



INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF
ESTONIA

ISE Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Handbook

August 2016

Introduction

ISE promotes the values of care and compassion and daily seeks to foster wellness in the lives of students. The ISE Child Safeguarding Policy seeks to protect the student, the family and the ISE community. It ensures that the right to protection and access to confidential support systems is available to all students.

ISE Child Safeguarding Policy Introduction

Child abuse and neglect are of growing concern in schools throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to a child's education as well as to their physical, emotional, and social development. The International School of Estonia has an institutional responsibility to protect children. In this role we need to ensure that all children in our care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop, no matter what cultural background they come from. As educators, we have the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time on a daily basis, and are in a unique position to identify children who need help and protection. As such, we have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of protection and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

All faculty and staff at the International School of Estonia are mandated to report their concerns about the well being of any student. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with Reporting Procedures within this policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate in Estonia, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities.

The International School of Estonia endorses the Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, Estonia, is a signatory and seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. The International School of Estonia will distribute this policy annually to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy annually to students, will provide annual training for all faculty and staff, and will make

every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, the International School of Estonia will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child includes 54 articles to which governments are expected to be signatories. The principal articles, relevant to ISE, include:

Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 12: Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

Article 19: [Governments] must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 39: Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

ISE Child Safeguarding - Staff Duties

Every student who attends ISE has the right to live in a safe and secure environment. To ensure this, the school's curriculum will incorporate information, which will instruct the students in this area as well as encourage them to seek help when appropriate.

While it is not the School's policy to monitor the conditions in which and under which the students live, the Board does expect School Personnel to be vigilant and proactive toward signs of abuse. While remaining sensitive to different cultures, the School sets out below common definitions of abusive behavior.

1. Physical abuse - non-accidental injury including burns, human bites, and beatings which have been intentionally inflicted;
2. Sexual abuse - where a child is used for the sexual gratification as in obscene conversation, exposure to pornographic material, exhibitionism, molestation, incest, rape, or sexual exploitation;
3. Emotional abuse - unreasonable demands in an excessive or aggressive manner such as habitual and inappropriate teasing, verbal abuse that demeans and belittles the child, bullying, and lack of love, support or guidance;
4. Neglect - inadequate supervision, persistent lack of provision of basic human necessities - food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or the failure to protect the child from exposure to any kind of danger (including cold and starvation) and which affects the child's health or development. In some cases, faculty or staff may hear of students who are home alone or with minimal supervision for period of time. They should notify the administration of those instances when they occur.

ISE Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

The International School of Estonia is committed to the safety and protection of children. This Code of Conduct applies to all faculty, staff, employees, volunteers and students who represent the school and who interact with children or young people in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity.

The public and private conduct of faculty, staff, employees, students, and volunteers acting on behalf of the International School of Estonia can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact, or can cause great harm if inappropriate. We must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work.

We should be aware of our own and other persons' vulnerability, especially when working alone with children and youth, and be particularly aware that we are responsible for maintaining physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in such interactions. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviors with those for whom we have responsibility. This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses. We are to provide safe environments for children and youth at the International School of Estonia campus or at off-site school events.

We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially children and youth, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration. The International School of Estonia's personnel and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child.

Physical contact with children can be misconstrued both by the recipient and by those who observe it, and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. One- on-one meetings with a child or young person are best held in a public area; in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with the door left open, and another staff member or supervisor is notified about the meeting.

We must intervene when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that children are being abused in any way. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported to the appropriate school and civil authorities as described in the ISE Child Safeguarding Policy of the school.

Faculty, staff, employees, and volunteers should refrain from the illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol at all times, and from the use of tobacco products, alcohol and/or drugs when working with children. Adults should never buy alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, videos, or reading material that is inappropriate and give it to young people. Staff members and volunteers should not accept gifts from, or give gifts to children without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.

Communication with children is governed by the key safety concept of transparency. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between the International School of Estonia parents, administration, teachers, personnel, volunteers, and minors:

- Communication between the International School of Estonia (including volunteers) and minors that is outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship (teacher, coach, host, etc.) is prohibited.
- Where possible, email exchanges between a minor and a person acting on behalf of the school are to be made using a school email address.
- Electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.
- Faculty, staff, and volunteers who use any form of online communications including social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and text messaging to communicate with minors may only do so for activities involving school business.

ISE Child Safeguarding Identification and Reporting Procedure

A. Identification

Members of the School Personnel are well placed to observe and report outward signs of abuse. Care must be taken as such signs can only be a cause for suspicion and are not, in themselves, proof that abuse has occurred. Unexplained changes in behavior or school performance may indicate abuse. Inadequate clothing, poor growth, or apparently deficient nutrition may indicate physical neglect, while attention seeking or excessive dependence may point to emotional neglect. School Personnel will encourage students to report abuse.

B. In School Follow-up After Identification

These steps should be followed after identification of a suspected abuse:

1. Identifying teachers must report the suspected abuse within twenty-four hours to the School's Counselor, who is required to inform the Principal and Director.
2. Assuming the Counselor concurs that a suspected physical abuse situation exists, the Counselor will notify the nurse, who will interview and examine the Student. Student examination can only occur after Parent consent is received. Parents should also be provided the opportunity to be present when the examination takes place. The Student can also request the presence of its Parent at any medical examination.

If the Parents would refuse to cooperate and would not allow the medical examination (or there is a concern or expectation that the consent will be refused) then, instead of the school's investigation's continuing, the school should turn directly towards the Child Protection Authority, and inform them of the circumstances. Following a successful examination, a written report will be prepared by the Counselor and nurse and sent to the respective Principal and the Director.

C. Follow-up with Parents and/or Sponsoring Organization

Normally, the Director and/or Principal in conjunction with the Counselor will arrange a meeting with the Parents to inform them of the suspected abuse. School Personnel will respect the family's right of confidentiality within the limits of the ISE Child Safeguarding Policy. If, however, it is felt that the abuse is considered to be life threatening, extreme, and/or it is deemed the child should be immediately removed from the home, the civil authorities will be notified.

In cases deemed not to be immediately life threatening a meeting between members of the School's Administration (Principal and/or Director and Counselor) will be arranged. Parents will be informed of the suspected abuse and the School's child protection policy. At the conclusion of the meeting the Parents will be requested to complete and sign a document (attached in the appendix of this handbook).

While each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis, it is the intention of the School for one or more of the following to take place depending on the severity of the case:

1. Family counseling - the family will be directed to a family counselor in the community. The family counselor will periodically communicate with the ISE school counselor to ensure that outside counseling is continuing and that the family is making every effort to resolve the problem.

2. Notification of Estonian authorities by the Director - If step 1 above is not successful, then the School will notify the Estonian Child Protection Authority in accordance with the Estonian Child Protection Act and recommend that they intercede on the Student's behalf. Again, this will be done immediately if the case is considered life threatening, extreme, and/or it is deemed that the child should be removed from the home

Appendix of Forms

Appendix 1: Notification to Parents

Appendix 2: Statement of Acknowledgement of Code of Conduct

Appendix 1: CHILD SAFEGUARDING FORM: Parental Notice

Date: _____

We, the parents of _____, have read and understand International School of Estonia Child Safeguarding Policy. We have been informed by the school officials of a suspected abuse as of this date.

We agree to begin a counseling program with a counselor in the community, who is recommended by the school and to continue in this program until the counselor indicates it is no longer necessary.

We understand that ISE considers this matter to be of a very serious nature and will notify the Child Protection Authority and/or the Courts of Guardians if we refuse to sign this form, refuse to begin and/or complete a counseling program or if the school is informed of another suspected abuse.

Father

Mother

Witness

Witness

Statement of Acknowledgement of Code of Conduct for Signature

I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth participating in programs at the International School of Estonia.

I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Never be alone with children and/or youth at school activities without another adult being notified.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than harsh criticism when working with children and/or youth.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children - when necessary - only in ways that are appropriate, public, and non-sexual.
- Comply with the mandatory reporting regulations of the International School of Estonia and with the policy to report suspected child abuse.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

I will not:

- Touch or speak to a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Inflict any physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading children and/or youth.
- Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with children and/or youth.
- Give a child who is not my own a ride home alone without expressed permission of the Parent and School.

- Accept gifts from or give gifts to children or youth without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- Engage in private communications with children via text messaging, email, Facebook, Twitter or similar forms of electronic or social media except for activities strictly involving school business.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth at any time.

I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to children and youth under the auspices of the International School of Estonia, I am subject to a criminal history background check. My signature confirms that I have read this Code of Conduct and that as a person working with children and youth I agree to follow these standards. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from the International School of Estonia.

Name..... Signature..... Date.....

