



IEA Child Protection Policy

Rationale

The International Education Agency of PNG (IEA) is committed to the total care of the students enrolled in IEA schools. Students in our schools have a right to expect that they will be protected by the personal efforts of staff members, and community members involved in our schools. This policy relates to all those who work in child-related employment in an IEA school or workplace.

As a school system we are committed to developing practices in our schools to ensure they are safe and supportive environments dedicated to protecting students in our care from any form of abuse (see Appendix 1: Indicators of Abuse for more information).

We recognise the importance of providing staff with professional advice and with constructive support to assist them to relate to students effectively and ensure their actions at no time places a child at risk of harm.

Statement of principles

The IEA is committed to developing school communities which meet the needs of individual learners in a caring environment. *(Vision Statement)* We are committed to providing a school environment conducive to the safety, welfare and well-being of students and staff members.

IEA schools should be characterised by positive relationships between all stakeholders, This is fundamental to providing quality teaching and learning and safe and secure environments. It is the shared responsibility of all employees and volunteers to actively develop these positive and safe relationships.

Our procedures for implementing protective child protection practices in our schools are based on the following principles:

- All adults in our school have a responsibility to care for students and to protect them from any kind of abuse as well as to promote their safety, welfare and well-being in a positive manner;
- In the protection of students (and any action taken in this regard), the best interests of the student is of paramount consideration;
- Each school endeavours to provide both a safe environment for students and programs which foster their overall development and self-esteem.
- All reasonable action is taken to protect students from all forms of violence, injury, neglect or exploitation within the school environment and where possible, in other arenas;

Operational principles

The school principal is responsible for the administration and conduct of the school and all that relates to it. Therefore, the principal is to be informed about all serious matters concerning the welfare of students, including concerns about suspected risk of harm to a student and suspected or disclosed incidents of abuse of students;

The school principal is required to ensure that concerns about the suspected risk of harm to a child from a staff member or volunteer are reported, as required, to the board of Governors and the Executive Director;

- Where the school principal is suspected of abuse of a student, or other improper conduct involving a child or young person, the Executive Director is to be immediately advised of these suspicions. This report can be made by any member of the school community;
- The school principal is to ensure that the pastoral care services, where possible, address the problem of abuse of students;
- School personnel who have access to information regarding concerns about suspected risk of harm to a student (including suspected or disclosed abuse) have a clear obligation to observe appropriate confidentiality in relation to the entire matter;
- School personnel must avoid any false, exaggerated or unjustified assertions that may damage the good name of another person.

Key areas of responsibility in child protection intervention

Key responsibilities of the IEA:

- to develop, document, disseminate and make accessible to all staff, appropriate policies and processes for the protection of students within IEA schools,
- to develop and implement appropriate guidelines for staff and volunteers when interacting with students
- to monitor implementation and adherence of these guidelines in schools
- to regularly review policy and procedures to ensure effectiveness and compliance with system provisions
- to make available appropriate protective practices and duty of care information to schools and to ensure principals effectively support their staff in student management practices
- to implement staff recruitment, selection processes which minimize the risk of perpetrators of child abuse being employed or engaged as volunteers
- to establish and implement fair, clearly documented and accessible procedures for dealing with allegations of staff misconduct
- to ensure schools provide appropriate prevention programs within the school curriculum which inform students of their rights and responsibilities, assist them to seek help effectively, and which teach them appropriate protection behaviours
- to ensure school sites, facilities and practices assist in the provision of a protective environment for students and staff
- to ensure all schools comply with all mandatory system requirements
- to make available to parents information about child protection policies and procedures in IEA Schools.

Key Responsibilities of principals:

- to manage child protection incidents and issues in accordance with the policy and procedures outlined in these and other relevant guidelines
- to report to the Executive Director any child reasonably suspected of being at risk of harm from a staff member or volunteer
- to investigate and report to the IEA allegations of inappropriate conduct by employees
- to have a working knowledge and understanding of all obligations and employer requirements relevant to the promotion of child protection
- to provide for training for all staff and volunteers, so as to ensure that they are conversant with all relevant child protection policies and procedures
- to ensure all staff are adequately supported in student management practices
- to comply with the system policy and procedures pertaining to staff recruitment and induction and to ensure, as far as possible, that those who are appointed to positions within schools are fit and proper persons to occupy those positions
- to ensure that all staff clearly understand their child protection responsibilities
- to provide in summary form details of the protective practices policy and procedures to teachers employed on a casual basis and to volunteers
- to effectively implement appropriate preventative programs within the school curriculum
- to ensure school staff employ protective practices in their interaction with students
- to ensure the school site, facilities and practices promote a protective environment for students and staff
- to ensure the school complies with all mandatory requirements
- to inform parents of child protection policy, procedures and curriculum as implemented at the school
- to ensure all persons employed, paid or voluntary, in child-related employment fill in a prohibited employment declaration.

Key responsibilities of teachers:

- to report to the principal all instances of any student enrolled by the school, suspected on reasonable grounds of being at risk of harm from a staff member or volunteer
- to participate in training in protective practices, duty of care and child protection
- to provide information required by the principal in order to assist in the assessment of a student's safety, welfare and well-being while at school
- to provide ongoing support and care to students who experience abuse, in accordance with the school's pastoral care policy and within the range of normal school duties
- to keep confidential, except as otherwise required, every aspect of an incident or allegation of suspected child abuse, or any case of a student suspected of being at risk of harm

- to teach students appropriate child protection behaviours in accordance with the school's curriculum
- to ensure their interaction with students is in accordance with system requirements.

Key responsibilities of support staff

- to report to the principal all instances of any student enrolled by the school, suspected on reasonable grounds of being at risk of harm from a staff member or volunteer
- to participate in system child protection training so as to recognise abuse, neglect and ill-treatment of children and young people and respond according to the relevant policy and procedures
- to keep confidential, except as otherwise required, every aspect of an incident or allegation of suspected child abuse, or any case of a child or young person suspected of being at risk of harm
- to ensure their interaction with students complies with system requirements.

Procedural Fairness

Principles of procedural fairness are integral to all procedures of International Education Agency that deal with complaints or alleged misconduct. As such, all child protection complaint-handling processes are required to demonstrate procedural fairness.

In this context, the core elements of procedural fairness involve impartial and objective fact-finding and decision-making. In particular, an employee subject of complaint should be provided with sufficient information to adequately respond to the complaint; employees subject of complaint will be provided with reasonable notice of interviews and will be encouraged to bring a support person to such meetings. Employees subject of complaint will also be given an opportunity to respond to any proposed adverse findings and proposed disciplinary outcomes, and will be advised of avenues for review of determinations as to findings and disciplinary outcomes.

Reporting Procedures

IEA employees fall under the mandatory reporting guidelines outlined in the *Lukaitim Pikinini (Child) Act 2009*. The act states in Section 45, Subsection 2: Duty of Professionals and the Public to Report:

(2) Notwithstanding any other Act, person referred to in Subsection (3), who –

- a) performs professional duties with respect to a child; and*
- b) in the course of that person's professional, official, or community duties, has reason to believe that the child is in need of protection,*

shall immediately report the matter to the Director.

The categories falling under this directive are:

(3) For the purposes of Subsection 2(a), a person who performs professional duties, include –

- a) a health care professional, physician, nurse, aid post worker, dentist, psychologist, teacher, school principal, social worker, family counsellor, member of the clergy, lawyer, police*



officer, community based corrections officer, juvenile court officer, correctional services officer, community development officer or community development office worker; or

(b) an operator or employee of a child-minding center or child care service.

Please see Appendix 2 for a flowchart outlining reporting procedures to be followed by IEA schools.

The following Appendices follow:

1. Indicators of Abuse
2. Reporting Procedure
3. Definitions

Appendix 1: Indicators of Abuse

Most cases of child abuse are not identified based on a single event or indicator. Indicators usually occur in clusters but the absence of indicators does not exclude the possibility that abuse is occurring.

The following indicators may lead to a concern that a child is being subjected to abuse. Indicators should be considered in the context of the child's age, capabilities, medical and developmental history.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has experiences involving beating, shaking, administration of alcohol and illicit drugs, attempted suffocation, excessive discipline and physical punishment. It does not include accidental injury.

Physical indicators

- Bite marks
- Bruises
- Burns
- Broken bones
- Hair missing in tufts
- Lacerations and abrasions (especially to the eyes, lips, gums and mouth)
- Lack of treatment and care of an injury
- Missing or loosened teeth
- Welts

Behavioural indicators

- No or little emotion when hurt
- Regression
- Overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive
- Uncommunicative
- Self-harming
- Suicide attempts
- Disclosure
- Fear of a parent or carer
- Avoidance of physical contact
- Arms and legs are covered by clothing in warm weather
- Homelessness
- Parent shows little concern about the marked delay between injury and medical assistance

Sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse includes any type of sexual behaviour involving a child where:

- the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence
- the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour
- there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour

- it includes
 - inappropriate touching,
 - exposure to sexual acts or pornographic materials,
 - inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature
 - sexual exhibitionism in the presence of a student
 - personal correspondence (including electronic communication) with a student in relation to the adult's sexual feelings for the student
 - patterns of behaviour aimed at 'grooming' * a child as a precursor to sexual abuse
 - sexual penetration.

Physical indicators

- Pregnancy or fear of pregnancy
- Signs of pain, itching or discomfort in the anal or genital area
- Self-inflicted cuts or burns
- Student has irritation around genitalia

Behavioural indicators

- Inappropriate interest in sexual matters
- Knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate to age
- Regression to infantile behaviour
- Sudden unexplained fears
- Enuresis and/or encopresis (wetting and soiling)
- Excessive attention getting, aggression or clingy behaviour
- Recurrent physical complaints
- Depression, withdrawal into fantasy, suicidal pre-occupation
- Disclosure directly or indirectly through drawings, play or writing
- Sexualised behaviours inappropriate to age (including sexually touching other children or themselves), public masturbation or disrobing
- Disclosure of involvement in sexual activity directly to an adult, indirectly to a friend or in a disguised way (for example "I know a person who...")
- Inappropriate expressions of affection
- Promiscuity
- Criminal sexual behaviour
- Decline in academic performance
- Running away from home
- Draws pictures of genitalia or sexual activity
- Regularly tired at school
- Reluctant to go home

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, belittling, humiliating, bullying, neglecting, ignoring, misleading and encouragement to engage in inappropriate behaviour.

Physical indicators

- Depression
- Eating disorders (anorexia or bulimia)
- Lethargy or fatigue
- Symptoms of stress
- Evidence of drug abuse or dependence
- Wetting, soiling, smearing
- Psychosomatic complaints

Behavioural indicators

- Attempted suicide
- Overly compliant or passive behaviour
- Overly shy or withdrawn
- Low self esteem
- Fire setting
- Truancy or school avoidance
- Deliberate harming of animals
- Poor peer relationships
- Disclosure directly to an adult or indirectly to a friend or adult
- Adult-like behaviour e.g. parents other children
- Aggressive or delinquent behaviour
- Excessive neatness or cleanliness

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse includes threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation and prevention of contact with services or support networks.

Physical indicators

- Violent drawings or writing
- Rocking
- Sucking thumb
- Self-harming behaviour

Behavioural indicators

- Fearfulness when approached by a person known to them
- Discloses having witnessed domestic violence
- Expresses feelings of worthlessness
- Low tolerance to frustration
- Delayed physical, emotional or intellectual development
- Eats hungrily or hardly at all
- Compulsive lying and stealing

- Lack of trust in people
- High levels of anxiety
- Extremes of behaviour from overly aggressive to overly passive
- Excessive seeking of attention or affection
- No evidence of love or support demonstrated by parent

Neglect

Neglect is defined as the intentional failure by parents/carers to provide, arrange or allow the provision of adequate care, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial treatment. It includes abandonment, failing to provide adequate food or shelter and/or care, nurturance or supervision to a severe and/or persistent extent.

Physical indicators

- Poor personal hygiene
- Dirty and unwashed
- Lack of adequate or suitable clothing
- Constantly hungry
- Inadequate nutrition
- Lack of medical or dental care
- Development delays
- Untreated physical or medical problems e.g. sores, boils and lice
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse in the home
- Lack of adequate supervision

Behavioural indicators

- Poor school attendance
- Falling asleep in school, constant fatigue
- Always attends school, even when sick
- Frequent lateness, early arrival or reluctance to leave school
- Poor academic performance
- Steals, hoards or begs for food
- Engages in vandalism
- Disclosure directly to an adult or indirectly to a friend that no one is home to provide care
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour

Family and domestic violence

Family violence includes all types of violence in intimate relationships. Perpetrators and victims can include aunts, uncles, cousins and children of previous relationships.

Domestic violence is defined as abusive power perpetrated mainly (but not only) by men against women in a relationship or after separation.

Physical indicators

- injuries which are excused as 'accidents'

Behavioural indicators

- constant and abrupt absences from school
- receiving recurrent, troublesome phone calls from the parent(s)
- a fear of the parent
- changes in personal behaviours (e.g. an outgoing student becomes withdrawn)
- an extreme fear of conflict
- the need for assertiveness
- tendencies towards isolation and avoidance of friends and family
- insufficient means to live (money, food, clothing)
- depression, crying, low self-esteem.

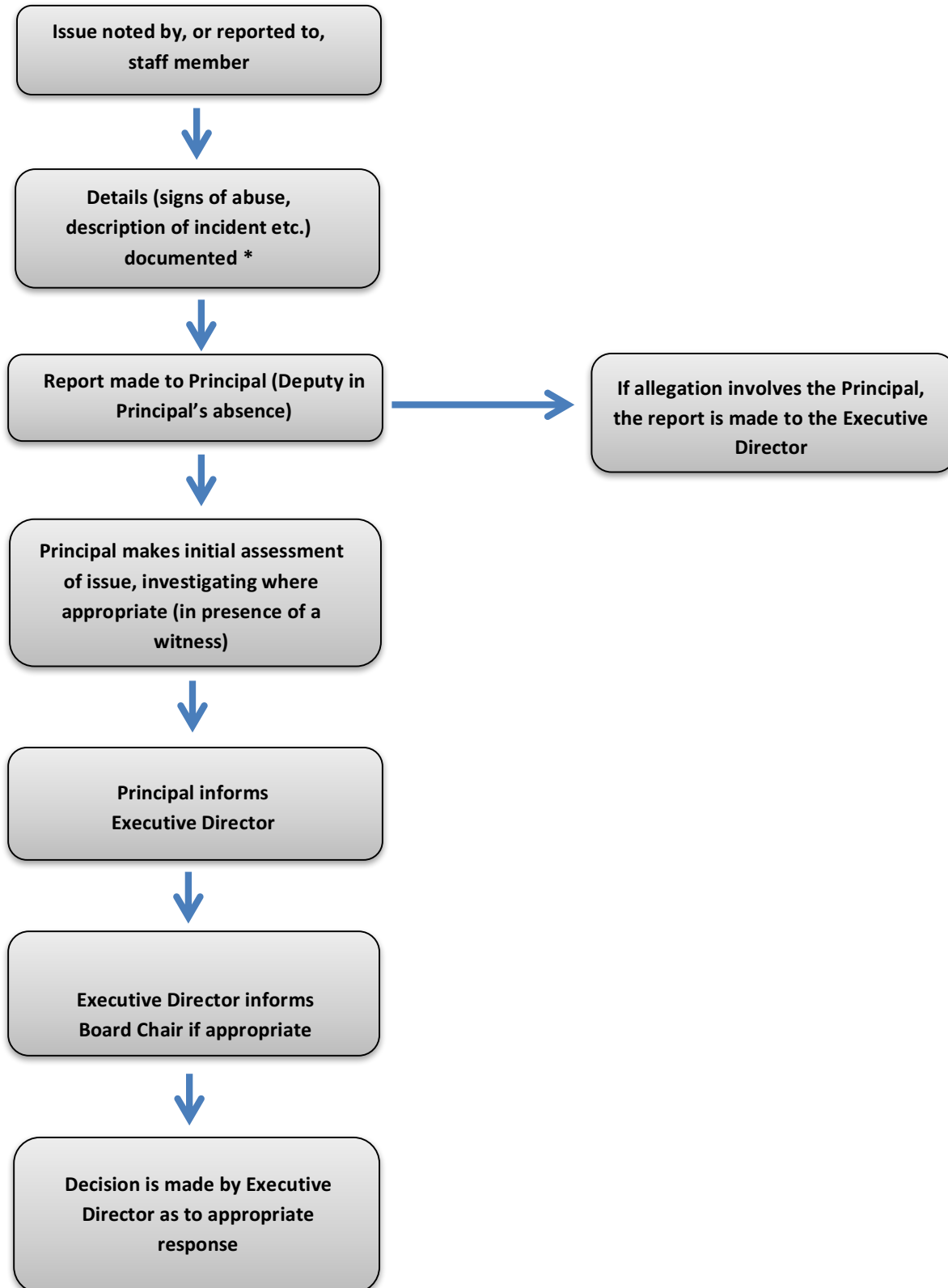
Grooming Behaviour

This means patterns of behaviour aimed at engaging or 'grooming' a child as a precursor to sexual abuse. It is a separate offence from the actual sexual abuse. The grooming process can include:

- persuading a child that they have a 'special' relationship, e.g. by spending inappropriate special time with the child, inappropriately giving gifts, showing special favours to them but not other children, allowing the child to overstep rules, etc;
- testing of boundaries, e.g. by undressing in front of the child, encouraging inappropriate physical contact (that is not overtly sexual), talking about sex, 'accidental' touching of genitals, etc;
- extending a relationship outside the employment situation - this should not be assumed to constitute grooming where an existing relationship pre-dates the employment or where the extended relationship arises through a reasonable level of social engagement in the relevant community (e.g. sports coaching, family level social contact within a small community);
- inappropriate personal correspondence, including electronic communication, that explores sexual feelings or intimate personal feelings.

Appendix 2: Reporting Procedure

* See Indicators of Abuse document



Appendix 3: Definitions

Child-related employment

Child-related employment refers to any employment, paid or voluntary, where at least one of the essential duties of the position involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised. This includes all teaching positions in schools and TAFES, related positions, all non-school based service positions and any other persons involved in working directly with students.

Primarily

Means at least one of the essential duties involves direct, unsupervised contact with children.

Direct contact

Means face to face contact.

Directly supervised

Means another person is present at all times during, and is observing and capable of directing, if required, the contact by the person under supervision.

Employment

Employment includes:

- performance of work under contract of employment;
- performance of work as a contractor, subcontractor or self-employed person;
- performance of work as a volunteer;
- undertaking practical training as part of an educational or vocational course
- performance of work as a member of a religious organisation

Declaration

It is mandatory for anyone involved in an IEA school or TAFE to declare if they are not a prohibited person (i.e. that they are not a person who has been convicted of a child-related offence – sexual or violence-related).

Employee

An employee is defined as any person engaged in employment and includes, but is not limited to:

- performance of work under a contract of employment such as teacher or school administrative and support staff;
- contractors, for example, cleaners, drivers, maintenance contractors;
- volunteers, for example, volunteers working in classrooms, volunteer sports coaches, people undertaking research in schools, excursion supervisors, host families who billet students;
- trainees, work experience and work placement participants (including TIPS teachers)
- clergy or other members of a religious organisation

Prohibited person

A Prohibited Person is someone who has been convicted of a serious sexual offence or, who has had a finding for a charge of a serious sexual offence proven in court, even if a conviction was not recorded.

This policy is based significantly on work done by Catholic Education Office Parramatta. Other sources include: NSW Commission for Children and Young People and Catholic Schools Office, Broken Bay.