



**Escola das Nações**  
School of the Nations

2021-2022

# Child Protection Handbook



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## Introduction

*“The education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind and draweth down the grace and favour of the All-Merciful, for education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence and alloweth man to work his way to the heights of abiding glory.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*

Child well-being is essential to realizing academic and holistic success.

All students have the right to a safe, secure, and nurturing environment. School of the Nations strives to create a school environment that protects students’ integral well-being and optimizes their growth and development. We embrace the diversity of backgrounds and cultures represented in our school community. We take active measures not only to preserve students’ rights but also to help them understand those rights and to find support through adult advocates.

Child abuse and neglect violate a child’s human rights and are impediments to the child’s education and to his or her healthy development. School of the Nations supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, Brazil, is a signatory. The School follows state and federal laws, and our international accreditation agency, Cognia’s Child Protection Assurances on child welfare and protection.

As a school, we have the moral and legal duty to safeguard the welfare of students and children who use our facilities or who take part in our programs and activities.

School of the Nations’ Child Protection Handbook sets forth the steps our faculty, staff, parents, students, volunteers, contractors, and consultants must take to maximize child protection and safety, and to respond quickly and effectively should abuse be observed, suspected, or disclosed.

Our goal is to maintain an environment that protects children by either preventing child abuse before it occurs or by ensuring its earliest detection, intervention, and reporting. Our strategy is to ensure that all School personnel, outsourced personnel, student teachers, interns, volunteers, parents, and students can recognize signs and symptoms of abuse, understand the issues of child abuse and neglect, and are familiar with national, international, and local reporting procedures of mandated reporting, including how, when, and to whom to report.

## Definition of Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse constitutes “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power” (World Health Organization).

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child’s health or development.

Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to recognize children who need help and protection. Educators, therefore, have an obligation to identify children who need help and protection and to ensure the child and family make use of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

## Prevalence of Child Abuse Worldwide

Child abuse and neglect – particularly sexual abuse – are among the world’s most serious concerns, with millions of cases reported to various children’s protective service organizations each year. It is estimated globally that 150 million girls and 73 million boys under the age of 18 have experienced forced sexual

intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact (International Center for Assault Prevention).

Yet, it is also estimated that much abuse is underreported either because the victims are afraid to tell anyone what has happened, or the adults who observe or suspect the abuse are unsure what to do.

## Policy Statement

School of the Nations strives to provide a healthy and safe (physical, psychological, well-being) environment in which community members' rights and obligations are well defined. The School offers opportunities to all students to develop their potential and abilities as human beings and as citizens of the world.

Under Brazilian law, School of the Nations reports incidences of abuse and neglect to the proper authorities.

School of the Nations safeguards children, meaning we strive to protect our students from abuse and neglect and prevent impairment of their health and development, so they can grow up in circumstances of safe and effective care that enables them to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully (Working Together 2013).

School of the Nations follows all local and federal Brazilian law, the Brazilian Statute of the Child and Adolescent, *Cognia* Assurances on Child Protection, applicable governmental personnel regulations, and all other laws, conventions, pacts, and decrees listed in the section of this Manual entitled Legal Documents Related to Child Protection.

## Code of Conduct to Protect Minors

School of the Nations 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.

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

We must 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 keeping physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in such interactions. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behavior with those for whom we have responsibility. This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses.

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. School of the Nations' personnel should be aware of cultural differences when interacting with other individuals. School of the Nations' personnel and volunteers are prohibited from physically disciplining a child.

Physical contact with children can be misinterpreted both by the recipient and by those who observe it and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate. One-on-one meetings with a child or young person must be 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.

All staff employed at School of the Nations 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 following up on all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will

proceed according to School of the Nations' Child Protection Policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect will be reported to the appropriate School Administrator(s) and, as required by law, to the respective local Child Protection agency and local authorities.

Faculty, staff, employees, and volunteers must refrain from the illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol, 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 Minors

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 parents, administrators, teachers, personnel, volunteers, and minors at School of the Nations:

- Communication between School of the Nations (including volunteers) and minors that is outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship (teacher, coach, host, etc.) is prohibited.
- Email exchanges between a minor and a person acting on behalf of the School are to be made using a School email address.

## Child Protection Program

The Learning Support Coordinator leads the Child Protection Program, which counts on the support of Principals, Assistant Principals, Counselors, and teachers and is supported by the School Board, the Executive Director, and the Administrative and Finance Manager.

### Child Protection Program Roles and Responsibilities

The School defines roles and responsibilities for overseeing and ensuring child protection as follows:

- The School Board adopts a schoolwide Code of Conduct to ensure Child Protection.
- The Learning Support Coordinator leads the Child Protection Program.
- Principals and Assistant Principals
  - support the Child Protection Program;
  - follow Child Protection Policy;
  - support implementation of the Child Protection Curriculum;
  - ensure compliance with the Child Protection Policy, local and federal law, and international conventions and obligations;
  - request annual budgetary resources to ensure effective operation of the Child Protection Program;
  - ensure all cases of child abuse or neglect are brought to the School lawyer;
  - follow legal advice of the lawyer.
- Counselors
  - help ensure a comprehensive Child Protection and Safety Program are in place;
  - act as first line responders to whom suspected cases of child abuse are reported;
  - follow up on all disclosures of abuse or neglect;
  - help in reporting;

- serve as a resource in cases that require child protection measures;
  - keep the Executive Director and Principals informed;
  - lead the Child Protection Program in each section;
  - consult with the Executive Director and Principals to develop, schedule, and provide professional development;
  - implement Child Protection curriculum;
  - review the effectiveness of the Child Protection Program;
  - review Child Protection policies and curriculum to ensure they are effective and promote child development;
  - meet with parents to develop a mutual understanding of the need for the Child Protection policies and curriculum, answer questions, and provide support;
  - identify resources available to the School.
- Teachers
    - develop lessons and units of study in the Child Protection curriculum
    - attend training and teach lessons of the Child Protection curriculum
    - help parents understand the purpose of the Child Protection Program
    - train other teachers and staff on child protection (those teachers who are members of the Child Protection Program)

## Security and Surveillance

In addition to the policies, procedures, and guidelines contained in this Child Protection Handbook and staff training, the School employs security guards, monitoring personnel, and video surveillance at key points throughout the School to ensure child safety and protection.

## Definitions and Signs of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

Below are the three main categories of abuse, the concepts of neglect and at-risk behavior, and possible signs that can help identify whether any of them are taking place.

### At-Risk Behavior & Its Possible Signs

At-Risk Behavior is any behavior that puts youth at risk for future negative consequences, like poor health, injury, or death.

### Possible Signs of At-Risk Behaviors

- unexplained bruises, scratches, or cuts on any part of the body
- refusal to dress properly for P.E. (long sleeves)
- resistance to eat or overeating
- sudden or constant academic failure
- unexplained burns or burns with a pattern
- secretive behaviors, spending unusual amounts of time in the students' bathroom or isolated areas on campus
- defiant or disrespectful behavior toward peers and adults
- indifference to advice and guidance

- social isolation

## Physical Abuse & Its Possible Signs

Physical Abuse may include but is not limited to: hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child. (These symptoms could also suggest harm to self, such as, cutting and suicide ideation).

### Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, or fractures on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages and colors
- Injuries reflecting the shape of an object
- Injuries that regularly appear after absences
- Unexplained burns or burns with a pattern
- Bald patches where hair might have been pulled out
- Fear of going home
- May flinch if touched unexpectedly
- Extremely aggressive or withdrawn
- Poor sleeping patterns, frequent nightmares
- Poor memory and concentration
- Changes in emotions or behavior

## Sexual Abuse & Its Possible Signs

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (that is, rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual abuse could include but is not limited to:

- penetrative or non-penetrative sexual acts
- sexual intercourse, anal or oral sex
- touching of genitals or breasts
- undressing or exposing oneself
- forced viewing of sexual acts, genitals, or pornographic media
- developmentally inappropriate conversations about sexual content
- exploiting a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices

### Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse

- sexual knowledge, behavior, or language inappropriate for age
- unusual relationship pattern
- sexually transmitted infection in a child of any age

- frequent urinary tract infections in both boys and girls
- evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital, or anal areas
- difficulty walking or sitting
- bed-wetting
- not wanting to be alone with an individual
- pregnancy, especially at an early age
- extremely protective parenting
- secrets he or she cannot tell anyone
- reluctance to change into physical education clothes, fear of bathrooms
- behavioral or emotional disturbances
- low self-esteem, depression
- frequent psychosomatic complaints (headache, nausea, stomachache)
- diarrhea
- eating disorders

## Grooming

The following explanation of grooming is adapted from the explanation of Forensic psychiatrist, Dr. Michael Welner, who is the lead researcher of an evidence-based measure to standardize the worst of crimes at [DepravityScale.org](http://DepravityScale.org). Dr. Welner is an associate professor of psychiatry at NYU School of Medicine and is chairperson of The Forensic Panel.

Grooming is the process by which an offender draws a victim into a sexual relationship and keeps that relationship in secrecy. Below are six stages that can lead to sexual molestation.

The grooming sex offender works to separate the victim from peers, typically by engendering in the child a sense that they are special to the child and giving a kind of love to the child that the child needs.

Since there are various models that explain grooming, it is best to think of it as a gradual, calculated process that ensnares children into a world in which they are ultimately a willing part of the sex abuse.

### **Stage 1: Targeting the Victim**

The offender targets a victim by sizing up the child's vulnerability—emotional neediness, isolation, and low self-confidence. Children with less parental oversight are more desirable prey.

### **Stage 2: Gaining the Victim's Trust**

The sex offender gains trust by watching and gathering information about the child, getting to know his or her needs and how to fill them.

### **Stage 3: Filling a Need**

Once the sex offender begins to fill the child's needs, that adult may assume noticeably more importance in the child's life and may become idealized. Gifts, extra attention, affection may distinguish one adult in particular and should raise concern and greater vigilance.

#### **Stage 4: Isolating the Child**

The grooming sex offender uses the developing special relationship with the child to create situations in which they are alone together. This isolation further reinforces a special connection. Baby-sitting, tutoring, coaching, and special trips all enable this isolation.

#### **Stage 5: Sexualizing the Relationship**

At a stage of sufficient emotional dependence and trust, the offender progressively sexualizes the relationship. Desensitization occurs through talking, pictures, even creating situations (like going swimming) in which both offender and victim are naked. At that point, the adult exploits a child's natural curiosity, using feelings of stimulation to advance the sexuality of the relationship.

When teaching a child, the grooming sex offender has the opportunity to shape the child's sexual preferences and can manipulate what a child finds exciting and extend the relationship in this way.

#### **Stage 6: Maintaining Control**

Once the sex abuse is occurring, offenders commonly use secrecy and blame to maintain the child's continued participation and silence—particularly because the sexual activity may cause the child to withdraw from the relationship.

The child may feel that the loss of the relationship and the consequences of exposing it will humiliate and render him or her even more unwanted.

## **Emotional Abuse & Its Possible Signs**

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve: conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; that they are inadequate or valued only while they meet the needs of another person; imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children; often causing children to feel frightened; or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

Emotional abuse may include but is not limited to: excessive criticism, negative comparisons, insults, rejection, put-downs, harmful threats, inappropriate expectations, and yelling.

Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

- fear of failing
- fear of consequences (can lead to lying)
- mood swings, withdrawal, aggressiveness
- mental or emotional development lags
- social isolation
- acting out
- irritability

## **Neglect & Its Possible Signs**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect could include but is not limited to:

- inadequate food, shelter, and clothing
- lack of hygiene
- not protecting a child from other forms of abuse
- lack of supervision by a parent or legal guardian
- not providing needed medical treatment
- emotional isolation, lack of affection or attention
- failure to support a child's educational needs

## Possible Signs of Neglect

- child is hungry or inadequately dressed or unwashed
- parents are uninterested in child's academic performance
- parents do not respond to repeated communications from the School
- parents or legal guardian are absent for more than 24 hours
- parents or legal guardian cannot be reached in case of an emergency
- child does not want to go home, feels lonely and uncared for at home
- unattended medical or dental needs
- developmental delays
- irregular attendance or absence from school
- demands constant attention and affection
- regularly displays fatigue or indifference
- self-destructive behaviors
- lack of trust in others

## Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, acts to traffic, or other activities directed against a person using coercion by any person, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home, school, and work. The ability to give consent is an important consideration in any sexual act. A person who is unable to understand the nature or condition of the act in order to decline participation, or to communicate unwillingness to engage in the sexual act, for example, because of illness, disability, age, or the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or because of intimidation or pressure, cannot give consent.

## Stalking

Stalking is the unwanted pursuit of another person. By its nature, stalking is not a onetime event. The individual's actions must be considered in connection with other actions to determine if someone is being stalked. It includes repeated harassing or threatening behavior toward another person, whether that person is a total stranger, slight acquaintance, current or former intimate partner, or anyone else.

Stalking is also:

- a terrorizing crime with no identified beginning and seemingly no end;
- a crime that can cause tremendous fear without the slightest physical injury;
- a behavior with a high correlation to physical and sexual violence;

- a crime that can be lethal; and
- a very effective tactic of control for domestic violence abusers.

## Sexual Exploitation and Commercial Exploitation

Sexual and Commercial Exploitation includes, but is not limited to: the inducement, coercion, or encouragement of a child to engage in any sexual activity; the use of children in prostitution or other sexual practices; the use of children in pornographic activities, performances, or materials.

School of the Nations takes all possible measures to protect children from all forms of sexual and commercial exploitation.

## Field Trips

A field trip is a student excursion related to what students are studying from the School curriculum. It occurs when students leave School grounds for an educational purpose.

School Administration recognizes the value of field trips that enrich students' learning experience and encourages teachers to consider trips as important to student learning. Extracurricular trips must contribute to the total development of students and expand their learning beyond the classroom; therefore, the educational merits and value to student learning must be clearly stated to be approved.

Our School policies and commitment to the safety of students and staff on school trips are carried out with rigor in planning and setting up field trips and outings.

School of the Nations staff (teachers, monitors, and Principals) fulfill specific duties in the context of field trips to help ensure the safety of all students. These duties are summarized below.

- The duty to warn and inform
- The duty to provide proper instruction
- The duty to condition and equip participants properly
- The duty to provide proper supervision
- The duty to provide safe facilities on field trips
- The duty to provide safe equipment
- The duty to provide prompt and appropriate post-injury care

Some activities pose risk to staff and students involved. Before approving a field trip, the School decides whether the curricular and learning objectives outweigh the potential risk of injury to those involved. Parents receive in writing all information about field trip activities, hazards, and risks and must sign an authorization slip for their son or daughter to go on the field trip and to take part in the activities.

As a rule, adult supervision for school field trips is one adult for every ten students; however, the chaperone-to-student ratio may increase depending on the age, maturity, and number of students, the types of activities they will do, facilities, duration of the field trip, type of transport, and safety considerations (such as emergency procedures).

The competencies and qualifications of the staff, teacher assistants, and adult chaperones must be directly related to the activity.

School of the Nations staff and chaperones must supervise students at all times.

For more information, please see the School's full Field Trip Policy in the Faculty Manual.

## Field Trips Involving Overnight Stays

Before all field trips involving overnight stays, students are reminded that they are representing their family, their team, their School, and their community. School staff keep in close contact with the host family and accommodate any special requests.

When large groups are traveling the School books accommodations and room allocation in advance to help keep groups together in a hotel.

School of the Nations requires that when students under the age of 18 years go on a field trip involving an overnight stay, the teacher organizing the field trip must ensure there is a designated trained person responsible for child protection on the trip. This person will respond to concerns, supervise and coordinate accommodations, hold preventive welfare briefings and daily debriefs, and monitor compliance with the Codes of Conduct. This person must not be related to or in a relationship with the teacher(s) attending the trip.

The training of the designated person must be the same given to all School of the Nations staff regarding Child Protection.

When mixed gender groups are involved, at least one male and one female trained staff member must go with the group.

A list of emergency contact numbers, medical information on each child attending the event, and a first aid box must be taken on all field trips.

Parents are informed of:

- Transport arrangements
- Key timings – pick up, departure, and return
- Destination and contact details
- Room allocation
- Code of Conduct
- Contact details for trip staff
- Trip requirements – pocket money, kit etc.

### Accommodations for Overnight Stays

- Where accommodation is needed for overnight stays, student accommodations must be suitable for their age and gender.
- It is unsuitable for 18-year-old students to share a room with students under the age of 16.
- Teachers, coaches, chaperones, helpers, and volunteers are not allowed to share a room with any student except if the student is their own child.
- Teachers and chaperones must arrange their accommodations to be at least on the same floor as students, preferably in the room next door to students.
- All students must be given an emergency contact number for them to call in the night should they need to.

# Reporting and Disclosures

## When Abuse is Suspected

School staff must tell their section Principal and Counselor when they are made aware of students who present any of the aforementioned symptoms or characteristics or when they think they may be dealing with a student who is showing at-risk behaviors such as depression, self-harm, or substance abuse, or that a student may be a victim of harmful use of the Internet or bullying.

## When to Report Suspected Abuse

When there is reason to believe that a child is being abused or has shown at-risk behavior, either by observation or disclosure, the faculty member must report to the section Principal and Counselor within 24 hours.

The report must be made when the reporter has knowledge of or has reason to suspect that a child has been abused, neglected, or is showing signs of at-risk behavior. The report must contain the name of the reporter for further investigation. The identity of the reporter shall be protected even when other information from the report is being disclosed.

## Procedures for Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Abuse, Neglect, and Disclosures

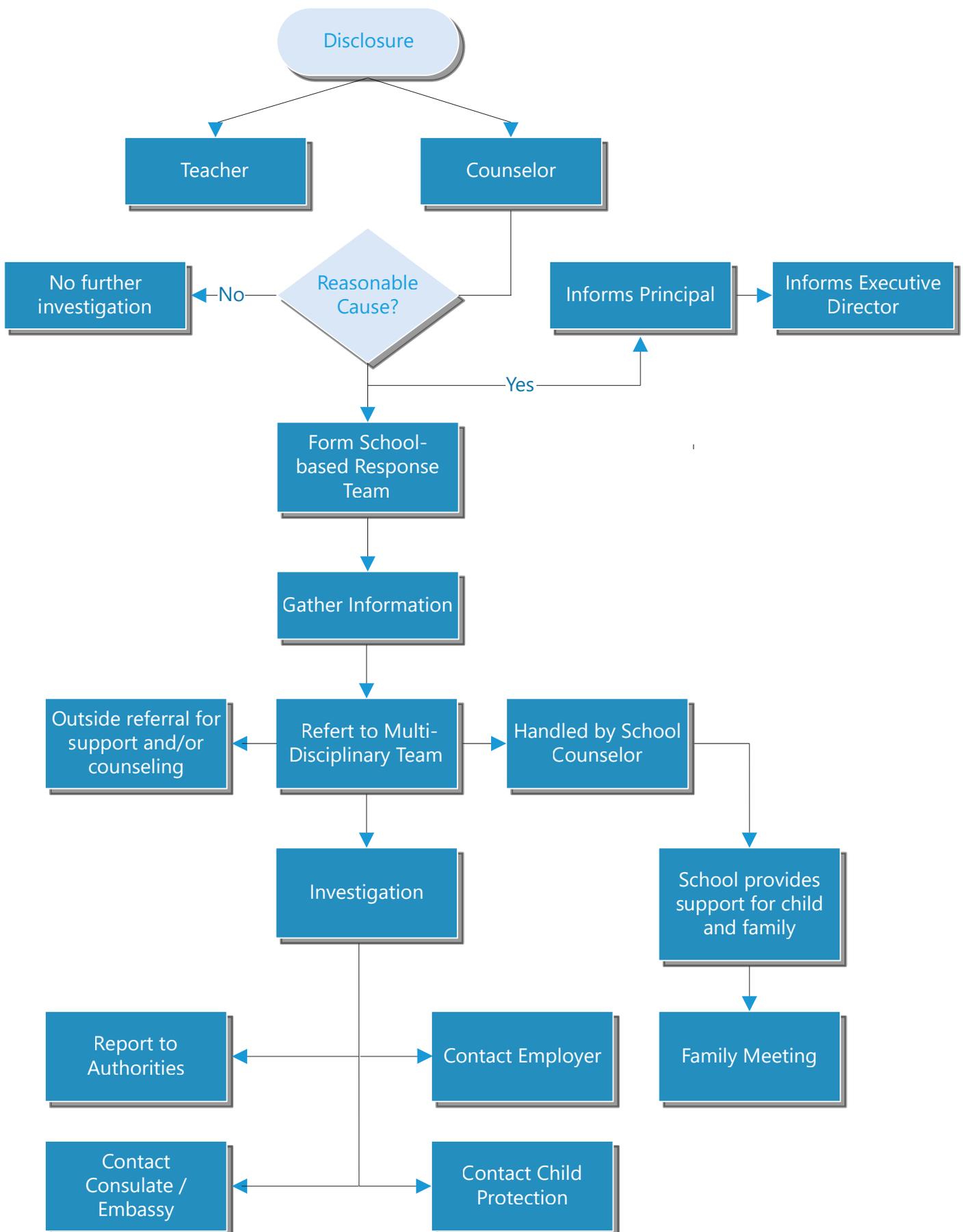
The section Principal and Counselor will gather information about the concern and meet with the Executive Director. The following actions may take place depending on information obtained:

- The section Principal and Counselor will interview staff members, review the child's school records as needed, and document relevant information.
- If a student is at risk of harm, the School shall notify local authorities.
- The Counselor will meet with the child to learn more information.
- The Child Protection Team will consult with the School attorney.
- The Child Protection Team will meet to discuss the report and decide next steps.
- The section Principal and Counselor will meet with the family to express the School's concerns and refer the student and family to outside professional therapists.
- The Counselor will maintain contact with the student and his or her family to give support and guidance as appropriate.
- The Counselor will offer resources to the student's teachers.
- The Counselor will follow up with outside professionals to learn about and inform on the progress of the student in and outside school.

School Counselors will handle many aspects of suspected cases of abuse, neglect, or loss such as those involving:

- student relationships with peers
- parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
- student-parent relationships
- emotional health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, and grieving

# Flowchart of Reporting and Actions to Take After Disclosure



Some cases will be referred to outside professionals, for example those that deal with mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, dissociation, and suicide ideation.

Cases reported for investigation and outside resources include:

- severe and continuing parental abuse or neglect;
- sexual abuse;
- incest.

When it appears evident in cases of abuse or concerns about the safety of the child, reports must be made to:

- local Child Protection Services
- the consulate if the child is a foreign national

Teaching students about child protection and being a part of their support system invites them to come to you with a problem. School personnel must understand and know how to respond appropriately, knowing that it is often very difficult for children to disclose abuse. Students often cannot tell about a touching problem because of the fear of:

- **Memory.** Children often cope with their abuse by pushing it so far back in their minds that they “forget.” To remember means to feel hurt again.
- **Loss of Love.** Children often worry that their parents or friends will not love them once they know about their abuse because now they are “dirty.” This is often because children will take responsibility for their abuse. Children also often fear their family will separate because of the telling. Offenders work hard to reinforce these feelings to keep the child silent.
- **Shame & Guilt.** Children either know or can sense that what happened, especially a sexual experience with an adult, is wrong. By telling someone and acknowledging that this happened, they fear the shame of the abuse. They fear they will get into trouble for telling. Older children will experience more of a sense of guilt than younger children, especially in sexual abuse.
- **Blame.** Children fear that they will be blamed for what happened and in the case of sexual abuse that they somehow wanted it. Adults tend to be believed over the child and offenders often say the child “asked” for the sexual touch or other abuse.
- **Harm.** Offenders often maintain control over their victims by threatening harm to them or their families if they tell. Children are then burdened with the inappropriate responsibility for keeping their families safe.

## Guidelines for Responding to Disclosure

- Do not let a child swear you to secrecy before telling you something. You may need to report, which the child will view as breaking your trust with them.
- If a child asks to speak with you, try to find a neutral, quiet setting with few interruptions.
- Do not lead the child in telling. Just listen, letting him or her explain in his or her own words.
- Do not pressure for a great amount of detail.
- Respond calmly and matter-of-factly. Even if the story the child tells you is difficult to listen to, do not register disgust or alarm.
- Do not make judgmental or disparaging comments about the alleged abuser. It is often someone the child loves or with whom he or she is close.
- Do not make promises to the child that things will get better.
- Do not confront the alleged abuser.
- If the child does not want to go home, consider it an emergency. Immediately report this by

contacting the section Principal and Counselor. Do not take the child home with you.

- Respect the child's confidentiality. Share with the section Principal and Counselor, but limit information from and with other staff.
- Explain to the child that you must tell someone else to get help.
- Let the child know that someone else also will need to talk with him or her, and explain to the child why.
- Empower the student by allowing him or her to be a part of the process.

The reporting of abuse alone does not mean that abuse occurred, much less can reporting alone lead to condemnation of the accused. Hasty judgments must not be made, especially since statistics indicate that abuse within schools is rare. The right thing to do is to take immediate precautions to protect the alleged victim, in addition to holding an internal investigation, without prejudice to investigations of competent authorities. Such investigations must always be carried out with civility and give all parties involved the opportunity to be heard.

## **Documentation, Child Protection Record Retention, and Record Destruction**

School policy on confidentiality and management of School records applies to all aspects of documenting incidents of abuse. The School follows local law, international law, and the advice of the School's legal team and local Child Protection services.

Documentation includes where to keep the child's records and what information to give to the next school based on legal requirements and liability for non-reporting.

Parents must indicate their agreement with this requirement in the admission contract.

### **Child Protection Records**

Any concern about a child or young person's welfare or safety, shall be recorded by School of the Nations regardless whether the concerns are shared with the police or children's social care.

School of the Nations shall keep an accurate record of:

- the date and time of the incident or disclosure;
- the date and time of the report;
- the name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details;
- the name and role of the person making the report (if this is different from the above) and their contact details;
- the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses to an event;
- what was said or done and by whom;
- any action taken to investigate the matter;
- any further action taken (such as a referral being made); and
- the reason the School decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant).

The report shall be factual. Any interpretation or inference drawn from what was observed, said, or alleged shall be clearly recorded as such. The record shall be signed by the person making the report.

## Storage of Child Protection Records

Information about child protection concerns and referrals are kept in a separate child protection file for each child. A child protection file will be started as soon as the School becomes aware of any concerns.

Child protection files are kept separate from a child's general records. The general record of the child will be marked to indicate there is a separate child protection file.

## Retention Period of Child Protection Records

Child protection files will be passed on to any new school the child attends and kept until their 26th birthday (7 years after they reach the school leaving age).

If the School decides not to share its concerns about a child's welfare with the police or social services, a record of the issues that were raised will be kept.

## Recording Concerns about Adult Behavior

Concerns are sometimes raised about an adult who works or volunteers with children because he or she has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- committed a criminal offense against, or related to, a child; or
- behaved in a way that suggests they are unsuitable to work with young people.

School of the Nations shall keep clear and comprehensive records of all allegations made against adults working or volunteering with children, including:

- what the allegations were;
- how the allegations were followed up;
- how the allegations were resolved;
- any action taken; and
- decisions reached about the person's suitability to work with children.

School of the Nations keeps these records to give accurate information if ever asked for it. For example:

- in response to future requests for a reference;
- if a future employer asks for clarification about information disclosed as part of an employment reference check; or
- if allegations resurface later.

## Storing Records Relating to Adults

Records relating to concerns about an adult's behavior are kept in the person's confidential personnel file, and a copy is given to the individual.

### Retention Periods: Concerns about Adults

If concerns have been raised about an adult's behavior around children, records are kept in their personnel file either until they reach normal retirement age or for 10 years - whichever is longer.

Records are kept for the same amount of time regardless of whether the allegations were unfounded. If it is determined that allegations are malicious, the record will be destroyed immediately.

Information is kept for this length of time even if the person stops working or volunteering for the organization.

### **Exceptions**

In some cases, records can be kept for longer periods of time. For example, if:

- the records provide information about a child's personal history, which the School might need to access later;
- the records have been maintained for the purposes of research;
- the information in the records is relevant to legal action that has been started but not finished; or
- the records have been archived for historical purposes (for example if the records are relevant to legal proceedings involving the organization).

If legal proceedings are underway, School of the Nations follows the advice of its legal counsel on how long to keep records.

When records are kept for longer than the recommended period, they are clearly marked with the reasons for the extension period.

## **Destruction of Child Protection Records**

When the retention period finishes, confidential records are incinerated or shredded in the presence of a School Administrator. At the same time, any electronic versions of the record are purged.

If not shredded immediately, all confidential records are labeled as confidential and locked in a secure place.

### **Review of Child Protection Records Retention and Storage Policy**

School of the Nations reviews its child protection records retention and storage policy regularly to ensure it is effective and follows current legislation.

## **Partnerships**

To help ensure all procedures described in this Manual are followed, School of the Nations partners with the following government agencies, embassies, School departments, companies who offer support and advice on child protection.

- Local Child Protection Services (Conselho Tutelar)
- School Lawyer
- American Embassy
- Fire Department
- UTI Life
- School Nurses

## **Hiring and Screening Personnel**

The Human Resources Department of School of the Nations thoroughly checks references of all staff, teachers, and other members of the community whose potential employment involves direct contact with, or the potential for unmonitored access to children.

School of the Nations uses Recommended Screening and Assessment Practices for international school recruitment.

The first and most effective means of preventing child abuse is screening out potential abusers before they come to the School. All personnel, staff, teachers, volunteers, and other members of the community whose potential employment or volunteer service involves direct contact with, and/or the potential for unmonitored access to children (including any individuals who regularly provide transport to children) will be given thorough reference checks.

The elements of a comprehensive reference check include:

- A written application and a “statement of suitability” requiring a signature stating the applicant knows of no reason or prior circumstance that would prevent him or her from working safely with minors
- A personal interview
- Verification of references and credentials

Misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in the information provided by the applicant, whenever discovered, may result in disqualification from, or termination of employment or volunteer service with the School.

## **Continuing Professional Development of Staff and School Community**

School of the Nations focuses on implementing policies and procedures that prevent incidents of child abuse from occurring. The continuing training is one of the strategies that help ensure all School personnel are prepared to deal with a possible case of abuse.

### **Objectives of Training**

- to provide child protection information to educational staff
- to understand what child abuse is
- to learn how to respond appropriately when one suspects or reports that a child in the School is being abused
- to identify how to protect children in School
- to define roles and responsibilities

Throughout the school year, School Counselors develop activities to teach students, parents, and staff about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Some of the activities include:

- Training staff members how to identify signs of abuse and at-risk behavior, how to respond to disclosure, and how to report.
- Offering lectures during the year to guide families, students, and teachers on healthy living (how to avoid substance abuse, peer pressure, etc.).
- The Social and Emotional Curriculum involves issues related to child abuse. According to the students’ age group, students have the opportunity to express concerns and needs for further

counseling and support.

- Parent Education: child protection at School is a partnership with parents. School Counselors provide parents information on how to keep safe and keep their children safe. This includes: personal safety, online safety, self-harm, and healthy sexual behavior.
- Training School Staff: the School employs security guards, cleaning and maintenance personnel, drivers, food service personnel, administrative staff, after-school instructors, and faculty. Training that is specific to each category of employee is given.

## Schedule of Annual Review of Child Protection Program, Policies and Procedures

In August each year, the School reviews data from the previous school year and develops plans for the current school year.

| Month         | Activity                                                                                                                           | Person(s) Responsible                     |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| August        | Inform Board, staff, students, and parents about Child Protection Program                                                          | Executive Director                        |
|               | Inform new families of School of the Child Protection Program                                                                      | Admissions Office and Counselor           |
| September     | Implement annual plan                                                                                                              | Child Protection Team and Principals      |
|               | Train all staff on Child Protection Program, individual responsibilities, how to manage disclosure, and how to report              | Principal, Counselors, Executive Director |
|               | Teach lessons to students                                                                                                          | Counselors and Teachers                   |
|               | Inform parents in writing and hold parent meetings                                                                                 | Counselors                                |
|               | Ensure all staff, volunteers, and contracted service providers sign Code of Conduct                                                | Human Resources Coordinator               |
| October       | Continue lessons in classroom                                                                                                      | Counselors and Teachers                   |
|               | Inform parents in writing and hold meetings with parents                                                                           | Counselors                                |
| November      | Review implementation and curriculum and recommend resources as needed                                                             | Counselors                                |
| January       | Update and review activities of first semester; recommend improvements                                                             | Principals and Counselors                 |
|               | Orient new students, families, and staff about Child Protection Program                                                            | Counselors                                |
| February -May | Teach lessons to students; offer lectures to students from outside professionals; offer lectures to parents and School staff       | Counselors and Teachers                   |
| June          | Update and review activities of first semester; make recommendations to improve; send budgetary requirements to Finance Department | Principals and Counselors                 |

## Inappropriate Behavior of Children Toward Other Children

School of the Nations seeks to ensure the safety and well-being of its students on campus. To do so the School has developed age-specific projects to help students develop social skills and to understand what acceptable and unacceptable behavior is.

Students are taught to recognize and respect others' limits and to follow rules that promote living together in harmony.

Students count on a safety net from which they can seek help and counsel and that includes teachers, assistants, counselors, Principals, and monitors.

Discipline at School of the Nations is based on justice, equality, mutual respect, and cooperation. Thus, we cultivate values and virtues among our students and staff and emphasize ethical behavior and attitudes. We expect all members of our community to abide by our three golden rules: be kind, be respectful, and be responsible.

Also see the Student-Parent Manual on Inappropriate Behavior.

## Resources

### Legal Documents Related to Child Protection

Local, national, and international obligations with respect to protecting children of which schools should be aware include:

- Brazilian Statute of the Child and Adolescent (Federal Law 8.069/1990)
- Brazilian Law of Guidelines and Foundations of National Education (Federal Law n. 9.394/1996)
- The Constitution of Brazil
- Organic Law of the Federal District
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (Decree 99.710/1990)
- International Pact on Civil and Political Rights (Federal Decree 562/1992)
- International Pact on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Federal Decree 591/1992)
- American Convention on Human Rights (Federal Decree 678/1992)
- Brazilian Federal Law 13.257/2016 (Early Childhood Statute)
- National Education Plan of Brazil (Law 13.005/2014)
- Brazilian Federal Law 13.185/2015
- District Laws 4.824/2012, 4.837/2012, and 5.267/2013) on bullying

The laws above emphasize the high priority placed on protecting children from child abuse and neglect, its many forms, and the obligation to establish and strengthen structures and organizations responsible for providing comprehensive services to child abuse victims and their families.

### Local Child Protection Services (Conselho Tutelar)

The Local Child Protection Services (*Conselho Tutelar*) is located at SHIS QI 11 Área Especial 01 - CEP: 71.625-205 (61) 3248-2120 / 3248-7170, or Call CISDECA - (61) 3217 - 0657



**Escola das Nações**  
School of the Nations