



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**PREPARED BY:** The Safe, Caring and Welcoming Committee, June 2016-17

**REVIEWED BY:** School Improvement Committee (DATE)

**APPROVED BY:** TIS Board of Directors (DATE)

### CONTENTS

1. Purpose
2. Guiding Framework
3. Related Policies and Protective Measures
4. Definitions
5. Roles, Responsibilities, and Procedures
6. Appendices

### PURPOSE

This Child Protection Policy (hereafter, the Policy) was created to prevent and address harm against students at the International School of Macao (TIS). It aims to provide TIS staff, students, and the families of TIS students, with guidance and clarity on how to address suspected incidents of harm. The Policy consists of this document and 2 related Codes of Conduct, one for adults, the other for students.

The Policy was developed by the 2017-18 Safe, Caring and Welcoming Committee (SCWC) building on the work of the 2016-17 Health and Safety Committee and previous TIS administrators. The Policy has been developed by reviewing child protection policies and procedures from other organizations, legal instruments including international human rights law, and by consulting with TIS staff, students, and families. If there are questions or concerns regarding the Policy or its implementation, please contact the SCWC at [scw.committee@tis.edu.mo](mailto:scw.committee@tis.edu.mo) or one of TIS' Child Protection Officers at (TO BE IDENTIFIED).

### GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most widely ratified piece of international human rights legislation, to which both Canada, and China on behalf of Macao, are party. The CRC guarantees all children the right to protection without discrimination. This means that adult duty-bearers, including parents and teachers, are required to keep children safe from harm. The CRC also entitles children with the right to participate in matters that affect them (see Article 12). Thus children, including TIS students, should not be viewed solely as passive victims of harm, rather, as active participants in their own protection.

TIS recognizes that it is one of many duty-bearers working to protect its students. Moreover, TIS is part of a broader system made of formal (laws, families, the media, other service providers) and informal (attitudes, norms, behaviours) components.



While TIS may influence other duty-bearers in the Macao child protection system, it acknowledges its primary role is to protect all of its students from harm while at school or during school activities. In its efforts to prevent harm against its students, TIS will work to build the capacity of its staff, students and their families, guided by the Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Professional Conduct, the Alberta Human Rights Act and related best practices from other international schools and organizations. TIS will adhere to its obligation to report suspected cases of harm guided by Macao's (2016) domestic violence legislation and The Alberta Education Act (2016) as detailed in the Procedures section below.

## **RELATED POLICIES AND PROTECTIVE MEASURES**

TIS has a variety of policies and protective measures currently in place that also contribute to preventing and/or addressing harm against students, including but not limited to:

- TIS' Social Media Guidelines and the Photo Permission Form
- Technology Responsible Use Agreement
- Lockdown Protocol
- Health and Safety Fact Sheets, Guidelines and Protocols for illnesses, air quality, inclement weather, and other specific issues
- relevant curriculum and educational activities
- Parent and teacher ID cards
- On-site security guards
- CCTV cameras, other equipment and infrastructure
- Bullying Awareness and Prevention week (November) and Pink Day (April)
- The Health and Wellness Committee and the Safe, Caring and Welcoming Committee
- Local community resources and contacts

While these related policies and protective measures do not all necessarily have child protection as their central focus, they do play a role in preventing and/or addressing harm against TIS students.

## **DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this policy, the following terms will be understood as:

*"Child"* - consistent with the CRC, a child is defined as every human being under the age of 18 years.

*"TIS Student"* - refers to any child enrolled at TIS as a student.

*"TIS Staff"* - refers to any individual contractually employed by The International School of Macao including but not limited to teachers; vice-principals, principals, and other administrative personnel; office workers; and, cleaning and maintenance workers.



*“Harm”* - is an act, action or series of acts or actions, by one person or group of person against a student in one or more of the following forms: abuse, neglect, violence, or exploitation.

There is overlap between some of the forms of harm, but the following definitions help to provide clarity for the purpose of this policy.

*“Abuse”* - the World Health Organization (2006) defines abuse as the intentional use of physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual force against a child that is likely to negatively impact a child’s health, survival, development or dignity, including but not limited to: hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning, and/or suffocating. Sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, or is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is developmentally unprepared for. Emotional and/or psychological abuse include but are not limited to restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, blaming, threatening, frightening, discriminating against, ridiculing, and/or other forms of rejection or hostile treatment.

*“Neglect”* - can be isolated incidents or a pattern of actions in which an adult fails to provide for the development and well being of a child, where they are in a position to do so, in one or more of the following areas: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions. Neglect is not necessarily an issue of wealth or poverty, rather of choice (World Health Organization, 2006).

*“Violence”* - The World Health Organization (2002) defines violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child by another person or group, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological damage, or maldevelopment. In agreement with the UN Study on violence against children (Pinheiro, 2006) TIS acknowledges that no violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable.

*“Exploitation”* - refers to the use of a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child’s physical or mental health, development and/or education. Exploitation includes but is not limited to: child labour and child prostitution (UNHCR, 2001).

*“Bullying”* - means repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual in the school community where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual's reputation (*Education Act 2016*)

## **ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND PROCEDURES**

All staff, students, and family members of TIS students, have a role implementing the TIS Child Protection Policy. The following roles, responsibilities and procedures have been developed to guide each person toward the collective aim of child protection at TIS.



## Roles and Responsibilities

*Child Protection Officers* - The administration/leadership team at TIS will identify two staff member(s) who lead the documentation and reporting process for suspected cases of harm; 1 from elementary and 1 from secondary. Alternatively 1 and or both child protection officers can be a staff member with cross-divisional responsibilities, however, the selected staff members should not be from the administration/leadership team, the counseling or student support staff, or the TIS nurse.

*SCWC* - Is a TIS school committee that contributes to the overall protective environment by leading activities and initiatives to prevent and address harm. SCWC also works to build the capacity of its staff and educate TIS stakeholders about child protection issues and efforts to address those issues.

*TIS Staff* - All employees are expected to read, understand, and uphold the *Child Protection Policy* and sign the *Adult Code of Conduct*. TIS staff are responsible for confidentially reporting suspected cases of harm against TIS students as detailed below.

*TIS Administrators* (Head of School, Principals, Vice-Principals) - In addition to their role as TIS Staff, are responsible to provide guidance and leadership to address child protection issues and when necessary implement disciplinary actions. They are also responsible for ensuring that training and other necessary support and resources are provided to staff including to the Child Protection Officers. TIS administrators are responsible for aligning hiring practices and procedures including during interviews by asking potential new staff whether they have been charged with, or dismissed from previous employment due to, harm against children. Additionally, during the interview process, potential new staff should be made aware of the TIS' *Child Protection Policy* and the requirement that all staff members are required to sign an *Adult Code of Conduct*.

*TIS Students* - All students are expected to read, understand and uphold the *Child Protection Policy* and sign the *Student Code of Conduct*. TIS students are responsible for confidentially reporting suspected cases of harm against TIS students as detailed below.

*Parents/Guardians of TIS Students* - All TIS parents and/or guardians are expected to read, understand and uphold the Child Protection Policy and when relevant sign the Adult Code of Conduct. Parents and/or guardians are encouraged to ensure that their students understand the Child Protection Policy in line with their evolving capacity.



## Procedures

1. If a student indicates that they have experienced harm, gather more information using the following guidelines:

DOs	DON'Ts
DO ask general, open-ended questions: <i>Do you want to tell me about that?</i>	DO NOT ask leading questions: <i>When, why, where, who, how did this happen?</i>
DO state observations: <i>I see you have bruises on your legs.</i>	DO NOT draw conclusions: <i>You must have been beaten.</i>
DO validate feelings: <i>I see you are upset.</i>	DO NOT analyze through remarks: <i>You must hate your father for doing that!</i>
DO express concern: <i>I need to know that you are safe; let's try to get some help.</i>	DO NOT make promises: <i>Everything will be alright when you report.</i>
DO let children/youth know clearly what decisions and actions need to be taken: <i>Here are the decisions we need to make and the people we need to talk with.</i>	DO NOT become part of the secret: <i>If you tell me, I won't tell anyone.</i>

(Canadian Red Cross, 2007, 63)

2. Confidentially provide the Child Protection Officer with a summary of the information using the template provided in ANNEX 3 as soon as possible. The template can also be found at: (GOOGLE DRIVE LINK). It will be the Child Protection Officer's responsibility to communicate the situation to administration.

3. If you suspect a child has experienced harm by observing bruises, cuts, burns, unusual or change in behaviour including being withdrawn or angry, and/or signs of neglect, confidentially report the incident to the Child Protection Officer using the template provided in ANNEX 3 as soon as possible. The template can also be found at: (GOOGLE DRIVE LINK). It will be the Child Protection Officer's responsibility to communicate the situation to administration. Do not gather more information from the child directly.



4. If a third party reports suspected harm, confidentially report the incident to the Child Protection Officer as soon as possible. Do not gather more information from the third party or the child.

5. If you observe harmful behaviour against a student by an adult, follow procedure #3.

### **Policy Review**

It is recommended that the Child Protection Policy be reviewed in 2018-19 (2 years from its adoption) to ensure its implementation and utility.

### **APPENDICES**

- I. Adult Code of Conduct
- II. Student Code of Conduct
- III. Child Protection Reporting Template



## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Canadian Red Cross. (2007). *Ten Steps to Creating Safe Environments for Children And Youth. A Risk Management Road Map to Prevent Violence and Abuse*. International Committee of the Red Cross. Taken from:

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