



Invictus International School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Prepared by

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INVICTUS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL is committed to:

- valuing, respecting and listening to all children
- ensuring all necessary child protection checks are made when recruiting staff
- maintaining strong child protection systems and procedures for staff
- training its staff and providing a common understanding of child protection issues to inform planning and practice
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children and parents/carers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- providing effective management for staff through clear processes, supervision and support

We will provide adequate and appropriate resources to implement this policy and will ensure it is communicated and understood

1. Rationale

At INVICTUS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL we recognise our duty and responsibility to protect and safeguard the interests of all children. The school recognises that effective Child Protection practice requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in recognising and responding to Child Protection situations.

This policy provides the basis for good practice within the school for Child Protection work, and provides a framework to ensure that all practice in the area of Child Protection is consistent and will enable every child to be healthy and stay safe. It also seeks to make the professional responsibilities clear to all staff to ensure that statutory and other duties are fully met.

The procedures outlined in this policy are in line with the Manual on Management of Child Abuse in Singapore (2008) produced by the Inter-Ministry Working Group comprising the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Education of Singapore.

The manual is based on current legislation principally the Children and Young Persons Act and the school has a professional responsibility to comply with this. Child Protection and Welfare Services are currently within the remit of the Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development.

This policy also supports Article 3.1 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child which states that 'in all actions concerning children...the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration'. Singapore became signatory to the convention in October 1995.

Sector-Specific Screening Guide (SSSG) and the Child Abuse Reporting Guide (CARG)

Using the SSSG and CARG. The SSSG and CARG are evidence-based tools, which serve as a guide for partners working with children and young person to make decisions on whether a child protection concern needs to be reported to MSF's Child Protective Service (CPS).

2. Terminology and definitions

Safeguarding: The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successful.

Abuse: A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Child Abuse: Any act of commission or commission by a parent or guardian... (or any other person)... which would endanger or impair the child's physical or emotional well-being or that are judged by a mixture of community values and professionals to be inappropriate' (Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development 2002)

Categories of Abuse: Physical Abuse; Neglect; Sexual Abuse; Emotional and Psychological Abuse.

Significant risk of harm: significant risk of harm' is the threshold which justifies compulsory intervention in the best interests of the child.

Best Interests of the Child: The principle, '*in the best interests of the child*' guides Singapore's policies and service provision for children and young persons, including the area of Child Protection.

3. Responsibilities

Child abuse occurs in all communities regardless of the gender of the child or perpetrator, wealth, religion, culture or ethnicity. Schools as institutions working with children and young people, become more attractive to those who wish to exploit or abuse children. All members of the school community have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

3.1 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT is responsible for formulating and implementing policy and procedures which:

- Prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people i.e. Safe recruitment procedures and single central vetting records.
- Promote safe practices and challenge poor and unsafe practices in the whole school context.
- Identify and support a Designated Person (s) for Child Protection who is a member or is appointed by the SLT.
- Identify instances where there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare and initiate appropriate action/intervention to keep them safe.
- Contribute to effective partnership working between all those involved with providing services for children.

3.2 The Designated Person(s) for Child Protection (DPCP)

At INVICTUS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL the Designated Person for Child Protection (DPCP) in the first instance is the Principal or if unavailable, the Vice-Principal, and if both are unavailable, the matter should be directed to the most appropriate member on site (Dean/Counsellor or SEN coordinator).

The DPCP is responsible for the school's approach to:

Policy Practice Procedures Professional development. Specifically the DPCP will:

- Ensure that all staff knows who is responsible for child protection issues.
- Maintain staff awareness and confidence regarding child protection procedures and ensure new staff are aware of these procedures and coordinate training in this respect.
- Coordinate action where child abuse is suspected.
- Attend case conferences or nominate an appropriate member of staff to attend on his/her behalf.
- Maintain and update Child Protection records including outcomes of case conferences and other sensitive information-to be secured (double key) in a confidential file and disseminated only on a 'need to know basis'.

- The secure file is maintained by the Principal (see Record keeping section 8) and with the Human Resource representative for Invictus.
- Keep up to date with current practice by participating in training opportunities at the highest level.

3.3 All Staff

All staff have a shared responsibility to help keep children and young people safe by:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people.
- Identifying young people who are suffering or who are at significant risk of harm.
- By keeping a record in their child protection book and emailing the Principal and the School Counsellor all information regarding concerns
- Taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure that children are kept safe both at home and at school.
- Understanding school policy and procedures related to child protection and safeguarding and knowing who is/are the Designated Person (see 3.2) for Child Protection.
- Contributing to professional training and awareness of Child Protection issues.

3.4 Human Resources Department in relation to Safer Recruitment

- Ensure that there are effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of all staff and in accordance with local guidance and legal requirements (and monitor the school's compliance with them).
- Ensure that there are effective administration of safe recruitment procedures and appropriate checks are carried out on all staff prior to working at the school.
- Keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks.
- Assess clearance and vetting documentation provided by contractors and agencies working at school in accordance with local guidance and legal requirements.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

The welfare of the child is paramount, and as such this policy will be reviewed at least once every two years and following case by case self-evaluation.

5. Categories of Child Abuse and their Signs/Symptoms

There are four main areas of Child Abuse. It should be recognised that the following suggested signs of abuse may also be a symptom of another problem.

5.1 Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect can occur where parents/guardians fail to meet the basic and essential needs of their children such as food, clothing and medical care. Leaving small children alone and unsupervised is another example of neglect or where older children are left alone for longer periods of time. Parents refusing or failing to give love and affection to their child is a case of emotional neglect.

Signs or symptoms which may possibly indicate neglect:

- Hunger Tiredness or listlessness
- Child dirty or unkempt
- Poor school attendance or often late for school (or conversely not wanting to go home)
- Poor concentration.
- Affection-demanding or attention-seeking behaviour
- Stealing or scavenging compulsively
- Anxiety due to the burden of pressure
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones

5.2 Physical Abuse (Physical injury to a child, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented)

It involves any non-accidental injury where adults physically hurt, injure or kill a child. This can involve hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting. It also includes giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs or alcohol.

Signs or symptoms which may indicate physical abuse:

- Bruising, Inconsistent account of how bruising or injuries occurred
- Bald patches
- Burns or scalds
- Fear of going home or parents being contacted
- Fear of medical help
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying

Please note some physical disciplining of children is used in Singapore. Parents are likely to be charged with child abuse if the child is significantly injured as a result of excessive force. At Invictus, the physical disciplining of students is never acceptable.

5.3 Sexual Abuse

The exploitation of a child or young person for sexual gratification or any sexual activity between an adult and a child. Commonly it occurs when the older person uses his/her power over the child/young person to involve the latter in a sexual activity.

It may involve:

- Sexual grooming
- Inappropriate exposure to sexual acts or materials
- Passive use of children and young persons as sexual stimuli for adults
- The child and young person may be subjected to exhibitionist activities, voyeurism or be coerced into posing for pornographic materials
- Inappropriate sexual contact or acts between older individuals and the child/young person
- Intercourse as a result of rape, assault and coercion

Signs or symptoms which may indicate sexual abuse (Please note-most frequently there are no signs of this type of abuse):

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age inappropriate behaviour
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching
- Persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains
- Eating disorders
- Attention-seeking behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation
- Regressive behaviour
- Enuresis, soiling and smearing faeces.
- Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming
- Bruises, scratches in genital area
- Lack of trust of a familiar or particular adult
- Unusually compliant

Please note in Singapore sexual intercourse with a girl below the age of 14 year's constitutes the criminal offence of rape, even if the girl gives her consent. When the girl is already 14 years old but not yet 16, the activity is an offence called "carnal connection", provided she has given consent.

5.4 Psychological/Emotional Abuse (persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection)

This occurs where constant lack of love and affection, threats, verbal attacks, taunting, shouting, can lead to a child's loss of self-esteem. It can also include harassment or indifference on the basis of race, culture, gender or disability.

Aspects of psychological and emotional abuse include:

- Hostile rejecting/degrading (e.g. taunts)
- Terrorising (e.g. threats or acts that induce fear)
- Actively isolating (e.g. locking a child in a room for extended periods of time)
- Exploiting/corrupting (e.g. teaching a child to steal)
- Denying emotional responsiveness (e.g. denying affection and shows of love)

Signs or symptoms which may indicate psychological abuse:

- Rocking, banging head, regression
- Self-mutilation, drug or solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Running away, compulsive stealing
- Masturbation
- Eating disorders
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis
- Sudden speech disorders, selective mutism
- Over-reaction to mistakes, continual self-deprecation
- Delayed physical/mental/emotional development

Child Protection Procedure

6.1 Disclose of abuse perpetrated outside of school

If a member of staff suspects a child has been abused or neglected by someone outside of school, the following procedures should be implemented:

- Invictus International School staff will report concerns immediately to the Designated Person for Child Protection (DPCP).
- They will be required to record observations.
- The DPCP records all information on Form 1 and is responsible for keeping all records and evidence safe.

In the event of suspected sexual abuse happening, it is a requirement for the school to contact the Child Protection and Service (CPS) or the Police. For cases happening within the context of the family, the family should not be alerted to the allegations being made and the report can either be made with the police or CPS. For sexual abuse cases happening outside the context of the family, the family should be informed of the incident and a report needs to be made to the CPS/Police. The school should record any disclosure factually (see section 6).

NB. The 'paramountcy principle' supports agencies making decisions in the best interests of the child and this may mean not disclosing information to parents.

In the event of other forms of abuse, the DPCP will be committed to taking action and arranging consultation with the Principal and/or the Director from HQ. In collaboration with the Principal/Director, when deemed appropriate after further investigation, the DPCP will inform the Child Protection Service. The DPCP will keep the teacher and staff up to date with developments on a need to know basis.

If there are obvious signs of harm, the student will be taken to the School Nurse immediately. If the student is in need of urgent medical attention, he/she should be taken to either the KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) or to the National University Hospital (NUH), the 2 designated paediatric hospitals. If it is not possible or advisable to obtain parent consent the CPS should be contacted for consultation. Where we suspect the abuse has occurred or is about to occur and the child is unsafe and in imminent risk of further harm, we are committed to reporting the matter to Child Protection Service Helpline at 1800-777 0000 (office hours) or the Police.

Where we suspect that the abuse has been perpetrated by someone close to the family or within the family network, the DPCP or a designated member of staff (probably the Principal) will contact the family and discuss ways on how the student could be kept

safe and managed more appropriately. Full consideration as to whether contact with the immediate family would increase the risk of harm should be given.

6.2 Disclosure of alleged abuse perpetrated by a staff member

The following procedures apply where a member of staff has been implicated:

- Meeting with Student/Alleged Victim-With the School Principal present, the DPCP or Principal will communicate with the student/s directly. If there is more than one student who has been a victim of abuse, the students will be interviewed individually. A summary of what was learned from investigations will be made by the DPCP.
- The DPCP or Principal shall coordinate interviews with any bystanders/ witnesses and notes taken.
- Meeting with Accused Staff Member - The accused staff member will be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal and DPCP and questioned regarding the accusations being made. The meeting will be documented. Notes from this meeting will be recorded.
- Contacting Parent/guardian - Parents/Caregivers of the student/s being questioned will be contacted by telephone by the Principal or DPCP and informed of the meetings that took place. The alleged victim's parents will be invited into school to discuss the issue face to face.
- Consultation with Directors (HQ) - The Principal and DPCP will be committed to taking action and arrange consultation with the Directors from HQ. Consideration will be given as to whether that member of staff should face suspension pending further investigations.
- Communication with Child Protection Agency -The Principal, DPCP or Directors will report the matter to Child Protection Services Helpline at 1800 777 0000 (office hours) or the police after careful consideration of seriousness of offense is given. Parents of student victims will be made aware of their right to do this also. The Principal/DPCP will keep those directly concerned with the case up to date with developments
- Counselling. With permission from parents/caregivers, student victims and suspected staff members will be offered in-school counselling by Human Resources at Headquarters or by an external referral. Off-campus professional counselling contact details will also be offered.

6.3 Disclosure of Abuse by Another Student

If a student in the school is suspected of abusing another student, the following steps should all take place within the school day.

- Initial Record of Concern - The adult who has suspicions of a student being abused by another child, or is approached directly by a student/s about being abused, completes a written statement, and handed to the DPCP. Class Teacher should be informed.
- Meeting with Victim/s - The DPCP and/or Class Teacher will meet with the victim directly. In the case of more than one victim, children will be interviewed individually and a summary of what was learned from investigations will be made by the Principal.
- Meeting with Bystanders - The DPCP and/or Class Teacher will communicate with possible witnesses individually to the abuse that has occurred, and make notes.
- Meeting with Accused Student/s - The DPCP or Principal or person delegated this role by them depending on the age and maturity of the student will communicate with the student accused of causing abuse to a fellow student or students. If there is more than one student who has taken part in an incident involving the abuse of other students, the students accused will be met with individually. Notes from this meeting will be recorded coordinated by the DPCP.
- Consultation - Consultation and agreement between the Principal, and DPCP.
- Parents of Accused Student/s Contacted - If abuse by student/s proves to be beyond doubt, the student/s are collected from wherever they are on the school campus and asked to bring their bags to the school office. The parents/guardian of the student/s accused of abuse towards another student/s will be telephoned to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or DPCP before being asked to take their child/children home for the rest of the day. An offer of counselling for their child will be made.
- Parents of Victims Contacted - Parents/guardian of the student/s who was/were abused will be contacted by telephone by the Principal or DPCP and informed of the meetings that took place. The course of action will be explained regarding the student/s who/whom carried out the abuse on their child and an offer of counselling for their child made.
- Action - the Principal will be committed to taking action and will inform the Directors AT HQ of proportionate responses in accordance with the schools behaviour policy. In extreme cases, expulsions will be considered. Further consequences including an apology letter to victim/s and exclusion from upcoming events will be considered.

- Communication with Child Protection Agency - the Principal and/or DPCP may report the matter to Child Protection Service Helpline at 1800 777 0000 (office hours) or the police after careful consideration of seriousness of offence is given. Parents of student victims will be made aware of their right to do this also.

Please note that incidents of 'bullying' are defined and resolved according to our Behaviour Management Policy.

7. Managing Disclosure

The disclosure of child abuse by a child to an adult is likely to be one of the hardest conversations that all parties will face. It is essential that we show empathy and professionalism in our approach to managing such conversations, mindful that what is said and what is recorded could influence criminal proceedings at a later date.

The following professional guidelines protect both the child and the person who is receiving the disclosure:

- No Promise Of Confidentiality - Staff should never give students or adults an absolute guarantee of confidentiality but must ensure that the information is disclosed only to the people who need to know.
- Listen Without Judgement - Listen, allow the pupil to finish without directly questioning, leading or stopping them. On no account should a pupil be asked to demonstrate the abuse. Let them tell you what they want to and no more. They may need to disclose to a social worker, police officer or other specialist later and too much detail now may interfere with later investigation.
- Take Notes - Write down notes, including date and time of the interview and sign the notes. Record as much as you can remember, as soon as possible (preferably immediately) afterwards, using the pupils own words and pass to the designated child protection teacher for the school.
- Empathy - Remember that it may be very traumatic for a pupil to recall and describe events.
- Next Steps - When the pupil has finished, make sure they feel secure and explain what you are going to do next.
- Professional - stay calm and convey this through word and action; reassure the child or young person that you are taking what they have to say seriously.

8. Record Keeping

The DPCP is required to record all information concerning a suspicion, allegation or disclosure of child abuse. All prior notes should be attached to this document. Record/Report(s) should contain facts regarding the issue, the actions the school took

and the actions the school decided not to take with explanation. All records of Child Protection allegations, suspicions, or disclosures are centrally kept by the Principal - both electronic and hard file copy (locked storage).f

8.1 Guidance

- Keep notes of any concerns, giving the issues, dates etc..., but be discreet whilst interviewing the child - they may find note taking at the time disconcerting.
- Keep all notes factual.
- Do not read your summary back to the victim as this can repeat the trauma.
- If you have a discussion with a child, keep a record of timing, setting, personnel present, what was said and any action taken/not taken.

9. Sharing a concern about Staff (Whistleblowing)

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Staff may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express their concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues, or may fear subsequent harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk.

Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young person who/whom is/are targeted. These children need staff to safeguard their welfare in good faith.

Reasons for sharing a concern

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from sharing a concern

- Fear of starting a chain of events which spirals out of control.
- Disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern. Staff should:

- Voice concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as they can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning and why, ensuring they are acting in good faith and not with malicious intent.
- Approach their immediate superior, Designated Person for Child Protection or the school Principal.
- Inform the school Senior Leadership Team if an allegation of improper conduct is made to them.
- Make sure they get a satisfactory response from those who they have reported it to.
- Ideally, put their concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places wherever they can. A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern. Don't lead the child when asking questions, let the child share what happened

What happens next? (See also section 5.2)

Staff should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries and the Class teacher informed in confidence the school has responsibility to protect staff from subsequent harassment or victimisation. No action will be taken against staff if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith. Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Self-reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children



Resources and Information

Child Protection and Welfare Service SLF Podium #01-01 to #01-09 512A Thomson Road Singapore 298137

Child Protection and Welfare Helpline: 1800-777 0000 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am-5pm and Saturday, 8.30am-1pm)

Child Protection Specialist Centres

HEART@Fei_Yue

6819 9170

Monday – Friday 9.30am – 5.30pm

Big Love Child Protection Specialist Centre

6445 0400

Monday – Friday 9.00am – 6.00pm

SAFE SPACE

6266 0171

Monday – Friday 9.00am – 1.00pm; 2.00pm – 6.00pm

or the Police Divisional HQ or the nearest Neighbourhood Police Post.

Singapore Resources

Protecting Children in Singapore - published by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) (2005). Amendments to the Children and Young Persons Act (2011)

National Standards for Protection of Children-Ministry of Community and Sports Child Protection and Welfare Services (2014)

Love our Children: Prevent Child Abuse-Child Protection and Welfare Service (2002) The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child | UNICEF UK

International

[UNICEF Child protection](#)

[UK - Safeguarding Children](#)

[Australian child protection legislation](#)

Safer Recruitment in Education

