



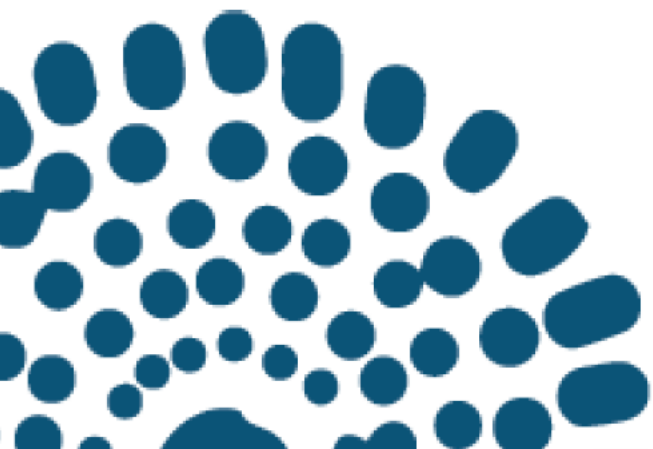
AISL

American International
School of Lagos

Child Protection Guide

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An Important Note for Parents

Dear Parents,

I am writing to inform you of a matter that is of sincere personal interest to me and is one that I hope is of utmost importance to all of you. I would like you to know that the American International School Board of Trustees has adopted a policy to assist our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety, and care of children in attendance at our school. In fact, I am required by this policy to send this letter to parents at the beginning of each school year. Thus, with this letter not only am I fulfilling my assigned duties, I also have the opportunity to write to you about this important aspect of our school's program.

The AISL Child Protection Policy is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of which Nigeria is a signatory. These two key articles from the U.N Convention on the Rights of the Child are important and we wish to draw your attention to them:

Article 19 Protection from abuse and neglect:

The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

Article 34 Sexual exploitation:

The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

By enrolling your child at AISL, you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted by the AISL Board of Trustees. We genuinely value our partnership with you in providing for the safety and care of your children. That is why American International School, Lagos has endorsed child protection policies that defines the standards by which all AISL students should be treated with respect and dignity at all times. As part of our overall educational programs and specific to our shared responsibility to educate children and to ensure a safe environment in which all children can learn and grow AISL will:

- Provide age appropriate information to help students understand personal safety, needs, and rights.
- Provide parent information sessions to help you better understand our programs and policy.
- Help faculty to identify and address issues of abuse and neglect.

Let's work together at home and school to ensure that our children are safe and knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities to themselves and to each other so they can grow and learn free of fear in a safe and supportive environment. I thank you for your support of our efforts and invite you to contact our school counselors or principals regarding any specific questions you may have in this regard.

Tom Pado
Superintendent

Child Protection Policy

Child abuse and neglect are concerns throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to the child's education as well as to their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. The American International School, Lagos endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, Nigeria, is a signatory.

Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of children. Schools need to ensure that all children in their care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop, both at school and away. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection. As such, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

All staff employed at the American International School must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering abuse or neglect. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations respective to this policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate in Nigeria, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/ or to local authorities.

The American International School of Lagos seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. As such, the American International School of Lagos will distribute this policy annually to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy annually to students, will provide training for all staff, and will make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, the American International School of Lagos will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process, keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority.

For detailed information on the Convention on the Rights of Child see the following link:

http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30160.html

Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse is any action by another person - adult or child - that causes significant harm to a child or creates a substantial risk of harm. It can be physical, emotional, or sexual. Neglect is a failure to provide for a child's basic needs, lack of love, care or attention and can be as damaging to a child as abuse. An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. It often happens over a period of time, rather than being a one-off event.

The signs of child abuse aren't always obvious, and a child might not tell anyone what is happening to them. Sometimes children don't understand that what's happening is abuse.

AISL classifies abuse into 6 main categories:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying including cyber-bullying

Physical Abuse may involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child. (These symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as cutting and suicide ideation).

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Shows reddening or blistering of the tissues through application of heat by fire, chemical substances, cigarettes, matches, electricity, scalding water, friction, etc.
- Has an injury to bone, muscle, cartilage, ligaments, fractures, dislocations, sprains, displacements, hematomas
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Being aggressive towards others
- Being very passive and complaint
- Chronic running away

Indicators of a Physical Abuser

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing or no explanation for the child's injury
- Describes the child as "bad" or in some other very negative way
- Use of harsh physical discipline with the child

Emotion Abuse is the result of persistent cruel acts or statements made, or allowed to be made, by the person responsible for the child and that have a direct effect on the child. It may involve: conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; that they are inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children; causing children frequently to feel frightened; or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

Signs of Emotional Abuse in a Victim

- Shows extremes in behaviors, such as overly complaint or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- Highly anxious
- Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder (e.g. stuttering, stammering)
- Is excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong
- Has headaches or stomach aches with no medical cause
- Fear of new situations
- Low self-esteem
- Is untypical socially withdrawn
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Attention-seeking behavior
- Persistent tiredness
- Lying
- Chronically hungry

Indicators of an Emotional Abuser

- Constantly blames, belittles, calls names, or humiliates the child
- Displays repeated negative acts, yelling, threatening, or bullying directed at the child
- Uses cruel or unusual actions in an attempt to gain submission, enforce maximum control, or to modify the child's behavior
- Overtly rejects the child by withdrawing attention, affection, physical contact, and other signs of nurturing

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic materials or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Children involved in commercial sex work are victims of sexual abuse, whether they perceive themselves as victims or not. Disclosure by the child is the single most important disclosure. However, the nature of sexual abuse, the guilt and shame of the child victim, makes it difficult for children to report sexual abuse.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Stays away from certain people
 - ✦ Shows fear or distrust of a particular adult
 - ✦ Avoids being alone with certain people, such as family members or friends
 - ✦ Seems frightened of a person or reluctant to socialize with them
 - ✦ Runs away from home without specific reason
 - ✦ Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in normal physical activities
- Shows sexual behavior that is inappropriate for their age
 - ✦ Becomes sexually active at a young age
 - ✦ Shows inappropriate sexualized behaviors or promiscuity
 - ✦ Excessive masturbation
 - ✦ Uses sexual language or has sexual knowledge not appropriate to their age level
 - ✦ Inappropriate sexual behavior with animals or toys
- Has physical symptoms
 - ✦ Frequent genital or anal infections, pain and itching
 - ✦ Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to private parts
 - ✦ Difficulty with urination
 - ✦ Has discomfort walking or sitting
 - ✦ Sexually transmitted diseases
 - ✦ Pregnancy
 - ✦ Being unusually quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive
 - ✦ Reports nightmares or bed-wetting

Indicators of a Sexual Abuser

- Is unduly and extremely controlling or protective
- Shows inappropriate attention to the child
- There is a significant age gap (inequality of power)
- Behaviors are intrusive upon the child
- Severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex
- Buys the child expensive gifts or gives them money for no apparent reason

Promotes or allows children or teens to consistently get away with sexually explicit or inappropriate behaviors

- Encourages silence and secrets with a child

Domestic Abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behavior between people in a relationship. Domestic abuse includes physical violence and any emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse. It includes controlling behaviors designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capabilities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behavior. It also includes coercive behaviors like threats, humiliation and intimidation to punish or frighten someone. Domestic abuse can happen in any relationship, and even after the relationship has ended. Teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

Signs of Domestic Abuse:

- Withholding money or preventing someone from earning money
- Withholding a passport
- Not letting someone leave the house or locking someone out of the house
- Reading emails, text messages or letters
- Threatening to kill or harm them, another family member or pet
- Children can experience domestic abuse or violence in lots of different ways as they might:
 - ✦ See the abuse
 - ✦ Hear it from another room
 - ✦ See a parent's injuries or distress afterwards
 - ✦ Be hurt by being nearby or trying to stop the abuse

Indicators of a Domestic Abuser

- Displays verbal abuse
- Is overtly controlling
- Shifts blame
- Is insensitive to others needs

Neglect is the persistent failure (intentional or not) to meet a child's basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect includes physical neglect, medical neglect, emotional or moral neglect and educational neglect.

Signs of Neglect

- Medical needs unattended
- Consistent lack of supervision
- Consistent physical signs of hunger and inadequate nutrition
- Insufficient clothing or dress
- Dirty clothing
- Poor personal hygiene
- Consistent fatigue or listlessness
- Self-destructive
- Extreme loneliness
- Extreme need for affection
- Failure to grow
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug or alcohol abuse

Indicators of a Perpetrator of Neglect

- Appears to be indifferent to the child
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs
- Seems apathetic or depressed
- Does not respond to repeated communications from the school
- Holds the child responsible for the care of siblings or others beyond the child's ability
- Fails to provide, whether intentional or otherwise, supervision or a reliable person(s) to provide child care
- Permits inappropriate use and viewing of internet websites, movies and TV programs
- Allows a child to be continuously absent or tardy from school through intent or neglect
- Is inattentive to special education needs or fails to cooperate with remedial instruction for the child when recommended and provided by the school and the child is not exceeding in current class placement

Bully is behavior that hurts someone else - such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumors, threatening, or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere - at school, at home, or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks and mobile phones, is called cyber bullying. A child can feel there is no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time day or night.

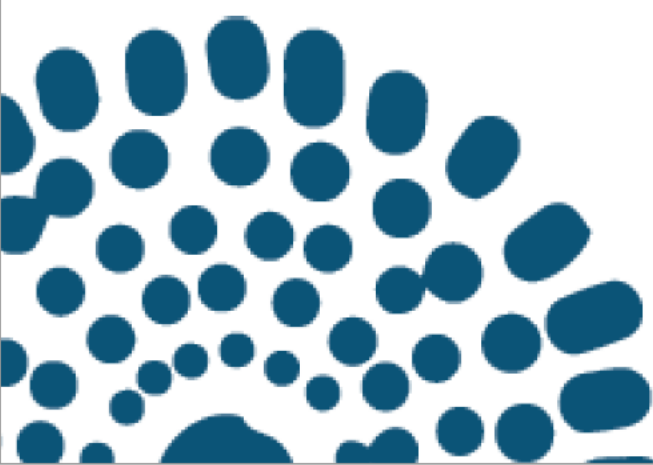
Signs of Bullying

- Verbal abuse, such as name calling and gossiping
- Non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or text messages
- Emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- Exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone
- Undermining, by constant criticisms or spreading rumors
- Controlling or manipulating someone
- Racial, sexual or homophobic derogatory comments
- Physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing
- Online cyber bullying

Cyber Bullying is becoming increasingly common. Unlike other types of bullying, it can happen anytime anywhere - a child can be bullied when you might think they are safe like when they are alone in their bedroom. It can feel like there's no escape. Children may know who's bullying them online or someone using a fake or anonymous account may target them. Cyber bullying negatively impacts children emotionally, psychologically and socially.

Cyber Bullying Includes:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
- Homophobia, racism or sexism
- Making silent, hoax or abusive calls
- Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'Trolling' - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- Excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- Encouraging young people to self-harm
- Voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- Creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- Sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
- Pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations



Responding to the Child

How should I respond to a child who reports being abused or neglected?

While it's normal to feel a little overwhelmed and confused in this situation, listening to a child who shares possible abuse or neglected information to you is one of the most important roles you can perform. Just remember, you can make a tremendous difference in the life of an abuse or neglected child. While not inclusive, here are a few DO's and DO NOT's that may help ease your mind if a child shares information with you about their situation.

DO:

- ☒ Remain calm and reassuring. A child may retract information or stop talking if they sense a strong reaction
- ☒ Find a private place to talk without interruptions
- ☒ Put the child at ease by sitting near them, not behind a desk
- ☒ Ask permission before touching the child. Touch may be associated with physical or emotional pain in children who have been physically or sexually abused
- ☒ Reassure the child that they are not in trouble and have done nothing wrong
- ☒ Use the child's vocabulary when reporting, not yours
- ☒ If possible, write down exactly what the child says to you
- ☒ Let the child know what you will do: "We need to tell the counselor. He/she knows how to help you and your family"
- ☒ Support the child: "I'm sorry that happened to you"
- ☒ Do what you can to make certain the child is safe from further abuse

DO NOT:

- ☐ Press for details. You do not need to prove abuse or neglect. Simply report the case to the counselor of the your school
- ☐ Ask "why" questions or interrogate. These questions require children to explain actions that they may or may not understand, or unable to interpret properly, and this may confuse or fluster the child making it harder for them to continue
- ☐ Promise that you will not tell anyone about the child's disclosure of possible abuse or neglect
- ☐ Ask leading or suggestive questions: "It must have hurt you lot, didn't it?" or "Did your father do that to you?"
- ☐ Make angry or critical comments about the alleged perpetrator. The child often knows, loves, or likes this person
- ☐ Disclose information indiscriminately. Keep in mind the child's right to privacy and your obligation to confidentiality
- ☐ Make the child feel different or singled out
- ☐ Investigate the case yourself

- ☐ Make judgement on whether the child is being truthful. Accept their disclosure and report it
- ☐ Put your personal feelings into your conversations: "I am not surprised, you know how much i have been worried about your behaviors"

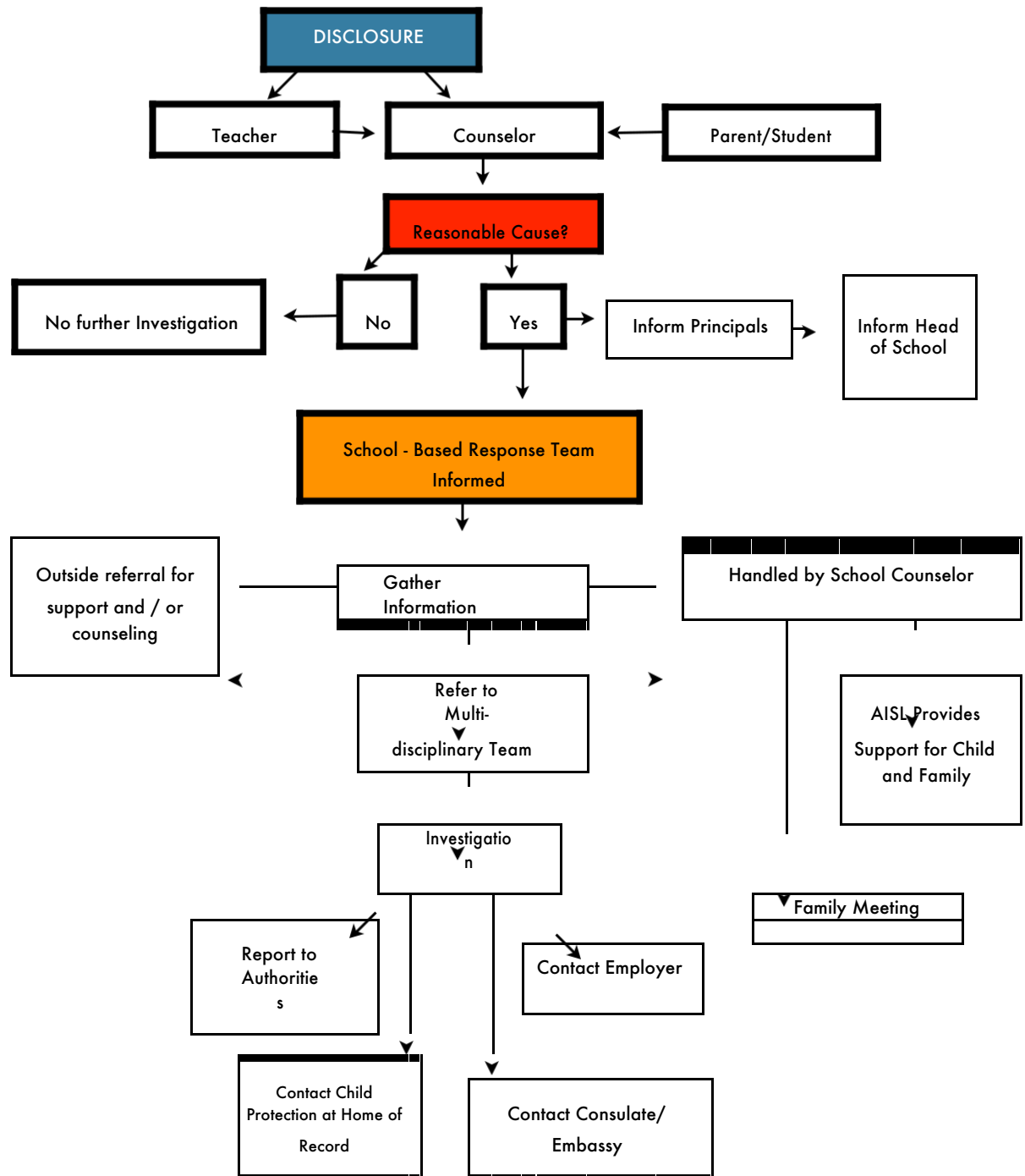
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Considerations

It is important to keep in mind cultural influences when assessing informations or behavior, and to avoid allowing personal beliefs or biases to influence decision making. Culture shapes attitudes and ideas about acceptable child behavior and discipline. For example, a family might have a different attitude toward nudity that is more relaxed than is typical. The same can be said for family sleeping, which is common in some cultures. Some families consider spanking an acceptable disciplinary measure, while other families find it unacceptable under any circumstances. These values can vary widely and cultural issues need to be understood. In order to work with people with various cultural identities in a way that promotes respect and dignity, it is important that you:

- ▶ Recognize any of your own pre-existing beliefs and biases and remain neutral
- ▶ Become educated about our culture(s) and understand information within the context
- ▶ Resist the temptation to classify or label persons based on cultural preconceptions

When suspected abuse or neglect is reported . . .

Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report their suspicions to the counselor, or to the principal. In all cases, the principal will be notified. It is the responsibility of the principal to inform the superintendent of the suspected case of child abuse or neglect. All staff, faculty and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect. All AISL employees are also required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect must be made to the counselor within 48 hours for immediate response.



Procedures for reporting suspected cases of abuse, neglect:

Step 1

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the teacher will seek advice from the grade level counselor within 48 hours. The counselor will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident and will form a school-based response team as needed to address the report. The response team will include the school nurse, counselor, psychologist, and other individuals as the principal sees fit. In all cases, follow up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained. The following procedure will be used:

1. Interview staff members as necessary and document information relative to the case.
2. Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school.
3. Report status of case to Head of School.
4. Determine the course of follow-up actions.

Step 2

Based on acquired information, a plan of action will be developed by the school counselors to assist the child and family. Actions that may take place are:

- Discussions between the child and counselor in order to gain more information. Depending upon the age of the child, these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with dolls to elicit more information as to what may have occurred.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counselor, or administrator.
- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling. In cases of severe abuse or where outside authority is deemed necessary, a request made to the Director (see chart, page 8) may result in further investigation and possible actions:
- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concern with the child/family, or to the welfare office at the home-of-record.
- Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.
- Consultation with the school or another attorney.
- Informal consultation with local authorities.

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves a staff or faculty member of AISL, the divisional principal will follow board policy pursuant to ethical professional behavior.

Step 3

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect:

- The counselor will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The counselor will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.

- The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
- The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists and multidisciplinary teams to update the progress of the child in school.

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the child's confidential school file. Records sent to schools to which their student may transfer will be flagged to let the receiving school know there is a confidential file for the child. AISL will make every attempt to share this information to protect the child.

Most cases of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled by school counselors, such as those involving:

- Student relationships with peers.
- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
- Student-parent relationships.
- Mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, grieving.

Some cases will be referred to outside resources, for example:

- Mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, dissociation, suicide ideation.

Cases reported for investigation and outside resources:

- Severe and ongoing physical abuse or neglect.
- Sexual abuse and incest.

In extreme cases when families do not stop the abuse or concerns remain about the safety of the child, reports could be made to:

- Local authorities
- The consulate
- The employer
- The home-of-record welfare office

The AISL child protection policy works for the child, for the family, and for our community

Research indicates that international communities are as prone to child abuse as communities in their home country. Child abuse is a multi-faceted issue that involves dynamics of the child, the family, and the community. The AISL Child Protection Policy works to respond at all three levels.

Child Protection Referral Form for AISL Staff

Reporting Date: _____

Person Referring:	
Job Title:	

Please Check One

Initial Referral	Follow-Up Referral

Name of Child	Age
Grade Level	Present location of child
Type of Referral	
Categories	
Physical Abuse	
Emotional Neglect	
Sexual Abuse	
Domestic Abuse	
Neglect	
Bullying (Including cyber bullying)	
Other (Specify)	

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Reason for Suspecting Abuse/Neglect

Observed Injuries (Specify)

Observed neglect condition of child (Specify)	
Reported by: (Check all that apply)	
Victim	
Witness	
Other	

Explain in detail:

I, _____ understand and agree that all information obtained from the child and subsequently recorded on this form should remain confidential.

Case Referred to Counselor and Principal and/or Nurse

Specified Appropriate Action:	
Investigation	
Information for Documentation Only	
Refer to Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)	

Services/Treatment being provided by referring agency/embassy authors

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Referring Party's Signature

_____ (Print Name)

_____ (Signature)

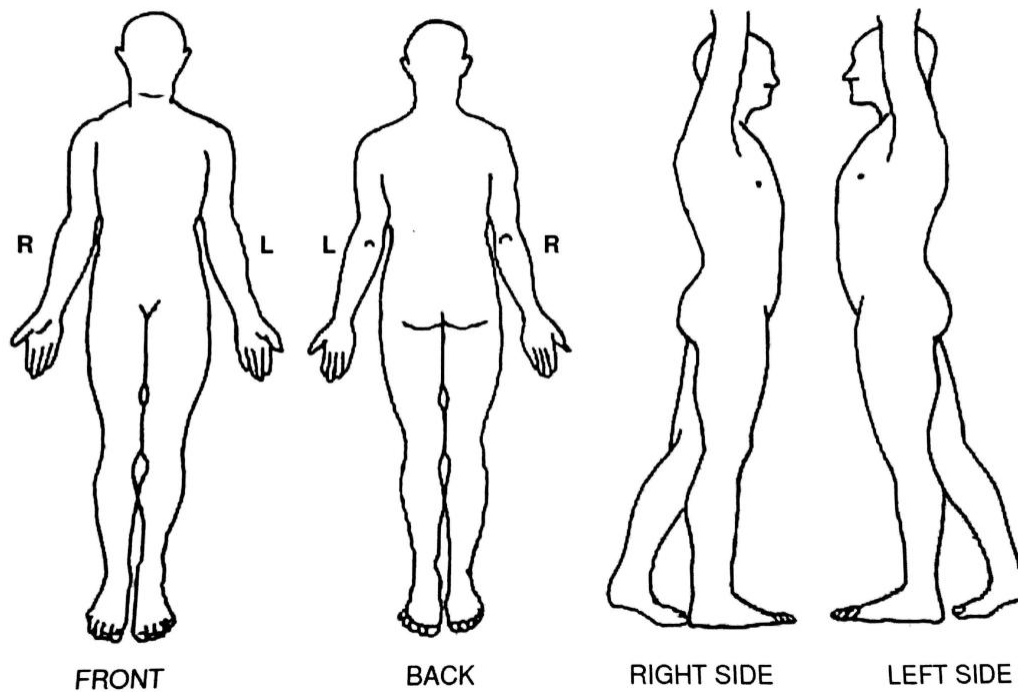
	Please attach the AISL Child Protection Report and Check Off once it is done
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School Nurse Reporting Form

BODY CHECK - CLINICAL

Individual's Name _____

Indicate on the chart below all bruises/discolorations, skin breaks, injuries etc.
Describe below as needed, being as specific as possible (measure in cm).
If there is more than one area affected, please number them (1,2,3 etc.)



Description:

Examiner _____ Title _____ Date ____/____/____

Witness _____ Title _____ Date ____/____/____

Is this an incident? _____ No _____ Yes (If Yes, attach this form to the incident reporting)

Myths and Facts about Child Abuse and Neglect

By understanding some of the myths regarding child abuse and neglect, you can play a huge role in protecting children. While not inclusive, the discovery and knowledge of the myths and facts regarding child abuse and neglect, child molesters, and abusive persons can help us add another layer of information and education that may keep children safe.

Myth #1: It's only abuse if it's violent or meant to physically hurt the child.

Fact: Physical abuse is just one type of child abuse. Neglect and emotional abuse can be just as damaging, and since they are more subtle; others are less likely to intervene.

Myth #2: Only bad people abuse their children.

Fact: While it's easy to say that only "bad people" abuse their children, it's not always so black and white. Many have been abused and neglected themselves, and don't know any other way to parent. Others may be struggling with mental health issues, marital stress, or a substance abuse problem, etc.

Myth #3: Child abuse doesn't happen in "good" families.

Fact: Child abuse and neglect doesn't only happen in poor dysfunctional families, or bad environments. It crosses all racial, economic, educational, and cultural lines. Sometimes, families who seem to have it all from the outside are hiding a different story behind closed doors.

Myth #4: Most child abusers are strangers.

Fact: While abuse by strangers does happen, many abusers are family members or others close to the family such as parent, guardian, baby sitter, relatives, and trusted others.

Myth #5: Abused children always grow up to be abusers.

Fact: It's true that abused children are more likely to repeat the cycle as adults, unconsciously repeating what they experienced as children. On the other hand, many adult survivors of child abuse have a strong motivation to protect their children against what they went through and become excellent parents.

Myth #6: It's not my role to interfere in someone else's family.

Fact: The effects of child abuse and neglect are lifelong, affecting future relationships, self-esteem, and sadly putting even more children at risk as the cycle continues. Breaking the cycle of abuse is a responsibility we all have legally and morally.

Myth #7: It won't make a difference what I have to say.

Fact: If you have a gut feeling that something is wrong, it is better to be safe than sorry. Even if you don't see the whole picture, others may have noticed as well, and your input might help break a cycle of abuse, that otherwise slipped through the cracks.

Myth #8: Children make up stories or lie about sexual abuse.

Fact: While children do make up stories, they seldom lie about sexual abuse. Also children who have not been abused do not usually have explicit knowledge of intimate sexual behavior.

Myth #9: Most children who are abused do something to cause the abuse to occur.

Fact: The child is always the victim. The responsibility for the abuse lies solely with the adult. In the case of sexual abuse, many offenders try to shift the blame for their actions by accusing the child of being seductive or that they were simply helping the child.

Myth #10: Abused or neglected children almost always come from poor, minority, or uneducated families.

Fact: There is no evidence that links social economic status, race, culture, or educational levels to abuse or neglect. Child abuse and neglect occurs within every aspect of family profiles.

Myth #11: Married men don't molest children; after all, they have their wives.

Fact: Marital status doesn't correlate to whether a person is a sexual predator or not. Molesting children is about power position, control, and vulnerability. The taste for sex with children is separate from a normal human adult sex drive oriented to adults.

Myth #12: Child molesters are unsociable and isolated.

Fact: Most child molesters are known and liked by others. They often have great personalities and demonstrate concern and care for others. Plus, they cultivate certain relationships in order to gain access to children, and many are genial and personable individuals with whom others enjoy socializing.

Myth #13: People who have high status and respected positions of responsibility can't be abusers.

Fact: Child molesters and abusers can be anyone at all. Positions of status, fame, or wealth are no guarantee that children are safe from them.

Myth #14: Anyone who would molest a child is seedy-looking or looks suspicious.

Fact: Handsome, rich men molest children. Beautiful, talented women molest children. Ordinary people you laugh with every day molest children; millionaires and highly educated people can be child molesters. Gone are the days of describing molesters as dirty old men, flashers in raincoats. You simply cannot tell a child sexual predator by their physical appearance, status, or personality.

Myth #15: Hugs and additional forms of affection and kindness with children in front of their parents and others prove they are not child molesters.

Fact: Molesters begin "grooming" and desensitizing children and adults so that the child thinks their parents and other trusted caregivers approve of the way they are touched. They lavish the child with special attention, kindness or other gifts for no reason. When it is done in private, the child assumes it is all right and that the person truly has their best interest and welfare at heart. These are the vulnerable conditions that the molester wants.

Myth #16: A real child molester would never talk about the subject.

Fact: A child molester may say contemptuous things like "Child molesters are the sickest people on the planet" or "Child molesters deserve the death penalty." While others might say the same things, and this is not an indicator by itself, it is a warning that predators know the right line to take.

Myth #17: Most child molesters eventually get caught and put in jail.

Fact: Contrary to belief, it is rare that a person who molests a child ever gets caught and when they do over 90% of these cases never find their way into a courtroom or are convicted. If accused they grossly distort the truth to justify their behavior. They blame the child, minimize the situation and make up myriad of lame excuses.

- ☒ "It was a loving gesture."
- ☒ "I was checking a rash."
- ☒ "I didn't know better."
- ☒ "We were just playing around."
- ☒ "I was simply trying to mentor them."

Friends, co-workers, and others may see a pattern but very little is witnessed. The hard truth is that each pedophile molests on average 260 victims in their lifetime.

