



CANADIAN
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL

Bangalore, INDIA

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY GUIDE

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Child Protection Policy

At CIS we take child protection seriously and have based our child protection policy on national and international laws for the protection of children while in our care. The CIS Child Protection policy is based on the Indian Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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.” (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)*

Article 34 - Sexual exploitation–*“The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography”. (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)*

Every child has the right to life and survival and to be shielded from any form of hardship, abuse or neglect including physical, psychological, mental and emotional abuse and neglect; and to a chance for harmonious development and a standard of living adequate for physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social growth. In the case of a child who has been traumatized, every step should be taken to enable the child to enjoy healthy development – Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO 2012)

By enrolling your child at Canadian International School, you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted by our school.

Child abuse and neglect are of growing concern in schools 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 their physical, emotional, and academic development.

Schools are in a position to notice when things are going wrong for their students. Schools need to ensure that all children in their care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop. Educators, because they have the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify children who need 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 CIS must report suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse or neglect. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations set out in this policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect could be reported to social services in India, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, or to the police authorities where applicable.

CIS will ensure that this policy is available to all parents via the website and communicate this policy to students and to all CIS employees. The school will make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children. In the event that allegations of abuse are made against a member of staff, CIS will conduct a full confidential investigation.

Responsibility to Accreditation Agencies

International schools are responsible to meet the program and best practice standards of various accrediting agencies around the world; in some places international schools must also meet accreditation standards of the host country as well. It is important for international schools to be knowledgeable about and respond to recent changes in standards of accreditation. The Council of International Schools (CIS) and the Middle States Association (MSA) have added specific standards related to Child Protection Programs in their most recent edition of accreditation standards. International schools can reasonably anticipate that, following the leadership of The Council of International Schools and the Middle States Association, other accreditation agencies will similarly include Child Protection Standards in the next revision of their standards. All international schools will be well served by these standards in developing the Child Protection Program for their community.

Statement from the Council of International Schools and Middle States Association

To reflect evolving programs and practices in the areas of Child Protection and related issues as well as the continuity of learning programs in exceptional circumstances, CIS and MSA are introducing a specific number of amendments to the Accreditation Standards and Indicators contained in the 8th Edition of the “Guide to School Evaluation and Accreditation”. These amendments are applicable to all schools, whatever their position in the accreditation cycle, from 1st January 2013 onwards.

Standard D1

The school shall have faculty and support staff that are sufficient in numbers and with the qualifications, competencies and sound moral character necessary to carry out the school’s programmes, services, and activities, to support fulfillment of the mission and objectives, and to ensure student protection and well-being.

Indicator D1a

Recruitment and screening processes are in place to ensure that employees in all categories are appropriately qualified and of sound moral character.

Indicator E4b

A culture of shared responsibility for the social and emotional well-being and protection of students is promoted by the school leadership and teachers through programmes to address awareness, prevention and responsiveness to issues such as sexual harassment, substance abuse, hazing and bullying, and discrimination in any form.

Indicator G4b

Appropriate and regularly reviewed arrangements exist to cover threats to the security of people and premises as well as to support – to the extent possible - programme continuity under exceptional circumstances.

Contextual Safeguarding Approach

Contextual Safeguarding is recognizing and responding to students' experiences of significant harm beyond the school experience. Canadian International School reserves the right to respond to incidents that take place outside of the school context if they affect the student(s) well-being.

Definition of Terms

Child Protection is a broad term used to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In this document the term 'child protection' applies to protection of children at CIS. Please note that this definition also includes harm to self.

Child Protection Policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to protecting students from harm (to self and from others) and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of students. It serves to create a safe and positive environment for children and to demonstrate that the school is taking its duty and responsibility seriously.

Child protection concerns include suspected, alleged, self-disclosed, or witnessed abuse of a child by anyone associated within or outside the school which must be investigated and followed by appropriate action.

Child Abuse - According to the World Health Organization, child abuse constitutes "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."

A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional (e.g. school) or community setting; children may be abused by individuals known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. Often children may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, further complicating the problem.

Most child abuse is inflicted by someone the child knows, respects or trusts. International school communities have unique characteristics of which school personnel must be aware in terms of the individuals who are around our children. School personnel should be knowledgeable of the potential reasons why children may not be able to talk about any victimization they might have experienced. To increase the CIS community awareness, this policy focuses on four main categories of abuse and provides basic information about the physical and behavioral signs associated with each type.

- I. **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning 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).

Possible Signs of physical abuse:

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries

- Injuries that 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
- 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 compliant
- Chronic running away

II. **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. 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.

Possible Signs of emotional abuse:

- Delay in physical, mental and emotional development
- High anxiety
- Delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
- Fear of new situations
- Low self-esteem
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- 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

III. **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 material 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. The age of consent in India is 18; 16 is the age of criminal responsibility depending on the seriousness of the case in India.

Possible Signs of sexual abuse:

- Pain or irritation to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Infection, bleeding
- Fear of people or places
- Aggression
- Regressive behaviors, bed wetting or stranger anxiety
- Excessive masturbation
- Sexually provocative behaviour
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
- Being unusually quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive
- Suffering from what seem physical ailments that can't be explained medically
- Showing fear or distrust of a particular adult
- Mentioning receiving special attention from an adult or a new "secret" friendship with an adult or young person
- Refusal to continue with school or usual social activities
- Age inappropriate sexualized behavior or language

IV. **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Possible indicators of neglect:

- Medical needs unattended
- Lack of supervision
- Consistent hunger
- Inappropriate dress
- Poor hygiene
- Inadequate nutrition
- Fatigue or listlessness
- Self-destructive
- Extreme loneliness
- Extreme need for affection
- Failure to grow
- Poor personal hygiene
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships

- Compulsive stealing
- Drug or alcohol abuse

V. Online Abuse and Cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is an increasingly common form of bullying behaviour, which happens on social networks, games and mobile phones.

Cyberbullying includes:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
- Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- Trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- 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 struggle using their name
- Sending explicit messages also known as sexting
- Pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversation.

Online grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purpose of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking

Child Sexual Abuse Online includes:

- Send or post sexually explicit images of themselves
- Take part in sexual activities via a webcam or smartphone
- Have sexual conversations by text or online

Peer-on-Peer abuse

Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer-on-peer abuse. Peer on peer abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer on peer abuse is under the age of 18. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to;

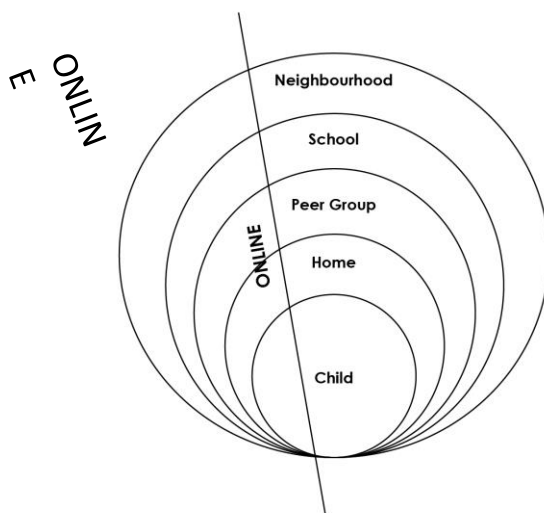
- Violence within intimate relationships
- Gender-based violence
- Sexual abuse and exploitation
- School-yard fighting
- Street-based youth violence and gangs
- Bullying (including cyberbullying)

Peer-on-peer sexual behaviours on a continuum:

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmentally expected - Socially acceptable - Consensual, mutual, reciprocal - Shared decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single instances of inappropriate sexual behavior - Socially acceptable behavior within peer group - Context for behavior may be inappropriate - Generally consensual and reciprocal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problematic and concerning behavior - Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected - No overt elements of victimization - Consent issues may be unclear - May lack reciprocity or equal power - May include levels of compulsivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Victimising intent or outcome - Includes misuse of power - Coercion and force to ensure compliance - Intrusive - Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given - May include elements of expressive violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physically violent sexual abuse - Highly intrusive - Instrumental violence which is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the child responsible for behavior - Sadism

(Simon Hackett, 2010)

Contexts of abuse



Young people can be exposed to harm within their families such as domestic or physical abuse. This can impact their behaviour in extra-familial settings. They may learn/adopt harmful social norms, which affect their peer relationships. Or young people in these situations may avoid their home altogether and spend time in community settings where they may experience criminality, violence and exploitation. Given this contextual nature of safety and vulnerability, systems and services designed to keep young people safe need to engage with the dynamics at play online, school, familial as well as extra-familial settings.

Fig.1: Firmin, 2013

Characteristics to Note

Characteristics/attributes of international school children:

- Transience and mobility impacts development of identity and relationships (especially for support in times of need);
- Early maturity/sophistication vs. naiveté and immaturity in other areas;
- Separation from extended families; working and traveling parents, and separation from long term friendships/relationships results in attachment issues and thus support during times of crisis or need may be minimal or non-existent
- Lost between multiple and sometimes conflicting cultures and value systems resulting in confusion of behavioral expectations;
- High expectations placed on students to achieve academically;
- Access to maids and other daily helpers (drivers); and
- Access to expensive international schools because companies pay tuition while they (and their peers) in their home-of-record, previously attended public school.

Characteristics of international school families:

- Isolation from extended family, previous community for support;
- Power differential in marriage (who has the work permit) creates vulnerability;
- Impact of absentee parents;
- “Love – hate” relationship with host country for expatriates;
- Lack of control over critical life decisions: company decides where, when, and how the family moves. Lack of stability;
- Superficial/tourist relationship with host country.

Characteristics of international school communities:

- School takes on sole role as center of family life - “goldfish bowl” - and often provides superficial relationships that cannot meet mental health needs;
- Power influence: family's position in community can be an inhibitor for school to act; and
- Sense of being lost in diversity of community – can cause further isolation. Cultural dynamics of international school communities:
- Multiple norms rooted in different cultural traditions can cause confusion: religious values, values of parenting, discipline, caregiving, sexuality, gender roles and responsibilities;
- Impact of rapidly changing pop culture from developed nations;
- Varying degrees of openness rooted in cultural traditions; and
- Varying cultural attitudes toward gender issues and child development – different concepts of developmental needs through childhood.

International school communities are vulnerable to abuse because the nature of abuse requires secrecy, insularity, isolation and limited access to support resources, which are some characteristics of the international community.

International schools must respond to the reality that these characteristics are exactly the characteristics that perpetrators will use to their advantage in abusing children.

Long-term impact of unmitigated child abuse

The impact of child abuse can persist for a lifetime after the abuse has been committed. Some victims of abuse are resilient and thus manage to function and survive. Much research has established the relationship between long-term child abuse and lifetime health and well being, especially if the children do not get appropriate support to help them cope with the trauma. The most important point to consider is that children often are exposed to multiple forms of abuse and suffer a myriad of symptoms. Furthermore, all forms of abuse have the potential for long-term impact on the victims, and can affect the victim's ability to function as a human being. Abuse challenges the self-value, self-esteem, and sense of worth of its victims, rendering them hopeless, helpless and unable to live a complete life.

Long-term impact of child abuse

- Poor educational achievement
- Inability to complete responsibilities
- Inability to live according to plan/ability
- Inability to care for self
- Inability to coexist, cooperate or work with others
- Lack of self-confidence, prone to addiction
- Inability to express love / or accept love
- Inability to lead family, constant health problem
- Prone to mental health problems
- Low self-esteem, depression and anxiety
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Attachment difficulties
- Eating disorders
- Poor peer relations, self-injurious behavior (e.g., suicide attempts)

In addition to knowing the signs of victimization, below are some early warning signs to look out for in potential offenders:

Signs of offenders (students)

- Unusual interest in sex, sexualizing inanimate objects and activities
- Does not stop sexual misbehavior when told to stop
- Uses force and coercion in social situations
- Unusual intensity when discussing sex and sexuality
- Socializes with children much younger
- Gives gifts, requires secrecy in relationships

Signs of offenders (adults)

- Has 'favorite' student or child
- Attempts to find ways to be alone with children
- Inappropriate language, jokes and discussions about students/children
- Sexualized talk in the presence of students/children
- Gives private gifts or has private chats on Facebook/internet

What happens when a teacher has reasonable cause to believe that a child is being abused?

The indicators of abuse and neglect will be used by the staff member as a guideline for reporting to the team, who will determine if the case needs further attention. A report must be made when a staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect. All reports are confidential.

What happens after suspected abuse or neglect is reported?

Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the first responder to report their suspicions to a member of the Child Safeguarding Taskforce. All staff, faculty and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect. All CIS 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.

Canadian International School, Bangalore

Procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect

[\(CIS Child Protection Procedure Flow Chart\)](#)

STAGE 1: REPORTING

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the first responder will seek advice from the counselor as soon as possible but no later than within 48 hours. The counselor will take preliminary steps to gather information through counseling regarding the reported incident and will take the evidence gathered to the Child Safety Lead (Head of School). Depending on the evidence gathered and the level of seriousness of the incident reported, the Child Safety Lead would initiate the school-based Child Safeguarding Taskforce to address the allegation. The Child Safeguarding Task Force will include the Elementary/Secondary/Boarding Counselor, School Nurse, Dean of studies, Elementary, Middle and High School Principals and Head of School. 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.

STAGE 2: SAFETY PLAN

The Child Safety Lead in conjunction with the Child Safeguarding Task Force will determine the need to initiate the development of safety plans to assist the child(ren) and family(ies), treat as something to communicate with key stakeholders, or that no action be taken. The safety plan will be implemented for both victim(s) and perpetrator(s) who are members of the CIS community. (Refer to Safety Plan [Document](#))

The Safety Plan actions can include:

- Developmentally appropriate discussions and counseling by the counselor with the student(s).
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counselor, or administrator.
- Communicate with the full Child Safeguarding Task Force to share information and next steps
- Meetings with the family to present the School's concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling.

More serious allegations will involve reporting to outside resources:

- Reporting to the social services where the law requires it.
- Reporting to the police authorities where the law requires it.
- Consultation with the school's attorney or another attorney.
- Referral to external professional counselor/psychologist if required.

STAGE 3: FOLLOW UP

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect, the safety plan will be reviewed every one to three months or if there is a further event that impacts the risk.

- 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 Head of School with ongoing support.
- The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
- The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists to monitor the child's progress.

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the child's school confidential records 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. CIS will make every attempt to share this information to protect the child.

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves a staff or faculty member of CIS the Head of School will follow board policy pursuant to ethical professional behavior, in particular by starting a confidential investigation.

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- [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#)

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CANADIAN
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OUR MISSION

CIS is a culturally-rich mosaic serving each student by providing a world-class international education, nurturing potential, developing life-long skills, and preparing students for an ever-changing global community.

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