

ISD Child Protection Policy

Philosophy

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school, and is related to the following:

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\).](#)

[The standards and expectations that were developed by the International Task Force on Child Protection \(ITFCP\)](#)

Hungarian Law outlining child protection

[ISD Inclusion Policy](#)

We work hard to ensure that everyone at ISD keeps careful watch throughout the school and in everything we do for possible dangers or difficulties. We want all children to feel safe at all times. We want to hear their views of how we can improve all aspects of safeguarding and from the evidence gained we put into place all necessary improvements.

We want all of our students to achieve their full potential by:

- being as physically and mentally healthy as possible
- experiencing good quality educational opportunities
- living in a safe environment
- learning and working in a safe environment
- experiencing emotional well being
- feeling loved and valued
- receiving support from a network of safe, reliable and caring adult relationships
- learning to look after themselves
- coping with everyday living
- having a sense of identity and a positive image of themselves
- developing their confidence and their interpersonal skills

Child Protection Team

The purpose of this team is to respond to and manage all child protection reports. The team consists of the following individuals on an as-needed basis:

- Designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) (School Director Tom Mclean)
- Elementary School Principal (Gonzalo Curbelo)
- Middle/High School Principal (Christopher Southwick)
- CPT Leaders (Counselors: Aleksandra Semaan and Whit Altizer, school psychologist Nora Vilmányi)
- Paramedic (Cynthia Ivan)
- Board member (if case involves ISD employee)

ISD has developed and adopted an appropriate definition of child abuse including physical, emotional or sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect and commercial or ideological exploitation, and inappropriate behaviour of children towards other children.

Definitions and Indicators of Child Abuse, as outlined by the World Health Organization (WHO)

Child abuse is any form of physical abuse, sexual abuse/exploitation, emotional abuse or neglect that causes injury or emotional damage to a child or youth.

It is important to note that physical and behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse or neglect, but maybe an indication that something is wrong and should be investigated further. Some students may be more vulnerable to abuse due to special educational needs, disabilities, ethnicity, religion, etc, and may require early intervention..

A. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when a person (adult or child) purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or youth.

Indicators may include but are not limited to:

- injuries that don't fit the explanation
- presence of several injuries that are at different stages
- facial injuries in young children
- injuries don't fit with the child's age and developmental stage
- cannot recall how injuries occurred or offer an explanation that doesn't fit
- wary of adults
- may cringe or flinch if touched unexpectedly
- infants may display a vacant stare
- extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn

B. Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Sexual abuse is when a person forces a sexual act upon is another person for sexual gratification without their consent. Sexual abuse can be contact or non-contact.

Child sexual exploitation is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It is the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. Sexual exploitation may include performing sexual acts, sexual explicit activity for entertainment and gratification, and appearing in pornographic material. It can be consensual or not, and many cases of sexual abuse are done by a family member or someone the child knows and trusts, therefore children can be groomed, blamed, or manipulated to keep secrets.

Indicators may include but are not limited to:

- unusual or excessive attention to the genital or anal area

- torn, stained, or bloody underwear
- pregnancy
- injuries to the genital or anal areas (e.g. bruising, swelling, or infection)
- sexually transmitted disease
- age-inappropriate play with toys, self, or others displaying explicit sexual acts
- age-inappropriate sexually explicit drawing and/or descriptions
- bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge
- seductive behaviors

C. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a chronic attack on a child or youth's self-esteem and disregards their well being. Rejecting, degrading, isolating, terrorizing, corrupting, ignoring, and exploiting are all forms of emotional abuse.

Indicators may include but are not limited to:

- bed-wetting that is nonmedical
- frequent psychosomatic complaints, such as headaches, nausea, abdominal pains
- child fails to thrive
- severe depression
- fear of failure
- fear of consequences which may lead to lying
- extreme withdrawal or aggressiveness
- overly compliant, too well-mannered, too neat or clean
- extreme attention-seeking
- displays extreme inhibition in play

D. Neglect

Neglect is the chronic inattention to the basic necessities in life due to their caregiver's or other individual's failure to properly supervise, protect, care, or provide for the child. Situations, where the child's need for medical, mental, emotional, or developmental services and treatment are denied by the parent or caregiver, are also considered neglect. Basic necessities could include but are not limited to clothing, shelter, healthy diet, education, good hygiene, supervision, medical and dental care, adequate rest, safe environment, moral guidance and discipline, exercise, fresh air and clean water.

Indicators may include but are not limited to:

- poor hygiene
- unattended physical or medical needs (e.g. glasses, dental work)
- consistent lack of supervision
- pale, listless, unkempt
- frequent absence from school
- inappropriate clothing for the weather, dirty clothes
- frequently does not bring a lunch

- Frequent tardiness or absence
- Acute fatigue or hunger
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from school
- Child does not want to go home

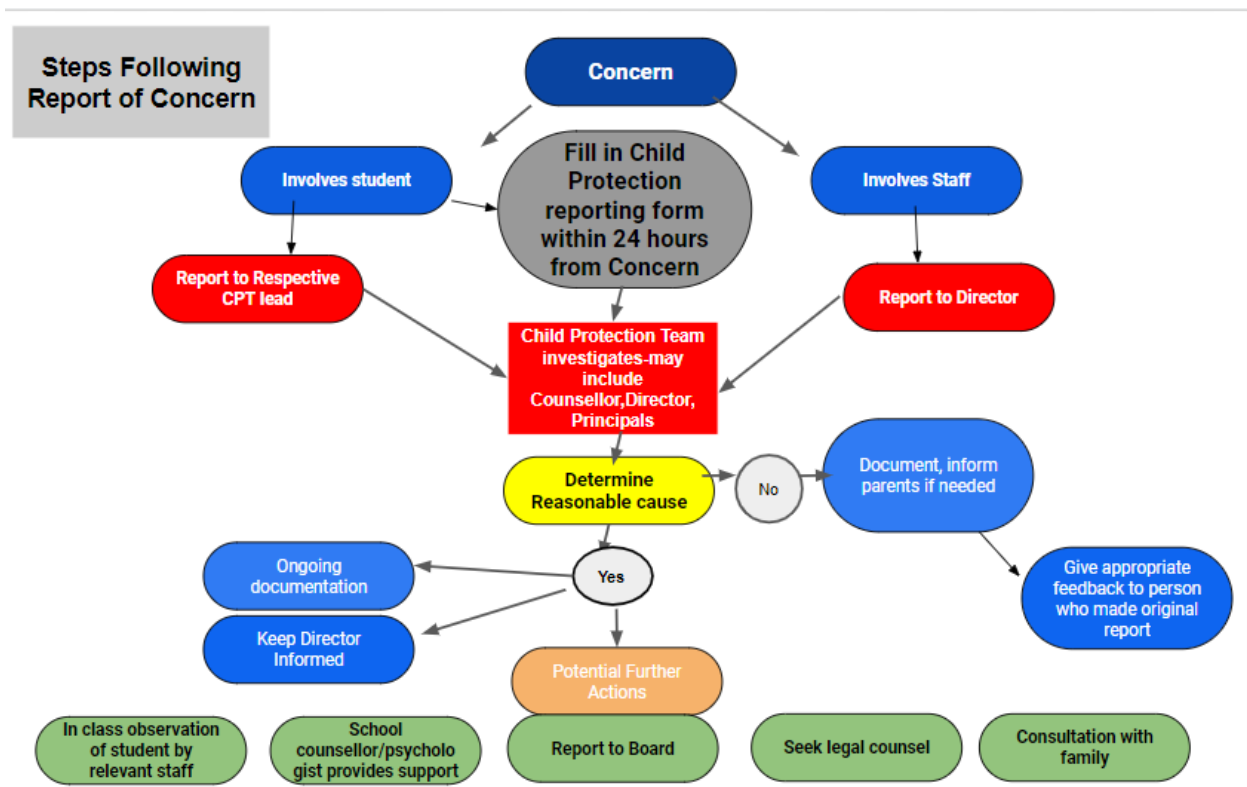
Procedures

This policy covers the procedures that will be set into operation in the event that an allegation of abuse is made.

The procedures cover the initial actions, those taken during the investigatory phase and the actions taken in the aftermath. They cover situations when allegations are found to have no substance and situations when they are shown to be well-founded. The detailed [flowchart](#) outlines the steps that need to be taken in such situations.

Reporting

Identifying when to report: if an employee has ‘reasonable cause’ or ‘reasonable suspicion’ of abuse based on his/her knowledge of the student or personal experience with children, the employee should act in good faith and report the concern to the relevant personnel outlined in the Flowchart.



Steps in Report of Concern

Step 1- Allegation: If a member of staff is a witness to, has a suspicion of, or receives information regarding a child protection issue, the member of staff informs either the CPO or a member of the CPT and then completes the [Child Protection Reporting Form](#) within 24 hours of disclosure.

Step 2- Investigation: Determining reasonable cause for concern within 48 hours from receipt of form.

The CPO or Respective CPT lead will gather the Child Protection Team to develop an action plan to determine if there is reasonable cause to substantiate the report.

The CPO, Respective CPT lead or the Director will then take initial steps to gather information about the reported incident and determine reasonable cause.

*note - some cases of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled by school counselors.

Examples:

- Student relationships with peers
- Parenting Skills related to discipline/neglect at home
- Student-parent relationships
- Mental Health - depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, grief/loss

All follow up activities will be documented factually and conducted in a manner as to ensure confidentiality.

The following procedure is recommended:

- Interview staff members and document
- consult school personnel to review student's school history
- report status of case to relevant admin • move to Step 3.

Step 3- Further Actions: If reasonable cause is not determined, and further information is not needed, documentation is made and the process ends.

If reasonable cause is determined and further information is deemed necessary, such actions may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Confidential meeting with student(s) involved
- Confidential parent notification/ meeting with parents
- Confidential meeting with others pertinent to the case, including the alleged abuser
- Physical injuries reviewed and documented by nurse

Step 4- Actions taken afterwards- changes case by case

In case of Disclosure from student:

If a student makes a disclosure then the member of the school personnel must:

- not promise confidentiality but inform them that other people need to be told;
- listen to the student;
- remain calm;
- offer reassurance;
- not ask leading questions;
- let the pupil speak freely;
- accept what has been told them without challenge;
- not offer opinion or criticize or lay blame;

- reassure the pupil at the end of the disclosure telling them that they have done the right thing;
- record accurately and factually what the child has said in note form- as soon as possible
- record observed injuries or bruises on a map of the body; but do not ask the student to remove or adjust clothing if injuries or bruises are observed.

Training

All ISD educational staff will receive training from Educare, with a focus on child protection in international schools, linked [here](#). The objective of the training is to develop staff members' understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse, how to respond to a student who discloses abuse and the procedure to be followed in sharing a concern of possible abuse or a disclosure of abuse. Training will be renewed yearly for new staff.

Safe Recruitment

We operate safe recruitment procedures and make sure every adult within our school who has access to children has been checked as to their suitability. At least one member of Senior staff has had appropriate training in safer recruitment procedures.

- Every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) knows the name of the designated person responsible for child protection and their role.
- All staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection. Staff will receive appropriate training updated every year.
- Parents are made aware of the school's responsibilities in regard to child protection procedures through the publication of the school's Child Protection Policy.
- All new staff are made aware of the school's policy and procedures as part of their induction into the school.
- We develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, ensuring that any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the relevant authorities within Hungary and their home country.
- We monitor children known or thought to be at risk of harm and keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately, ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from student records.

Curriculum

We ensure that the curriculum deals with safeguarding through activities and opportunities in PSHE that will equip the children with the necessary skills and awareness to stay safe from abuse. We want children to understand risk, to become more resilient, and know where to go for help and support - not only in school but also in the local community.

Curriculum: <https://www.secondstep.org/what-is-second-step> from 2022/2023 Academic Year.

Confidentiality

- It is imperative that confidentiality is observed at all times as the protection of the child is paramount.
- School personnel have a professional responsibility to share information with other professionals who are investigating a case.
- A child, when confiding information to a member of staff, must be made aware that for the child's own sake this information cannot be kept secret.
- The child must be reassured that the information will only be shared with the designated teacher who will decide what will happen next.
- All child protection records are regarded as confidential and will be kept in a secure place.

Staff Code of Conduct

ISD 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 ISD 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 behaviours 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 ISD.

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. ISD 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 to suggest, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that children are being abused in any way. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported to school leadership in accordance with the ISD Child Protection Policy.

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 ISD parents, administration, teachers, personnel, volunteers, and minors:

- Communication between ISD (including volunteers) and minors that are 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.
- Teachers must not befriend students on social media. A clear division between professional and personal life must be maintained at all times. The only digital tools that teachers should use to communicate with students are the official accounts held by ISD e.g. Google, Seesaw.

The following is not an exhaustive list of unacceptable or inappropriate behaviors but is intended to provide guidance and raise awareness of the importance of maintaining professional boundaries between staff and students:

Professional Boundaries

Staff should be aware of their own and other people's vulnerability, especially when working alone with students, and be particularly aware that they are responsible for maintaining physical, emotional boundaries in such interactions. Any covert behavior directed toward students is prohibited. This includes speech or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits or harasses students.

Physical Contact

Staff must show prudent discretion before touching students, 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. Physical contact with students 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. Staff are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child.

One-to-One Student Interactions

One-to-one interactions with a student must be held in a public area or in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed (such as a room with an open door or window that provides visibility). We are aware that at ISD we have certain rooms without windows, such as music practice rooms.

Another staff member should be informed of any one-to-one meetings with students. Staff and students should never be in a room with a locked door (where access/egress is prohibited). The same prudence should be applied for after-school activities.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the faculty handbook
- the school website
- meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- meetings with faculty

Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy

ISD will communicate this policy annually to all parents, applicants and students and will review the policy annually for compliance and effectiveness.