



Think International School

Think - Inquire - Inspire



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

All children have a right to be safe. The health, safety and well-being of all our students is of paramount importance and will be respected, protected and fulfilled by all members of the TIS community. Our children have a right to feel safe and protected, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, or disability.

TIS endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which Hong Kong SAR is a signatory. As a school we will provide and maintain an environment where students feel safe and ensure that students know that there are adults within the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.

This policy and procedures is written with reference to, and in line with the Education Bureau Circular No. 5/2018 *"Handling Suspected Cases of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence."*

TIS recognises the following expectations recommended by the International Task Force on Child Protection (ITFCP) Statement of Commitment to Child Protection:

- All children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- All schools have a duty of care to children enrolled in the school and those who are affected by the operations of the school.
- All actions on child protection are taken with the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

There are three main elements to the TIS Child Protection Policy:

1. **PREVENTION** (positive and safe school environment, careful and vigilant teaching, accessible pastoral care, support to students, good adult role models).
2. **PROTECTION** (agreed procedures are followed, staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns).
3. **SUPPORT** (counselling and guidance is available to students who are or may have been at risk of harm and/or their families whenever support is deemed beneficial)

PREVENTION

1. Staffing

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. At TIS, we ensure the practice of safe recruitment by checking and recording the suitability of staff. It is the school's responsibility to ensure, as far as is practical, that all employees are suitable to work with children.

a. Recruitment

- i. All expatriate employees must provide a police clearance from their home of record and their last country of residence.
- ii. All Hong Kong SAR employees must provide a Sexual Conviction Record Check (SCRC)
- iii. All candidates' referees will be asked directly if there are concerns regarding the candidate's suitability to work with children.
- iv. Successful candidates will be informed of their responsibilities towards Child Safeguarding while employed at the school.

b. Volunteers, interns and student teachers

It is the school's responsibility to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all volunteers, interns and student teachers are suitable to work with children.

- i. Volunteers, interns and student teachers must sign the TIS Visitors Code of Conduct. (Appendix 3)
- ii. Volunteers, interns and student teachers will be accompanied by a CCS staff member.
- iii. It is the school's responsibility to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all camp supervisors are suitable to work with children

2. Education Practices

As part of our commitment to safeguarding the welfare of all our students, we will promote the rights of a child to be listened to and to be taken seriously so that each child is able to express her/his views, thoughts and concerns.

a. Child protections issues are to be included in the taught curriculum.

- i. Curriculum activities and opportunities will equip students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse.
- ii. Students will be taught how to be safe and make good choices through the curriculum;

b. Parent workshop/coffee mornings shall be held each year.

3. School Environment

a. Students toilets are to be used by students only.

b. All classrooms are equipped with CCTV.

c. Adults collecting students from school must present a Student Pick-up Card, issued by the school.

PROTECTION

1. Staff training
 - a. TIS Staff shall have regular Child Protection professional development sessions
 - i. Separate sessions shall be held for education and auxiliary staff.
 - ii. Sessions shall take place in the most effective language of communication, whether English, Cantonese or Putonghua.
 - b. All staff shall be trained to recognise the signs of abuse or neglect (Appendix 1) and know the procedures for reporting this (Appendix 2).
2. Procedures
 - a. **At TIS the designated Child Protection Officers (CPO) are the Heads of School.**
 - b. The indicators of abuse and neglect in Appendix 1 shall be used by the staff member as a guideline for reporting to the Child Protection Officer, who will determine if the case needs further attention.
 - i. Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report his or her suspicions to a School CPO .
 - ii. In all cases, the Heads of School will be notified.
 - c. All staff, faculty, and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect.
3. Documentation
 - a. A report must be made when a staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect.
 - i. All reports are confidential
 - b. TIS will maintain appropriate records that might be required in a possible future investigation or inquiry.
 - c. The TIS Staff Handbook shall include guidelines regarding how to report abuse.
 - d. TIS shall have a Code of Conduct for visitors .
 - e. All students, from Year 3, shall sign a Digital Responsibilities Agreement, which is countersigned by a parent or guardian.
 - f. All Child Protection reference documentation shall be saved in the Think Drive for easy reference (policies, handbooks, EdB directives).

SUPPORT

Without appropriate support, any young person experiencing neglect or abuse may be affected for the rest of their life.

1. TIS shall maintain an ethos where students feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
2. TIS shall ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
3. TIS recognises that any student who comes from challenging circumstances needs extra support and care;
4. TIS shall create a curriculum which helps students develop a sense of personal care and safety.
5. If necessary TIS shall draw on the services of external agencies, which may include the Child Abuse Investigation Unit, Family and Child Protective Services Units or Social Welfare Department outreach team.

Confidentiality

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

A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a student nor should they agree with a student to keep a secret. If there is a child protection concern this must be reported in accordance with established procedures.

Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a "need to know basis" only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held confidentially to themselves.

Appendix 1: Definitions of abuse

Physical Abuse is:

- Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means, causing skin bruising, burns, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function, death.
- 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 acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain and/or mental suffering.
- Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the criminal code or school policy.
- Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury to, or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child.
- Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the
- Occurrence of any of the above.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colors)
- Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand) Injuries that regularly appear 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 on arms, legs, neck, or torso
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
- Immersion burns with a distinct boundary line
- Unexplained laceration, abrasions, or fractures

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs within their own environment. Neglect may be:

- Physical (e.g., 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. Should parents/guardians leave the country for any reason, then the responsibility for informing the school of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian.
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment)
- Emotional (e.g., 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.)

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF NEGLECT

- 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 and legal guardians are absent from Shanghai for any period of 24 hours or greater, without appropriate provision made for child's care, and a temporary guardian named.
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of emergency.

Behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse or neglect. Together with other indicators, such as family dynamics, they may warrant a referral.

Sexual abuse is

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

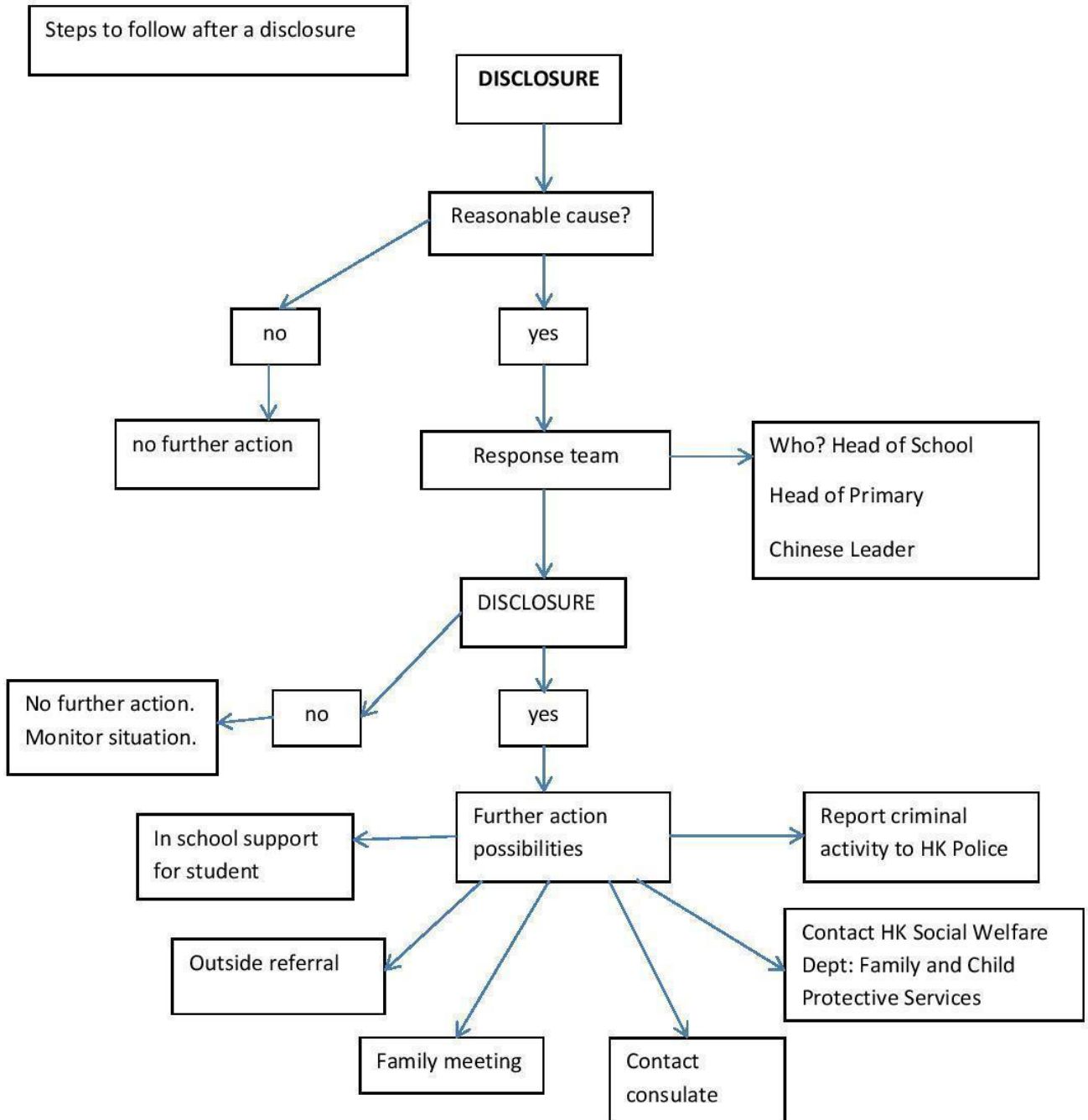
Sexual abuse has some different characteristics of child abuse that warrant special attention. While physical abuse is often the result of immediate stress and not usually planned, sexual abuse requires planning with results that are more insidious. The planning, referred to as "grooming," often results 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, so is more difficult to report.

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

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- 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 in the oral, genital, or anal areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Refusing to change into PE clothes, fear of bathrooms
- Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual
- Pregnancy, especially at a young age
- Extremely protective parenting

Appendix 2: Procedure flow chart



Appendix 3: Parents, Helpers and Visitors Code of Conduct

TIS has behaviour expectations of its students, staff, parents and visitors. The TIS Behaviour Code states that at all times, we are expected to demonstrate respect for self and others, respect for property, and to be responsible for work and behaviour. TIS promotes mutual respect, tolerance and social responsibility in a safe environment. All students, teachers, staff, parents and visitors have the right to feel safe in the school. This code of conduct is that of mutual respect between all school staff, students and all visitors. Included in this is respect for school property.

The school expects all visitors to

1. Be in compliance with all laws and regulations of Hong Kong SAR

2. Dress appropriately for a school environment.

3. Demonstrate in their own behaviour that all members of the school community should be treated with respect.

4. Use language appropriate to a school environment.

5. Only use the toilets assigned to staff and adults.

6. Ask permission from a member of TIS teaching team before taking/using images or video of students.

7. Any safeguarding or child protection concerns or disclosures must be reported immediately to a member of the school senior leadership team.

8. Should an emergency or drill happen while a visitor is on site, they must comply with the instructions of the school staff.

I have read and agree to abide by the TIS Code of Conduct.

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____