

Child Protection Policy

Document ID: Ru-20160206-PD



Policy Purpose:

ISP recognises its ethical and statutory (Czech law and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all its children. We are committed to providing safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support and protection. The well-being and safety of the child is of paramount importance.

The ISP will therefore:

- Ensure an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Ensure we practice safe recruitment with personal reference checks pertaining to the suitability of staff to work with children.
- Ensure that all ISP staff receive ongoing training in child protection practices.
- Include learning opportunities for children to develop skills they need to recognise, and stay safe from abuse.

1. DEFINITIONS & ABBREVIATION

ISP – International School of Prague, hereinafter referred to as “ISP” or “School” only

Child / Children - these terms are interchangeable and refer to all Students at ISP.

Staff - refers to representatives of ISP Faculty, Support staff, Administrators, Community representatives - i.e. any adult who is employed, commissioned or contracted to work with, or on behalf of, ISP’s children in either a paid or unpaid capacity.

Safeguarding - 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 successfully.

Duty of Care - the duty which rests upon an individual or school to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of a child involved in any activity or interaction for which that individual or school is responsible. Any person in charge of, or working with children in any capacity is considered, both legally and morally to owe them a duty of care.

2. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Ultimate responsibility for interpretation of this policy rests with the ISP Director.

Roles & responsibilities of the Staff:

- to clearly understand the school child protection policy;
- to take an active role in acting accordingly with this policy at ISP;
- Staff who come into contact with children in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare;
- Staff have a duty to report any child protection or welfare concerns to a designated member of staff in ISP and/or report any concerns to the local social welfare office.

3. OBJECTIVES

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The policy has six main elements:

1. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff to work with children.
2. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to help keep them safe.
3. Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
4. Supporting children who have been abused as defined by the agreed child protection plan (to be specified for each case of child abuse).
5. Minimising the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against staff who work with children.
6. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all faculty, administration and staff at ISP.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

ISP is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment.

The school will take all reasonable measures to:

- ensure that we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff to work with children in accordance with the related Legislation;
- ensure that any person (whether employed, contracted, or a volunteer) who works with children will be made aware of the School's Child Protection Policy and will undergo respective safeguarding training according to the ISP schedule;
- ensure that, in cases where the school ceases to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) because that person was considered unsuitable to work with children, a detailed report is made to the respective authorities & Schools association;
- reinforce to all staff that they have a responsibility to identify children who may be in need of support or who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm;
- protect each child from any form of abuse;
- be alert to signs of abuse both in the school and from outside;
- deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse;
- design and operate procedures which promote this policy;
- design and operate procedures which, as far as possible, ensure that anyone working with, or coming into contact with, children who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations;
- be alert to the medical needs of children;
- operate clear guidelines on drugs and alcohol;
- operate a clear anti-bullying practice;
- operate a self-harm policy. Self-harm behaviours include bone-breaking, cutting, bruising, banging, burning and non-suicidal overdosing and the behaviours are usually chronic, repetitive and habitual;
- establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- ensure children know that there are adults in the School whom they can approach;
- include opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and help them stay safe;
- brief older children given positions of responsibility over other children, on appropriate action to take should they receive allegations of abuse.

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Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the school will be reviewed and in appropriate circumstances will be referred to an external authority such as the Social Services Department of the local authority, the Child Protection Unit of the police. Each such case should be referred firstly to the School Psychologist and the School Director.

6. DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING PERSONS

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Ms Colleen Knutson (School Psychologist) who may be contacted on mobile: 720 979 523 or email: .

The other designated Safeguarding Persons are:

- Sona Mure, Head Nurse, mobile: 606 256 155, smure@isp.cz,
- David Vacek, Security & Safety Supervisor, mobile: 604 209 762, dvacek@isp.cz
- Petr Draxler, Human Resources Director, mobile 777 770 181, pdraxler@isp.cz,
- John Evans, US Counselor, jevans@isp.cz,
- Stephen Bogli, MS Counselor, sbogli@isp.cz,
- Tammy Gordon, US Counselor, tgordon@isp.cz,
- Corky Hawkins, ES Counselor, chawkins@isp.cz

The designated Safeguarding Persons are the first points of contact for parents, children, staff and external agencies in all matters of ISP child protection. They co-ordinate the child protection procedures in the school, liaise closely with the respective sectional Principals on any Child Protection related matters and work with the Leadership Team to ensure an ongoing training programme for all school employees.

Designated Safeguarding Persons will advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to them and will liaise with the Social Services Department and other agencies on behalf of the school. If the designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, her duties will be carried out by the Head Nurse, or the Human Resource Director, as appropriate. Any allegations against members of staff should immediately be referred to the Human Resource Director who will inform the designated Safeguarding Persons and the Director of ISP. If the Human Resources Director or other designated Safeguarding Person is the subject of a complaint, these duties are carried out by the Director of ISP.

7. DUTY OF EMPLOYEES, TRUSTEES & OTHER COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Every employee and trustee of the school as well as every volunteer who assists the school are under a general legal duty:

- to protect children from abuse;
- to be aware of the school's child protection procedures and to follow them;
- to sign in acknowledgement that they have read the reviewed Child Protection Policy;
- to receive training in child protection at the start of their ISP employment;
- to know how to access and implement the procedures;
- to keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event;
- to report any matters of concern to the designated Safeguarding Person;
- to undertake appropriate training including regular refresher training;
- to maintain only professional working relationship with students (regardless of age) and will actively avoid giving even the impression of an inappropriate relationship. School employees may not join the e-social networks of any student

8. TYPES & SIGNS OF ABUSE

8.1 Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by staff or another child or children.

8.2 Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve 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 carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

8.3 Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

8.4 Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve both physical contact and non-contact activities.

8.5 Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve 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); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

8.6 Signs of Abuse

Unexplained injuries; fabricated or induced illness; improbable explanations; fear of returning home or parents being contacted; aggression/bullying; running away; significant change in behaviour without explanation; deterioration in work or attitude; unexplained pattern of absence; self-harm; compulsive stealing; 'don't care' attitude; social isolation; eating disorders; depression/withdrawal; low self-esteem; poor social skills.

8.7 Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying should be reported and will be managed according to the School guidelines.

9. PROCEDURE

Anyone who is suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- must listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place;
- must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer;
- must reassure the child but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the designated Safeguarding Lead who will ensure that the correct action is taken;

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- must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation and preserve any evidence (for example scribbled notes, text messages, etc.). The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the 'who, what, when' of the allegation. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the designated Safeguarding Lead. The designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for holding the central list of all records.

The member of staff making the initial referral should expect to be informed that action has been taken by the designated Safeguarding Lead. If no communication from the designated Safeguarding Lead is made within 24 hours after the referral the member of staff should make further contact with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Reporting

All suspicion or complaints of abuse must be reported to the designated Safeguarding Lead, who is obliged to inform the Director accordingly.

Action by the Designated Safeguarding Person

The action, which will be taken as soon as possible, will take into account:

- the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to the relevant local safeguarding authority or to the police without investigation within the school;
- the wishes of the child who has complained, provided that the child is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a child's wishes;
- the wishes of the complainant's parents, provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the child's best interests and that they are properly informed. Again, it may be necessary, after all appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the designated Safeguarding Person is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child at risk, he or she will take further advice from the designated Safeguarding Lead, Ms. Colleen Knutson, before making a decision to disclose;
- duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable; Given the sensitivity of the subject it is important that all faculty/staff communicate these matters only with the designated Safeguarding Person and will avoid discussing the situation with colleagues or others;
- the lawful rights and interests of the school community as a whole including its staff;

If there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the designated Safeguarding Person may consult with other appropriate professionals on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a child may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made without delay. If the initial referral is made by telephone, the designated Safeguarding Person will confirm the referral in writing to the Director within 24 hours.

Referral guidelines

A referral to the external authority or police would be made by the designated Safeguarding Lead after careful consideration of all related circumstances.

However, if during the course of the internal procedures, it appears that the situation is more serious, the designated Safeguarding Lead will again consider whether a referral should be made bearing in mind sensitivity to any cultural considerations that might impact the handling of cases of abuse.

Allegations against Staff

The school has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff from false or unfounded allegations.

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The school will not undertake its own investigation of an allegation against a member of staff without prior consultation of the designated Safeguarding Lead.

Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:

- the safety and welfare of the pupil/s concerned; and
- the need for a full and fair investigation.

All allegations against members of staff should go straight to the Director. Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Director, the designated Safeguarding Lead will report to and consult with the ISP's Board Chair Staffan Erenmalm (email: staffan@erenmalm.com, phone: +420 731 552 228).

Guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place children or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a child. This guidance is contained in the Faculty Handbook.

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Director will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the child who made it; or whether the police should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person responsible if he/she was not a child.

Allegations against Children

A child against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the school during the investigation (partly or wholly to protect them and to ensure fair process) and the school's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply. Where the allegation refers to the abuse of a child by another child, or a group of children, the procedure will remain the same. Depending on the specific nature of the allegation this policy will be read and acted upon in conjunction with our anti-bullying policy.

The role of the parents

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. If a parent has any suspicions that their child, or any other child at the school, is being abused, in the first instance, must contact the designated Safeguarding Lead.

10. SAFE RECRUITMENT

ISP endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ safe staff.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- provide thorough CV & job application,
- provide referees, including one or more who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children where applicable, as a general principle the school will always speak to the referees personally,
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- be checked through the Criminal Register as appropriate to their role,
- be interviewed.

As part of our standard recruitment practice we do perform:

- candidate interview including questions checking on candidate's motivation, background, attitudes & behaviours,
- credential verifications (verification of personal and professional histories and documentation),
- professional & confidential personal reference checks for shortlisted final candidates,
- police checks (Criminal record checks not more than 6 months old from the country of teacher's most recent residence as well as the country of their teacher training,
- internet checks (candidate's name and reputation).

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All members of staff will undergo training that includes familiarisation with the school's Child Protection Policy and identification of their own safeguarding and child protection training needs. All staff sign to confirm they have received, read a copy of the Child Protection Policy and will abide by its guidelines (see: Appendix 1).

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

Staff may have access to confidential information about children in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in interest of the child to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child concerned. The well-being and safety of the child is of paramount importance.

If an adult who works with children is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from the designated Safeguarding Lead. Any actions should be in line with locally agreed information sharing protocols.

Whilst adults need to be aware of the need to listen to and support children, they must also understand the importance of not promising to keep secrets. Neither should they request this of a child under any circumstances.

Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the Director without delay.

12. DISCLAIMER

This policy may be modified or terminated at any time by the school. Any modifications shall be in writing and take effect upon proper notice. The Leadership Team of the school will undertake an annual review of the policy and will ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in regards to child protection arrangements are put right without delay.

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Appendix 1

CONFIRMATION OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

All school staff are valued members of the school community. Everyone is expected to set and maintain the highest standards for their own performance, to work as part of a team and to be an excellent role model for our children.

All school staff will:

- place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations,
- treat all members of the school community, including children, parents, colleagues and trustees with consideration and respect,
- maintain only professional working relationships with students (regardless of age) and will actively avoid giving even the impression of an inappropriate relationship. School employees may not join the e-social networks of any student.
- adhere to the principles and procedures contained in the policies in our safeguarding portfolio and in teaching and learning policies,
- demonstrate a clear understanding of and commitment to non-discriminatory practice,
- recognise the power imbalances between children and staff, and different levels of seniority of staff and ensure that power and authority are never misused,
- understand that school staff are in a position of trust and that sexual relationships with a child represent a serious offence,
- be alert to, and report appropriately, any behaviour that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm,
- never condone inappropriate behaviour by children or staff,
- take responsibility for their own continuing professional development within the area of child safety,
- refrain from any action that would bring the school into disrepute,
- value themselves and seek appropriate support for any issue that may have an adverse effect on their professional practice.

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I do confirm that I have read and will abide by the ISP Child Protection Policy and I do understand my duty to safeguard and promote children’s welfare resulting therefrom.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Once signed please return the document to the HR Department.

Appendix 2

Child Protection Agreement for Visitors

ISP’s Mission is to Inspire, Engage and Empower. In order for everyone within our school community to work together to fulfil our mission, it is fundamental that our environment is one that is safe, welcoming and secure for all of our students.

ISP recognises its ethical and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our students. As child safety and protection is our highest priority, we state clearly and categorically that any conduct which potentially or actually causes harm or alarm to our students will not be tolerated. Any allegations of such conduct will be dealt with, if appropriate in partnership with the relevant authorities, in line with the [ISP Child Protection Policy](#).

The ISP Child Protection Policy is based on the work of the [International Task Force on Child Protection](#), local Czech laws relating to the safety of children and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Policy details the nature of different types of potential alarm and abuse that children and young people can face.

As a visitor, I do confirm that I have read and will abide by the guidelines that ISP has outlined in their Child Protection Policy and I do understand my duty to safeguard and promote children’s welfare resulting therefrom. If, while during my visit I have any concerns in this regard it is my duty to contact an ISP designated safeguarding person.

The ISP Designated Safeguarding Lead is Ms Colleen Knutson (School Psychologist) who may be contacted at +420 720 979 523, email: cknutson@isp.cz

The other designated ISP Safeguarding Persons are as follows:

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- Sona Mure, Head Nurse, mobile: 606 256 155, smure@isp.cz;
- David Vacek, Security & Safety Supervisor, mobile: 604 209 762, dvacek@isp.cz;
- Petr Draxler, Human Resources Director, mobile 777 770 181, pdraxler@isp.cz;
- John Evans, US Counselor, email: jevans@isp.cz;
- Stephen Bogli, MS Counselor, email: sbogli@isp.cz;
- Tammy Gordon, US Counselor, email: tgordon@isp.cz;
- Corky Hawkins, ES Counselor, email: chawkins@isp.cz;

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Once signed please return the document to the ISP Reception.