



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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Revised by	Safeguarding and Child Protection Team
Approved by	St.Mary's Leadership Team St.Mary's Board



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SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT STATEMENT

St. Mary's International School (the “**School**”) is committed to child protection and the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children. The School expects those working or volunteering within and connected to its community to share its commitment to:

- protect each child's right to be safe;
- ensure that all adults share the responsibility to safeguard and protect children; and
- prevent and report abuse, neglect, and harassment.

The School believes all children have the right to:

- learn in a supportive and safe environment;
- receive protection from all types of abuse;
- be under the supervision of caring staff who are vigilant for any signs of distress or abuse; and
- learn in an environment where effective safeguarding processes are in place.

The School does and will:

- create a school environment that safeguards children through both prevention and intervention;
- follow international standards of best practice in child protection, ensuring they are implemented and regularly reviewed and revised;
- ensure that all stakeholders uphold child protection guidelines and procedures at all times and that they receive regular on-site training; and
- following best practices in the hiring process which includes specific questions to the candidate as well as references related to child safeguarding.

The School endorses the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), of which Japan is a signatory, and supports and complies with Japanese Child Protection Laws ([Appendix C](#)).



I. SCOPE OF POLICY

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (this “**Policy**”) sets forth the School’s commitment:

- To provide an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued, and respected and where they feel confident and know their concerns will be heard and responded to in a timely manner.
- To ensure that all staff, faculty, administrators, board members, and volunteers who have access to children have been checked for suitability based on verification of their qualifications and background checks
- To raise stakeholder awareness of the need to safeguard children and articulate the responsibilities of stakeholders in identifying and reporting cases of suspected abuse of children
- To provide a structure in which all members of the School community are expected to and can freely report suspected abuse or risk to children while simultaneously emphasizing communication between all stakeholders.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies that are responsible for the social care of children.
- To ensure that all staff, faculty, administrators, board members, and volunteers, and children have access to the Child Protection Reporting Process outlined in [Appendix B](#).

II. DEFINED TERMS

- Child:** all people under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Child Welfare Act of Japan. For the purposes of safeguarding at St. Mary’s, a child also refers to any person enrolled as a student, even if that individual is over the age of 18. *The legal age of an adult is 18 in Japan.*
- Child maltreatment (abuse and neglect):** encompasses all forms of physical and emotional maltreatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or possible harm to the child’s health, development or self-worth (WHO, 2017). ([See Appendix D](#))
- Child Protection:** the measures and structures intended to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence affecting children. (Save the Children, 2007)



- D. **Safeguarding:** responsibilities, preventative measures, and activities that the School undertakes to protect children, ensuring that no child comes to harm as a result of their association with the school.
- E. **Stakeholders (adult):** refers to any adult who is invested in the welfare and success of the school and its children, including administrators, teachers, staff members, volunteers, parents/guardians, families, caregivers, community members, and school board members.

III. MANDATORY REPORTING

All stakeholders (as defined in Section IV, E) have an obligation to report, without delay, a suspected safeguarding concern or disclosure. This may include, but is not limited to:

- observing a reason for concern related to abuse
- receiving a disclosure or allegation of abuse
- having knowledge that causes him/her to believe harm to a child will or has taken place

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES [\(Designated Members in Appendix A\)](#)

- A. **Board of Directors, Safeguarding and Child Protection Liaison:** A designated School board member who is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this Policy and who will work with the school Administrative Team and the Child Protection Coordinator to ensure the efficiency with which procedures have been implemented and to report compliance to the Board of Directors. The designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Liaison of the School Board of Directors will receive and respond to allegations about the Head of School.
- B. **Child Protection Coordinator:** A designated individual responsible for child protection issues within the School. The Child Protection Coordinator will work closely with the Child Protection Team and the Administrative Team to ensure that the highest level of safeguarding standards is developed, met, and adhered to. The Child Protection Coordinator will monitor international best practice standards and will liaise with stakeholders to ensure compliance.
- C. **Safeguarding and Child Protection Team:** The Safeguarding and Child Protection Team consists of three members, who act as the safeguarding “point persons” in each section of the school, ES, MS, HS, respectively.



They have the training and background in child safeguarding, including designated safeguarding lead training. In the absence of a member of the Child Protection Team, the others will be deputized to respond to concerns in the relevant section.

- D. **E-Safety Lead:** The E-Safety Lead will be the Director of Technology, who will be responsible for planning and consultation to promote safety in the online environment.
- E. **Head of School:** The Head of School oversees the implementation of Safeguarding policies and procedures and coordinates with the relevant teams and authorities to ensure the well-being of the school community. The Head of School plays a specific role as the point person in handling concerns against a faculty member reported by another adult. Any allegation against a member of faculty or staff should be reported directly to the Head of School.
- F. **Contracted Agencies / Personnel, Vendors, Volunteers, and Invited Guests:** All significant partner agencies, vendors, and invited guests who are defined as such by written contracts with the School are to be informed of this Policy and associated procedures. Those who have direct contact with children must sign the Code of Conduct and Child Protection Agreement Form.
- G. **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.
- H. **Local Resources and Agencies:** Children and Family Support Centers, the Tokyo Metropolitan Child Guidance Center, and local police are all agencies that the School will partner with in response to suspected or confirmed cases of child maltreatment on an as-needed basis.
- I. **Parents and Greater Community Members:** All parents and members of the School community play a vital role in the safety and well-being of children through prevention, education, support, and reporting.
- J. **Visitors:** Visitors who will not work directly with children are not required to attend Safeguarding Training or sign Safeguarding Forms. General safeguarding policies (posted at reception) should be pointed out to them and they should acknowledge their understanding verbally. All visitors need to adhere to all security and safeguarding procedures.

V. EDUCATION AND TRAINING



- A. **Board of Directors, Safeguarding and Child Protection Liaison:** Board members should attend a basic level of child protection/safeguarding training. The Board Liaison should receive advanced training within one year of being designated as a Safeguarding and Child Protection Liaison and then one conference every two years that covers the topic of has a focus on child protection/abuse or safeguarding and managing disclosure against an employee, including senior leaders, senior members of staff, or administration.
- B. **Safeguarding and Child Protection Coordinator:** The Safeguarding and Child Protection Coordinator will maintain up-to-date professional development training in policy and program management aspects of child protection to implement best practices within the role of Coordinator. They will attend at least one conference annually to maintain an advanced level of training for child protection and safeguarding.
- C. **Safeguarding and Child Protection Officers:** The Safeguarding and Child Protection Officers will attend at least one conference bi-annually to maintain an advanced level of training for child protection and safeguarding.
- D. **Counselors:** Counselors play a role in incident response to support child safeguarding concerns. The school recognizes the demands and sensitivities of this role and has arrangements in place for their professional supervision of casework and access to their own welfare counseling.
- E. **Recruiting/Hiring for Administrators and Staff:** Safer Recruitment training should be completed by all managers/administrators who interview candidates for jobs across the school.
- F. **Stakeholders:** Stakeholders are mandated to attend an introductory safeguarding training (level of training will be dependent upon position and language capabilities) upon initiating employment or volunteering, and a minimum of annual safeguarding training during the tenure of their employment/volunteering.
- G. **Parents / Guardians:** Parents and Guardians will have opportunities to attend educational seminars regarding safeguarding and the school's policies regarding child protection. Additionally, the school will provide access to online child protection training in multiple languages, such as the Child Protection Tutorial for Parents at Childsafeguarding.com.



- H. **Students:** Students from K-12 will receive age-appropriate curricular and extra-curricular instruction on Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) health and safety topics relevant to their age and developmental level. In the Elementary section, K-5, a comprehensive Social-Emotional Learning curriculum, which includes Child Protection and Bullying Prevention Units, is taught.

VI. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION PROCESS

- A. Report/disclose a concern ([Appendix B](#))
1. Members of staff can report safeguarding concerns on the online platform, Child Protection Online Monitoring Systems-CPOMS when a disclosure is made to them or they have a personal concern.
 2. For members of the School community who do not have access to CPOMS, they can complete a paper copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Report Form and post it into the Safeguarding Postbox, available at the BookStore window on the ground floor.
 3. Students and other community members can also report to the Child Protection Officers online utilizing the reporting QR Code, online link, or in person.
- B. Following a disclosure, the Child Protection Officer will conduct an initial evaluation and determine a course of action.
1. If it is determined that there is a concern for the child's immediate safety or it is suspected community services may be required, documentation using the CPOMS will be initiated and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Team will be informed. As a team, further actions will be discussed and actions taken.
 2. In the event that the allegation is against an employee of the school, the Head of School must be informed in the first instance.
 3. Other members of the staff (e.g., counselor, teacher, nurse) may be called upon to become involved as part of the response team.
- C. Response team
1. The response team will immediately assess and assure short-term safety for the child to the best of its ability, and if applicable by law, inform local Japanese authorities including the appropriate Child and Family Support Center, Tokyo Metropolitan Child Guidance Center, and/or local police.



2. The response team will develop and document a response plan with recommendations/requirements. The response plan may consist of, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Meeting(s) with parents and/or children
 - Internal / External referrals for parenting support and education
 - Medical / counseling referrals for physical and or emotional support
 - Safety contract with child and/or parents/guardians
 - Contact with Parent/Guardian Employer
 - Contact with Embassy/Consulate of the involved family
 - Employee supervision & monitoring plan
 - Employee termination of employment
3. Throughout the reporting and responding stages, the response team will support children, staff, and parents to the best of its ability by:
 - Taking all concerns, reports, and disclosures seriously
 - Carefully following policies and procedures
 - Ensuring regular communication between school and home to keep all parties informed of the process
 - Ensuring secure and comprehensive documentation
 - Maintaining confidentiality as indicated and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
 - Making referrals to outside agencies, counselors or other avenues of support and protection as appropriate
 - Ensuring that the School's approach to safeguarding remains child-centered and in the best interests of the child
4. The Child Protection Officers involved with the cases are responsible for ensuring follow-up and follow-up action plans will be documented appropriately on CPOMS.

VII. HISTORICAL CASES

If, at any time, a complaint or allegation is made against a staff member (current or former) by a child who has already graduated from St. Mary's or has previously attended the School, such complaint or allegation should be referred to the Head of School.

VIII. TYPES OF CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE



- A. “**Child-on-Child Abuse**” is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse, or coercive control, exercised between children or within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate).
1. Child-on-Child Abuse can take various forms, including, but not limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), relationship abuse, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, harmful sexual behavior, or gender-based violence.
- B. There are many types of abuse that may occur between peers, including, but not limited to:
1. **Physical Abuse:** This may include hitting, kicking, nipping, pinching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person.
 2. **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment:** This may include inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, sexual touching, or sexual assault/abuse. Sexual violence and harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur among a group of children toward a single child or group of children.
 3. **Bullying:** Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-age children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes making threats, spreading rumors, and attacking someone physically, verbally, or relationally.
 4. **Harassment:** Harassment is harmful behavior, physical, emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalized.
 5. **Online or Cyberbullying:** This is the use of technology (social networking, messaging, text messaging, email, chat rooms, etc.) to harass, threaten, make fun of, or intimidate someone for the same reason as bullying or harassment. Cyberbullying includes but is not limited to abusive texts, abusive comments, encouragement of self-harm, pressuring to send sexual messages or images, spreading of rumors, and posting of rude or derogatory images.
 6. **Sexting:** This relates to sending of indecent images, videos, and or written messages with sexually explicit content that are created and sent electronically. They are often shared via social media.



7. **Initiation/Hazing:** Hazing is a form of initiation that is used to induct newcomers into an organization or to pressure conformity. Hazing can be relatively mild to severe in nature. Many of these rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, physical violence, and harassment.
 8. **Teenage Relationship Abuse:** Teenage relationship abuse is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (13-18 years of age), against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, sexual sabotage, sexual harassment, threats or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent or coercive behavior to gain power and control over the partner.
- C. The School takes a school-wide approach to the prevention, early identification and management of harm between peers. Child-on-Child Abuse will not be tolerated as acceptable interactions between children. All allegations reported by children and adult stakeholders will be taken seriously and investigated in a manner consistent with the School policies outlined in the designated school handbooks/code of conducts. If an allegation is of a criminal nature, local authorities will be notified.
1. Child-on-Child Abuse allegations will consider the following before actions are taken:
 - Is the behavior deliberate?
 - Is the behavior problematic or concerning?
 - Does the behavior involve any over elements of victimization or discrimination?
 - Does the behavior involve a power imbalance between the child (s) involved?
 - Does the behavior involve an abuse of power?
- D. If the child's actions are considered Child-on-Child Abuse, then the same policies regarding a concern or disclosure should be followed.

IX. SAFE RECRUITING AND HIRING

- A. Advertisements for all potential positions will state that child safeguarding and protection are enforced and the screening procedures will be included in the hiring process.
- B. The School will:



- Perform 'live contact' interview(s) with the potential candidate(s) with at least two school administrators. At least one question/scenario will be related to child safeguarding.
- Perform two or three verbal reference checks (e.g. phone, Zoom, Google Meet) with a current (most recent) principal, head of school, and a third-person colleague who works closely with the candidate. Verbal reference checks will include questions regarding the candidate's safety in interacting/working with children.
- Contact all references through business email/business phone numbers. Additional reference checks may be completed, especially for any suspicious employment history or gaps in employment.
- Verify all credentials.
- Undertake criminal background checks from the candidate's country of record (passport/credentials) and most recent country of employment.
- Require all potential employees to sign a written "statement of suitability" stating that the candidate has no reason or prior circumstance that would preclude the candidate from working with children and disclose any criminal or misdemeanor convictions.
- Require all employees to sign (annually) that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct and the Child Protection Agreement Form.
- Conduct retroactive or periodic background / criminal background checks on employees at any time during employment. Documentation of all the above must be maintained in personnel files.

X. PHOTOGRAPHY/MEDIA USE GUIDELINES

Throughout the year, children are photographed and video recorded as they participate in academic, artistic, or athletic activities. The photos and videos may be used for publicity, promotional, and/or educational purposes (i.e. publications, presentations or broadcast via newspaper, internet, or other media sources). Parents or guardians are allowed to opt-out, in writing, of their child's photograph/video being used in this capacity.

St. Mary's will:



- Make every effort to ensure that no identifying or personal information beyond first names will be posted with a photo or video
- Respect cultural, religious and other personal beliefs in all photography
- Prohibit unsupervised access to children

XI. EXTENDED SCHOOL AND OFF-SITE PROGRAMS

Where extended or offsite School activities are provided and managed by the School, all child protection policy and procedures apply. All extended and offsite activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health, safety, and safeguarding requirements. On off-campus day and overnight trips or athletic events, the school's School Trip Policy must be followed.

XII. SITE SECURITY

- A. All staff must wear ID badges while on campus.
- B. Parents are issued ID badges at the beginning of the school year. During school hours they are expected to sign in and out and have a specified purpose. Parents who are delivering or picking up children before or after school do not need to sign in/out, provided they have their badge. Parents are to wear their badges whenever on campus and during all school activities.
- C. Visitors, with appointments, to the School are asked to sign in and are given a Visitor Badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. All visitors must be accompanied while on campus unless a member of the administrative leadership team exercises personal judgment in determining whether a visitor can be unsupervised on site.
- D. All parents and visitors are expected to follow the school's visitor safeguarding guidelines which are posted at reception and reviewed at the time of check-in.



Appendix A: DESIGNATED ROLES IN SAFEGUARDING

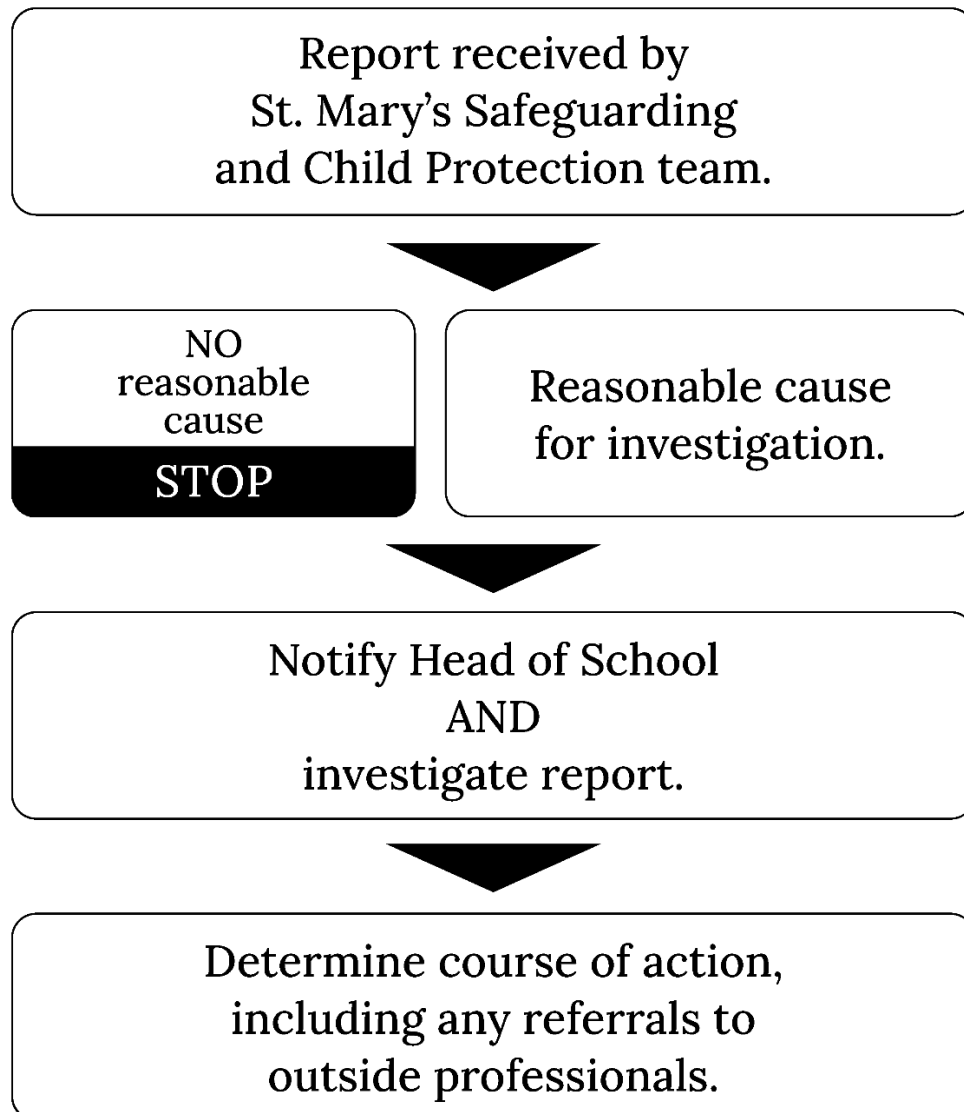
Name and Email:	Role at St. Mary's	Section of School to which they are the safeguarding 'point person'.
Hiromi Sawamura sawamurah@smis.ac.jp	Safeguarding and Child Protection Coordinator and Elementary School Counselor	Elementary School
Andrew Cubitt cubitta@smis.ac.jp	Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer and Middle School Assistant Principal	Middle School
Andy Bayfield bayfielda@smis.ac.jp	Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer and High School Assistant Principal	High School
Saburo Kagei kageis@smis.ac.jp	Head of School	n/a
Koji Shimomura shimomurak@smis.ac.jp	Child Safeguarding Liaison of the School Board of Directors	n/a
Eamonn Coleman colemane@smis.ac.jp	E-Safety Lead and Director of Technology	n/a



Appendix B: CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING FLOW CHART

REPORT MADE

(Digital, paper, or in person)





Appendix C: JAPANESE CHILD PROTECTION LAWS

Child Welfare Act 1947 (rev. 2016)

Article 1.

- 1) All citizens shall endeavor to ensure that children are born and brought up in good mental and physical health.
- 2) All children shall equally be afforded the guaranteed level of life and be kindly treated.

Article 4.

- 1) The term "child" as used in this Act shall mean a person under 18 years of age.

Child Abuse Protection Act 2000 (rev. 2004)

Article 1. Child abuse is a grievous infringement on the rights of children, which can have serious effects on their mental and physical growth and character formation.

Article 2. In this law, "child abuse" shall mean one or another of the following acts done to a child (a person under 18 years of age, both here and hereinafter), by a guardian (a person exerting parental authority or another person acting as caretaker of a minor having actual custody of the child; the same shall apply hereinafter):

- 1) Physical abuse resulting in bodily injury to a child, or violent acts deemed to result in such injury. It is stipulated that parental authority shall not inflict disciplinary actions to an extent that exceeds the levels necessary for custody and education.
- 2) Coercion of any child by a parent or a caregiver to engage in, or assist another person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct with a child.
- 3) Preventing the normal physical and mental development of a child through neglect by markedly reducing nutrition, abandonment for over long periods, failure to prevent acts by a person living with the child other than the parent as described in the previous Item 2 or the following item, and seriously neglecting care as a guardian.
- 4) Strong verbal abuse or an attitude of rejection toward the child, or violent words and actions directed against a spouse living in the child's household (illegal physical aggression against the spouse ("spouse" also refers to people living in a marital relationship for all practical purposes, even though a



marriage has not been registered) that is injurious to life or body, or corresponding words or actions that cause psychological damage) that cause severe psychological trauma in the child.

Japanese Civil Code

Article 1.

67) The Law for Punishing Acts Related to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and for Protecting of Children, which took effect in November 1999, the law defines "child" as anyone under 18 years of age and punishes such acts as engaging in child prostitution, producing child pornography for the purpose of sale, etc.

Appendix D: TYPES OF ABUSE AND DEFINITIONS

Type of Abuse	Definition	Signs and Symptoms
Physical	<p>Involves the use of violent physical force so as to cause actual or likely physical injury or suffering (e.g. hitting, striking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, female genital mutilation, torture). Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or care provider feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child. (Save the Children, 2007)</p> <p>In Japan, the Child Abuse Prevention Law (Article 2) defines physical abuse as physical injury or trauma to a child, or when a child is placed in physical danger, due to violence. Evidence of physical abuse includes but is not limited to bruising, dislocation, fractures, or burns (Ministry of Justice, 2018).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts • Improbable excuses given to explain injuries • Injuries which have not received medical attention • Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games • Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains • Withdraws from physical contact • Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather • Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted • Showing weariness or distrust of adults • Self-destructive tendencies • Being aggressive towards others • Being very passive and compliant • Chronic running away
Emotional (Psychological)	<p>Intentional caregiver behavior that conveys to a child that he/she is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or valued only in meeting another person's needs¹². Psychological abuse can be continual (e.g., chronic and pervasive) or episodic (e.g., triggered by a specific context or situation: caregiver substance use/abuse) (CDC, 2008).</p> <p>Under Japan's Child Abuse Prevention Law, emotional maltreatment is recognized as a form of child abuse, and witnessing family violence is identified as a form of emotional abuse (Ministry of Japan, 2018).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed Physical, mental and emotional development • Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder • Fear of new situations • Low self-esteem and self-worth • Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations • Attention-seeking behavior • Persistent tiredness • Extremes of passivity or aggression • Drug or alcohol abuse • Chronic running away • Compulsive stealing • Obsessions or phobias
Sexual	<p>Any completed or attempted (non-completed) sexual act, sexual contact with, or exploitation (i.e., non-contact sexual interaction) of a child by a caregiver. Sexual acts include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain or irritation to the genital • Vaginal or penile discharge area • Difficulty with urination • Regressive behaviors, bed-wetting or stranger anxiety



Type of Abuse	Definition	Signs and Symptoms
	<p>- contact involving penetration, however slight, between the mouth, penis, vulva, or anus of the child and another individual.</p> <p>- penetration, however slight, of the anal or genital opening by a hand, finger, or other object.</p> <p>- Sexual acts performed by the caregiver on the child or by the child on the caregiver.</p> <p>- A caregiver who forces or coerces a child to commit a sexual act on another individual (child or adult).</p> <p>Abusive sexual contact includes:</p> <p>- intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the following: Genitalia (penis or vulva), anus, groin, breast, inner thigh and buttocks.</p> <p>Noncontact sexual abuse can include the following:</p> <p>Acts which expose a child to sexual activity (e.g., pornography; voyeurism of the child by an adult; intentional exposure of a child to exhibitionism)</p> <p>Filming of a child in a sexual manner (e.g., depiction, either photographic or cinematic, of a child in a sexual act)</p> <p>Sexual harassment of a child</p> <p>Prostitution of a child</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Infection, bleeding ● Excessive masturbation ● Sexually aware beyond age ● Excessive Masturbation ● Sexually provocative behavior ● Unusually quiet or withdrawn or aggressive behavior ● Age inappropriate sexualized behavior
<p>Neglect</p>	<p>Neglect means the failure to meet the children's physical and psychological needs, protect them from danger, or obtain medical, birth registration, education or other services when those responsible for the children's care have the means, knowledge and access to services to do so.</p> <p>Physical neglect is the failure to protect a child from harm, including through lack of supervision, or failure to provide the child with basic necessities including adequate food, shelter, clothing, and basic medical care.</p> <p>Psychological or emotional neglect includes lack of any emotional support and love, chronic inattention to the child, caregivers being psychologically unavailable by overlooking your children's cues and signals and exposure to intimate partner violence, drug or alcohol abuse. (UNCRC, 2011)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medical needs unattended ● Lack of supervision ● Consistent hunger ● Inappropriate dress ● Inadequate nutrition ● Fatigue or listlessness ● Self-destructive behavior ● Extreme loneliness ● Extreme need for affection ● Poor personal hygiene ● Frequent lateness or nonattendance at school