

The Anglo-American School of Moscow

# Child Protection Handbook



Respect, Love Learning, Contribute  
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THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED TO SUPPLEMENT THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND ESTABLISHED PROTOCOLS AS OUTLINED IN OUR BOARD AND DIVISIONAL HANDBOOKS.  
SEE CHILD PROTECTION APPENDIX.

# The Child Protection Handbook is aligned to and intended to supplement the School Board Policy Manual and the divisional handbooks.

## Elementary School Family Handbook

- Respecting and Protecting Myself page 8
- Respecting and Protecting Others page 9
- Digital Citizenship page 10

## Middle School Handbook

- Conduct and Behavior pages 26-27
- Guardian Policy pages 23-24
- Harassment Policy pages 27-29

## High School Handbook

- Core Values (students' best interests, safe environment) section 1.2
- Vision of an AAS Student (healthy lifestyle) section 1.4
- Guardianship Policy (as pertains to neglect) section 4.14
- BYOD Digital Citizenship subsection (internet safety) section 4.16
- Digital Citizenship Agreement (including reference to law enforcement agencies) section 4.17
- Harassment Policy section 4.18
- Fighting (Physical violence will not be tolerated) section 4.22

## Board Policies

- Teaching about Sensitive Issues Policy section 2.43
- Guardianship Policy section 7.25
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures section 7.8

# School Board Policy Manual 2015-2016

## 7.80 Child Protection Policy and Procedures

The Board considers the safety of children and staff in the school as its most serious responsibility. The Director will ensure that every member of staff at the school understands their responsibility for contributing to the safety and well being of pupils at the school.

This includes the following:

1. Setting out procedures for suspected cases of child abuse or neglect,
2. Creating a plan of action to assist the child and family,
3. Reporting identified cases of abuse or neglect to relevant school authorities,
4. Identifying services the counseling staff will be expected to provide, and
5. Ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of where they can access our Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

The Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be submitted to the board for approval annually and kept under review by the Director.

The Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be made available on the school's website to ensure that all members of the community are aware of the provisions.

All matters that are covered by these policies and procedures will necessarily adhere to Policy 6.80 - Confidential Information.

# Child Protection Handbook

SCHOOLS NEED TO ENSURE THAT ALL CHILDREN IN THEIR CARE ARE PROVIDED A SAFE, SECURE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO GROW AND DEVELOP, BOTH IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL.

Child well being is essential to realizing academic and holistic success. Child abuse and neglect are significant issues across the world. Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are impediments to the child's education as well as to their healthy development. The Anglo-American School of Moscow(AAS) endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, Russia, is a signatory.

Schools should fill an important role in society as protectors of children. Schools need to ensure that all children in their care are provided a safe,

secure and nurturing environment in which to grow and develop, both in and out of school. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to recognize children who are in need of help and protection. As such, educators have an obligation to identify children who are in need of aid and protection and to ensure that the child and family make use of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

All staff employed at The Anglo-American School of Moscow must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered, is suffering or might suffer abuse or neglect. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with the AAS child protection policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate in Moscow, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities.

AAS believes that a child's welfare is paramount. Every child has a right to be safeguarded from harm and to have their welfare safeguarded. AAS seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. As such, AAS will distribute this policy every year to all parents and applicants, will highlight this policy annually to students, will provide regular training for all staff, and will make every effort to use appropriate diligence hiring practices to ensure the safety of children. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, AAS will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process, keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority.





# How are abuse and neglect defined?

Definitions of abuse are complex and culturally based, influencing child-rearing behaviors, gender and role responsibilities and expectations. The primary determination of abuse is that it is dependent on some form of a relationship that is used to meet the need of the more powerful person, either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides much of the definitions that are based in understanding the impact of certain behaviors. Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs.

## Physical abuse may involve...

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or other wise causing physical harm to a child
- Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning
- Committing acts that are cruel or inhumane regardless of observable injury, such as implementing extreme discipline which demonstrates a disregard of a child's pain and/or mental suffering
- Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child
- Fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child
- Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the aforementioned occurrences.

## Possible indicators of physical abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, lacerations, abrasions, or fractures on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colors)
- Injuries reflecting the specific shape of an object (electric cord, belt, buckle, table tennis paddle, hand)
- The regular appearance of injuries after absence or vacation
- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks
- Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
- Rope burns to extremities
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child

## Emotional Abuse is...

a pattern of actions, such as inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs

## Specific examples may include...

- verbal humiliation
- refusing to acknowledge presence of child
- invasion of privacy for no specific reason
- violent threats, etc.

Can include grooming for non-sexual purposes such as radicalization.

## Neglect may be...

- Physical — failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision (this would include failure to provide proper adult guardianship, such as leaving children unsupervised at home for any extended period of time)
- Medical — failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment

## Possible indicators of neglect include...

- Child is unwashed or hungry
- Parents are uninterested in child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- Child does not want to go home
- Both parents or legal guardian are absent from Moscow for any period of 24 hours or greater without notifying school as per AAS policy
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of an emergency



## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is committing or allowing any sexual offense against a child to be committed. This includes intentionally touching either directly or through clothing, the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child for reasons other than hygiene or child care purposes.

Sexual abuse has some different characteristics of child abuse that warrant special attention. While physical abuse is often the result of immediate stress and not usually planned, sexual abuse requires planning. The planning, referred to as grooming, often results in victims accepting the blame, responsibility, guilt and shame for the sexual behavior of the offender. Sexual abuse requires far more secrecy than other forms of child abuse, making it more difficult to identify and report.

Many victims, through the process of grooming, are taught that the sex is a form of love, and the children can present as happy and well-adjusted with no negative symptoms because of their perception of being loved.

Working with the sexual offender cannot be done by school counselors.

## Possible indicators of sexual abuse include...

- Sexual knowledge, behavior or use of language not appropriate to age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
- Venereal disease in a child of any age
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital, or anus areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Refusing to change into physical education (PE) clothes or fear of bathrooms
- Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaints
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual
- Pregnancy, especially at a young age
- Extremely protective parenting



## What happens when a teacher has reasonable cause to believe?

The indicators of abuse and neglect will be used by staff as a guideline for reporting to the counselor, who will determine if the case needs further attention.

A report must be made when a staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect. All reports are confidential.



## When suspected abuse or neglect is reported?

When there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report their suspicions to the grade-level counselor, and the principal will be notified. It is the responsibility of the principal to inform the director of the suspected case of child abuse or neglect. All employees of AAS are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours. We recognize that every child and every case is unique and must be dealt with appropriately.

# Procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect

## Step 1

Teachers will discuss any child report or reasonable cause for suspicion of abuse or neglect with the grade-level counselor within 48 hours. The counselor will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident and form a school-based response team, which will include the school nurse, counselor, psychologist, and other individuals as the principal sees fit. In all cases, follow-up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained.

Designated response team members will do the following:

- Interview staff members as necessary and document information relative to the case.
- Review the child's history in the school with school personnel.
- Report case status to the school director.
- Determine the course of follow-up actions.
- Protect confidentiality.

## Step 2

Based on what is learned, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. We acknowledge that actions must be mindful of nationality and status in the country. This plan may include any of the following:

- In-class observations of the child by a member or members of the school response team.
- Discussions between the child and counselor in order to gain more information. For younger children these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with dolls to gather more information.
- Meeting with the family to discuss the school's concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling.

In cases where outside authority is deemed necessary, one or more of the following may take place:

- Notification to the management of the sponsoring employer or the welfare office of the home-of-record.
- Consultation with the family's respective embassy or consulate.
- Consultation with local authorities

The Special Committee for Under-aged Children and Protection of their Rights +7(499) 726-61-56 or

The Child Protection Service (Guardianship authorities) +7 (495) 415-39-58

may also be contacted for consultation when gathering evidence of mistreatment.

If evidence of mistreatment is sufficient, a criminal case may be initiated.

### Step 3

After a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect, the following will occur:

- The counselor will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance.
- The counselor will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.
- The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
- The counselor will maintain contact with the outside therapist to discuss the child's progress in school.

All case documentation will be kept in the child's school confidential records file. In addition, AAS will make every attempt to share this information to protect the child, and student records sent to schools will be flagged, letting the receiving school know there is a confidential file for the child.

### Reporting

Please see flowchart on page 12.

### Services Provided by the AAS Counseling Staff

School counselors are placed within a school to help provide students, parents, and school staff with short-term targeted interventions for their academic and personal/social problems. School counseling professionals will define annually the range of services to be provided by the school and the range of services to be referred to outside resources.

Typically handled by school counseling professionals:

- Student relationships with peers
- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
- Student-parent relationships
- Mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, grieving.

Issues referred to outside resources:

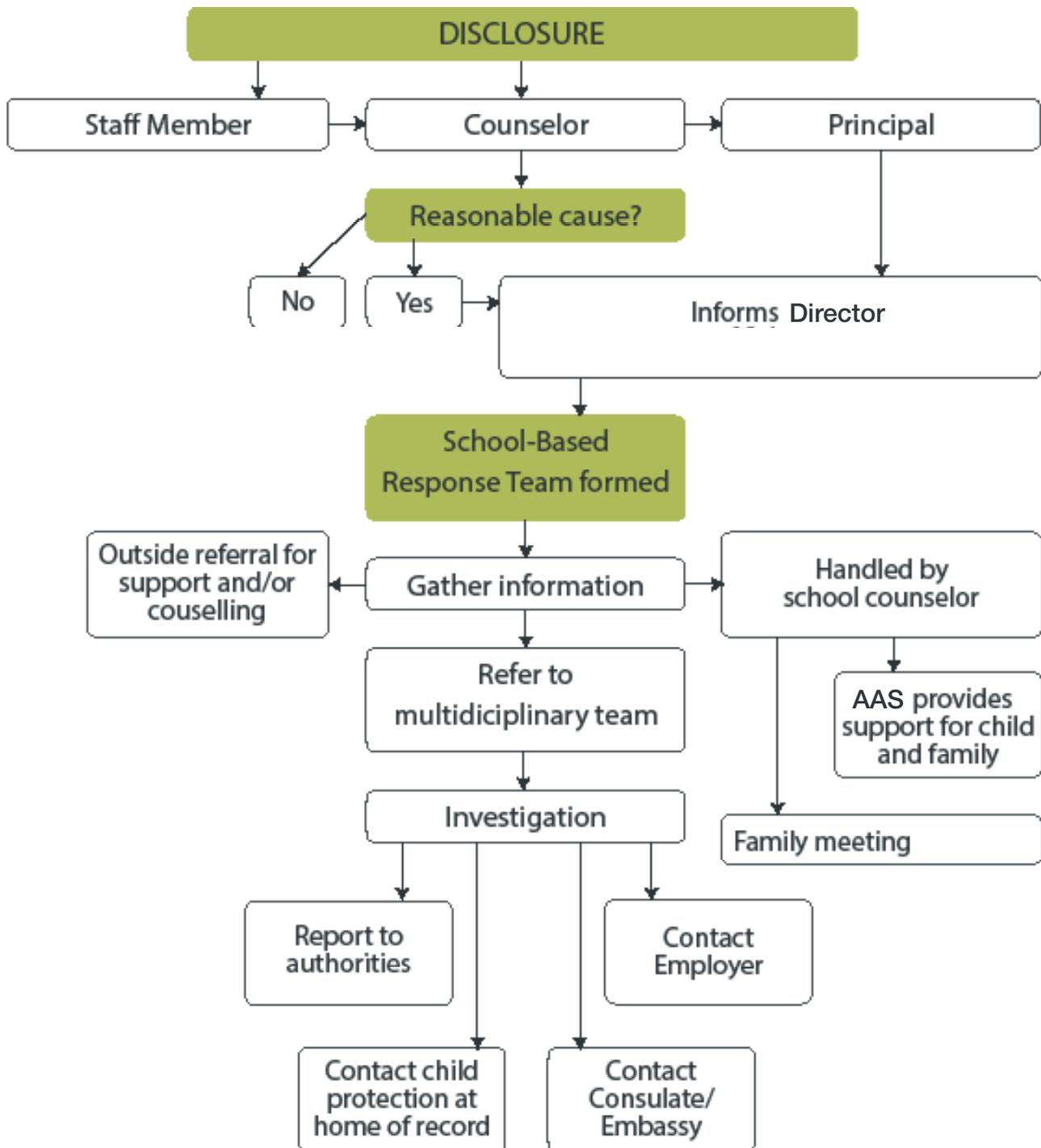
- Mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, dissociation, and suicide ideation.

Cases reported for investigation and outside resources:

- Severe and ongoing physical abuse or neglect
- Sexual abuse and incest.



# Procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect





**CHILD PROTECTION**

# For the Teacher...

## Guidelines

Every member of staff at the school is responsible for contributing to the safety and wellbeing of pupils at the school. All teachers need to be aware of the information below and follow the guidelines contained there as part of that responsibility.

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the teacher must talk to the child's grade level counselor as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours. The counselor and reporting teacher will then meet with the division principal to take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident. The counselor and principal will form a school-based response team as needed to address the report. This response team will include the school nurse, counselor, psychologist, and other individuals as the principal sees fit. In all cases, follow-up will be conducted in a manner that ensures information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained.

The following procedure will be used:

1. Interview staff members as necessary and document information relative to the case.
2. Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school.
3. Report status of case to school director.
4. Determine the course of follow-up actions.
5. At all steps along the way records will be taken and reporting will take place.

## Recognizing when a child may be at risk

Abuse and neglect are forms of child maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

If any member of academic staff has significant concerns about the welfare of a child, they should immediately make them known to the child's grade level counselor at the school. These concerns may include:

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve a parent or care-taker:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or care-taker fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately causes illness in a child.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the severe and persistent negative effects on a child's emotional development through persistent emotional maltreatment. It may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or unvalued.
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

- Developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are above the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in age-appropriate social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.
- Serious bullying (including Cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of child maltreatment, though it may occur alone.

## **Sexual abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving an act of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

## **Neglect**

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.



# Signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect

Exhibiting these signs does not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be considered if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a highly noticeable degree.

## Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies

## Sexual Abuse

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
- Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

## Physical Abuse

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Bald patches
- Chronic running away
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

Note: A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

# Guidelines for listening and talking to children

## **If a child chooses to disclose, you SHOULD:**

- Be accessible and receptive;
- Listen carefully and uncritically at the child's pace;
- Take what is said seriously;
- Reassure the child that they are right to tell;
- Tell the child that you must pass this information on;
- Make a careful record of what was said verbatim;
- Avoid leading the students with your questions;
- Use open questions "Tell me, describe to me, show me, explain to me."

## **You should NEVER:**

- Take photographs or examine an injury;
- Investigate or probe aiming to prove or disprove possible abuse – never ask leading questions;
- Make promises to children about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets';
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action;
- Jump to conclusions or react with shock, anger or horror;
- Speculate or accuse anybody;
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved;
- Offer opinions about what is being said or about the persons allegedly involved;
- Forget to record what you have been told;
- Fail to pass the information on to the correct person;
- Ask a child to sign a written copy of the disclosure.

For children with communication difficulties or who use alternative/augmented communication systems, you will need to take extra care to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are identified and interpreted correctly, but concerns should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children.

# Guidelines for record keeping

Well-kept records are essential in situations where it is suspected or believed that a child may be at risk from harm.

## **Records should:**

- State who was present, time, date and place;
- Use the child's words wherever possible;
- Be factual/state exactly what was said;
- Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation;
- Be written in ink and signed by the recorder;