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Last updated: September, 2022

Next update due: September, 2023

# Child Protection Policy

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## Purpose

- To Provide Child Protection documentation relevant to ISGR and its context
- Provide necessary definitions and tools for identification of abuse and/ or neglect
- Ensure that ISGR maintains high Child Protection standards
- Ensure that prompt and appropriate actions are taken to help any children at risk
- Define procedures for the school community, along with reporting guidelines and mechanisms
- Outline processes and procedures for ISGR in connecting to its local communities and relevant agencies

**This document outlines ISGR's safeguarding and child protection policy. It applies to all ISGR's employees, management, contractors, students, parents, guardians and volunteers**

*The ISGR Child Protection Policy abides by and incorporates the Swedish child protection laws which states children are respected and protected. Swedish law forbids chastising, physical abuse or any degrading treatment towards children, up to and including 18 years of age. All adults are considered mandated reporters of suspected neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse as defined by the law in Sweden and are obliged to report this to the Swedish Department of Social Welfare for further investigation in the municipality where the child officially resides.*

## Aim

**To ensure that all members of the ISGR community help keep children and young people in our care safe by:**

- Creating safe learning environments for children and young people
- Taking appropriate measures to ensure that they are kept safe while at school
- Identify any children or young people who are at risk from abuse. (See definitions below)
- Communicating to our school community our commitment to keeping all children and young people in our care safe from abuse or suffering

## **This policy outlines how ISGR will:**

- Provide staff, students and parents with a common definition and understanding of what constitutes child abuse (physical, emotional and neglect)
- Create an environment where children feel secure and valued
- Continue to develop awareness amongst community members of the need to safeguard student well-being and the responsibilities of all adults in identifying signs of abuse
- Ensure all staff are aware of the school's referral procedures
- Ensure that external agencies are involved where appropriate
- Ensure that all children and young people are aware that there are adults in school that they can approach if they feel worried or in danger
- Ensure that we practice safe recruitment and check the suitability of all staff and volunteers who work with children
- Provide information for all parents/ guardians outlining the procedures laid down by this policy

## **Definitions**

### **Child Abuse:**

This includes all forms of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child. Child abuse maybe deliberate but can also include failure to act to prevent abuse happening. Please note that child abuse is not restricted to adult to child abuse but also can be peer to peer abuse. In fact statistics show that the vast majority of abuse is peer to peer.

### **Indicators of Possible Child Abuse:**

- Withdrawal from friends and usual activities
- Changes in behaviour- this could include aggression, anger, hostility, hyperactivity, changes in school performance
- Depression, anxiety or a sudden loss of confidence
- Reluctance to go home
- Truancy
- Rebellious/ defiant behaviour
- Problems sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Increased absence from school
- Eating disorders
- Self-harm or attempts at suicide
- Reluctance to go to school

**Parent/ Guardian Behaviour:**

- Parent seems indifferent to child
- Parent seems unable to notice emotional/ physical distress in child
- Denies that problems exist or blames the child
- Display persistent negative verbal behaviour to the child, criticising, blaming and describing the child in negative terms
- Uses physical discipline
- Limits the child's contact with others
- Offers weak/contradictory explanations for physical injury or cannot explain injury at all.

**Physical Abuse:**

Physical abuse can occur when physical punishment is used or when a parent lashes out in anger. It is defined as an act that can result in physical injury to the child resulting in red marks, cuts, welts, bruises, muscle sprain or broken bones. This is defined as physical abuse even if the act was unintentional.

**Indicators of physical abuse:**

- Unexplained injuries on any part of the body. Could include bruising, red marks, burns or fractures.
- Untreated medical or dental problems
- Bruises of different ages as indicated by differing colours
- Injuries reflecting the shape of instrument used, such as belt, hand, electric cord
- Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
- Unexplained burns
- Rope burns on legs, arms or torso
- Unexplained lacerations, abrasions or fractures

**Emotional Abuse:**

This is defined as persistent emotional maltreatment or emotional neglect of a child which results in severe negative impact on the child's emotional development and health. Often a child suffering from emotional abuse may be subject to other kinds of abuse as well.

**Indicators of Emotional Abuse:**

- Young children may be overly affectionate to strangers
- Become easily anxious, lack confidence
- Show aggression to other children, animals, teachers

- Distant, isolated or lack a relationship with parents or guardians
- Use language or behaviour that is age inappropriate
- Lack emotional control or have extreme outbursts
- Lack age appropriate social skills
- Few, if any friends

### **Sexual Abuse:**

This can include a wide-range of sexual behaviours that may take place between a child and an older person or alternatively between a child and another child or adolescent. This may include inappropriate body contact such as sexual kissing, touching, fondling of genitals and intercourse. Other behaviours that can be termed as sexually abusive but not include bodily contact could involve genital exposure, ('flashing'), verbal pressure for sex, and sexual exploitation for purposes of prostitution or porAvoidance of certain people

- Avoiding being alone with certain people (family member, friends, staff at school)
- Wishes to avoid places that the person may frequent such as home, school or church
- Signs of age inappropriate sexual activity
- Becoming sexually active at a young age
- Use of sexual language or information that is unsuitable for their age
- Physical symptoms of anal or vaginal soreness, unusual discharge, sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy
- Soreness when sitting or lying down.

### **Neglect:**

Neglect occurs when a parent or guardian does not provide the care a child needs even when financially able or when offered assistance in doing so. This could include failing to provide food, clothing or shelter. It may also include not providing a child with medical/ mental health care or failing to provide necessary medicines the child needs. Neglect can also include failing to provide the child with education, exposing the child to dangerous environments, poor supervision or placing the child in the care of someone incapable of providing it, forcing the child to leave the family home or abandoning it. This is the type of abuse most often reported to child care services but is often the most difficult to identify or prove, making it hard for the relevant authorities to take action.

### **Indicators of Neglect:**

- Inadequate clothing, unwashed clothing
- Poor hygiene, seems hungry, arrives at school without having eaten breakfast
- Untreated injuries or dental issues
- Repeated accidental injuries that seem to be due to lack of supervision
- Recurring illness or infections
- Skin infections, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- Thin, frail or swollen tummy
- Tiredness

- Signs of anaemia
- Slow or poor communication skills
- Left alone for long periods of time according to age appropriateness
- May be living in an unsuitable home environment, unclear, unsafe, lack of child safety considerations
- Child taking on the role of primary caregiver.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation:**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse but in this type of abuse the child receives some sort of gift, money, affection, gang affiliation, or online present as a result of performing sexual activities or letting others perform the sexual activities to them. The child may believe that they are in a consensual loving relationship. Children may be groomed online, at parties, school, home, friends' homes, church, camps, parks or any other location where the perpetrator can gain trust and familiarity with the victim. Signs and symptoms of child sexual exploitation can be hard to identify as it may be seen as normal teenage or adolescent behaviour.

### **Child sexual abuse online**

When young people are persuaded or forced to: send or post sexually explicit pictures of themselves, perform sexual activities via phone camera or webcam, 'sexting' or sexual conversations online. The abuser may threaten to use or expose the victim if they tell anyone about their online relationship. They may also threaten the victim to induce them perform sexual activities.

### **Indicators of sexual abuse or exploitation:**

- Involved in relationships with older people, antisocial towards children their own age
- Possibly goes missing from home or school
- Spends time at places of concern such as hotels or others' homes without a reason to visit a child of their own age
- May be involved with petty crime
- Unexplained injuries
- Sudden changes to the way they look, dress or act
- Excessive amounts of time online
- Online activity is secretive, online history is regularly deleted



## Risk Assessment

### Key Areas of Risk for ISGR:

#### Guldheden Campus:

1. Main Building
2. PE halls
3. Playground/Football pitch
4. Hill
5. Front of school playground
6. Field Trips
7. Music Rooms
8. Art Room
9. Corridor behind the STEAM lab
10. Staircases at the end of D wing (Door 3)

#### Götaberg Campus:

1. Main building
2. Bamba
3. Yard
4. International Travel
5. Field trips
6. Travel related to PE trips during school day

## Designated Safeguarding Leaders:

### DSL Coordinator

Overall coordinator of Designated Safeguarding Leaders (DSL): Graham Miselbach

### Responsibilities:

Coordinate with the Principals in completing the following:

- Regular (at least once per year) updates to the Child Protection Policy based on feedback
- Regular (at least once per year) Safeguarding & Child Protection training for ISGR staff
- Development and delivery of a structured and sequential student learning programme related to physical and mental health and child protection

## **Role of the Principals**

At ISGR the Principals of each section is the Designated Safeguarding Leader and has overall responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection in their section:

MYP: Graham Miselbach

LgrM: Corinna Ljungberg

PYP: Lee Brown

LgrP: Marianne Axelsson

### **Responsibilities:**

- Establish policy objectives
- Develop child protection policy and procedure
- Provide training for ISGR staff
- Enforce policy
- Contact external agencies where necessary
- Receive and process child abuse or neglect concerns
- Process individual rights requests:
- Ensures the right to privacy about concern
- Ensures the right to confidential communications
- Ensures the right to file a complaint or concern
- Report cases to the Head of School

## **Deputy Safeguarding Members:**

Deputy Principals at each campus

### **Responsibilities:**

- Coordinates and implements policy through school's departments
- Oversee training
- Receives and processes concerns from staff
- Processes individuals rights requests
- Ensures the right to privacy about concerns
- Ensures the right to confidential communications
- Ensures the right to file a complaint or concern

## **Head of School:**

- Approve policy and procedure
- Review cases for satisfactory outcomes
- Communication with board and report cases to the Chair

## **Chair of the Board:**

- Endorsement of policy
- Ensure due process has been followed in reported cases

## Staff Responsibilities:

Understand and comply with ISGR's Child Protection Policy regarding our commitment to protect all children from harm that the school may come into contact with.

### Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect Concern Guidelines:

All staff, administrators, board members and volunteers are required to report incidences of abuse or neglect, as well as any suspicions regarding these types of abuse. All staff must report any concerns in written form and share these concerns with the principal, deputy principal or a member of the student support team, (counsellor/ nurse). Any incident or suspicion should be reported immediately or as soon as is possible.

### What should you do if you suspect a child is being abused?

- Report suspicion/ evidence to a principal, deputy principal or member of the student support team immediately or as soon as is possible
- Report details in writing to principal or deputy principal as soon as possible. Include any relevant observation/ evidence/ reason for suspicion.
- If decided that there is no need for further action, process ends there.
- If it is decided that further action needs to take place, the principal is informed and the student support team are informed.
- The principal in conjunction with the deputy principal and support team will decide on the course of action necessary. This may involve reporting to external organisations, or it may be decided that further investigation is necessary before proceeding.

## Safeguards for the protection of Staff and Students at ISGR

The management and staff at ISGR denounce all forms of discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment. Our aim is to create an environment that encourages togetherness, creates a feeling of wellbeing and provides the prerequisites for personal growth. Our behaviour towards self, staff and students is respectful and reflective. As a school we recognize that focusing on a positive, safe and secure school atmosphere is enhanced when school standards and codes of conduct are emphasised. This is further developed in the school **Well-Being Plan** and **Staff Handbook**.

## Disciplinary Actions of Inappropriate Staff Behaviour:

- The management of ISGR will act immediately when inappropriate behaviour is suspected or reported.
- Depending on the nature of the allegation an external body may be contacted, for example police or social services.
- Depending on the nature of the allegation either an external investigation or an internal investigation may take place
- Depending on the outcome of the investigation either no further action will be taken or a meeting will be scheduled with the employee to go through which rules she/he is not following and remind the employee of expected standards of behaviour.
- All the meetings with the employee will be documented with dates, and description of the behaviour.
- Depending on the context there may be a serious conversation between principal and employee.
- If the infraction is of a more serious nature the employee will be given a written warning and the relevant union informed if appropriate.
- A follow up meeting will be scheduled to review progress.
- If after one warning the same behaviour continues, another written warning letter will be given, documented and a meeting scheduled. Again, the union will be informed if appropriate.
- Continuation of inappropriate behaviour could result in suspension while further investigation is carried out or dismissal.

## Child Protection Training

### For children:

All students will receive a yearly safety talk on basic ways of keeping safe e.g. getting lost, emergency and stranger danger, use and misuse of social media.

### For New Staff:

During their induction new staff will be introduced to the Child Protection Policy, the Crisis Plan, ICT Policy and the Well Being Plan.

### For Existing Staff:

Staff will go through a training session to review the Child Protection Policy and Well Being Plan.

## Staff Recruitment:

Adverts for jobs at the International School of the Gothenburg Region will include the following statement. 'At ISGR we are committed to protecting children.' All applicants to the school will be required to have a national police check in Sweden. In addition they will be required to show a mandatory police background check from the last year of employment in the last 2 countries worked. References will be received and reviewed before a formal job offer is made.

## Appendices

### 1. Why International School Students are Vulnerable to abuse

- **Characteristics/attributes of international school children**

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

- **Characteristics of international school families**

- o Isolation from extended family, previous community for support
- o Power differential in marriage (Who has the work permit?) creates vulnerability
- o Impact of absentee parents
- o "Love – hate" relationship with host country for expatriates

- o Lack of control over critical life decisions: company decides where, when, and how the family moves
- o Lack of stability
- o Superficial/tourist relationship with host country

- **Characteristics of international school communities**

- o School takes on sole role as centre of family life - “goldfish bowl” - and often provides superficial relationships that cannot meet mental health needs
- o Power influence: family's “position” in community can be an inhibitor for school to act
- o Sense of being “lost” in diversity of community – can cause further isolation.

- **Cultural dynamics of international school communities**

- o Multiple norms rooted in different cultural traditions can cause confusion: religious values, values of parenting, discipline, care-giving, sexuality, gender roles and responsibilities
- o Impact of rapidly changing “pop culture” from developed nations
- o Varying degrees of openness rooted in cultural traditions
- o Varying cultural attitudes toward gender issues and child development – different concepts of developmental needs through childhood.

*International school communities are vulnerable to abuse because the nature of abuse requires secrecy, insularity, isolation and limited access to support resources, which are some characteristics of the international community. International schools must respond to the reality that these characteristics are exactly the characteristics that perpetrators will use to their advantage in abusing children.*

*Child abuse is a multifaceted issue that involves dynamics of the child, the family, and the community. In international communities we can assume that child abuse occurs, that certain factors and characteristics of international communities make expat children vulnerable to abuse, that international schools tend to be isolated from social service resources.*

## 2. ISGR Toileting and Intimate Care Guidelines

These Guidelines are for any ISGR staff member that finds themselves in an intimate care situation with a student (e.g. Early Years Teachers, School Nurse, PE teachers, Overnight Field Trip Teachers).

Intimate care can be defined as any care that involves washing, touching or carrying out an agreed procedure to intimate personal areas in order to care for another person. Intimate care tasks are associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene that may involve direct or indirect contact with, or exposure of the genitals. All intimate care is provided in a manner so as to maintain the child or young person's dignity and confidence. The child or young person is cared for in a way that avoids distress, embarrassment or pain.

- For entry into Early Years Grades at ISGR, it is an expectation that all students are toilet trained and are able to go to the toilet independently. In the case where a student is not toilet trained or has regressed please inform the parents immediately. Staff need to work in partnership with the child or young person's parents or carers to discuss their needs as to when the student can reintegrate into the regular school routine.
- When a child needs help toileting or has had an accident, alert another staff member that you are with a child.
- Always where possible, keep the toilet doors open and remain visible.
- Encourage the student to be independent and to do as much as they can by themselves e.g. 'Can you take toilet paper and wipe your bottom'.
- If possible, especially in the case where a child has been sick/had an accident, use gloves and an apron when trying to clean the child. Ask for additional support (i.e. school nurse, cleaners and/or other members of staff) if need be.
- Send the soiled clothes home in double plastic bags. Spare clothes can be found at the nurse's office.
- In the case where a child/children are in a cubicle or bathroom with a closed or locked door, knock to inform the child that you are there. Ask the child to dress themselves and to open the door. In the case that the child refuses, ask them to explain why. If the child is not speaking, explain that you will have to call someone to open the door to check on their wellbeing.
- If a student is using a cubicle/toilet, only one student permitted with a closed door.
- Cameras and recording devices are never taken into bathroom areas.
- Wherever possible, staff should care for a child of the same gender.

***School Nurse:***

The school nurses on both campuses have an infirmary where they receive students, staff and parents. For confidentiality reasons they may close the door and curtain. The school nurses have the right to administer medication and treatments with the approval of parents/guardians. This may necessitate touching body parts of students (such as administering creams, ice packs) or asking students to undress to show injured or affected body parts. In this case the nurses always ask the students' permission and explain what they will do before doing so. The parents are also always informed by the nurse that this has occurred.

**3. Additional Guidance for Teachers**

These are procedures to protect children from abuse and neglect. Child protection concerns include suspected, alleged, self-disclosed, or witnessed abuse or neglect of a child, and must be followed up with appropriate action.

***If a student confides in you:***

- Do not let a child swear you to secrecy before telling you something. You may need to report the information, which the child will view as breaking your trust with them.
- You can reassure the child that the information they give you will be treated sensitively and kept as confidential as necessary.
- You may want to suggest to the student that there are other people they can talk to, and who might be better placed to help them. However, it is important for the child to not feel dismissed.
- If a child asks to speak with you, try to find a neutral setting where you can have quiet and few interruptions.
- Do not lead the child in telling. Just listen, letting him/her explain in his/her own words.
- Don't pressure for a great amount of detail.
- Respond calmly and matter-of-factly. Even if the story that the child tells you is difficult to hear, it is important not to register disgust or alarm.
- Do not make judgmental or disparaging comments about the abuser - it is often someone the child loves or with whom he/she is close.
- Do not make promises to the child that things will get better.
- Do not confront the abuser.
- If the child does not want to go home, this should be considered an emergency.



Report and handle immediately by contacting a member of the student support team or a principal. Do not take the child home with you!

- Explain to the child that you must tell a member of the student support team or a principal to get help.
- Try to let the child know that someone else also will need to talk with him/her and explain why.
- Empower the student by as much as possible allowing the child a part in the process.

*If you have suspicions, yet the child does not confide in you, contact an appropriate member of staff as mentioned above.*

### ***Protecting yourself from vulnerability***

Interactions between adults and students at ISGR should always be appropriate, and to protect them from false allegations, adults should always ensure that they are seen to be, so:

- Avoid situations in which you are alone with a child. This includes not transporting a child alone in your car. When it is necessary to speak privately with a child, find a space out of earshot, but within sight of others for your conference.
- The privacy of children in situations such as toileting, showering and changing clothes should be respected.
- Minimal physical contact should be used only in the following situations: To prevent or treat injury; to ensure safety; as a means of instruction; to meet the requirements of the sport; to comfort a student in distress.
- Do not use corporal punishment in any form.
- Sexual jokes, comments of a personal sexual nature, inappropriate physical contact, sensual massages or sexual gestures are not appropriate behaviour for an adult staff member or volunteer.
- When volunteering to supervise overnight activities, adults should not share sleeping quarters with children other than their own.
- Social media/online: Maintain your own strict privacy settings on personal online profiles and avoid contact with students on social media and in online forums, such as gaming.

*It is always the adult's responsibility to set and respect boundaries. When a child attempts to involve an adult in inappropriate behaviour, the adult must reject the overture and inform either a principal or a member of the student support team of the incident*

## Child Protection Procedures

