

AISL Child Protection Guidebook and Procedures
Update on April for 2023 -2024



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External Resource Links	
AISL Child Protection Code of Conduct with AISL students	link
AISL community child protection training materials and additional resources for staff and families	link
AISL Digital Technology Appropriate Use Guidelines and Procedures	link
AISL Faculty Code of Ethics	link
AISL Guardianship form for absent parents	link
Intimate Care Guidelines and Procedures, including permission slip and intimate child care plan Residential trips; night time routines etc	link
Safer Recruitment Hiring Guidelines	link
Suicide Prevention Action Plan	link

Superintendent's letter to AISL Community

Dear AISL Community,

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

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

Article 19 Protection from abuse and neglect:

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

Article 34 Sexual exploitation:

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

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

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

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

Tom Pado, Superintendent

Why AISL Prioritizes Child Protection

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

Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of children. Schools need to ensure that all children in their care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop, both at school and away. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are uniquely positioned to identify children who need help and protection. As such, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who need help and protection and 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 AISL must report suspected child abuse or neglect incidents whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering abuse or neglect. Reporting and follow-up of all suspected child abuse or neglect incidents will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations respective to this policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, the respective consulate in Nigeria, the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities.

The American International School of Lagos seeks to be a safe haven for students experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. As such, AISL will distribute this policy annually to all parents and applicants, communicate this policy annually to students, provide training for all staff, and 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, AISL will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process, keeping the child's safety at the highest priority.

For detailed information on the Convention on the Rights of Child see the following [link](#); for [Lagos State; Nigeria](#)

Safe Recruiting and Hiring Practices

AISL is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students in its care and therefore holds itself to a high standard of effective recruitment practices with specific attention to child protection.

As an employer, the school expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment. According to AISL Guidelines for Pre-Employment Background Screening, all post holders are appointed subject to satisfactory Criminal Background Checks, Social Media Check, Global Sanctions Check, and Reference Checks with past employers, including the current employer.

All AISL employees, including outsourced personnel and volunteers, must also sign the AISL Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct after completing the child protection training.

Code of Conduct for Adults

Introduction

The American International School, Lagos requires that all adults engage in safe, supportive, and respectful interactions with children at all times. The following outlines appropriate and expected conduct for physical behavior, verbal and digital communication, and general conduct. Further details are provided within the AISL [Child Protection Handbook](#).

Physical Behavior

All adults interacting with children must do so in open, public spaces. If one-on-one meetings are necessary for educational or emergency purposes, they should also be conducted in a public area, in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed (for example a window), or in a room with the door left open. The child is always entitled to have another adult present. Adults must not give a child a ride home except in the case of an emergency and in such cases with consent from both the principal and parent.

The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate physical behavior:

Appropriate physical behavior includes contact that maintains physical boundaries at all times and only consists of public and non-sexual touches, such as:

- Pats on the back or shoulder
- Child-initiated hugs
- Adhere to AISL's [Intimate Care CP Guidelines and Procedures](#) as needed.

Inappropriate physical behavior is any contact that abuses, exploits, or harasses the child, such as:

- Slapping, shaking, pinching, hitting, punching, pushing, grabbing, kicking
- Patting the buttocks
- Touching private body parts
- Adult-initiated hugs/kisses
- Intimate/romantic/sexual contact
- Showing pornography or involving children in pornographic activities

Communication

All communication between adults and children should be transparent via the American International School Lagos (AISL) Domain only, about school or program activities. Adults also need to use professional domains to communicate with AISL students. The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate verbal and digital communication.

Verbal

Appropriate

- Praise and/or positive reinforcement with a pedagogical purpose when used consistently

and equally for all children

Inappropriate

- Profanity, sexual innuendo, or risqué jokes
- Yelling, threatening, ridiculing, or degrading comments

Digital

Appropriate

- Emails (AISL Domain only) with pedagogical purpose and subject to periodic monitoring

Inappropriate

- Private messaging via social media and/or online gaming communities
- Allowing access to electronic devices that may expose children to inappropriate content

General Conduct

Adults will:

- Support and model professional relationships with children.
- Treat all children with respect and provide safe and supportive interactions that foster children's social, emotional, and academic development
- Comply with all school-based and local/national laws related to mandatory reporting procedures
- Cooperate fully with any investigation of misconduct or abuse of children.

Adults will not:

- Engage in bullying or harassment
- Use or be under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in the presence of children
- Give individual or groups of children unapproved gifts
- Ask students to keep secrets

Exceptions may apply. Should a situation occur when breaking the code of conduct could occur, ask yourself, 'Could I explain and justify this action to my principal and Superintendent?' If you do break the code of conduct, inform a member of the child protection team.

Agreement

I understand that any action that violates these policies may result in disciplinary and/or legal action in compliance with school policy and procedures and local Nigerian law.

As a person working with and/or providing services to children at the American International School Lagos I understand that I am subject to a criminal background check.

I agree to comply with the standards including procedures for mandate reporting contained therein.

Roles and Responsibilities

Definition of a child

A child is anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child [link](#); and [Lagos State, Nigeria](#). For the purposes of child protection and safeguarding at AISL, a child also refers to any person enrolled at AISL as a student, even if that individual is over the age of 18.

All members of the AISL community are involved in ensuring the safety and protection of all children at AISL. The following section outlines the roles and responsibilities of all adults connected to AISL. See the [flowchart](#) for details on the reporting processes.

Child Protection Officers (CPO)

At AISL the CPO role is led by the Counselors. The CPOs will:

- Facilitate and document annual staff training for all AISL faculty, staff, and contracted employees
- Engage with local and international child protection networks to ensure best practice
- The CPO leads respective division [Case Reviews](#) once a disclosure is made (reference disclosure chart procedure below)
- Divisional CPO identify members of the multidisciplinary team that need to be involved to further the investigation, if the need arises
- Divisional CPO, assigned case lead and multidisciplinary team members assigned to the case maintain records of completed tasks documented on the [Case Review](#) and share with CPO lead after all steps have been completed
- Meet with divisional principal weekly to identify and monitor or support low level concerns
- Meet with CPO lead at least once per month or as needed to provide summary of low level concerns, action steps, best practices, child protection curriculum delivered and case review forms.
- Maintain integrity and confidentiality of all members involved: outcomes can not be disclosed

Child Protection Officer (CPO) Lead

- will initiate AISA yearly audits / environmental audits
- will organize monthly meetings or as needed with the MS/HS division to get updated on low level concerns, CP cases, curriculum delivery and exploration of best practices
- will meet with superintendent once per quarter or as needed to provide updates
- maintain a public record list of all trained AISL staff, long term contracted and volunteer members

- maintain a record of training presentations
- deliver Board Briefing
- in addition to the responsibilities listed above, is responsible for storing the Case review files of all CPO cases and sharing with transfer schools as needed.

Within their roles as counselors, the CPOs will also:

- be available to provide short-term counseling support to both the target and the abuser
- Provide resources as needed
- Educate students and parents on how to recognize, refuse and report abuse

The CPOs 2023-2024

Diana Abukazam, EC/ES Counselor, CPO Lead, dabukazam@aislagos.org

Andrea Bernoth, MS/ HS Counselor, CPO, abernoth@aislagos.org

Multidisciplinary team

The makeup of the response team will vary from case to case, with the purpose of ensuring the child is protected and their dignity is maintained as much as possible. At the minimum, the response team will include the CPO(s), the relevant divisional principal, and the relevant divisional counselor. Depending on the disclosure or allegations, the team may also extend to include the AISL Superintendent; the Health, Safety, and Security Officer; the IT Director; the school doctor or nurse; the Athletics Director; and/or any other adult pertinent to the case at hand and serve as positive support for the team.

This team will collectively investigate and review any disclosures and allegations according to the procedural flowchart.

AISL Staff, Interns, and Volunteers

All individuals who are employed or engaged by the school and whose duties include contact with children are mandated to sign and abide by the AISL Code of Conduct and follow the child protection policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook. This includes teaching faculty, administrative staff, maintenance and facility staff, security, catering staff, substitutes, contracted instructors, and external coaches.

These individuals are mandated to attend introductory child protection training upon initiating employment or volunteering and annual safeguarding training during their employment/volunteering at AISL.

Partner Agencies, Job Shadowing Partners, and Invited Guests

All significant partner agencies, job shadowing partners, and invited guests are informed of the AISL child protection policies and procedures, and may or may not be mandated to undergo background screening and sign the [AISL Child Protection Code of Conduct with AISL students](#) for non-employees, depending on their contact with students.

Local Resources and Agencies

When required, the CPOs and/or members of the multidisciplinary team will liaise with relevant individuals and organizations within the local community. This may include the Child Protection Unit Helpline, the Child Development Department Helpline, the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team, the Nigerian police, relevant Non-Governmental Organisations and other relevant organizations.

Country of Origin Embassies or Local Employers

Employment and embassy organizations may be called upon to partner with the school in response to suspected or confirmed cases of child maltreatment. The US Consulate Regional Security Officer (RSO) is available to support in certain cases.

AISL Parents and Greater Community Members

All parents and members of the greater AISL community play a vital role in protecting the safety and well-being of students through prevention, education, support, and reporting.

Recognizing types of abuse and neglect

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

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

AISL classifies abuse into 6 main categories:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Neglect
- Peer-to-Peer abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when there is a physical use of force against a child, resulting in harm and injury to the child. It includes but is not limited to, hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning, and suffocating. This includes such actions regardless of whether or not they result in obvious physical or mental injury. These symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as cutting and suicide ideation.

Physical signs	Behavioral signs	Abusive adult behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts • Broken bones • Hair pulled out • Arms and legs covered by clothing in warm weather • Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive • Being aggressive towards other • Uncommunicative • Signs of regression • Fear of parent/carer or contacting or returning home • Avoidance of physical contact • Unexplained/unlikely explanation of injury • Little/no emotion when hurt • School attendance issues • Drug/alcohol abuse • Non-suicidal self-injury / self-harm • Suicidal ideation or attempted suicide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers conflicting, unconvincing or no explanation for the child's injury • Describes the child as "bad" or in some other very negative way • Use of harsh physical discipline with the child

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the maltreatment of a child which results in impaired psychological growth and development. This type of maltreatment is often manifested through words, actions, and/or deliberate indifference and can involve rejection, isolation, belittlement, domination, and frequent criticism of the child. This may look like: 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.

Physical signs	Behavioral signs	Abusive adult behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headaches or stomach aches with no medical cause • Depression or anxiety • Eating disorders (anorexia or bulimia) • Lethargy or fatigue • Symptoms of stress • Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder (e.g. stuttering, stammering) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempted suicide • Overly compliant or passive behavior • Overly shy or withdrawn • Low self-esteem; low tolerance to frustration/ Feeling of worthlessness • Obsessions or phobias • Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations • Lying • Compulsive stealing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly blames, belittles, calls names, or humiliates the child • Displays repeated negative acts, yelling, threatening, or bullying directed at the child • Uses cruel or unusual actions in an attempt to gain submission, enforce maximum control, or to modify the child's behavior • Overtly rejects the child by

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of drug abuse or dependence • Wetting, soiling, smearing • Psychosomatic complaints • Violent drawings or writing • Rocking • Sucking thumb • Chronically hungry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor peer relationships • Adult-like behavior (e.g. parenting other children) • Aggressive, delinquent or attention-seeking behavior • Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration 	<p>withdrawing attention, affection, physical contact, and other signs of nurturing</p>
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Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse is the involvement of a child in a sexual act that he/she is unable to fully understand or give consent to; they may or may not be aware of what is happening. This includes both contact (penetrative, i.e. rape, or non-penetrative acts) and non-contact activities (e.g. involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic materials or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways). Children involved in commercial sex work are victims of sexual abuse, whether they perceive themselves as victims or not.

Child sexual abuse is often thought to occur between a child and an adult, but it can also occur between a child and another child if the relationship (by age, development, or position) is evidenced by a higher level of responsibility, trust, or power by one of the individuals, with the sexual activity being intended to satisfy the needs of the more responsible or powerful member (UNICEF, 2012). The age of consent in Nigeria is 18. Disclosure by the child is the single-most important disclosure. However, the nature of sexual abuse along with the guilt and shame of the child victim make it difficult for children to report sexual abuse.

Physical signs	Behavioral signs	Abusive adult behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent genital or anal infections, pain or itching • Bruises, bleeding, or physical trauma from external genitalia, vagina or anal regions. • Blood-stained underwear • Wetting or soiling • Reports nightmares or bed-wetting • Pregnancy or fear of pregnancy • Urinary tract infections or difficulty with urination • Discomfort walking or sitting • Sexually transmitted infections • Self-mutilation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely controlling or protective • Shows inappropriate attention to the child • Significant age gap (inequality of power) • Limits the child's contact with other children • Buys the child expensive gifts and gives them money for no apparent reason • Encourages silence/secrets • Allows children to get away with sexually explicit behavior • Shows sexual behavior (promiscuity etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is unduly and extremely controlling or protective • Shows inappropriate attention to the child • There is a significant age gap (inequality of power) • Behaviors are intrusive upon the child • Promotes or allows children or teens to consistently get away with sexually explicit or inappropriate behaviors • Encourages silence and secrets with a child

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse occurs between people in a relationship, and can include any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behavior. Domestic abuse includes physical violence and any emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse. It includes controlling behaviors designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capabilities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance, and escape, and regulating their everyday behavior. It also includes coercive behaviors like threats, humiliation, and intimidation to punish or frighten someone. Domestic abuse can happen in any relationship, and even after the relationship has ended. Teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships. Children may also witness or experience domestic abuse in their families: they may see the abuse, hear it from another room, see a parent's injuries or distress afterward, or be hurt by being nearby or trying to stop the abuse.

Physical signs	Behavioral signs	Abusive (adult) behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Injuries which are excused as 'accidents' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constant and abrupt absences from school Receiving recurrent, troublesome phone calls from the parent(s) A fear of the parent Changes in personal behaviors (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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Withholding money or preventing someone from earning money Withholding a passport Not letting someone leave the house or locking someone out of the house Reading emails, text messages or letters Threatening to kill or harm them, another family member or pet Displays verbal abuse Is overtly controlling Shifts blame Is insensitive to others needs

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure (intentional or not) of a parent or other person with responsibility for a child to meet the child's basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Types of neglect can be physical, medical, emotional or moral, or educational. It occurs when a child's needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision is withheld to the degree that the child's health, safety, and well-being are threatened with harm. Negligent treatment would include failure to provide [age-appropriate adult guardianship](#) if both parents are out of town and a child is left with an alternate caregiver. The school needs to be informed of this using the adult guardianship form. Children under 18 years old are considered minors and are not allowed to be left alone.

Physical signs	Behavioral signs	Abusive adult behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor personal hygiene • Dirty/unwashed appearance • Lack of adequate or suitable clothing • Consistent physical signs of hunger and inadequate nutrition • Lack of medical or dental care • Development or growth delays • Drug and/or alcohol abuse at home • Lack of adequate supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Extreme loneliness or need for affection • Low self-esteem • Poor social relationships • Self-destructive behavior, including drug or alcohol abuse • 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 behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes student out of school for long periods (for non-emergency/ medical reasons) • Appears to be indifferent to the child • Leaves child home alone without assigning a guardian and informing the school of the guardian. • Is abusing alcohol or other drugs • Seems apathetic or depressed • Does not respond to repeated communications from the school • Holds the child responsible for the care of siblings or others beyond the child's ability • Permits inappropriate use and viewing of internet websites, movies and TV programs • Is inattentive to special education needs or fails to cooperate with remedial instruction for the child when recommended and provided by the school and the child is not exceeding in current class placement

Peer-to-Peer Abuse

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer-to-peer child abuse and can take many forms, including all forms of abuse listed above. It can happen both inside and outside of school.

Physical signs*	Behavioral signs*	Signs of abusive peer behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical injuries • Lack of sleep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence from school • disengagement from school activities • Mental or emotional health issues • Becoming withdrawn/ lacking self-esteem • Alcohol/ substance abuse • Changes in behavior • Inappropriate behavior for age • Harmful toward others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived differences on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other differences • Children might have complex needs (mental health/ learning needs etc) • Children might have disruption in their own lives (exposure to domestic abuse; educational underachievement)

*Indicators of peer-to-peer abuse also include physical and behavioral signs listed above for other

forms of abuse. Grades [3-5](#) & 6-12 students sign an upstander pledge to affirm that they will be upstanders.

Step-by-step processes for child protection concerns

Culturally and linguistically diverse considerations

It is important to consider 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 might have a different attitude toward nudity that is more relaxed than is typical. The same can be said for family sleeping, which is common in some cultures. Some families consider spanking an acceptable disciplinary measure, while other families find it unacceptable under any circumstances. These values can vary widely and cultural issues need to be understood. In order to work with people with various cultural identities in a way that promotes respect and dignity, it is important that you:

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

When suspected abuse or neglect is reported (including whistleblowing)

[Refer to the Disclosure/ Whistleblowing Flowchart](#)

Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the AISL community member to report their suspicion to the divisional counselor and complete the Child Protection referral form for documentation. If the student needs support, a case review form will be developed with relevant need-to-know members of the multidisciplinary team and shared with the Child Protection Officer for record-keeping, monitoring, and follow-up.

In cases where the superintendent is suspected, the report can be directed to the Board President. See below for [further procedural details](#) and [paper/ electronic](#) forms.

All AISL staff, faculty, and administrators are **mandated to report** incidences of abuse and neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect must be made to the Child Protection Officer within 48 hours for immediate response.

In cases of crisis (suicide ideation), reports are immediately made to the counselors first. If the counselors are unavailable, report to the principal; the health, safety and security manager; or the leadership team. Do not leave the student in crisis by themselves. **Review the [Disclosure/ whistleblowing flowchart](#) and detailed procedures for reporting below.**

Anonymous reporting: reports can be made anonymously, but this might limit the ability to explore the reasonable cause.

Confidentiality: All concerns will be treated in confidence. However, the whistleblower may be

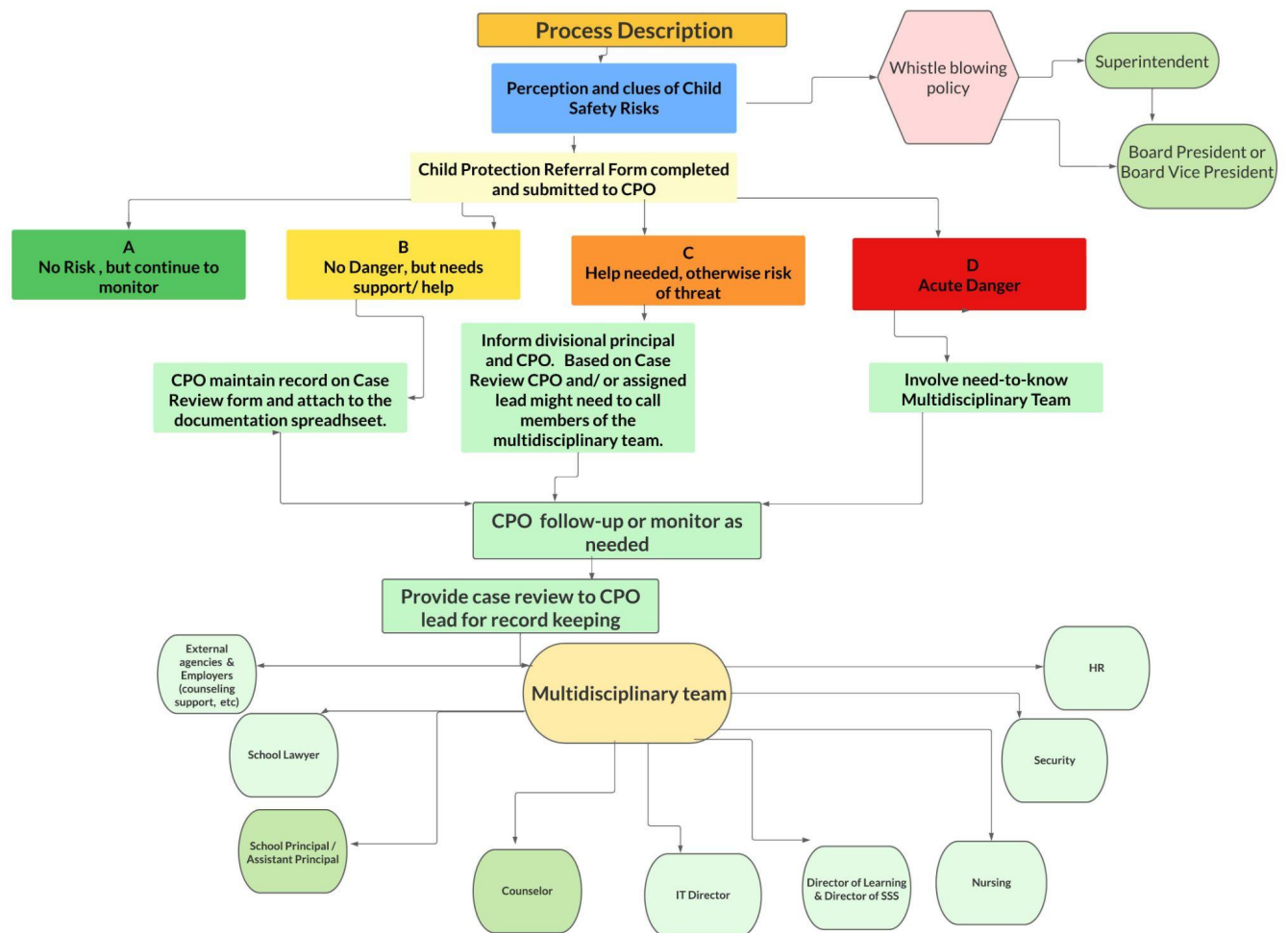
required to give evidence, e.g., if they have witnessed a crime, or regarding disciplinary procedures for this outcome.

Protection: If staff raise a concern in good faith that an investigation does not confirm, no action will be taken. Any staff member expressing concern about their safety following disclosure will be given all necessary support to continue in their role safely.

Confidential filing disclosure reporting and investigation documents: Once the investigation/action taken is complete, the reports are provided to the Child Protection Officer lead, Diana Abukazam, to file securely.

Disclosure/ Whistleblowing FlowChart

Refer to the Communication and Contact Guide for detailed contact information.



Step 1: Responding to disclosures

While it is normal to feel a little overwhelmed and confused in this situation, listening to a child who shares possible abuse or neglected information with you is one of the most important roles you can perform. Just remember, you can make a tremendous difference in the life of an abused 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	DO NOT
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remain calm and reassuring. A child may retract information or stop talking if they sense a strong reaction. ✓ Find a private place to speak 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. They know how to help you and your family." ✓ Support the child: "I'm sorry that happened to you." ✓ Do what you can to make sure the child is safe from further abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Press for details. You do not need to prove abuse or neglect. Simply report the case by following the child protection referral procedures. ✗ Ask "why" questions or interrogate. These questions require children to explain actions that they may or may not understand or are unable to interpret correctly, 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 a 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 have been worried about your behavior."
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Step 2: Reporting disclosures and filling out the referral form

When abuse is reported or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse occurred, the AISL community member will inform the divisional social-emotional counselor and submit a report to the Child Protection Officer within 48 hours, unless the report is being made anonymously, in which case, the reporter will only complete the referral documentation.

The report can be made anonymously or non-anonymously through either an [electronic form](#) or a [paper form](#), which should be given to the CPO or social-emotional counselor. If a non-anonymous paper form is completed, an email should also be sent to the CPO with the subject “CP report X.X.” (the initials of the student of concern).

See [Technology-related incidents](#) below for additional steps if any technology/devices are involved.

**** Please note**

- only need-to-know members of the child protection multidisciplinary team will be involved in the investigation.
- due to confidentiality, the reporter is not likely to be informed of the outcome of the case and investigation.
- reporting behavioral incidents and matters may also be addressed using the Eagles AISL Positive Behavior Guidelines and Procedures for their respective division. The behavior guidelines and procedures manuals and referral forms are linked on the [table of contents](#) above.

Step 3: CPO gathers a multidisciplinary team as needed

The Child Protection Officer will provide the information to the relevant stakeholder(s) after taking initial steps to gather information regarding the report and will form a customized school-based internal response team as needed to maintain confidentiality while furthering the investigation to address the child protection report.

The principal and/or multidisciplinary team will be available to address discipline/behavior complaints. The school counselor will be available to support both the victim and alleged perpetrator’s social/emotional well-being and families as needed.

In all cases, follow-up activities will be conducted to ensure that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained.

The following procedure will be used:

- Start a [case review file](#) and share it with CPO for monitoring case, and record-keeping.
- The assigned lead and assigned members of the multidisciplinary team can update the case review file including action steps.
- If an electronic device is used, please refer to [Technology-related incidents](#)
- Once the investigation is complete and noted, provide a copy of the report to the designated Child Protection Officer, Diana Abukazam for record-keeping.

Step 4: Case investigation and follow-up

Based on the acquired information, a plan of action will be developed by the multidisciplinary

team to assist the child and family. Using the Case Review Form as a guide, the team will implement specific, targeted actions relevant to the individual case, which may include:

- Discussions between the child and counselor. Depending on the child's age, these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with dolls to better understand.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counselor, or administrator.
- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling.
- In cases of severe abuse or where outside authority is deemed necessary, a request made to the superintendent (see whistle-blowing procedures linked above) may result in further investigation and possible actions.
- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concern with the child/family, or to the welfare office at the home of record.
- Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.
- Consultation with the school or another attorney.
- Informal consultation with local authorities.

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

Step 5: After a reported and/or substantiated case of abuse or neglect:

- The school will address policies, guidelines and procedures to prevent future incidents.
- The school will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The school will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.
- The school will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
- The school-assigned lead will maintain contact with outside therapists and multidisciplinary teams to update the child's progress in school.

All documentation of the investigation can be provided to the child protection officer, Diana Abukazam to be maintained confidentially. The child protection team members will have access to the files as needed. Records sent to schools to which their student may transfer will be flagged to let the receiving school know there is a confidential file for the child. AISL will make every attempt to share this information to protect the child.

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

- Student relationships with peers.
- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home.
- Student-parent relationships.

- Mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, and grieving.

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

- Mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, dissociation, and suicide ideation.
- Cases reported for investigation and outside resources:
 - Severe and ongoing physical abuse or neglect.
 - Sexual abuse and incest.

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

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

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

For technology-related incidents

The Child Protection Officer will liaise with the Technology Director following the acceptable use guidelines and procedures. School-owned devices, as well as devices used on the AISL property, may be confiscated if there is suspicion that the devices are being used to harm themselves or harm another person; only the Tech Director, along with one other member of the Child protection internal/multidisciplinary team can explore the contents of the confiscated device for further investigation. **Procedures relating to confiscating technology will involve:**

- Confiscating the device if it is suspected that it is being used to cause harm
- Do not look at the device, instead, take it to Mr. Joe Barder, Director of Technology, and complete the “[Digital Chain of Custody Form](#)”.
- Complete the Child Protection form (paper or [electronic](#)) and provide it to the CPO following general reporting procedures.

Child protection referral forms

[Electronic form](#)

The [electronic form](#) can be completed anonymously or non-anonymously. If the reporter is choosing to remain anonymous, they should provide as much information as possible to assist the

investigation. Non-anonymous forms do not need as much detail (although this is welcome) as the multidisciplinary team may approach them to get more information later.

Paper form

Once you have completed the form, please return it within 48 hours to a CPO officer. If you select to complete a paper form, please send an email with the subject heading "CP report submitted for X.X." (student first and last initials). You can also complete a report electronically using this [link](#). **Anonymous reports** can be made both by paper or electronically. Please note that with anonymous reporting, it might be challenging to do a comprehensive check.

Child Protection Referral Form (pg. 1 of 2)	
Date of form submission to CPO:	In person or Anonymous (circle)
Your full name (optional)	Your role
Full name of the child that you are concerned about. (Please complete a separate form for each child)	Grade Level of the child you are concerned about
What type of abuse was observed? Circle all that apply	Were there any witnesses? Please provide name/ grade level/ role.
<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Abuse</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Abuse</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Neglect</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Peer on Peer Abuse</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Physical Abuse</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Abuse</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Other</div> </div>	
Did the alleged abuse occur at AISL?	What was the date/ time / location of the

	observed abuse?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Please share the full name of the alleged suspect?	What is the role of the alleged suspect?
Child Protection Referral Form (pg. 2 of 2)	
Please describe the signs you saw (refer to the Child Protection Handbook for signs) *you can use an additional black document if you need to provide further details.	
Does the alleged suspect (s) have access to children at home or in their community? *	Is the abuse carried out on a school electronic device?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Did you confiscate the device and complete the digital custody form? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
When will the alleged suspect next encounter children (including their own), and will they be alone with the children? Is there a possibility the alleged perpetrator will be alone with a child in an isolated area or in a room without windows?	Can contact with children be canceled without tipping off the alleged perpetrator? If not, what measures can be put in place to increase supervision and minimize any one-to-one contact until the alleged perpetrator can be informed?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
If this involves an electronic device, please complete the Digital Chain Custody Form on the next page.	

Digital chain of custody form

Digital Chain of Custody Form (attach to Child Protection report) (Submit this form along with the device to the Technology Director (Mr. Joe Barder))	
Date evidence was confiscated	
Time evidence was confiscated	
Name of the person who confiscated/is delivering the evidence	
Signature of the person delivering evidence	
All technology evidence can be provided directly to the Technology Director	Joe Barder
Signature of the person who received the evidence	
Date evidence received	
Time evidence received	
Full name of the second person examining the evidence with the Tech Director	
Date of examination	
Time of examination	
Results of examination to be filed by the Child Protection Officer:	

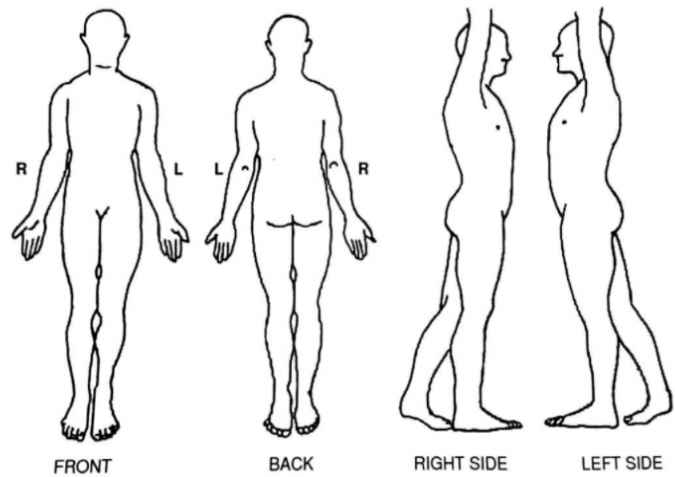
School Nurse / Doctor Reporting Form

BODY CHECK - CLINICAL

Full Name of examiner:

Full examinee name: Age: Grade level / Job title

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



Description:

Examiner _____ Title _____ Date ____/____/____

Witness _____ Title _____ Date ____/____/____

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

Myths and Facts about Child Abuse and Neglect

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

Myth #1: It's only abuse if it's violent or meant to physically hurt the child. Fact: Physical abuse is just one type of child abuse. Neglect and emotional abuse can be just as damaging, and since they are more subtle; others are less likely to intervene.

Myth #2: Only bad people abuse their children. Fact: While it's easy to say that only "bad people" abuse their children, it's not always so black and white. Many have been abused and neglected themselves, and don't know any other way to parent. Others may be struggling with mental health issues, marital stress, substance abuse problem, etc.

Myth #3: Child abuse doesn't happen in "good" families. Fact: Child abuse and neglect doesn't only happen in poor dysfunctional families, or bad environments. It crosses all racial, economic, educational, and cultural lines. Sometimes, families who seem to have it all from the outside are hiding a different story behind closed doors.

Myth #4: Most child abusers are strangers. Fact: While abuse by strangers does happen, many abusers are family members or others close to the family such as parents, guardians, baby sitter, relatives, and trusted others.

Myth #5: Abused children always grow up to be abusers. Fact: It's true that abused children are more likely to repeat the cycle as adults, unconsciously repeating what they experienced as children. On the other hand, many adult survivors of child abuse have a strong motivation to protect their children against what they went through and become excellent parents.

Myth #6: It's not my role to interfere in someone else's family. Fact: The effects of child abuse and neglect are lifelong, affecting future relationships, self-esteem, and sadly putting even more children at risk as the cycle continues. Breaking the cycle of abuse is a responsibility we all have legally and morally.

Myth #7: It won't make a difference what I have to say. Fact: If you have a gut feeling that something is wrong, it is better to be safe than sorry. Even if you don't see the whole picture, others may have noticed as well, and your input might help break a cycle of abuse, that otherwise slipped through the cracks

Myth #8: Children makeup stories or lie about sexual abuse. Fact: While children do makeup stories, they seldom lie about sexual abuse. Also, children who have not been abused do not usually have explicit knowledge of intimate sexual behavior.

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

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

Myth #10: Abused or neglected children almost always come from poor, minority, or uneducated families. Fact: There is no evidence that links social-economic status, race, culture, or educational levels to abuse or neglect. Child abuse and neglect occur within every aspect of family profiles.

Myth #11: Married men don't molest children; after all, they have their wives. Fact: Marital status doesn't correlate to whether a person is a sexual predator or not. Molesting children is about power position, control, and vulnerability. The taste for sex with children is separate from a normal human adult sex drive oriented to adults.

Myth #12: Child molesters are unsociable and isolated. Fact: Most child molesters are known and liked by others. They often have great personalities and demonstrate concern and care for others. Plus, they cultivate certain relationships in order to gain access to children, and many are genial and personable individuals with whom others enjoy socializing.

Myth #13: People who have high status and respected positions of responsibility can't be abusers. Fact: Child molesters and abusers can be anyone at all. Positions of status, fame, or wealth are no guarantee that children are safe from them.

Myth #14: Anyone who would molest a child is seedy-looking or looks suspicious. Fact: Handsome, rich men molest children. Beautiful, talented women molest children. Ordinary people you laugh with every day molest children; millionaires and highly educated people can be child molesters. Gone are the days of describing molesters as dirty old men, flashers in raincoats. You simply cannot tell a child sexual predator by their physical appearance, status, or personality.

Myth #15: Hugs and additional forms of affection and kindness with children in front of their parents and others prove they are not child molesters. Fact: Molesters begin "grooming" and desensitizing children and adults so that the child thinks their parents and other trusted caregivers approve of the way they are touched. They lavish the child with special attention, kindness, or other gifts for no reason. When it is done in private, the child assumes it is all right and that the person truly has their best interest and welfare at heart. These are the vulnerable conditions that the molester wants.

Myth #16: A real child molester would never talk about the subject. Fact: A child molester may say contemptuous things like "Child molesters are the sickest people on the planet" or "Child molesters deserve the death penalty." While others might say the same things, and this is not an indicator by itself, it is a warning that predators know the right line to take.

Myth #17: Most child molesters eventually get caught and put in jail. Fact: Contrary to belief, it is rare that a person who molests a child ever gets caught and when they do over 90% of these cases never find their way into a courtroom or are convicted. If accused they grossly distort the truth to justify their behavior. They blame the child, minimize the situation and make up a myriad of lame excuses.

- ☐ “It was a loving gesture.”
- ☐ “I was checking a rash.”
- ☐ “I didn’t know better.”
- ☐ “We were just playing around.”
- ☐ “I was simply trying to mentor them.”

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

2023-2024 Contact Information

For any concerns or questions about child protection at AISL, please contact or complete the [electronic reporting](#) form which is also available anonymously for AISL Staff and Parents to complete:

Role	Name	Contact
Child Protection Officer Lead Early Childhood/ Elementary Counselor	Diana Abukazam	dabukazam@aislagos.org Room: 200
Child Protection Officer Middle School and High School Counselor	Andrea Bernoth	abernoth@aislagos.org Room: A102
Child Protection Team Elementary Principal	Margit Heinrichs	sahmed@aislagos.org Room: 200
Child Protection Team Middle School and High School Principal	Kathleen Bowin	kbowin@aislagos.org Room: A103