



INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL

Mauritania Road
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Addis Ababa
ETHIOPIA

Child Safeguarding and Protection Handbook

ICS would like to acknowledge

AISA Child Protection Taskforce

International Taskforce on Child Protection [ITCP]

CIS, ISCA, NSPCC, ICMEC

Global Safeguarding Collaborative

for sharing their policies and allowing others to use or learn from them

This Handbook shall be reviewed every year by the Safeguarding and Protection Team and the Schoolwide Leadership Team. Next review 2026-27 school year.
Updated February 5, 2026



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Philosophy

Child abuse and neglect are concerns throughout the world and are violations of a child's human rights that create obstacles to their academic, physical, emotional, and spiritual development. Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of children and need to ensure that all children in their care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop. Educators have the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time and are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection.

Values Statement

ICS is a nonviolent community, dedicated to supporting the development of every student. Physical violence and emotional mistreatment of children is not acceptable, and is inconsistent with the school's values and the ICS Way. Children develop most fully when they live and learn in a community free from intimidation, free from emotional injury, and free from physical threat.

ICS seeks to be a safe haven for all students and as such has adopted the following comprehensive Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy and program, which it will communicate annually to all staff, parents, and new applicants. The child protection program defines the various forms of child abuse and child neglect and outlines the school's requirements for:

- a code of conduct that guides interactions between adults and children,
- mandated reporters and procedures for reporting,
- maintaining a child protection team,
- screening and selecting staff, faculty, and volunteers,
- training and education about child sexual abuse prevention for staff and students,
- follow-up care and service plans for families in need.

Legal Framework

This document is informed by the following law(s) and provisions:

Ethiopia ratified the main [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) on May 14, 1991, and it entered into force on January 30, 1992. The country also ratified two of its three optional protocols in 2014.

Article 36 of the [Ethiopian Constitution](#) further defines the rights of children to include the right:

- *To be free of corporal punishment or cruel and inhumane treatment in schools and other institutions responsible for the care of children.*
- *In all actions concerning children undertaken by public and private welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the primary consideration shall be the best interests of the child.*



Code of Conduct

ICS employees agree to follow the guidelines for the Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding and Protection Handbook as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth participating in ICS programs.

I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Never be alone with children and/or youth at school activities without another adult being notified.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times, and only when necessary, touch children in ways that are appropriate, public and non-sexual.
- Comply with the mandatory reporting regulations of ICS and with the ICS policy to report suspected child abuse.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
- Use restrooms on campus designated for adults and only enter a student restroom with the presence of another adult.
- Wear my ID badge while on campus.

I will NOT:

- Touch or speak to a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Inflict any physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening or degrading children and/or youth.
- Smoke or use tobacco products with children, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with children and/or youth.
- Give a child, who is not my own, a ride home alone.
- Accept gifts from or give gifts to children or youth without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- Engage in private/individual communications with students via text messaging, personal email, any social media messaging platforms, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat or similar forms of electronic or social media without consent from high school students or the parents of middle and elementary school students.
- Use images or videos that reveal a student's identity, such as their face or other distinguishing marks, on personal social media or communication accounts without consent from high school students or the parents of middle and elementary school students.
- Take pictures of students without their permission or for the purposes other than those considered a legitimate learning activity.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth at any time.

Confidentiality Policy

- ICS recognizes confidentiality as the principle of keeping information given by, observed, or about an individual in the course of any medical, psychological or child protection/safeguarding context for all ICS staff/students, secure.
- A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a student nor should they agree with a student to keep a secret regarding a safety concern. All safety concerns



must be reported to the Child Protection Officer and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

- Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a “need to know basis” only. Confidentiality will be expected from any staff receiving information generated from a Child Protection/Safeguarding context.
- Staff will maintain confidentiality by ensuring private or confidential information is treated with care, not left in the open, or not unintentionally shared with people who should not have the information.
- All ICS staff will acknowledge the definition of confidentiality and comply with all confidentiality guidelines annually.

Mandated Reporters

In conjunction with Ethiopian laws, ICS maintains that all school employees are mandated reporters of child abuse, neglect and/or harassment. If any employee of ICS has reasonable cause to suspect that a student is being mistreated in any way, he/she is to report the suspicion to the designated safeguarding lead or administrator immediately. Failure to report may result in employment or legal accountability.



Child Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Incidents can vary greatly in detail, impact, and desired outcome so we employ a team approach to the response process. A team approach ensures that multiple lenses are applied to the planning and implementation of the response. In general, the following are roles that are likely to be involved in a response to potential student harm:

Description and Identification of Roles

Role	Responsibility	Person 2025-2026
<i>Strategic Safeguarding Lead</i>	Responsible for developing the Safeguarding plan and providing resources for its execution.	Dr. Chris Cowherd
<u>Designated Safeguarding Lead [DSL Job Description]</u>	Manage the execution and operations of safeguarding at school. Leads child safeguarding team; supports the investigation and management of child safeguarding cases.	Dr. Chris Cowherd
<i>Child Protection Officers (CPO)</i>	Investigates and manages child safeguarding cases, primarily in school sections, but supporting other sections as needed.	Ms. Mei-Lyn Freeman Ms. Yodit Hizikiel Mr. Ken Forde Mr. Steve Melville
<i>Designated Safeguarding Board Member</i>	Acts as the Child Safeguarding representative of the Board; ensures the ongoing institutional responsibilities for safeguarding, and shares safeguarding reports with the board.	Mr. Vinny Nagaraj
<i>Lead Safeguarding Trainer</i>	Responsible for schoolwide training and development with staff, parents, and students. Acts as safeguarding consultant as needed.	Mr. Jason McEvoy-Edwards
<i>Child Safeguarding and Protection Task Force</i>	Representative group who helps examine safeguarding concerns and are responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Plan 	Mr. Jason McEvoy-Edwards Ms. Danielle Chamberlin Ms. Mei-Lyn Freeman Ms. Ivana Bagini Ms. Sloane Hill



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a culture of safeguarding and child protection • Reviewing policies and procedures and recommending updates or changes 	Ms. Iman Bedru
<i>Response Team</i>	Group designed to address case specific safeguarding concerns and consists of relevant faculty, leaders, and administrators who will respond to specific cases.	This team may include School Psychologist, Health Office, Counselors, Principals, Deputy Principals, Human Resources or IT and is formed related to specific concerns
<i>Leads for Adult Allegations of Abuse</i>	Members who investigate and document the process of allegations made against adults in the community. Head of School, Board Representative, HR	Mr. Earl Chamberlin Mr. Vinny Nagaraj Ms. Areyam Workneh
<i>Student Training and Ongoing Support</i>	Counselors	Ms. Ivana Bagini Ms. Esther Ossai Ms. Sloane Hill Mr. Jason McEvoy-Edwards Ms. Danielle Chamberlin Ms. Angela Mack

The purpose of the safeguarding and response teams is to ensure that the safeguarding and protection guidelines are being implemented and to monitor and review the effectiveness of the program.

The Safeguarding Task Force meets monthly, develops best practices, reviews procedures, and suggests ways to develop a culture of safeguarding and protection in the community through communication, training, and curriculum. This group is designed to be representative of different sections of the school and led by the DSL.

The Response Team members are activated as needed depending on the specificity of the case at hand. The team will work with the case manager (usually the DSL) to investigate any cases, respond to any needs, and document fact-finding, responses, and other actions. This team



usually comprises the sectional leadership, counselors, health office (in the cases of physical harm) and DSL.

The counselors, in partnership with the safeguarding team and grade level leaders, develop the curriculum for schoolwide education programs to include specific safeguarding and protection content. This curriculum will define abuse, neglect and harassment, provide prevention and reporting strategies, and instill in our students an overall understanding that no person deserves to be abused, neglected nor harassed. Purposeful instruction in safeguarding and protection will help to create a school environment in which everyone feels safe and protected, and whereby students, employees and volunteers are encouraged and empowered to report abuse, neglect or harassment to a trusted adult, knowing they will receive comprehensive support. The curriculum is section specific and will be taught at the appropriate age level and developmental level of the students.

Multidisciplinary Team

ICS maintains relationships with outside organizations to support our efforts for the safeguarding and protection of our students. These organizations help through expert advice and resources. Organizations include, but are not limited to, national embassies, healthcare providers, non-governmental organizations, local and national law enforcement, and international organizations dedicated to child welfare. These resources are activated at the discretion of the DSL, in consultation with the Head of School.

Non-Employee Responsibilities

Parent volunteers

Parents who support the school program through volunteerism must understand and sign code of conduct. Parent volunteers must also complete appropriate Child Protection Training. The school will coordinate with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to organize and document training several times per year, including initial in-person training, virtual refresher courses, and access to online training resources equivalent to those the staff receive.

Interns

- Adult interns (18 years or older) who use our campus or work with students must comply with the relevant school policies, including the Code of Conduct.
- All participants in the ICS internship/mentorship programs will review and sign the agreements/understandings form for the Internship/Mentorship Program.
- This form will be kept on file in the division office



Visitors and Guests

All visitors and guests will be required to acknowledge the code of conduct in order to enter or utilize our campus resources.

See [Visitor Code of Conduct Form](#)



Definitions of Terms

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

*“**Child Protection** is the prevention of, and response to, exploitation, abuse, neglect, harmful practices and violence against children.”* -[Unicef](#)

Definitions of Abuse

The World Health Organization provides the following definition:

Maltreatment, sometimes referred to as child abuse and neglect, includes all forms of physical and emotional ill- treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, development or dignity. Within this broad definition, five subtypes can be distinguished – physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect and negligent treatment; emotional abuse; and exploitation. source

A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Adults/Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional (e.g. school) or community setting usually by individuals known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger (most abuse is perpetrated by someone the person knows, respects or trusts). Often adults/children may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, further complicating the problem.

The following information is excerpted from the AISA Child Protection Handbook (3rd Edition): To increase the AISA community’s awareness, this handbook focuses on four main categories of abuse and provides basic information about the physical and behavioral signs associated with each type.

Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to an adult/child. (These symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as, cutting and suicide ideation).

Signs of physical abuse

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Bodily injuries in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Refusal to discuss injuries



- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Being aggressive towards others
- Being very passive and compliant
- Chronic running away

Emotional Abuse

Is the persistent emotional ill treatment of an adult/child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on an adult/child's emotional development. It may involve: conveying to adults/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 adults/children; causing adults/children frequently to feel frightened; or the exploitation or corruption of adults/children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of an adult/child, though it may also occur alone.

Signs of emotional abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed
- Highly anxious
- Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
- Fear of new situations
- Low self-esteem
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Attention-seeking behavior
- Persistent tiredness
- Lying

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing an adult/child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the adult/child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging adults/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.



Signs of sexual abuse

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

Neglect

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

Some indicators of neglect

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



Long-Term Abuse

Long-term impact of unmitigated child abuse

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

Long-term impact of abuse

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

Identity-Based Harm

(from *CIS*)

The term *identity-based harm* describes harmful or abusive behaviors targeted at people's personal identities, such as ethnicity, gender identity, physical and mental health, neurodiversity, race, religion and sexual orientation.

Identity-based harm can manifest in many forms, including, but not limited to:

- microaggressions
- hate speech
- online harassment
- child-on-child abuse
- physical violence
- social exclusion



Child on Child Abuse

(from *TES*)

Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, financial, and/or coercive control exercised between children and young people; this includes intimate and non-intimate relationships. This means that young people's experiences of child-on-child abuse can fit within a number of other definitions of violence/abuse. As with many forms of abuse it rarely takes place in isolation. Children and young people may be abusive to each other in many different settings such as in school corridors, on local transport, parks and through social media platforms.

Types of child-on-child abuse

When thinking about child-on-child abuse the following types of abuse should be considered, as there is not one key definition.

- Relationship abuse
- Prejudice-based harm/discrimination
- Harmful sexual behavior
- Serious youth violence
- Bullying/cyber bullying

see [Bullying Prevention Handbook](#)



Child Safeguarding

The following is the child safeguarding and protection protocols at ICS:

- All employees are mandated reporters of child abuse, neglect and/or harassment
- Employees are to immediately report any suspicions to a school counselor, divisional principal or the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assemble a response team to investigate the case
- All reports will be reviewed by the response team.
- Counselors or other trusted adults will immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and divisional principal. The Head of School will be informed by Designated Safeguarding Lead
- All findings are systematically recorded by the case manager and entered into our online documentation application, CPOMS (*Appendix 1*).
- If suspicion is substantial and/or the child seems to be at risk of further abuse, the team will compile an official report that will be legally translated into Amharic.
- The report may be officially filed with local and home country authorities and child protection agencies.
- If the suspected perpetrator is a parent, or if the parents do not act in the best interest of protecting their child, the school maintains the right to contact the parents' employer, the family's embassy(s) and/or legal authorities, mandate professional counseling and/or revoke enrollment of their student(s) at ICS.
- If the suspected perpetrator is a school employee and their continued employment is determined to put children at further risk, the school maintains the right to contact legal authorities and /or the employee's embassy, mandate professional counseling and/or terminate the employment contract at ICS
- Follow-up services will be provided by the school counseling team and administration as needed

Procedures for Reporting

A student or adult can report, in person, or directly to an administrator, counselor, or Designated Safeguarding Lead. Teachers also have the option to submit an incident directly into our Child Safeguarding application (CPOMS). Reporting and follow-up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with the guidelines in this handbook. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, ICS will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process, keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority.



Cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported by the school to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate in Ethiopia, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities.

In responding to incidents of harm to children, the school may:

- Engage the student(s) involved prior to contacting parents, to allow the school to initiate the inquiry quickly and without external influence
- Consider the social-emotional needs of both students and adults involved in an inquiry and offer support as needed, either during and/or after an interview
- Have two adults present during an interview or engagement conversation, especially when the subject is sensitive and it is likely to be a difficult conversation
- Consider gender, location, and timing when deciding upon the elements of a conversation or interview
- Consult with internal reporting guidelines to ascertain next steps with respect to reporting to outside local authorities
- Consult with outside experts regarding the school's response to specific cases

Reporting and Response

Step 1a: Disclosures by Adults

- A member of staff should raise concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, a section administrator, a counselor or another member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If concerns involve the Head of School, the report should be made to the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors.
- If concerns involve the Board of Governors, the report should be made to the Head of School.
- The Designated Safeguarding lead will take detailed notes and document these notes in CPOMS.

Step 1b: Disclosures by students

If a student discloses to an adult, the adult should:

- Listen empathically without judgement
- Ask the basic, minimal 1 or 2 questions to decide if there is something of concern
 - Ask open ended questions “tell me about it?” “what happened” “what makes you say that?”
- Do not ask leading questions “did they...?”
- Tell the victim you have to report this (do not promise to maintain confidentiality)
- Afterwards immediately record verbatim what you can, either in a notebook or directly into the CPOMS incident report form. This report will be sent directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for review.



Step 2: Response & Initial Fact-Finding

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, after receiving the report and as expeditiously as possible, will:

- Take steps to secure the immediate physical safety of students or other persons, if that is a concern. If the matter is deemed to be a child protection issue, prompt action should be taken as per the Child Protection Procedures.
- If deemed necessary, activate and assemble the relevant response team members.
- Take steps to gather basic information from the student, the reporting adult and if necessary, witnesses to the incident.
- They should also note any other other relevant information regarding the incident, such as the background and history of the concern; specific observations giving names, dates, and places where possible; and reasons for concern, either by asking the member of staff to provide a written statement or by taking notes of a verbal report.
- As appropriate, the DSL will bring the concern to the attention of the Head of School, the School Leadership Team, Human Resources or Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors.
- If necessary, immediately report the matter to relevant local authorities, such as the Police or Social Welfare Department.
- At this stage concerns/allegations are neither accepted nor rejected.
- Fact finding will strive to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the student and the reporter by using:
 - Private Meetings (not group or public)
 - Discreet investigations
 - Secure Data for documentation

Step 3: Investigation & Outcomes

- The relevant school leaders will determine whether further investigation or a more expansive plan of action is required.
- All reasonable steps should be taken to protect the confidentiality of the member of staff raising the concern unless the individual waives the right to confidentiality.
- The DSL or designated counselor will document all aspects of the reporting process in CPOMS.
- Follow up actions will be documented and shared with the Response Team.



Specific Response Protocols

The following protocols pertain to harm to children from different categories of individuals. Specific response protocols for each category are needed because there are inherent differences in the types of cases, the potential for impact, and the school's role in responding. In all incidents, if the harm is potentially criminal in nature, the school will follow internal protocols based on local law for reporting to external authorities.

Non-employee Adult (e.g. parent or guardian)

When the school is concerned that a child is being unduly harmed by a non-employee adult (e.g. parent or guardian), the following steps are taken:

- Concern or allegation is shared with the following people: Counselor, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Child Protection Officer (CPO) through documentation in the current reporting system (MyConcern, CPOMS, Google Drive, etc.) by person receiving report. The CPO is designated as the Safeguarding Response Team (SRT) Leader
- SRT determines which other members of the community need to be made aware of the case (determine limits of confidentiality)
- Student is interviewed to assess for safety risks and impact of harm, usually by the counselor, CPO or both. Student may be referred to the health center/medical office for examination if injuries are present.
- Internal Reporting Guidelines are consulted to ascertain next steps with respect to reporting to outside local child protection authorities
- If parents are to be contacted, Counselor and/or CPO will consult to decide on specifics of engagement and next steps
- Feedback loop will be closed with the original reporter of concern (e.g. faculty)
- Student safety will be assessed on a regular basis to determine safety risks, monitoring levels with student and family, appropriate referrals, and desired outcomes
- Case will either stay active or be marked as closed in reporting system, depending on ongoing safety risks with child
- Any new concern or incident related to that student will restart the protocol from the beginning

Due to the specific and variable nature of incidents, timing of the response, availability of team members, and other unforeseen elements, these procedures are designed to be flexible and open to professional judgment on a case-by-case basis.



Employee adult (e.g. faculty, staff)

When a concern or allegation is reported that a school employee may have unduly harmed a student or group of students, the following steps are taken:

- Concern or allegation is shared with the CPO and an initial Safeguarding Response Team comprising the following employees: Principal, Deputy Principal, and Safeguarding Lead.
- This initial SRT meets to discuss any immediate student safety needs, implications, and mitigation plans to prevent further harm
- SRT discusses and determines which other community members need to be made aware of the case (i.e. limits of confidentiality)
- Original concern is documented in CPOMS
- Deputy Head of School is notified of investigation
- Investigation is implemented as planned, including interviewing all relevant individuals and documenting notes in secure document
- SRT reconvenes to discuss findings and recommends next steps
- Recommendations are decided and put into place as per school safeguarding and HR policies
- If the harm is potentially criminal in nature, the school will follow internal protocols based on local law for reporting to external authorities
- Feedback loop to all relevant reporters is completed by Response Team Leader or team member
- Secure documentation is finalized and kept in HR files
- A summary report is completed and reflective conversation held with Response Team members for significant cases

Due to the specific and variable nature of incidents, timing of the response, availability of team members, and other unforeseen elements, these procedures are designed to be flexible and open to professional judgment on a case-by-case basis.

Harm by other child/children

Non-sexual misconduct (e.g. physical assault, harassment, bullying)

Known as child-on-child abuse, incidents involving peers can cause significant harm and impact a student's psychological and/or physical safety. These incidents are in violation of ICS core values and behavioral expectations and therefore a response is initiated by the Deputy Principal. In such cases, disciplinary procedures outlined in the student handbooks are followed. As part of the school's response, we will take steps to ensure each child's safety, and when appropriate, engage students in restorative actions and/or impose disciplinary consequences. A trauma-informed care approach is utilized when there is a concern for the student's safety.



Any child-on-child incidents of harm which include allegations of a criminal nature will be reported to the appropriate local authorities as per internal reporting guidelines. Even in such cases, a school response may continue outside of and without clear legal resolution in order to serve the social-emotional needs of the student(s) involved, restore peer relationships, and re-establish physical and psychological safety at school for all students involved.

Sexual misconduct (e.g. atypical sexual behavior, non-consensual sexual activity, sexual assault)

Concerns or allegations that involve sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, can have a significant impact not only on students' physical or psychological safety on campus, including their academic learning and success, but their general social and emotional wellbeing beyond campus. ICS has a moral imperative to respond to such incidents with sensitivity, utilizing evidence-based frameworks on what's expected vs. what would be considered atypical behavior for the age of the child, using a trauma-informed care approach, and abiding by the school's legal responsibility as per internal protocol to report a potential criminal violation.

Sometimes, serious safeguarding concerns are surfaced to adults through peer rumors. When there is a rumor that results in an employee's concern about a student's wellbeing, the counselor will perform a wellbeing check. If the concern remains, is heightened, or a disclosure is made during the check, an investigation will commence. If not, documentation of the wellbeing check will be made and no further actions will be taken.

Child Protections Officers and School Counselors are trained to identify and respond to atypical sexual behavior in students ages 3–18. The school's response to such behavior will vary depending on the level of concern and impact on others. Intervention may involve targeted education, parental involvement, and/or report to external authorities. Even in cases where a report must be made to external authorities, a school response may continue outside of and without clear legal resolution in order to serve the safety and social-emotional needs of the student(s) involved, restore peer relationships, and re-establish physical and psychological safety at school for all students involved.

- Concern or allegation is shared with the following employees: Designated Safeguarding Lead/s, Counselor and Principal/Deputy Principal. A Safeguarding Response Team Leader is identified from this group.
- SRT meets to discuss any immediate student safety needs, implications, and mitigation plans to prevent further harm
- SRT discusses and determines which other community members need to be made aware of the case (i.e. limits of confidentiality)
- Safeguarding concern is securely documented in current reporting system (MyConcern, CPOMS, Google Drive, etc.) by person receiving report.
- All students involved are interviewed to assess allegations, safety risks and impact of harm, usually by the student's counselor, DSL or both. (It is recommended to have two employees present in the student interviews, given the sensitive nature of the content.)



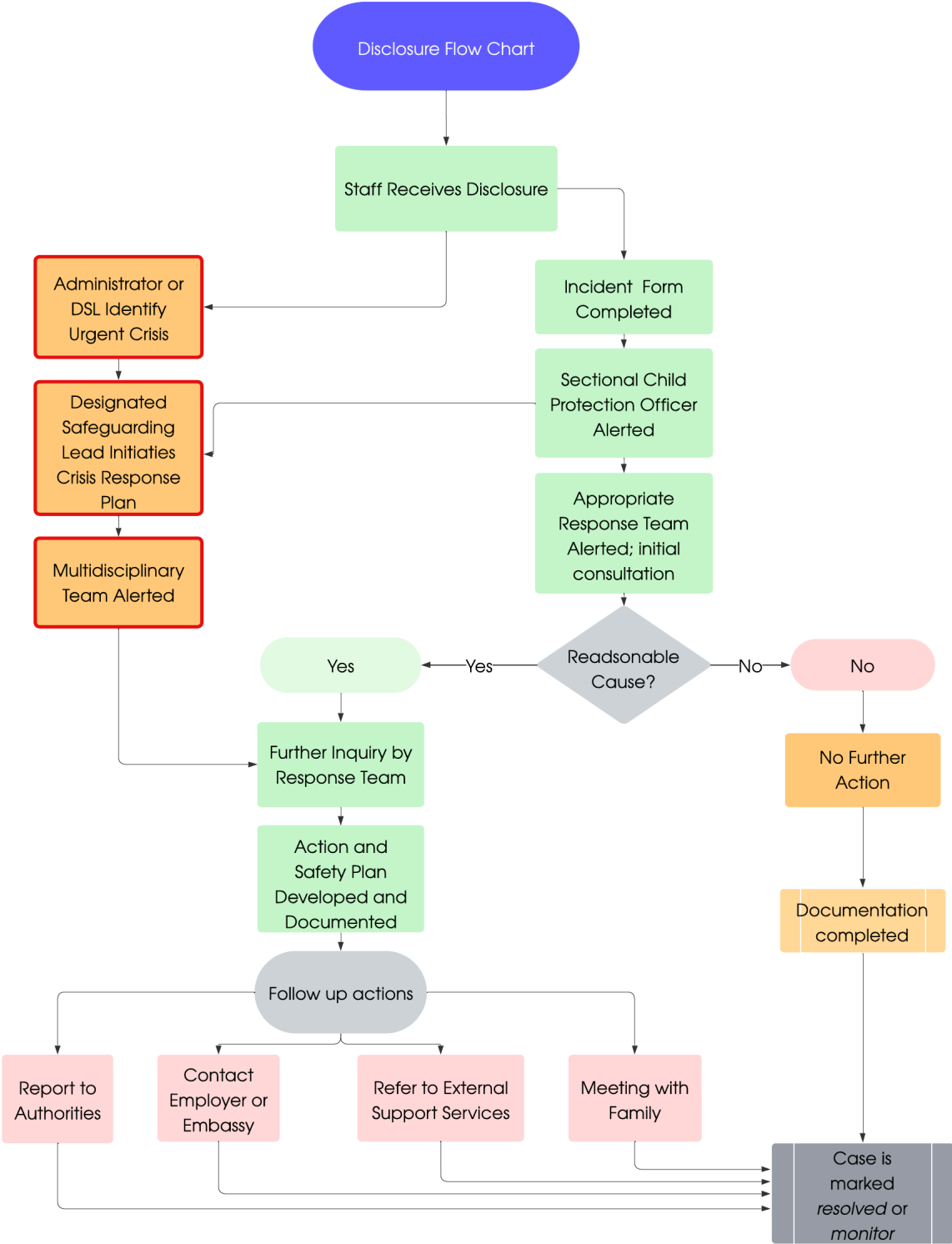
- Evidence presented that may contain student sexualized images should not be viewed by employees, but may be preserved for external authorities to view
- Parents are informed about concerns or allegations and student interviews by members of the response team
- Response team meet after interviews are completed and review documentation
- Reporting Guidelines are consulted to ascertain next steps with respect to reporting to local authorities
- If the harm is potentially criminal in nature, the school will follow internal protocols based on local law for reporting to external authorities
- Student impact and wellbeing will be assessed through counselor check-ins on minimum weekly basis to determine safety risks, appropriate referrals, and any additional actions necessary for healing and reconciliation, if appropriate
- Restorative conversations and actions, if appropriate and with consent from all parties, may be facilitated by counselors or DSL. Such actions may include targeted education on impact vs. intent, sexual consent, etc. Objectives of restorative actions would be to provide the students voice to play a role in healing and to prevent further harm
- Case will either stay active or be marked as closed in reporting system, depending on ongoing wellbeing and safety risks with students
- Feedback loop will be closed with the original reporter(s) of concern
- A summary report is completed and reflective conversation held with Response Team members for significant cases

Harm to self

Known as self-harm or suicide ideation, when a concern is raised that a student is actively or considering hurting themselves physically, the response will be led by the social-emotional support team of the divisional counselor and student support staff. Each division has an age-appropriate protocol to respond to such concerns, which includes an initial risk screening and development of a safety plan. Documentation of the concern and the school's response is done in the school's reporting system for secure and confidential records.



Disclosure Flowchart





Follow-up Care and Services

Beyond our legal obligation to report suspected abuse, neglect and/or harassment, we believe we have a moral and ethical obligation to assist our families with follow-up care and services that will enable them to move forward in a healthy manner. Therefore, we offer the following post-traumatic intervention strategies and work closely with families to develop an appropriate plan of action. Because each experience of abuse, neglect or harassment is unique, so are the intervention strategies applied. Below you will find the types of support we are able to provide to our students and families in need.

ICS provides:

- Preliminary counseling and guidance in a confidential and supportive environment
- Referrals to licensed counselors, therapists or mental health professionals for continued individual or family therapy outside the school setting
- Weekly check-ins with student/parents to monitor the intervention plan, share feedback on progress, and revise strategies as needed
- Supportive resources such as websites, articles, books, support blogs, etc.

Safeguarding During School Closures, Evenings, Weekends, and Holiday Breaks

There are times when school is closed for regular sessions, but community members may still be present on campus. During these periods, safeguarding procedures must be adapted to reflect the limited presence of school support leaders. The following guidelines apply when school is out of session, including late evenings, weekends, holidays, and school breaks.

1. Designated Safeguarding Officer

During all closures, a safeguarding officer will be assigned to campus.

- In most cases, this will be the **Chief Security Officer (CSO)**.
- If the CSO is unavailable, the **Shift Commander** will serve as the acting safeguarding officer.

2. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

If a concern arises regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child/community member:

- Any staff member or community member may report the concern to a **security officer**.
- The security officer will immediately notify the **CSO or Shift Commander**, who will respond at once to ensure safety remains the top priority.
- Security guards who receive reports from a child, parent, or guest, should escort them to the **CSO or Shift Commander**.



- **CSO or Shift Commander** will activate safeguarding process

3. Reporting Tools and Follow-Up

- **Urgent concerns** should be reported directly to the **CSO (or Shift Commander)** without delay. The online form can be completed afterward for documentation.
- The **CSO** will first ensure the scene is safe, then **activate the safeguarding procedure** by contacting the **Head of School (HoS)** or their **designee**.
- The HoS will determine the most appropriate person to follow up and document the case in line with standard safeguarding procedures.
- The **online safeguarding reporting form** remains active during closures and can be used at any time.

4. Leadership Availability

School leaders—including the HoS, Deputy HoS, Principals, Deputy Principals, and the Executive Director of Learning and Innovation—remain **on-call via WhatsApp** throughout all breaks to support any safeguarding response deemed necessary by the **HoS**.

Non-Retaliation/Whistleblowing Policy

Whistleblowing Definition

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers in the school community. A ‘whistleblower’ is a person who raises a concern about anything they witness or become aware of which is seen to be inappropriate, negligent, illegal or in any way putting the health and safety of school community members at risk.

All ICS employees have a responsibility to report any concerns about poor or unsafe practices, including in relation to the care and protection of staff and/or student(s) at ICS. If the person believes that best practice in this area is not being adhered to or that a practice may put a staff and/or student(s) at risk, they should report the concern to the Principal or Child Protection Lead. If the concern relates to the Division Lead, they should contact the Deputy Head of School. Any whistleblowing concerns can also be raised directly with the School Board. Concerns raised under this Whistleblowing Policy are distinct from concerns or allegations about an adult’s suitability to work with or have access to children. No member of staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine concern about unsafe practices, provided they do so in good faith and follow the whistleblowing procedures.

The ‘whistleblower’ would see this concern as genuine and would raise the concern in good faith, keeping the wellness of students at the forefront. If staff are uncertain about whether their concerns fall under the ‘whistleblower’ category, they should check with the Principal or Child Protection Lead. All adults have a responsibility to raise concerns if they relate to child



protection and the safety of the staff or students. If an adult has a concern that is beyond the scope of a direct supervisor, they should report immediately to a division lead.

If the concern relates to the Division Lead or there is a conflict of interest, the 'whistleblower' should report the concern to the Head of School. The concern should be raised as quickly as possible. Dealing with a concern raised by a whistleblower, the leadership member or their representative should arrange a meeting with the 'whistleblower' as soon as possible after the concern is brought to their attention. The leadership member or their representative should record the concerns and follow up as required. Recorded concerns and all related documentation will be kept in a confidential file indefinitely.

If the person who is responsible for compiling the file leaves the school, he/she is required to pass on the files to HR and the Deputy Head of School. The leadership member or their representative will do their best to ensure the identity of the whistleblower will remain confidential. It is often not possible to maintain confidentiality, and if this is the case, it will be explained to the 'whistleblower'. The 'whistleblower' will be informed of the outcome of the investigation as appropriate. If the complaint or reported concern is proved to be unfounded, no action will be taken against the 'whistleblower' if the concern was raised in good faith. If an employee misuses this policy by making malicious or repeated complaints that are unsubstantiated, actions may be taken against them according to the Code of Conduct/Staff Handbook.

Concerns Raised Against a Member of Senior Leadership Team

If a 'whistleblower' concern is raised regarding a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the whistleblower should report the matter to the Child Protection Lead and the same procedures are followed.

Self-Reporting

If a member of staff has a personal difficulty (such as medical, mental, emotional, physical) which could impact on their ability to carry out their job responsibilities or could potentially put the health, safety and wellbeing of students or staff at risk, they have a responsibility to inform their supervisor or Senior Leadership Team so that support can be provided and necessary measures taken. While such reporting will remain confidential in most situations, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise welfare or safety concerns of others. The school recognizes that it may be stressful and challenging to raise these concerns to a member of the leadership team and will offer support to the whistleblower. Considerations about who the whistleblower discloses to and who investigates, based on professional and personal connections with the accused and whistleblower, should be taken into account.



Allegations Against Staff or Other Adults

In alignment with our Core Values, ICS strives to create a culture that facilitates taking care of others through a responsible disclosure of information relating to suspected wrongdoing or misconduct in the workplace. Whistleblowing occurs when an employee reports suspected wrongdoing or misconduct in the workplace. This policy and its procedures can be used by staff to raise concerns and make a report without fear of victimization or disadvantage.

Concerns covered include (but are not limited to):

- actions which endanger the health or safety of any individual - self, students, other employees, the public;
- damage or danger to the environment;
- a criminal offense;
- dishonesty, covering up wrongdoing;
- theft of or misusing school funds;
- serious breach of professional standards and policies outlined in the Staff Handbook;
- concern for the welfare or safeguarding of a child.

Suspicious and allegations of child abuse by teaching staff, non-teaching staff, outsourced staff, service providers, volunteers or visitors will be responded to in a manner which best ensures the student's immediate and long-term safety. If an allegation is made against an adult or an adult has put a student at risk, or acted inappropriately, this shall be reported to Human Resources or Senior Leadership and will be managed by HR or the Designated Safeguarding lead. If the allegation is made against the DSL, it will be managed by HR or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the allegation is made against a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the case will be handled by the Head of School. Allegations against the Head of School will be managed by the Board of Governors. All allegations will be taken seriously and treated without favoritism or prejudice.

If the school determines that teaching staff, non-teaching staff, outsourced staff, service providers, volunteers or visitors has directly or indirectly participated in any form of abuse or neglect toward or against a student/staff, the individual will face disciplinary action. Disciplinary action could include suspension or dismissal of an employee, termination of a contract or volunteer privileges and informing local authorities, and/or appropriate consulate. If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a school disciplinary enquiry may still be undertaken to assess the suitability of this individual to work with students.

All concerns regarding the suitability of any person to work with students will be based on facts. Allegations will be treated in a confidential manner and the rights of adults will be respected. However, written records of concerns will be kept and stored securely. If concerns have been raised about an adult's behavior around children, Human Resources should keep the records in their personnel file indefinitely and should keep records regardless of whether the allegations were unfounded. However, if the allegations are found to be malicious, the records should be destroyed immediately.



Once an employee leaves the organization, it is the responsibility of the Human Resources to ensure the personnel file is securely stored. No member of staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine concern about unsafe practices, provided they do so in good faith and follow the whistleblowing procedures.

How to report a concern

If an individual has a genuine concern about a risk, malpractice, or wrongdoing of a colleague, it is to be reported to any one of the following:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Child Protection Officers
- Human Resources
- Section Administrator (principal) (if the concern involves the DSL/dDSL)
- Head of School
- Board of Governors (if the concern involves the Head of School)

Where there is a concern regarding the well-being of a student, a report must be made immediately to the DSL, appropriate school counselor, or principal, in accordance with Child Protection reporting protocol. These allegations will be documented in CPOMs according to the “Adult Allegations” flowchart. (Appendix 2)

See [Reporting and Response](#)



Crisis Management Protocols

ICS Safeguarding & Protection Crisis Management Protocol

When a crisis situation presents, the Child Safeguarding Response Team will evaluate the Risk Assessment form to determine if it is a Child Safeguarding & Protection Crisis.

See [Risk Assessment Form](#)

Level 1: Is the adult/child in immediate physical danger or presents with current injuries?

- If a situation is level 2-5 the Child Safeguarding & Protection team would follow up.
- The Child Safeguarding & Protection crisis team immediately meets when a student witnesses or experiences any of the events below on or off campus.
- Life-threatening illnesses/injuries, for example disfigurement and injury dismemberment, road, train, or maritime accidents, assaults, suicide attempts, fires/arson, explosions
- Fatal, violent, or unexpected illnesses/injuries, for example fatal accidents, homicides, suicides, fire/arson, explosions
- Threatened death, for example due to human aggression (e.g., robbery, mugging, or rape); and/or injury domestic violence (e.g., child or spouse battery/abuse), kidnappings
- Acts of War, for example invasions, terrorist attacks, hostage-taking, prisoners of war, torture, hijackings, assassinations
- Natural Disasters, for example drought/famine, hurricanes, floods, fires, earthquakes; tornadoes, avalanches/landslides, volcanic eruptions, lightning strikes, tsunamis
- Man-Made/Industrial Accidents, for example airline crashes, exposure to toxic chemicals, nuclear accidents, toxic waste, dam failures, construction/plant accidents
- Sexual Assault/Predatory Behavior, for example sexual or psychological assault, rape, online or in-person harassment/threatening language

Child Protection Crisis Management Process:

1. Crisis is reported to DSL or Deputy DSL, if the DSL is not available.
 - a. Unless otherwise determined, the process will follow through outline shared in the [Emergency Response Handbook](#).
2. Provide care for people involved in crisis and stabilize situation, communicate responsibilities to bystanders for their immediate response
 - a. Contact response team to help as determined by the crisis
 - b. DSL provides report to Head of School regarding crisis
3. The DSL would develop the appropriate response team based on division involved or cross divisional
 - a. Determine which members may have a conflict of interest in developing this team based on divisional or personal relationships
4. The DSL would schedule an immediate response team meeting
 - a. Determine whether the crisis should be handed to the Head of School, Chief Security Officer, or other Senior Leadership Team Member, otherwise:



- i. Determine the frequency of the crisis team follow up meetings and schedule with all members attending to ensure transparency and excellent communication.
 - ii. Identify additional help needed
 - iii. Delegate members to communicate with the ancillary help that is determined and follow up with the DSL
 - iv. Update the HOS of the initial meeting and plan.
5. Safety Plan(s) and Psychological Triage and referral for bystanders who were affected.
 - a. Psychological Triage guide
 - b. CIS Safety plan template
6. Crisis management team will continue with follow up meetings and communication as the crisis determines.
 - a. Develop reentry plan if necessary
 - i. Reentry plan guide
 - ii. Personal Safety Plan guide
7. DSL will facilitate a closure Response Team meeting to debrief and review takeaways.

Crisis Communication Notification System

When the Designated Safeguarding Lead is notified, they will notify relevant members of the response team directly or via an online notification. The Head of School will direct the communication to the community and determine whether to execute the schoolwide notification system.

For other Crises, please see the [Emergency Response Handbook](#)

Safeguarding On Campus

All students have the right to respect and privacy. It is an expectation that students will use the toilet or changing room in a safe, efficient and orderly manner and be treated fairly with respect for their privacy and dignity. However, an appropriate level of supervision must be implemented to safeguard students and to satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the students concerned.

Use of Toilets and Changing Rooms

- Toilets on campus are labeled as ADULT or STUDENT bathrooms. For normal use, community members and guests should use the appropriate toilet.
- Staff should not use the toilet, change, or shower in the same place as students or in a student toilet or changing room.
- Parents must teach children independent clothes changing skills.



- Male staff must not enter female toilets or changing rooms and vice-versa (unless in an emergency situation). All adults should avoid being in the changing rooms or toilets without just cause.
- Cleaning staff should only clean the toilets or changing rooms when students are not in the changing room or toilets. Cleaners should leave the toilet or changing room if a student enters.
- This also applies to all field trips and sporting events on campus and off.

However, for the protections of students, adults are allowed to enter student bathrooms when there is a reasonable concern for a student's health or safety. Adults must announce before they enter and will try to have a second adult on hand.

Safeguarding During School Trips

Rooming

Students should not be in a room or tent on their own overnight. Students should not sleep in the same room as adults.

The only exceptions are:

- if a student has a sickness or injury which is deemed by a certified medical professional (e.g. school nurse) to require regular monitoring in which case that child may stay in the same room as a medical professional.
- If a student has a sickness which is deemed contagious and potentially hazardous for others, once the parent has been notified, if they cannot be collected, in that case they can sleep on their own with the health professional immediately next door. Student room doors must be locked at night, but teachers must have a key.

Use of Public Toilets (away from school)

When students are using public toilets, a teacher must be situated close to the toilet building and if appropriate in the area outside the toilet cubicles. Students should not use public toilets on their own, they must enter in pairs or larger groups. Male teachers should not use urinals when ICS students are present. Male teachers are encouraged to use toilet cubicles even when students are not in sight to avoid any potential inappropriate encounter or allegation regarding a student.

Mobile Phones

All teachers should carry a charged mobile phone and school office and Leadership Team telephone numbers in case of emergencies/reporting etc.



Guidance Protocol for Handling Inappropriate Sexualized Behaviors in Young Children (Ages 3–8)

When behaviors such as dancing while rubbing against each other or placing hands inside one another’s pants occur — especially out of the teacher’s view — it is essential to intervene calmly, clearly, and with an educational focus centered on care and protection.

1. Framing the Situation

At this age, some degree of body exploration can be part of normal child development. However, when it involves invasion of another’s body, secrecy, repetition, or imitation of adult behaviors, it becomes inappropriate and requires guided intervention.

The goal is not to punish, but to protect, guide, and understand the context and meaning of what occurred.

2. Initial School Intervention

- Interrupt the behavior firmly but without dramatizing or shaming the children.
- Name what happened in simple terms (“It’s not okay to touch another person’s body without permission”).
- Document the incident and inform the counseling or pastoral care team as well as the families.
- Reinforce adult supervision in the spaces where the incident took place.

3. Work with the Children

- Speak individually with each child in a caring, non-judgmental way to understand whether it was a game, an imitation, or something they have seen.
- Reinforce body boundaries, respect, and consent, using age-appropriate language (“Your body belongs to you,” “Private parts are not for others to touch”).
- Encourage cooperative play and group activities that foster respect and empathy.

4. Communication with Families

- Describe the behavior factually, without labeling or blaming (“Some inappropriate behaviors between peers have appeared, which we are addressing in an educational way”).
- Recommend that families talk calmly with their children at home, without punishment, reinforcing the value of respect and personal boundaries.
- If there are signs of exposure to inappropriate content or situations, advise seeking professional guidance.

5. Institutional Reflection

- Review supervision routines and environmental factors that may have enabled the situation.
- Consider implementing classroom workshops on emotional education and body safety.
- If behaviors persist, seek follow-up from the counseling team or an external specialist.



Adult Safeguarding

The following is the adult safeguarding and protection protocols at ICS:

- All employees are encouraged to report any abuse that may be directed towards adults in our community.
- Employees are to immediately report any suspicions of adult abuse to Human Resources, a divisional principal, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- All reports will be reviewed by Human Resources, with the DSL if necessary.
- The Head of School will be informed by Human Resources or the DSL.
- A response team, led by Human Resources, will be created to investigate the case.
- All findings are systematically recorded by the team and placed in the adult's cumulative file for documentation of the suspected incident for ICS.
- If suspicion is substantial and/or the adult seems to be at risk of further abuse, the team will compile an official report that will be legally translated into Amharic if an Amharic speaking adult is involved.
- The report may be officially filed with local and home country authorities and Safeguarding & Protection agencies.
- If the alleged perpetrator is a parent or family member, or if parents do not act in the best interest of protecting their child, the school maintains the right to contact the parents' employer, the family's embassy(s) and/or legal authorities, mandate professional counseling and/or revoke enrollment of their student(s) at ICS.
- If the alleged perpetrator is a school employee and their continued employment is determined to put other adult/children at further risk, the school maintains the right to contact legal authorities and /or the employee's embassy, mandate professional counseling and/or terminate the employment contract at ICS
- Follow-up services will be provided by the school counseling team and administration as needed

Confidentiality

ICS recognizes confidentiality as the principle of keeping secure from others information given by, observed, or about an individual in the course of any medical, psychological, or child protection/safeguarding context for all ICS staff/students.

A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a student nor should they agree with a student to keep a secret regarding a safety concern. All safety concerns must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a "need to know basis" only. Confidentiality will be expected from any staff receiving information generated from a Child Protection/Safeguarding context.

Staff will maintain confidentiality by not projecting attendance or any screen in PowerSchool or email for others to view as to not inadvertently share confidential information on the screen.



All ICS staff will acknowledge the definition of confidentiality and comply with all confidentiality guidelines annually. It is expected that all staff read, sign and comply with these standards annually.

Recruiting and Screening

Screening of Employees, Contracted Staff and Volunteers:

At ICS, we are committed to making sure that our staff, faculty and outside service providers (ASA, tutoring, music lessons, etc.) have been properly and rigorously screened before working with children. We utilize the [Safer Recruiting Practices](#) as developed by the International Task Force on Child Protection to guide our hiring practices. ICS is also committed to ensuring that all outside contracted workers have provided documentation of background checks and screenings.

During the Recruitment Process

[from the International Taskforce on Child Protection, *Safer Recruitment*, February 2024]

Policy

- ICS’s safeguarding and child protection policies include a safer recruitment policy, clearly written recruitment and selection procedures and process for the review and validation of references.
- Personnel who carry out the recruitment and selection process should include two or more recruiters whose names are recorded in each applicant’s file.
- The school’s commitment to safeguarding and safer recruitment will be communicated throughout the process, including recruitment presentations, individual meetings, and written communications.
- ICS documents and maintains comprehensive files for applicants, candidates, and employees, in accordance with applicable legal requirements.
- ICS maintains full responsibility for adherence to safer recruitment practices, whether conducted by the school or through the work of a recruitment agency.

Application form

- An application form is used to collect and document each applicant’s full work history.
- A CV is not acceptable in place of an application form.
- The application form should require a list of all qualifications earned and a complete employment history, including dates, with any gaps in employment explained. At each stage, the reason for leaving a job should be recorded.



- The application form should include the opportunity to disclose any criminal offenses and /or involvement in disciplinary procedures including outcomes, subject to applicable legal requirements.
- The application will be cross-referenced with additional checks and information.

References

The ICS application form asks for the names and contact details of three referees, one being the current or most recent employer. All referees should be from people who supervised the applicant (minimally at the Assistant Principal level). References should be obtained directly from the school(s) where the applicant worked. If a referee is now working in a new setting, the reference should be provided by the school's Human Resource department.

Key point: Referees must be able to verify whether or not any low-level concerns existed about the applicant's behavior.

Note: In some instances, an Assistant Principal may not be aware of child protection concerns that were raised about the individual for whom they are asked to provide a reference. Schools requesting a reference should clearly state on each reference request that referees should be in a position to comment on the candidate's suitability to work with children. Schools can also encourage referees, where appropriate, to ask the school head or human resources department whether there is any information about the applicant which should be included in the reference. Effective school practice requires the head of each school where references are being checked to approve the reference before it is provided to the hiring school or to a recruitment agency representing the applicant.

- The application form should clearly state that the recruiter reserves the right to contact all previous employers and that the recruiter will contact the last workplace where the applicant interacted directly with children.
- The application form should include specific minimum information for each referee (i.e. name, current role and business email address, role in relation to applicant and dates covered).
- The recruiter or school verifies each referee's title, role and relationship with the applicant. Referee identities and contact details are checked via professional directories where possible, including web search and social media. The dates provided are checked against applicant history and open sources.
- Referees should be able to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children and will be asked to explicitly state whether or not any substantiated allegations were made.
- ICS follows up on a minimum of two of the written references by phone or video call, to verify that the referee wrote the reference, and to follow up any concerns or queries. Reference verification calls should be made by the same person.
- Contact with referees should be made through a school phone number and or verified school email address and should be documented in writing.
- Open letters of reference ('To whom it may concern') are not acceptable.



- References may be requested at different stages but where possible should always be available *before* the final interviews, so that any problems can be raised.
- When references are received, they should be scrutinized against the information provided on the application form to verify whether or not the applicant has worked continuously without gaps. If gaps exist, queries should be made as to the circumstances.
- Should an 'agency' be listed as a reference, contact should be made with the agency personnel representing the applicant.

Interview

- The interview process includes:
 - a consistent interviewer/panel for all applicants for each position;
 - child safeguarding-related questions probing specific cases/scenarios and the applicant's awareness and mindset on child abuse prevention, recognition, intervention, and reporting during the first round of applicant interviews;
 - a safeguarding question specifically relevant to the role;
 - questions to probe short term positions, moving from paid to unpaid roles, gaps in employment, career changes; and
 - detailed notes of all interviews taken by the interviewer/panelists during the interview, stored in each applicant's file, and;
 - the interview panel should affirm the outcome in writing, using an agreed format for the documentation and review of interview notes for the files.

Shortlisting

- All applications should be scrutinized for dates of employment and any gaps or discrepancies, and link to the person specification and job description.
- At least two people who have completed safer recruitment training should be involved in this process and the applications should be judged against agreed criteria, which includes safeguarding.

Pre-employment checks

- Where the in-country laws permit, the school conducts an internet and social media search (for example, on Google) of each applicant including all variations of names listed on their application. Searches include the words "child protection" and "safeguarding" and the names of current or previous schools
- The school reviews sex offender websites (if they exist) for each of the countries and local jurisdictions where the applicant has lived.
- The school reviews any teacher prohibition lists in the country where the applicant qualified as a teacher. This review is applicable even if the applicant is applying for a non-teaching position.
- The school conducts criminal record checks that include, where possible, all countries where applicants have lived for 6 months or more within the previous 10 years (including



their home country, if appropriate). 'Cautions' or 'words of warning' are investigated further.

- If available, 'enhanced' police background checks are required.
- Where it is not possible to carry out a check for one or more of these countries, additional measures are put in place to compensate for this gap. For example, an additional reference may be sought.
- The school verifies the applicant's current teaching certification and educational diploma/transcript of their highest-level qualification, reviewing the original documents where possible.
- The school requests copies of the applicant's birth certificate and passport(s) to check if their name has changed by any legal means (identity card, birth certificate, marriage/divorce, passport verification, etc.) Passport numbers should be checked against police certificates for date and number discrepancies.

Onboarding

- The school offers conditional letters of employment including:
 - a declaration of full disclosure and acknowledgment that the employment agreement and subsequent employment may be terminated immediately for misrepresentation; and
 - the contract offer is contingent on the successful completion of all criminal records and background checks.
- ICS maintains a comprehensive, secure, centralized safeguarding record-keeping system which includes all applicant and employee recruitment and selection documents in compliance with the country's legal system.
- School volunteers, contractors, faculty and staff undergo regular, systematic professional training on student safeguarding in all educational environments for which they are responsible, including boarding facilities, homestay, residential arrangements, excursions, trips and student exchanges. Topics include child abuse prevention, recognition, intervention, and reporting.
- ICS's Code of Conduct for faculty and staff, including a section on disciplinary procedures, is reviewed and signed alongside the employment contract. These include clear statements of unacceptable conduct which may lead to suspension and/or dismissal.
- All employees are required to take online training on child protection as part of the orientation process during which there will also be a review of this handbook. A similar training will be conducted with the local staff in Amharic as well.
- The school should have an on-boarding and induction program which includes student safeguarding and how to manage concerns and allegations about adults who work with children. Supervision and the appraisal cycle should include discussion of safeguarding understanding and professional development needs.

Additionally, temporary contractors/consultants will sign a child safeguarding and protection form and are bound by their sponsoring organizations.



ISSAAA Coaches, courtesy, temporary and family ID holders will sign a child protection form when they receive their badge.

Ongoing Staff Training

All ICS staff must complete the full Safeguarding & Protection training issued by the Safeguarding & Protection Team annually. This includes but is not limited to:

- 1) All English speaking staff of every division will complete modules assigned in Educare by deadlines given.
 - a) All staff will send completed certificates to their divisional office.
- 2) All Non-English speaking staff will attend the Amharic Safeguarding & Protection Training Annually.
- 3) All Staff in every division will attend the child protection/safeguarding training held during orientation week which includes ICS specific Safeguarding & Protection policy and information.
- 4) Each division will include Safeguarding & Protection Education once a semester given by the Safeguarding & Protection Team.
- 5) New staff will complete the online Child Protection for International Schools training by Educare as part of the induction process.
- 6) In addition, the designated members of the Safeguarding & Protection Team will undertake an outside agency training every year to keep his or her knowledge and skills up to date.
- 7) Head of School, Deputy Head of School and Divisional Principals will undertake an additional training with the Safeguarding & Protection Team every two years by an outside agency.
- 8) Head of School will coordinate with CMO & Board Liason for Child Safeguarding & Protection on a quarterly basis and as emergent needs arise.
- 9) All staff will read and agree to the child protection policy annually.

The HR Manager supported by the Safeguarding & Protection Team and divisions will keep detailed records of all Safeguarding & Protection training and will issue reminders when training updates are required.



Annual Training Schedule

Trainer	Assigned Employee Groups		
Safeguarding & Protection Lead and translator			
Guards	Cleaning staff	Cafeteria and Canteen staff	Gardeners
Maintenance	Finance/Procurement	Copy Center	All other non-English speaking staff
Counselors and Safeguarding & Protection Lead			
Orientation week all English speaking staff	All professional teaching staff and educational assistants (Twice annually)	Board members	ES MS and HS Leadership Teams
Activities Office			
Outside Activity Providers			
<p>Safeguarding & Protection Training is included as part of Induction for all new staff.</p> <p>Additionally, we offer training at points over the school year to ensure any new staff who missed induction or staff in need of a refresher course are trained.</p>			



Student Training

Each Section will offer specific age appropriate child safeguarding & protection education annually and offer the education to parents.

Safeguarding & Protection posters will be posted around the ICS campus educating all employees, students and community members on how to report any safeguarding & protection concerns.

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
<p>ES Counselors meet with every grade level to complete a series of Child Protection sessions to ensure the curriculum is covered. This is reviewed in small groups in April for any new students.</p>	<p>MS Counselor works with advisory teachers to plan and deliver the Child Protection curriculum.</p>	<p>HS Counselors meet through grade level advisors for age appropriate child safeguarding education annually</p> <p>Comprehensive Sexual Education Course annually</p>
<p>The Safeguarding & Protection curriculum is documented by the counselors.</p>		

Online Learning Safeguards

This section clarifies specific Safeguarding & Protection considerations during online learning.

During the online learning, all communication between teachers and students will be done through assigned ICS identities and on the following approved platforms. The counselors will adhere to the International School Counselor Association guidelines for confidentiality and privacy.

ICS Online Learning Approved Platforms

- Google Workspace for Education and associated chrome extensions
- Google Meet
- Padlet
- Screencastify
- Toddle
- Zoom



Online Meetings/Conferencing Guidelines for Parents

All video conferencing will be done through Google Meet/ Zoom. Google Meet is a school-managed platform and all settings and recordings can be monitored and managed by the school.

As part of our online learning, teachers will be meeting with your child synchronously during designated class times. They may also meet with your child 1:1 during office hours. When a teacher sets up an intentional 1:1 meeting with your child, then ES will invite parents by a calendar invite and MS/HS will notify parents by email. Some of these meetings may be recorded for instructional and internal school-related purposes.

These meetings are part of our regular teaching and learning process, ICS assumes general parental consent for all these meetings.

A few child-safeguarding notes:

1. As much as possible, please ensure your child is in a public or neutral space (background is a wall, for example) when they meet online or that you are within hearing distance.
 - a. We ask that children’s bedrooms are not visible during 1:1 calls.
2. Students should be wearing school appropriate clothes during online meetings.
3. If you think something inappropriate happens during a meeting, please contact the teacher and/or the divisional leadership team.

Online Tools

As part of our ICS teaching and learning process, our teachers use various educational technology tools available from the market. ICS chooses these tools based on their compliance with privacy, security, and child protection regulations. Since these tools are part of our educational delivery, ICS assumes general parental consent to the use of these tools.

For safeguards regarding AI, please refer to the [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Policy](#)

If you have any questions or concerns please send an email to the divisional office at:

es.office@icsaddis.org
ms.office@icsaddis.org
hs.office@icsaddis.org

Online Meetings/Conferencing Guidelines for Teachers

All video conferencing will be done through Google Meet. Google Meet is a school-managed platform and all settings and recordings can be monitored and managed by the school.



Attending video conferences in whole and small groups is part of the regular teaching and learning at ICS. Sometimes, teachers/counselors may need to work with students 1:1 for instructional purposes. As with all learning both on-campus and online at ICS, our Child Safeguarding Policies and procedures continue to guide our practice. However, due to the specific nature of online learning, we have provided the following guidelines to support our educational practice:

- When communicating digitally with students, use only ICS-approved modes of communication (Toddle, Google Classroom, ICS email accounts, etc.).
- Contact should be observable and interruptible.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries - avoid conduct that any reasonable person might question.
- Do not use personal accounts or social media (including WhatsApp) for any direct student contact or communication.
- With any Google Meet meetings for online classroom learning, ensure your divisional admin team has access/ability to join the meeting.
- In Google Meet meetings, allow students to opt-out of the video option at any point, if need be. We promote students' video presence and connection during any meeting but in some special circumstances, teachers may allow students to opt-out of the video option.
- If there are 1:1 online meetings of any nature between a student and teacher/counselor/administrator these need to be properly recorded as minutes/transcript form or video recorded.
- If any student concerns arise, continue to communicate directly to the student's counselor and/or an Administrator about these concerns.
- If any Child Safeguarding concerns arise during online learning, continue to contact your Principal/ Counselor within 24 hours of your concern.
- Seek educational solutions to educational problems. Ask if you are not sure!

Before a Meeting

- All intentional 1:1 meetings must be pre-arranged and invite the student through a Google Calendar invite using the default Google Meet video conference link. ES will invite parents by the calendar invite. MS/HS will notify parents by email (inform them that the meeting will be recorded for school purposes).
- Teachers must set up all meetings through the following platform and invite the following individuals:
 - EY - G5 - Google Calendar invite with the parents
 - MS - invite students to drop in teacher office hours, small group, and whole class sessions through Google Classroom that includes the Google Meet code, remembering to reset the automatic Google Meet link. Please see the ICS Tech Dashboard for Google Meet Tutorials.



- HS - for 1:1 meetings a calendar invite will be sent; for drop in teacher office hours/small group/whole class sessions the Google Meet link will be shared on the respective Google Classroom.

During a Meeting

Teachers must:

- Adhere to the ICS Code of Conduct and Safeguarding & Protection Policy at all times
- Be in ICS-approved dress at all times when visible online, use appropriate language and challenge any inappropriate language or comments.
- The Teacher ends the call - (student(s) leave first) minutes before ending the call.

Students must:

- Use appropriate language at all times.
- Use neutral language at all times in order to prevent any misunderstanding of intent
- Respect other student's right to privacy.
- Be dressed in accordance with the ICS section dress code at all times when visible online
- Follow all school rules

After the meeting

Teachers must:

- Rename any recording that is automatically stored in their personal Google Drive (Meet Recording Folder) and follows the naming convention: (es/ms/hs)_(course)_(yy-mm-dd)
- Notify parents and guardians using appropriate form email if the meeting was not pre-arranged. (MS form email)
- All staff and parents must periodically remind students of the potential dangers of sharing personal information on the internet, uploading photographs, online harassment, and the potential for scams.



Media and Communications Protocols

The purpose of these protocols is to provide clear direction regarding the use of images on official and unofficial communication platforms and communications between ICS employees and students. There will be consequences for any violation of these protocols.

Photos of Students

As a school, we do get permission from parents to use photos and videos of students and products completed by students on official ICS social media, printed and other communication and marketing platforms.

We do not get permission from parents to use photos or videos of their students or products completed by students for use on personal social media accounts, presentations, printed material or on other personal media or communication platforms. When you represent ICS on social media (official or personal), you must adhere to these policies.

Anything posted/shared on an ICS official platform **MUST** follow the “NO-PHOTO” list of students. For employees, this can be found in the Employee Center.

Official ICS Communication Platforms and Accounts includes but is not limited to:

- ICS Facebook page
- ICS Twitter Accounts
- ICS Instagram Accounts
- ICS Website
- ICS Community FB page
- ICS Alumni Page
- ICS Google websites, such as Employee Center, Employee Directory, Divisional Handbooks, ICS Weekly
- ICS Email accounts
- ICS Printed Documents
- ICS Posters on Campus
- ICS Presentations to parents
- ICS Sponsored presentations at conferences
- ICS recruitment materials
- Toddle
- Powerschool
- Google classroom
- Anything that is used for ICS business, communications or marketing purposes, is an official use.

If you are posting as a representative of ICS and sharing ICS practices, programs and/or classroom work, you will need to pause and make sure you are following these protocols.



If you are at a **public** ICS event and are snapping photos of **your own child** and want to post these on your personal social media and there happens to be other students in the background, it is ok to post. It is ok, because it is a public event and you are not representing ICS.

Social Media

ICS Social Media

All official social media accounts, websites or other communication platforms include an ICS or ICSAddis in the account. Any ICS accounts that are managed by ICS employees or students now must be registered with the Communications Office, providing the active and current username and password for the account. Content providers for each account **MUST** read, adhere to and sign the ICS Social Media Policy and will be held responsible for the use and content of the account.

ICS Official Social Media Accounts

We encourage positive posts and tweets on official ICS Social Media that promote the school, our teachers, our students and our community.

Publishing on ICS Official Accounts/Communication platforms

If you are publishing/making images, videos public for official ICS accounts or business, you can use images, videos, and products of ICS students under the following parameters:

- Follow the “NO PHOTO/NO VIDEO” list
- Do not publish any full names of any student.
 - First name, grade level, team name, the event name is ok

Personal Social Media Accounts

ICS Employees are welcome to post on their personal social media and communication platforms with the following stipulations.

- Do not “friend” or “follow” or “tag” any current students on any social media platform
- We realize students may follow your personal accounts, but do not follow students back
- Also, keep in mind that students may be following you when making posts or tweets.

Publishing on Personal Social Media Accounts or other Personal Communication Platforms

The Rule: Do not use any photos or videos of students on any personal social media or communication platforms. This includes but is not limited to:

- Twitter
- Facebook



- Instagram
- Pinterest
- FB messenger
- What'sApp
- Presentations
- SnapChat

The Exception: If you want to post images of students to showcase events happening in the classroom, or on campus, you may use photos of students that do not show their faces or any identifying marks. Backs of heads, backs of students, hands writing, etc. are acceptable. Or you can get written consent from the parents for middle and elementary students and from students in high school, to use their or their child's images, videos, products for your personal social media and/or communication accounts.

- When posting images of adults, it is best to get permission/consent.

If you do post/tweet on your personal accounts to highlight great work in the classroom or on campus, make sure it is your own work or get permission from the teacher, group, facilitator to post on your personal accounts.

For more information, see the [Social Media Policy and Practice](#)

Field Trips

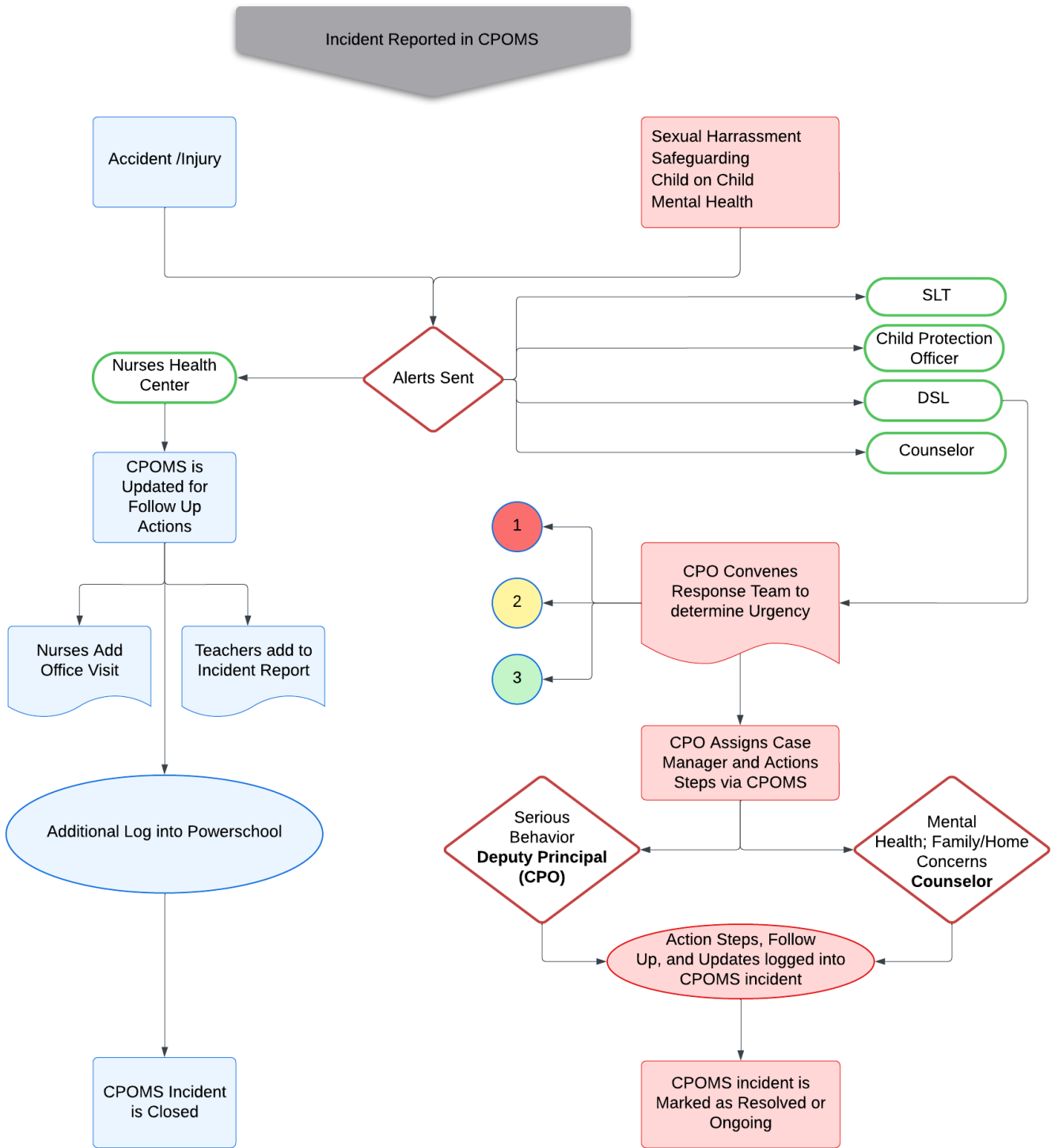
ISSEA Trips / Away Games / Week Without Walls

- In the event of an emergency, coaches and chaperones should have parent phone numbers available. There is no need to have student phone numbers or for students to have coaches/chaperones' phone numbers.
- If you are missing a student or a student is running late, you may call or have another student call or text the late student.
- For team communication, Google Spaces or Google Chat groups are allowed.
- If there are instances that you still need to contact students individually, we can create a permission slip that details the dates of the communication, the purpose/intent, the communication method and have parents sign it. Please design plans with the Director of Communications
- If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your sectional principal or the Director of Athletics and Activities.

For more information, see [ISSEA Child Protection Handbook](#)



Appendix 1 - CPOMS Flowchart





Appendix 2 - Adult Allegation Flow Chart

