



# **CHILD PROTECTION** AT AISM

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## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Child abuse, neglect, harassment, and exploitation are concerns throughout the world. These actions 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 of Mozambique endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, Mozambique 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 AISM **are MANDATED to report** suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, harassment, and exploitation whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering abuse, harassment, neglect, or exploitation. 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, neglect, harassment, or exploitation may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate or embassy in Maputo, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities.

AISM seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse, harassment, neglect, or exploitation in any aspect of their lives. As such, AISM will distribute this policy annually to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy annually to students, will provide training for all staff annually, 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 Mozambique 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](http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30160.html)



## HOW ARE ABUSE, NEGLECT, HARASSMENT, AND EXPLOITATION DEFINED?

Definitions of abuse are complex and based in various cultures of child-rearing behaviors, gender and role responsibilities, and expectations. The primary determination of abuse is that it is dependent on some form of a relationship that is used to meet the need of the more powerful person, either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides many of the definitions that are based in understanding the impact of certain behaviors. **Abuse** may take place between adults, including parents and/or AISM employees, between adults and children, and/or between children.

**Child abuse**, specifically, may be defined as "All forms of physical, and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power." (Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention, 29–31 March 1999, WHO, Geneva. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1999 (document WHO/HSC/PVI/99.1).)

**Different forms of abuse include, but are not limited to:**

**Physical abuse is:**

- Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means, causing skin bruising, burns, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function, death; and/or
- Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's body functioning; and/or
- Committing acts that are cruel or inhumane regardless of observable injury. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain and/or mental suffering; and/or
- Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the criminal code or school policy; and/or
- Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury to, or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child; and/or
- Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above
- Possible indicators of physical abuse
- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colors)
- Injuries reflecting shape of article used (e.g. electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand)
- Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation



- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks  
Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
- Immersion burns with a distinct boundary line
- Unexplained laceration, abrasions, or fractures
- Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso

**Emotional abuse** includes non-physical behaviors such as threats, insults, constant monitoring, humiliation, intimidation, isolation, exposure to violence, or stalking that result in actual or potential harm to an individual's health, physical, mental, and/or social development. Such behaviors may include restricting a child's movements, denigration, ridicule, threats and intimidation, discrimination, rejection and other non-physical forms of hostile treatment (adapted from Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention, 29–31 March 1999, WHO, Geneva. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1999 (document WHO/HSC/PVI/99.1)).

**Sexual harassment** is the unwelcomed physical, verbal, written, or electronic conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with a person's academic or extracurricular activities, professional obligations, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

**Sexual abuse** is committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in either the criminal code of the host country or school policy, or intentionally touching either directly or through clothing, the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child for other than hygiene or child care purposes.

**Neglect is** failure to provide for a child's basic needs within their own environment.

Neglect may be:

- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision)
- this would include failure to provide proper adult guardianship, such as leaving children unsupervised at home for any extended period of time.

**Note:** AISM requires that one parent be a full-time resident of Maputo. Should parents/guardians leave the country for any reason the responsibility for informing the school of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian. Temporary Change of Guardian Forms are available from AISM. These are expected to be completed prior to parents/guardians leaving the country.

- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment); and/or
- Emotional (e.g., a pattern of actions, such as: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs, specific examples may include verbal humiliation, refusing to acknowledge presence of child, invasion of privacy for no specific reason, violent threats, etc.).



**Possible indicators of neglect**

- Child is unwashed or hungry
- Parents are uninterested in child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- Child does not want to go home
- Both parents or legal guardian are absent from Maputo for any period of 24 hours or greater
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of an emergency



## WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE?

As defined above, **sexual abuse** is committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in either the criminal code of the host country or school policy, or intentionally touching either directly or through clothing, the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child for other than hygiene or child care purposes.

Sexual abuse has some different characteristics of child abuse that warrant special attention. While physical abuse is often the result of immediate stress and not usually planned, sexual abuse requires planning with results that are more insidious.

The planning, referred to as grooming, often results in victims accepting the blame, responsibility, guilt and shame for the sexual behavior of the offender. Sexual abuse requires far more secrecy than other forms of child abuse, so is more difficult to report.

Many victims, through the process of grooming, are taught that the sex is a form of love, so tend to love their offender and often present as happy and well-adjusted children with no negative symptoms because of their perception of being loved. Working with the sexual offender cannot be done by school counselors.

### POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE:

- Sexual knowledge, behavior, or use of language not appropriate to age level.
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns.
- Venereal disease in a child of any age.
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital, or anal areas.
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Refusing to change into PE clothes, fear of bathrooms.
- Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint.
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual.
- Pregnancy, especially at a young age.
- Extremely protective parenting.

**Behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse or neglect. Together with other indicators, such as family dynamics, they may warrant a referral.**



## WHAT IS SEXUAL EXPLOITATION?

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION refers to the transactional nature of some forms of abuse. It is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home and education at some point.

### Signs of sexual exploitation that may or may not be present:

- Signs of sexual abuse
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- Suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Fear of people or places
- Abuse drugs and alcohol
- Go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Regularly miss school or education or go missing from education.

ONLINE SEXUAL ABUSE & EXPLOITATION is the sexual abuse of children using digital technology. This commonly includes grooming children with a sexual motive, creating, viewing and distributing child sexual abuse material (child pornography and self-produced sexual images or 'sexts') and coercing and blackmailing children for sexual purposes. This abuse may be perpetrated by individuals or gangs, young people or adults and may include in person contact or only online contact. As technology advances, new forms of this crime are emerging. Children with unsupervised use, high usage, low digital knowledge, low self esteem, poor digital literacy skills (sharing of passwords, insufficient privacy settings, etc.) may be especially vulnerable, but any child with digital access, boys or girls, may be victimized.

Signs of online grooming, abuse or exploitation that may or may not be present:

- Secretive behavior
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Late night or excessive internet use
- Anxiety
- Withdrawal from family/friends/interests
- Suicide ideation/self-harm
- Poor educational achievement, attention deficits
- Sleep disruption
- Increase in followers or contacts
- New devices and/or platforms
- New usage patterns
- Avoidance of online use or certain online platforms or apps



## 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 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 a 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 judgment 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've been worried about your behaviors*"

### **CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE CONSIDERATIONS**

It is important to keep in mind cultural influences when assessing information 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 from one culture might have a different attitude toward nudity that is more relaxed than other cultures allow. 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 preexisting 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



## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT IS REPORTED?

### RESPONDING TO THE CHILD PROTECTION PROCESS

All staff employed and volunteering at AISM must immediately report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the individual has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered, or is at significant risk of suffering, abuse, or neglect. Reports may be made to a Counselor or a Principal. Child Advocates exist to encourage reporting among the student body, and this trained group of teacher and staff volunteers also report to Counselors and Principals.

Just as staff and volunteers in the school are mandated reporters, counselors and administrators are mandated to follow through on reports that are received. When a suspected abuse or neglect case is reported, a series of sequential steps occur. These steps are also found in the flowchart in the next section.

#### Step 1

##### INTAKE:

When an adult reports abuse or neglect or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect is occurring, they will make a verbal or written report to the divisional Counselor or Principal immediately, always within 24 hours. The counselor will take initial steps to gather information from the reporter and determine whether there is probable cause or risk.

When a child reports abuse or neglect to an adult, that individual will immediately report to the counselor for determination of whether there is probable cause or risk.

#### Step 2

##### INVESTIGATION:

Upon receipt of the child abuse or neglect report, the Child Protection Response Team will be informed. The Child Protection Response Team is composed of a minimum of three confidential staff members, including the divisional Principal, Counselor, and at least one other professional with expertise related to the report. Together with team members as necessary, the divisional counselor will conduct an investigation within 48 hours to ensure that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained. At the discretion of the counselor, other personnel may be requested to participate in the investigation. Some of these may be:

- Parents
- Embassy/Consulate
- Police
- Nurse
- Caregiver
- Teacher
- Director
- School Board Child Protection Lead - This is the Board Chair or a designee
- Embassy Regional Medical Officer
- Child Protection Officer
- Others



The investigation may discover varied findings that will be taken into consideration:

- The report is not substantiated
- The alleged abuse is unsubstantiated but there is reason to suspect it either occurred or could happen.
- The report reveals probable cause and the parents work for the US Embassy.
- The report reveals probable cause and the parents don't work for an Embassy.
- The report is substantiated and there is real risk of the safety and possible further harm of the child.
- The report is substantiated and there is potential for immediate risk to the child.
- The report is substantiated and there is potential that other children have also been harmed.

### Step 3

#### PROTECTIVE INTERVENTION:

Based upon acquired information and findings of the investigation, a protective plan and range of interventions will be developed by the counselor in collaboration with school personnel to assist the child and family. While not inclusive, actions that may take place are:

- Documentation
- Emotional and professional support
- Monitoring and periodical review
- Interviews
- Parent meetings
- Observations
- Interim support and protection
- Sharing information with the school community or with other schools in Maputo and internationally
- Contact with Embassy personnel (required within 24 hours if a US Embassy family)
- Development of a Safety Plan
- Notification of police
- Notification of employer and local authorities
- Termination

### Step 4

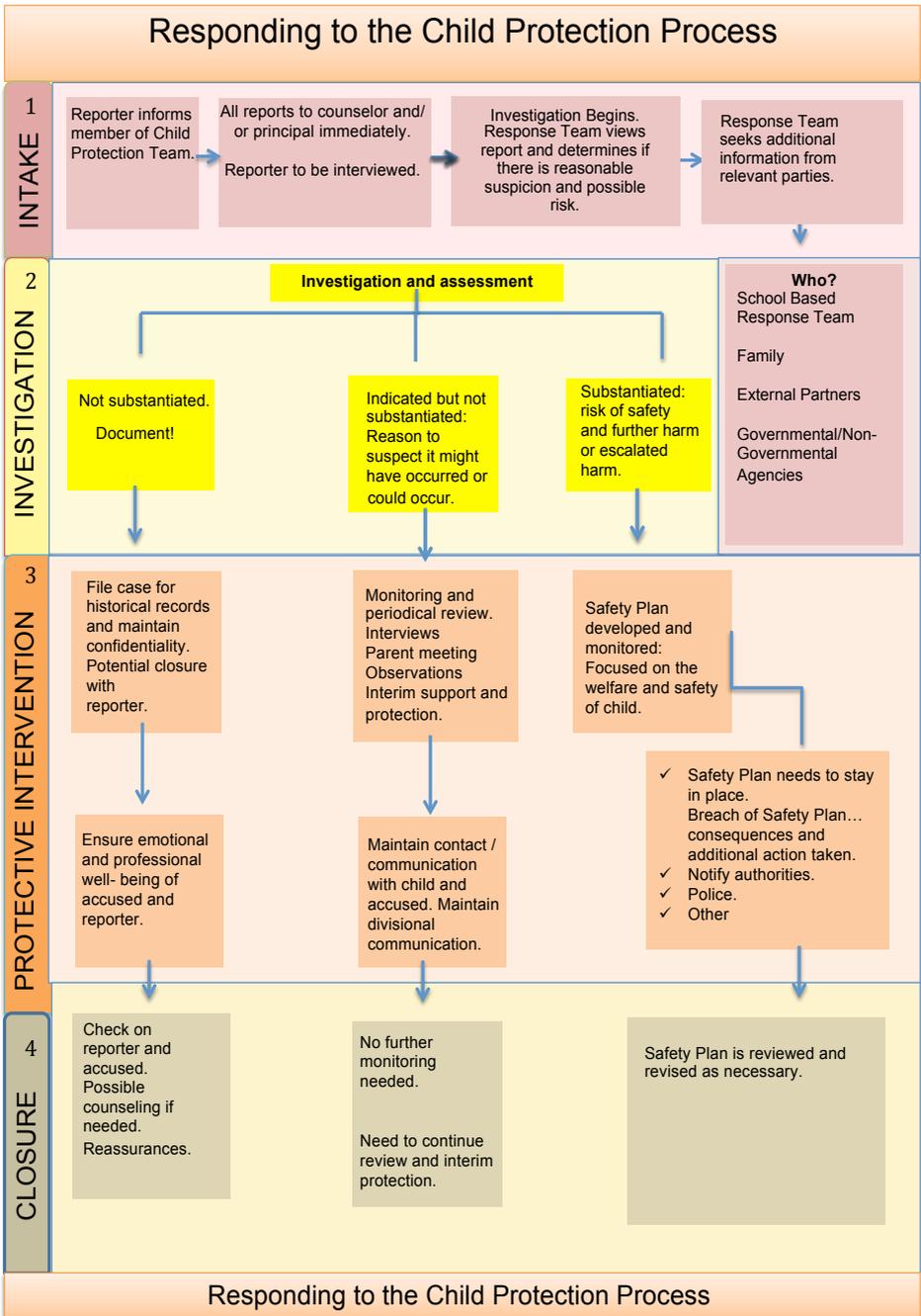
#### CLOSURE

Putting closure on the investigation and intervention of a reported child abuse or neglect case is important for all parties involved, as well as the institutional memory of AISM. While some cases may have a natural and logical ending, other cases may warrant on-going monitoring or interventions. In all cases, the primary focus is to ensure that children are safe and necessary steps are in place for the protection of the child. Although not exhaustive, closure for the findings of investigation may involve and include:

- Check on reporter and accused to provide support, possible counseling, and reassurances.
- Continue to review the situation and monitor any interim protection that may have been put in place.
- Maintain on-going feedback and coordinated efforts with parties involved, potentially any additional findings, actions, interventions, or decisions that may have taken place.
- Evaluate and modify, as needed protective interventions that are in place.
- Take additional protective measures including other resources and authorities.

**In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves a staff or faculty member of AISM, the administration will follow board policy #5005 on Child Protection pursuant to ethical professional behavior.**





Responding to the Child Protection Process



## WHAT DOES A CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY AND PROGRAM MEAN FOR THE AISM COMMUNITY?

The American International School of Mozambique is defining a standard for the treatment of all children and youth - that they be treated with respect and dignity at all times.

Children and youth have legal and moral rights to their individuality, that when protected, will develop into the ability to meet the needs of the family, community, and global society. Child protection standards defined by AISM encompass all cultures and international law. When given reasonable cause to believe that these rights are violated, AISM will seek all available resources to restore those rights.

While AISM's Child and Youth Protection Policy is intended to disclose key components and related procedures for the school's overall child and youth safety framework, the school also strives to maintain additional guidelines and "best practices" procedures for the school's on-going and pro-active child and youth protection program.

Some of those additional areas in which the school is also committed to with respect to its comprehensive Child and Youth Protection Program, but in which limited details have been included in this policy, include:

- Recruitment/screening assessments and background checks for new hires
- School curriculum considerations related to child and youth protection.
- Training requirements for leadership, staff, and students (*the school has a scheduled program of regular, systematic professional training for volunteers, contractors, faculty, and staff on child protection, child abuse prevention, recognition, intervention, and reporting*).

Other formal learning programs throughout the school experience related to child protection may cover areas such as bullying, personal safety, physical abuse, manipulation, online safety, healthy sexual behavior, neglect and negligent behavior, staying safe away from home, sexual exploitation, and disclosing abuse. (These programs are to be delivered by members of faculty or external providers who are trained in these areas)

- Special considerations for student trips & related transportation and lodging issues
- School safety and security considerations (school environment, building and facilities, protective equipment).
- Procedures/Response for dealing with alleged staff offender
- Procedures/Response for dealing with student who has been harmed, eg Safety Plan
- Relationships with local resources & community partnerships & support agencies (*the school develops meaningful and effective relationships with external organizations and bodies that are able to provide appropriate support and advice on matters related to child protection*)
- Public communication of the school's child protection policy/procedures
- Confidentiality and record-keeping procedures
- Self-audit protocols (adherence to child and youth protection policies and procedures are reviewed with sufficient regularity and systematically).
- Community members' acknowledgment of obligations concerning child protection policy/applicable codes of conduct.



## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF STUDENTS

The American International School of Mozambique (AISM) is committed to the safety and protection of our students. This Code of Conduct applies to all faculty, staff, employees, volunteers who represent the school and who interact with children or young people in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity.

The public and private conduct of faculty, staff, employees and volunteers acting on behalf of AISM can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact, or can cause great harm if inappropriate. We must always be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work. We should be aware of our own and other persons' vulnerability, especially when working alone with students, and be particularly aware that we are responsible for maintaining physical and emotional boundaries in such interactions. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviors with those for whom we have responsibility. This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses. We are to provide safe environments for students on the school campus as well as at all school sponsored events outside of school.

We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially students, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration. AISM staff and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child.

Physical contact with children can be misconstrued both by the recipient and by those who observe it, and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. One-on-one meetings with any student are best held in a public area; in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with the door left open, and another staff member or supervisor is aware of the meeting. We must intervene when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that children are being abused in any way. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported to the appropriate school and relevant civil and/or international authorities as described in the Child Protection Policy of the School.

Faculty, staff, employees, and volunteers should refrain from the illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol at all times, and from the use of tobacco products, alcohol and/or drugs when working with children. Adults should never buy alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, videos, or reading material that is inappropriate and share it with students. Faculty, staff, employees and volunteers should not accept gifts from, or give gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.

Communication with children is governed by the key safety concept of transparency. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between AISM parents, administration, teachers, personnel, volunteers, and minors:

- Communication between AISM (including volunteers) and students that is outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship (teacher, coach, host, etc.) is prohibited.
- Email exchanges between a minor and a person acting on behalf of the School must occur through the use of an official school email address.
- Electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.
- Faculty, staff, employees, and volunteers of AISM should only communicate with students through official school platforms. Engaging or communicating with students through social media or text messages, even for school business, is prohibited.





## STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR AISM EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, AND CONTRACTORS

I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the students participating in AISM programs.

### **I will:**

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration
- Respect cultural differences
- Encourage open communication between all children, young people and adults, and have children and young people participate in the decisions that affect them.
- Exercise due care in all matters related to my role with a child and not divulge any confidential information about a child unless in the best interests of the child.
- At all times, be transparent in my actions and whereabouts.
- Ensure appropriate and safe supervision of students at all times.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with students.
- Take responsibility for ensuring I am accountable for my behavior and choices.
- Avoid any position where a reasonable person would question the appropriateness of my actions, or the safety of a child.
- Self-assess my behavior, action, language and relationships with children to maintain authentic student attachment.
- Proactively report any concerns about child safety or child abuse to a counselor or principal as soon as concerns arise.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
- Speak up to a counselor or principal when I observe behavior of colleagues that causes concern.
- Immediately report any concern or student disclosures of harassment or abuse from or between peers to a counselor or principal.

### **I will not:**

- Engage in behavior that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children.
- Use inappropriate, offensive, or discriminatory language when speaking with a child or young person.
- Condone or ignore peer on peer harassment or abuse between students.
- Develop a sexual relationship with a child or any relationship with a child that may be deemed inappropriate, exploitive or abusive, including touching or speaking to a student in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Act in a way that shows unfair or differential treatment (favoritism) to children or engage in quid pro quo (this for that).
- Inflict any physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading students.
- Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with students.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes.
- Give a student who is not my own child a ride home alone, unless I have written parent permission.
- Accept gifts from or give gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- Engage in private communications with students via text messaging, email, Facebook, Twitter or similar forms of electronic or social media except school approved communications that can be monitored.
- Photograph, record or film students for use other than official school events and activities without consent from parents or guardians.
- Use profanity in the presence of students at any time.

Name (in print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX

### Hiring Procedures

AISM is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment. The school has a code of conduct, a child protection policy, and procedures which support this commitment. All employees are required to undertake a security clearance from their last job posting and home of record. This takes the form of a criminal records report from a national police agency. Entry into Mozambique for working purposes requires an authenticated or apostilled criminal records report. It is school policy to actively seek confidential references for all new employees.

### Volunteers

Volunteers are defined as members from within or beyond our community who regularly give time to support school functions. All volunteers are required to undertake a security clearance and to engage in child protection education and training.

### Chaperone Expectations and Child Protection

1. Teachers will reinforce behavior expectations for students prior to the field trip. All school rules apply to any off-campus activity. No student may consume alcohol or smoke, or use illicit drugs regardless of the environment.
2. Activities that lend themselves to injuries are not permitted without prior permission from the school administration. Such activities include swimming, hiking and climbing, driving any type of vehicle, etc. Any activity which has not been shared with you should not be attempted by students if you deem them to carry an extraordinary risk.
3. It is expected that teachers will maintain continuous supervision of all students – that is, no student should be unattended or out-of-sight for any reason.
4. Teachers must demonstrate professional behavior at all times throughout the field trip, including appropriate use of language and interaction with other staff members. Consumption of alcohol or use of illicit drugs by a staff member is not permitted under any circumstances.

### Additional Considerations for Week without Walls

Due to the nature of WWW, you are in close contact with our students for an extended amount of time. Create safe boundaries for you and your students. Be aware of the vulnerabilities of the children. Maintain physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries. Avoid any covert or overt behaviors which exploit, abuse, or harass. Be aware of how your words, actions, and physical touch can be perceived. Be sure that all are within the typical expression of greeting, or care for safety.

It is your responsibility to check on student welfare in their accommodation for the week. Be sure never to be alone with a student in the accommodation, and check that students are decent when you enter their rooms. The same goes for any shared restrooms.



## SAFETY PLANS

The safety plan is developed and implemented when there is reasonable cause to believe immediate or extended protection is needed for the child either at home or in the school. It is a well thought out written agreement between the school and the alleged party that establishes how impending danger or threats to the child's safety will be managed. There are seven components of an effective safety plan that should be considered:

### CRITERIA

The safety plan must consider the following criteria:

- Actions and services contained in the written safety plan are designated specifically for the purpose of controlling or managing impending danger now and in the foreseeable future.
- The safety plan must have an immediate effect, it must be implemented at the point of the impending danger, and it must do what it is supposed to do the very day it is set up.
- It identifies the most suitable people taking the necessary action frequently enough to control threats or dangerous situations so that the child is protected at all times.
- People involved in the safety plan must be immediately accessible and available in accordance with the provisions of the plan.
- It must be based in a developmental context. The plan should meet the child's needs at the time and be modified as the needs or circumstances of the child changes.
- The plan has a monitoring and review schedule that is strictly adhered to.
- All parties pertinent to the successful implementation of the safety plan must agree to their roles by written signatures of agreement and dated.

### RANGE

The safety plan must be an intervention, which is dynamic and fluid. It can range from monitoring to intensive intervention. Multiple factors need to be addressed when

considering the needs of the child. The most effective safety plan will involve some or most of the following:

- A strategy that combines the use of in-home or out of home actions as well as in school and out of school actions.
- The descriptive role of others who participate in the safety plan. For example, the roles of friends, relatives, teachers, administration, counselors, and others who may have an active responsibility in assuring the safety or support of the child need to be effective.
- Delineate the circumstances in which the access to the child is allowed and under what conditions.

### INFORMATION GATHERING

Information gathering is ongoing throughout the life of a case. Bringing to light pertinent knowledge that can increase the awareness of the child's needs is critical in knowing what elements and to what degree specific components should be in the safety plan. Information, which at first does not make sense, is often clarified in the process of information gathering. Seek multiple sources of information while cultivating trust so that full disclosure is more likely to happen.

### RISK ASSESSMENT

Immediate or foreseeable risks to the child must be well thought out and looked at. To formulate a viable risk assessment, it is important to be a critical thinker and to consider multiple competing needs, prioritizing the child's safety and personal needs.



All sources of information such as observation, previous history of suspicions, acceptable levels of involvement, or where there has been previous concerns or offending behaviors within the circle of the child needs to be assessed.

### **ANALYSIS AND PLANNING**

When planning the safety plan it is paramount to determine whether there is a present and immediate danger to the child. If it is determined that the child needs immediate safeguards a short term plan should be developed and implemented. The short term plan is very specific, tied to particular present danger threats and must control those threats from the present until sufficient information can be gathered and analyzed to determine the need for a formal continuing safety plan. Analysis and planning for short and long term safety plans includes but is not limited to:

- What are the threats that you are concerned with? What danger must be controlled?
- Do resources and supports seem sufficient and available to address the threats to safety during the next few hours and days?
- Does everyone know how the plan is supposed to work? "Maybe or probably" are not good standards when it comes to making sure children are safe.
- Does a crisis exist? Is the family not letting their child go to school due to the threat?
- Does the family or child have immediate needs that must be addressed? (e.g. housing, food, some sort of care).
- Evaluate the need for the alleged perpetrator by considering the nature of the alleged perpetrator's involvement with the family and his or her relationship to the threats of danger.
- Can an in-home immediate protection plan be established? What roles and responsibilities will parents have? What roles and responsibilities will be given to others?
- Identify the caregiver's protective capacities for the child. Are they sufficient or insufficient?

### **ACTIONS**

Actions are services that are active and focused with respect to the safety factors; they are not change or treatment related. These are services that are located in acceptable proximity and can be called for immediate response. Safety plans should never ask nor have caregivers promise to change behavior. Everything is in writing. Make sure everyone understands exactly what is expected in a safety plan and who is to do it. Maintain the supervision and accountability.

### **REVIEWING OUTCOMES**

Safety plans are developed in response to unsafe decisions and behaviors that have put the child in danger or at risk. When reviewing the outcomes identified in the safety plan consideration much be given to whether outcomes have met the criteria of keeping the child safe in a way that abates further harm or risk. Reviewing outcomes may include:

- Determination on whether the interventions were sufficient in controlling the threat or danger.
- Whether modification is needed as a result of circumstances that are uncovered after the initial safety plan was developed and implemented.
- Determining whether there is a need for multiple safety assessments for multiple settings:
  - If child spends time with another member of family, is there a threat of danger in the new household environment that needs to be controlled?
  - Whether the child falls in the hands of multiple caregivers who display unsafe decisions.
  - The child feels safe in one school environment but not another.
  - Extra curriculum trips create separation anxiety from zones of emotional comfort.
- Whether the need exists for a second safety plan or a modification of the primary safety plan.
- Consideration if there is more than one-way to address the child's safety.



## WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION & NON RETALIATION

AISM Board of Directors Policy - 1011 Reporting Unethical or Illegal Conduct  
("Whistleblower" Policy)

AISM encourages employees to report unethical or illegal conduct of any type, and ensures that there will be no retaliation for reporting pursuant to the established protocol. The protocol for reporting and addressing alleged unethical or illegal conduct is described in the Human Resources Manual.

## UNDERSTANDING BULLYING & HARASSMENT

(adapted from educateiowa.gov)

### Harassment & Bullying Defined

Harassment and bullying are broadly defined as: Any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's academic performance
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school

"Trait or characteristic of the student" includes but is not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.

### What is Bullying?

The definition below is used for bullying prevention and intervention programming in schools. This definition guides efforts to educate all constituents with common language around bullying specifically.

Bullying involves unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying and harassment include actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. – *2014 US Department of Education office of Safe Schools*

In his writings, Dr. Dan Olweus, creator of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, is very clear that bullying is **peer abuse** that should not be tolerated.



## Bullying is Not

**Conflict is not Bullying.** A conflict is a disagreement or antagonism between two or more people. All parties involved have some responsibility for the encounter. It is not bullying when two or more kids with **no perceived power imbalance**, fight, have an argument or disagree. Conflict resolution strategies can be employed to find common ground when both parties have a vested interest in resolving the conflict. Peer mediation may be appropriate in conflict situations. Bullying is peer abuse and needs to be reported and treated as such. Peer mediation is **not** appropriate in bullying.

The difficulty here is to know when a situation is conflict and when it can be relational bullying or social bullying. Relational bullying does occur within social groups of "friends." It is critical for educators to be careful to seek to understand when "friend" behaviors that might have been conflicts turn into bullying. Be careful to:

- Understand the characteristics of relational bullying
- Educate all staff, students and parents about relational bullying
- Make sure you are addressing social and emotional development for all students
- When bullying is reported NEVER bring those involved together for the interview, *do not intervene and treat the report as a conflict without first investigating and assuring bullying is not occurring*

## Types of Bullying & Harassment – Taken from [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

### Verbal – speaking or writing mean things.

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

### Social (Relational) – hurting someone's reputation or relationships

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

### Physical – hurting a person's body or possessions

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

## What works in Addressing Bullying?

### Teachers

The following activities from the [Violence Prevention Works website](http://www.violencepreventionworks.org) can help teachers build and sustain a safe, secure classroom environment:

- Develop, post, and discuss rules and sanctions related to bullying.
- Treat students and each other with warmth and respect. Demonstrate positive interest and involvement in your students.



- Establish yourself as a clear and visible authority with responsibility for making the school experience safe and positive.
- Reward students for positive, inclusive behavior.
- Take immediate action when bullying is observed and consistently use nonphysical, non-hostile negative consequences when rules are broken.
- Listen to parents and students who report bullying in your classroom. Quickly and effectively resolve the issue to avoid perpetuation of bullying behaviors.
- Notify parents of all involved students when a bullying incident occurs, and resolve the problem expeditiously, according to discipline plans at school.
- Refer students affected by bullying to school counseling or mental health staff, if needed.
- Protect students who are bullied with a safety plan.
- Hold class meetings during which students can talk about bullying and peer relations.
- Provide information to parents about bullying behaviors and encourage their involvement and support in addressing bullying issues.

### Parents and Families

Parents and families play a central role to preventing bullying and stopping it when it happens. The following list from the [US National Crime Prevention Council website](#) are a few things parents and families can do:

- Teach kids to solve problems without using violence and praise them when they do.
- Give children positive feedback when they behave well to help their build self-esteem.
- Help give them the self-confidence to stand up for what they believe in.
- Ask your children about their day and listen to them talk about school, social events, their classmates, and any problems they have.
- Take bullying seriously. Many kids are embarrassed to say they have been bullied. You may only have one chance to step in and help.
- If you see any bullying, stop it right away, even if your child is the one doing the bullying.
- Encourage your child to help others who need it.
- Don't bully your children or bully others in front of them. Many times kids who are bullied at home react by bullying other kids. If your children see you hit, ridicule, or gossip about someone else, they are also more likely to do so themselves.
- Support bully prevention programs in your child's school. If your school doesn't have one, consider starting one with other parents, teachers, and concerned adults.

Help your child deal with bullying by talking to teachers, administrators, and staff.

The following PDF files give more information:

- [How to talk with educators at your child's school about bullying](#) – Get advice on how to communicate with teachers and other leaders at your child's school if you're dealing with bullying.
- [Tips for parents: What to do if your child is being bullied](#) – Get tips for supporting your child through this very painful experience.
- [Tips for parents: What to do if your child bullies others](#) – If your child bullies others at school, it needs to stop. Find out what you can do at home.
- [Tips for parents: What to do if your child witnesses bullying](#) – Empower your child to take positive action in bullying situations and help prevent further bullying.
- [What can parents do to prevent and address cyber-bullying?](#) – Protect your child from indirect forms of bullying that use text messaging, websites, and cell phones.
- [Advocate for a bullying prevention program at your school](#) – You can play a very important role in advocating for a bullying prevention program at your child's school.



### Filing a Complaint

A Complainant who wishes to avail himself/herself of this procedure may do so by filing a complaint with the Director, Principal, or School Counselor. Complaints should be filed within 15 days of the event giving rise to the complaint or from the date the Complainant could reasonably become aware of such occurrence. The Complainant will state the nature of the complaint and the remedy requested. The Complainant shall receive assistance as needed. School employees, volunteers, and students shall not engage in reprisal, retaliation, or false accusation against a victim, witness, or an individual who has reliable information about an act of bullying or harassment.

### Investigation

The school district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying or harassment in line with child protection investigation procedures as outlined in the AISM Child Protection Policy. Initial complaints of bullying and harassment start at the divisional level unless there are circumstances in which the investigation at the divisional level would be inappropriate. The investigation will consider the totality of circumstances presented in determining whether conduct objectively constitutes bullying or harassment.

### Decision

If, after an investigation, a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student shall be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include suspension and expulsion. If after an investigation a school employee is found to be in violation of this policy, the employee shall be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include termination. If after an investigation a school volunteer is found to be in violation of this policy, the volunteer shall be subject to appropriate measures, which may include exclusion from school grounds. All decisions will be made in line with the AISM Child Protection Policy.

### Policy Review

The AISM Child Protection policy and program will be reviewed annually. AISA audit tools and other best practices will inform the review.

## ISSEA HOSTING AGREEMENT

The ISSEA (International Schools of South and East Africa) Hosting Agreement has been developed because all schools expect that visiting students will be placed into safe and protective home environments. ISSEA places child protection and student safety as our highest priority. All ISSEA host families accept the agreement to ensure the welfare and proper safeguarding of all visiting students.

### Child Protection

ISSEA schools endeavor to ensure that students in our care are always treated with respect. Safeguarding the wellbeing of students entrusted to ISSEA events includes the following:

1. **In Loco Parentis** While hosting visiting students, parents assume the responsibility of the acting parent to provide safe and secure environments.
2. **Safety and Welfare** Host families provide a welcoming and safe environment for visiting students. Parents provide adequate accommodation and meals, care and ensure the welfare of those entrusted to their custody. Host families have a duty to provide a safe and non-threatening environment for our programs that prevent the likelihood of neglect, bullying, harassment, racism, and emotional and physical misconduct.



- 3. Rules and Conduct** Host families must acknowledge they have read and understand the [ISSEA Rules and Guidelines](#) and help to ensure that visiting students adhere to these expectations.

## HOST AGREEMENT

When committing to be a host family, all members of the household will uphold the ISSEA guidelines for hosting.

## BASIC GUIDELINES FOR HOST FAMILIES

### 1. Accommodation

Clean and basic accommodation is required, including a space for a private, lockable bathroom and changing facilities.

Towels and bedding are provided.

Provide breakfasts and dinners while respecting dietary needs.

Guests will stay in minimum groups of two students, of the same gender, from that from the same school.

### 2. Transportation

Provide safe transportation to/from events or use school busing when provided.

Students may not arrange taxis or Uber transport if unaccompanied by host parent.

ISSEA participants cannot be transported in automobiles driven by students (even if students have legal licenses) or any person under 21 years of age. Golf carts and motorcycles are not permitted to be used to transport ISSEA guest students.

### 3. Communication

A parent must be present in the house to receive the curfew call from the visiting chaperone to confirm guests are home safely for the night.

Any behavior or hosting issues arising during the event should be reported immediately to the host school activity director.

The host activity director will share information if a guest needs to take medication or has existing medical or dietary preferences.

Any medical issues should be reported to the host activity director. The host activity director will inform the host family of school medical procedures.

The host activity director will share information with the host families about any relevant emergency procedures.

If you have any questions about hosting please read through the [Helpful Hosting Guidelines](#)

**\*All ISSEA schools have detailed child protection policies. Please refer to your school's child protection guidelines for further details.**



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