

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Safeguarding children

Introduction

The International School of Morocco [ISM] recognizes its clear responsibility in respect of its “duty of care” to protect children and to support students in school. *“Because of their day to day contact with individual children during school terms, teachers and other school staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop” (Working Together – under the Children Act, 1989)* This policy applies to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Primary and Secondary levels.

Aims

- To provide a school environment where children feel secure, valued, respected and encouraged to talk, with the knowledge that their ideas, feelings and concerns are clearly heard
- To educate our students, through the school’s curriculum, to understand the appropriate behaviour that relatives, friends and strangers may demonstrate towards children and how to keep themselves safe
- To educate and guide our students so that they know how they can deal with any behaviour of others that gives them cause for concern
- To train all staff in good practice for recognizing and dealing with child protection issues
- For parents to recognize that the school is a caring establishment where they too can seek support and advice in matters relating to Child Protection

Objectives

- To ensure we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- To equip our children with the skills needed to keep them safe, and to establish a secure environment in which they can learn
- To maintain appropriate documentation relating to incidents and concerns, following the International School of Morocco’s guidelines and procedures
- To disseminate the procedures to all staff (full-time and part-time); supply teachers; teaching assistants; support staff, school supervisors; students and volunteers working at our school
- For the Board of Directors to monitor and review procedures and policy on a regular review cycle.

School Commitment

The International School of Morocco is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. As such, all employees are required to complete a background check verifying that they have no convictions, cautions or bind-overs or are subject to any sanctions imposed by any regulatory bodies from Morocco and their previous country of employment or residence. The

school requires all employees to produce evidence of qualifications and references from previous employers and to verify each.

We recognize that for children, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult can help to protect them from abusive situations and their consequences. ISM establishes and maintains an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to by caring staff members who make time to support children whenever the need arises. Through our curriculum as well as assemblies, morning meetings, circle time and class discussions, children have regular opportunities to equip themselves with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse.

Framework

Child Protection is the responsibility of all adults in our school community. Teachers do not operate in isolation. The Board of Directors are responsible for the development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice.

Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them. There are, however, key people within the school who have certain responsibilities.

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| 1. Younes Mellouki | Designated Child Protection Officer |
| 2. Lesley Boujemaoui | Designated Child Protection Officer |
| 3. Chair of Governors | Conducts annual review of policy & procedures |

Designated Child Protection officers will disseminate policy and provide CPD training for all staff. Staff should discuss any concerns regarding Child Protection with the designated officers who will advise on the monitoring of children and the making of appropriate referrals.

The Director and Head of Teaching and Learning will report to Chair of Governors on issues relating to policy and procedures regularly and through the systematic review cycle.

Procedures

Staff will be informed of changes to policy and procedures and updated in good child protection practice through regular staff meetings and CPD.

The school's induction procedures and staff handbook include these guidelines as to what adults working in school should do in the event that they become aware of child protection concerns.

The parent handbook includes a statement outlining the school policy on Child Protection.

Possible signs of abuse:

The signs of child abuse are not always easy to recognize. As education professionals our job is not to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. It is, however, our responsibility and

duty, as articulated in the ISM child protection policy, to keep records of our concerns and to act in order that the child may receive any and all professional attention and resources available at the school's disposal, including referrals to qualified psychological counselling.

The following list of possible warning signs of abuse are taken from the Child Protection Fact Sheet, by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Multiple bruises, in clusters, often on the upper arm or outside of the thigh
- Cigarette burns
- Human bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds, with upward splash marks
- Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home

Changes in behaviour that can indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviour, e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
- Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Bruising or bleeding near genital area
- Sexually transmitted disease (vaginal discharge or infection)
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g.; becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares

- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- Constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate neglect may include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

For more information on the definitions and signs of child abuse please see the original document at:

[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/trainingandconsultancy/consultancy/helpandadvice/definitions and signs of child abuse pdf wdf65412.pdf](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/trainingandconsultancy/consultancy/helpandadvice/definitions%20and%20signs%20of%20child%20abuse.pdf)

Guidelines for reporting:

If a teacher suspects that a student has been physically or emotionally abused, neglected or bullied the following steps may be taken:

1. Make your concerns known to the Head of School without delay.
2. Log details of the concern on the "[Student Concerns Form](#)", available in the ISM One Drive.
3. When seeking information from the child be sure to carry this out with tact and sympathy. Over-questioning should be avoided. Complete the [Student Concerns Interview](#) form, available in the ISM One Drive.

All paperwork must be kept in the confidential file. Careful notes should be made of dates, times, personnel involved, details of telephone conversations and copies of letters sent.

Training and Support

The International School of Morocco will ensure that the directors and all designated Officers for Child Protection attend training relevant to their role. Staff working with children will receive regular updates and training 'in house' and, when appropriate, be offered

opportunities to attend specified courses. Staff will receive training through the school's induction procedures, which includes advice on care, control and physical intervention and allegations against professionals.

Professional Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue that needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child.

- Confidentiality is stressed to all ISM staff and board members as part of the schools' induction procedures.
- On no account is a child guaranteed confidentiality.
- Information relating to child protection issues should only be shared with the Head of School who will decide if information needs to be disseminated to other personnel.

Records and Monitoring

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concerns held about the child or children within our school, and the status of such records.

General information about a child's behaviour and discipline are kept in the class teachers' files. Whilst not confidential or secure, these documents are maintained by the class teacher. No information of a confidential nature is recorded in these files. Child Protection concerns are only recorded on the designated form and kept in a secure area within the school administrative office.

Child Protection concerns are monitored closely and regular reviews organized by the Head of School, who will decide when further advice or a referral is necessary.

Supporting students at risk

The International School of Morocco recognizes that those children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. This school recognizes that it may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. It is also recognized that some children who have experiences of abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

The International School of Morocco will endeavour to support students through:

- A curriculum that encourages high levels of self-esteem and self-motivation.
- A focus on character development through the learner profile traits.

- An ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all students and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- The implementation of school behaviour management policies.
- A consistent approach which recognizes and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays.
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the interests of the child to do so.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.

The Child Protection Policy will be carefully considered alongside other related policies in school. ISM recognizes that statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. Where children are exposed to domestic violence or drug or alcohol abuse, children may be vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

Safe School, Safe Staff

- The International School of Morocco gives the monitoring of children, in terms of their health and welfare, a high priority.
- All staff members, through the staff handbook, are advised on the physical handling of children and the procedures to be followed if an allegation is made against them.
- Only staff who have been security checked are permitted to work in the school, or on authorized school visits.
- The school participates readily when sharing perspectives and experiences with practitioners from other agencies.
- The performance of all staff members with regard to building successful and appropriate relationships with children is monitored closely by the Head of School.
- The school requires that the necessary security checks be in place before any person is employed or deployed to work with children in the school setting.
- The school monitors closely all personnel, including volunteers, who work with children during induction and probationary phases.
- Personnel must NEVER place themselves in a position where their behaviour or actions place students or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student, and must be particularly vigilant in situations involving one on one personal or physical interactions with students, including 1-1 tuition, sports coaching, conveying a student by car, engaging in electronic communication with a student and so on.
- Staff has access to all policies relating to allegations and abuse.
- Procedures for protecting staff from abuse are regularly reviewed and revised as necessary.
- The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors.

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed on a regular review cycle. The procedures described therein will be evaluated in the light of experience and where necessary modified immediately.

Reviewed April 2023

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Reviewed September 2021

Y Mellouki

Reviewed December 2018

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Reviewed April 2015

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Reviewed October 2012

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