



# Vientiane International School

## Child Protection Procedure Manual

### 2018 - 2019

#### **VIS Child Protection Policy (8.7.3)**

VIS is committed to providing a safe environment for its students, free from abuse and uses the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified in 1989)* as a framework. The Convention comprises 54 articles that address the needs, protection and rights of children worldwide. It has been signed by nearly 200 countries including Lao PDR. Countries that ratify the treaty pledge to protect children from economic and sexual exploitation, violence, and other forms of abuse and to advance the rights of children to education, healthcare, and a decent standard of living.

VIS relies on preventative practices such as student and staff education to reduce risk and promote student wellbeing. As educators, we have the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time on a daily basis, and are in a unique position to identify children who need help and protection. As such, we have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of protection and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of any services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

All faculty and staff at Vientiane International School are mandated to report their concerns about the wellbeing of any student. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures linked to this policy.

Therefore, no VIS employee may engage in any activity constituting abuse and VIS employees must report any suspected abuse either in or out of school to the Child Protection Officer, Head of School, Divisional Principal, Counselor or other member of the Child Protection Team.

**Definition of child abuse / neglect:** Child abuse is the physical, sexual, emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child or children. We know that abuse can take many forms and may not always be visible or detectable.

**Child abuse / neglect prevention:** VIS seeks to be a safe haven for students. In order to achieve this the following practices will be put in place by the Head of School:

1. VIS's hiring practices will include Background Checks for all employees and full-time service providers.
2. All VIS staff must undergo annual training on the safety and wellbeing of children.
3. VIS will maintain an updated Child Protection Procedure Manual to ensure appropriate procedures are in place. This document will be shared annually with faculty, staff, parents, and students.

## Definitions and Possible Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

Definitions of abuse are complex and usually based in child-rearing behaviors, gender and role responsibilities, and social expectations of different cultures throughout the world. The primary determination of abuse is that it occurs within a relationship that is used to meet the need/desires of the more powerful person, a member of the family, a teacher, a friend, etc without concern for the needs of the child.

It is important to note that behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse or neglect. However, together with other indicators, such as family dynamics, they may warrant a referral.

### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning / scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child.

### Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse

Physically abused children find it difficult to relate to their peers and the adults around them. The threat of violence makes them vigilant and mistrustful, and they may be overly domineering and aggressive in their attempts to predict and control other people's behavior, or extremely reserved and withdrawn. Abused children are also vulnerable to instances of overwhelming emotional responses to everyday situations.

Physically abused children exhibit a range of signs, including:

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Injuries to the body in places that aren't normally exposed to falls, etc.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Being aggressive towards others
- Being very passive and compliant
- Chronically running away
- Excessive need to use the toilet without a medical reason
- Inappropriate clothing (extra baggy or very revealing)
- Arms and legs are kept covered in hot weather (not related to religious attire)

### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the most common form of child abuse. It refers to the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child so as 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another

person; having age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children; causing children frequently to feel frightened; or the exploitation or corruption of children. Emotional neglect, or not attending to the emotional needs of children is also a form of emotional abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may also occur by itself.

Some parents who are emotionally abusive practice forms of child-rearing that are orientated towards fulfilling their own needs and goals, rather than those of their children. Their parenting style may be characterized by overt aggression towards their children, including shouting and intimidation, or they may manipulate their children using more subtle means, such as emotional blackmail.

Emotional abuse does not only occur in the home. Children can be emotionally abused by teachers and other adults in a position of power over the child. Children can also be emotionally abused by other children in the form of "bullying".

### **Possible Indicators of Emotional Abuse**

Emotionally abused people are often more withdrawn and emotionally disengaged than their peers, and find it difficult to predict other people's behavior, understand why they behave in the manner that they do, and to respond appropriately.

Emotionally abused children exhibit a range of signs, including:

- Low self-esteem
- High anxiety
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations
- Chronically running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Obsessions or phobias
- Delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Difficulties with school attendance
- Difficulty making friends
- Attention-seeking behavior
- Incontinence and mysterious pains
- Persistent tiredness
- Lying
- Delayed physical, mental and emotional development
- Inappropriate need for physical contact

### **Neglect**

It is generally understood that "neglect" refers to a range of circumstances in which a parent or caregiver fails to adequately provide for a child's basic needs:

- through the provision of food, shelter and clothing
- by ensuring their access to medical care when necessary
- by providing them with care, love and support
- by showing appropriate moral and legal guidance
- by ensuring that the child regularly attends school

- by exercising adequate supervision and control of the child

Note: VIS requires all students to live with a parent / guardian. Should both parents / guardians leave the city / country for any reason, then the responsibility for informing the school of who will be caring for the student/s, and all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian. Parents / guardians should complete the 'Parent / Legal Guardian Absence Form' to provide this information.

### **Possible Indicators of Neglect**

Neglected children exhibit a range of signs, including:

- The child is unwashed, hungry and / or improperly clothed
- Parents are uninterested in the child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- The child does not want to go home
- Both parents or legal guardian are absent from Vientiane for any period of 24 Hours or greater
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of emergency.

### **Sexual Abuse**

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. Activities involving physical contact that include penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts during which a child is intentionally touched either directly or through clothing, on the genitals, anus, or breasts for other than hygiene or care purposes. Non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways is also sexual abuse. Children Involved in commercial sex work are victims of sexual abuse, whether they perceive themselves as victims or not.

### **Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse**

- Pain or irritation to the genital area
- Vaginal or penile discharge
- Excessive toilet usage without medical reason
- Difficulty with urination
- Sexually transmitted disease (STD)
- Fear of people or places
- Aggression
- Regressive behaviors, bedwetting or stranger anxiety
- Excessive masturbation
- Sexually provocative behavior
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
- Being unusually quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive
- Suffering from what seem to be physical ailments that can't be explained medically
- Showing fear or distrust of a particular adult
- Mentioning receiving special attention from an adult or a new "secret" friendship with an adult or older student
- Refusal to continue with school or usual social activities
- Sexual behavior, language, or knowledge too advanced for their age



- Change in clothing style (extra baggy or very revealing)

In addition to knowing the signs of victimization, below are some early warning signs to look out for in potential offenders:

- Has a “favorite” student/child
- Attempts to find ways to be alone with children
- Inappropriate language, jokes and discussions about or with students
- Sexualized talk in the presence of children
- Gives private gifts or has private chats on Facebook/internet.

## **Overview of Comprehensive Program**

At VIS, the Child Protection Team (CPT) ensures that VIS has an up-to-date and comprehensive, proactive approach to student protection that includes:

### **1. Child Protection Team**

- Implements the Child Protection Procedure Manual
- Gathers information on reported incidents and develops a response
- Sets the schedule for lessons and other child protection tasks for the school year
- Keeps up-to-date research on best practices
- Oversees annual child protection training for all personnel
- Conducts yearly internal audit

### **2. Background Checks for Employees and Visitors to School Policy**

- Written application / statement of suitability
- Reference check
- Criminal history background check
- VIS Visitors to School Policy

### **3. Child Protection Agreement and an Awareness of Power Differential and the Responsibility to Maintain Appropriate Boundaries**

- Use of discretion when touching children
- How to handle one-on-one meetings
- Prohibition against smoking, drinking, profanity, sexual innuendo or jokes around students on and off campus
- Use of social media, text, email with current students unless for a specific school-related purpose
- Compliance with reporting policies / protocols
- Must be read by all current / potential employees and signed to acknowledge receipt

### **4. Policies and Procedures for Child Protection**

- Identifies mandatory training requirements (i.e. annual training)
- Articulates the reporting protocol
- Step-by-step instructions with flow chart
- Rules for school, classroom, interpersonal safety



- Identifies who is expected / required to report and to whom
- Procedures for support of teacher and parents
- Procedures for case when school personnel are accused of abuse
- Outlines how information is provided to parents
- Sets up support network

#### **5. Education and Training for the Three Stakeholder Groups at VIS**

- **Teachers** - awareness, types, signs / symptoms, prevention, policies and laws, reporting process, student curriculum, and resources
- **Students** - age appropriate personal safety / abuse prevention training for all grade levels based on core elements and evidence-based practices
- **Parents** - school safety goals and objectives, how to talk with their children, and resources available.

#### **6. Community Partnership Resources**

- US Embassy (US Embassy Families)
- French Clinic
- Individual counselors / psychologists

#### **7. Measurement, Analysis, Self-Audits**

- Compliance and quality / effectiveness
- Annual self-audit to assess the policy and procedure
- Analysis of policies and procedures every three years
- Continuous quality improvement
- Effectiveness and measurement

## **Child Protection Team**

The Child Protection Team consists of the Child Protection Officer, school counselors, the school nurse, administrators from each division and the Head of School. The role of the Child Protection Team is to ensure that there is a comprehensive child protection program in place at the school and to annually monitor the effectiveness of the program. Specific tasks include:

- Ensure a comprehensive child protection program is in place
- Gather information on reported incidents and develop a response, including follow-up
- Work within the school's existing structures to ensure development and adoption of child protection curriculum to meet school needs
- Ensure that child protection curriculum is taught and assessed annually
- Support teachers and counselors in implementing the child protection curriculum
- Ensure / guide training for all staff that have direct / indirect contact with students regarding the child protection program
- Ensure / guide parent evening education programs to support understanding of the objectives and goals of the policy / curriculum

The Child Protection Team will meet at least twice annually to discuss and plan for the following:

- Preparation / inventory of personal safety materials



- Review personal safety protocols and guidelines
- Schedule for annual training

Minutes of child protection team meetings will be recorded and shared with the team.

### **Role of the Child Protection Officer**

The role of the VIS Child Protection Officer is to:

- Receive and act upon any reported concerns, including follow-up actions
- Discuss reported concerns with the Child Protection Team to establish next steps
- Ensure the Child Protection Procedure Manual is reviewed and updated yearly
- Coordinate annual training for all staff
- Promote best practice in child safeguarding
- Manage referrals to outside agencies

## **Background Check and Visitors Policy**

As preventative measures, VIS has implemented a background check policy as a means of screening all employees prior to working at the school and a visitors policy that limits the interactions between VIS students and adults that have not undergone the screening process.

### **VIS Background Check Policy**

Prior to beginning employment, all employees and full-time service providers are required to complete the following:

1. A police clearance certificate or government issued background check from their most recent place of residence;
2. A government-issued background check from their country of citizenship;
3. Vientiane International School Disclosure and Consent Form

### **VIS Visitors to School Policy**

Parents and their guests are welcome to visit the School. When interested in visiting their child's class, parents are required to make advance arrangements with the teacher as unscheduled visits to classrooms can be distracting to teachers and students.

Outside students, educators or interested observers will be granted visiting privileges only with prior permission of the Head of School or his/her designee and will be supervised by a staff member at all times.

The Head of School will ensure procedures are in place to manage visitors on campus including cases where visitors would be denied entry and/or escorted from the premises.

## **Employee Child Protection Agreement**

Each year all VIS personnel will endorse their understanding of this agreement on the Child Protection Agreement (Addendum A). The Child Protection Agreement applies to all



employees (faculty and staff) who represent the school and co-curricular providers or any adults working with students. Aspects of this agreement are detailed below.

It is important to acknowledge that the public and private conduct of employees can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact and/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 people's vulnerability, especially when working alone with students, 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 behaviors or language with those for whom we have responsibility. This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, or harasses.

We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially 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. VIS personnel are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child.

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. One-on-one meetings with students are best held in a public area - in a room where the interaction can be observed - or in a room with the door left open. Classroom windows should not be covered.

School sponsored overnight trips will have male and female chaperones when both girls and boys are on the trip and at least two chaperones for overnight trips, unless approved by the division principal.

Communication with students is governed by the key safety concept of transparency. Employees should be mindful of the following guidelines:

- Electronic communications with students are to be made, whenever possible, using a school email or other communication platform. Any electronic communication that takes place over a school network may be subject to review and / or monitoring.
- When using other electronic communication modes, including social media and text messaging, messages should relate to a student's school life. Only group messages should be sent with at least two adults included in the group.
- Staff should not engage with individual current students on social media platforms.

VIS employees should be very cautious discussing sensitive issues. If such conversations occur, a counselor should be informed immediately. Counselors, too, should seek consultation as required by the VIS code of ethics. VIS employees should never agree to or suggest that confidential discussions be kept from school officials or parents when these involve potential abuse.

VIS personnel should not smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol, or illegal drugs in the presence of students while in a professional capacity (this includes MRISA events, SALSA and any other school endorsed trips).



Employees should never buy alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or inappropriate video / reading material to give to students. Employees should be cautious of accepting gifts that may indicate an inappropriate relationship. If this occurs, they should meet with a counselor or Principal.

Employees are mandated to report suspected abuse to the Child Protection Officer, a school counselor, or division principal (see "reporting abuse and next steps"). Reports should be made within 24 hours of observing or reasonably suspecting abuse. The reporter's name will be kept confidential if at all possible.

## **Responding to a Child or Young Person**

Adults working with children and young people must understand and know how to respond appropriately to disclosures from students, knowing that it is often very difficult for them to disclose abuse. Children and young people often cannot easily talk about an abuse problem because they may:

- Try to "forget" in order to cope
- Worry they will lose the love of their parents and friends
- Fear the shame of abuse or getting in trouble for telling (especially older children)
- Fear they will be blamed as adults tend to be believed more than children
- Be under threat by the offender to harm them or their family if they tell

It is important that you remain calm and in control of your feelings in order to reassure and support the child or young person. If a student asks to speak with you, find a neutral setting where it is quiet, and there will be few interruptions.

Possible ways you can show your care and concern:

- Listen carefully to what the child or young person is saying
- Refrain from expressions of panic or shock
- Reassure the child or young person that you believe them and that to disclose was the right thing to do
- Acknowledge that it is hard to talk about such things
- Indicate that you are required to share this information with the child protection team. i.e. someone who can give you some advice about what should happen next
- Reassure the child or young person that they are not to blame (only if the child indicates this is what they believe)
- If you are not in a position to answer all the questions that a child or young person may have, explain that you don't know but will pass on their questions or concerns to the relevant person

You will not be helping the child if you:

- Probe the student into telling details; instead, just listen, letting him/her explain in his/her own words.
- Express anger or disgust about the alleged abuse;
- Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone; or promises to the student that things will get better.



- Seek further details beyond those that the child or young person freely wants to discuss.
- Confront the abuser.

Remember that quizzing children about details may be interpreted as disbelief. Your role is to support and listen to the child or young person, not to conduct an investigation.

Respect the student's confidence. Share with the Child Protection Officer, a counselor or principal, and do not discuss information with other staff. Any as needed sharing should be done by the Child Protection Officer or principal. Write down the basic information, in the student's words if possible. Explain to the student that you must tell someone else to get help. Try to let the student know that someone else also will need to talk with him/her and explain why.

If the student does not want to go home, this should be considered an emergency. Report to the Child Protection Officer, a counselor or principal immediately.

If you suspect abuse at any time, regardless of whether or not the child or young person has told anyone, speak to the Child Protection Officer, your division counselor, or principal.

## **Reporting Suspected Abuse / Neglect and Next Steps**

### **Step 1**

Students are encouraged to report incidents for which they themselves or others may be the victims. Reporting by students may be verbal, or in writing, and shared with any school employee. When a child reports potential abuse / neglect or circumstances indicate potential abuse or neglect, the teacher will seek advice from the Child Protection Officer, or school counselor / divisional principal within 24 hours. Employees will be asked to complete the child protection reporting form (Addendum B) at this stage to record their concerns.

The Child Protection Officer will gather preliminary information and provide written documentation including date, person or persons involved, and any additional relevant information. The Child Protection Officer will convene a meeting of the Child Protection Team to develop a response to the reported incident. Led by the Child Protection Officer, the team will discuss the case and identify if further information needs to be gathered to make a decision of whether there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect. Other than as required to investigate allegations or fulfill legal obligations, care must be given to protect the alleged victim(s), the alleged perpetrator(s), and the reporter by restricting information access to those who need and have the authority to know.

The following actions will be considered as part of the investigation:

- Discussions between the student and Child Protection Officer in order to gain more information. Depending upon the age of the child, these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with toys to elicit more information as to what may have occurred.
- In-class observations of the child by the Child Protection Officer, teacher, counselor, or administrator.

- Interviews with staff members and/or family members as necessary and documentation of information relative to the case, which could include a physical examination by the school nurse and subsequent report inclusive of photographs, whenever possible.
- Consultation with school personnel to review the child's history in the school.
- Meeting with others pertinent to the case, including the alleged perpetrators
- Report status of case to the Head of School.

## **Step 2**

In situations where the Child Protection Team agrees that there is reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions that **may** take place are:

- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns
- VIS providing support for the child and family
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling
- Consultation with local authorities according to Laos law\* see addendum D
- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concern with the child/family, or to the welfare office of the home-of-record
- Consultation with the consulate/embassy of the country of the involved family
- Consultation with the school or another attorney

In situations where there is no reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect the Child Protection Team will still consider whether the provision of support to the child and family would be beneficial.

In all situations it is essential that the Child Protection Officer follows up with the person who reported the concern. It is also important that follow up activities are conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained.

Once the team has developed and enacted an action plan they will allocate a case manager to follow up on the following as applicable:

- Maintain contact with the child and family
- Provide the child's teachers resource materials and strategies for supporting the student
- Maintain contact with outside therapists to update the progress of the child in school

## **Allegations made involving an VIS employee**

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves a staff member of VIS, the same steps described above will be followed in conjunction with the following actions.

### *Investigation*

1. VIS personnel who are involved in or accused of abuse will immediately be removed from any contact with students and the situation will be quickly and thoroughly investigated by the school administration.

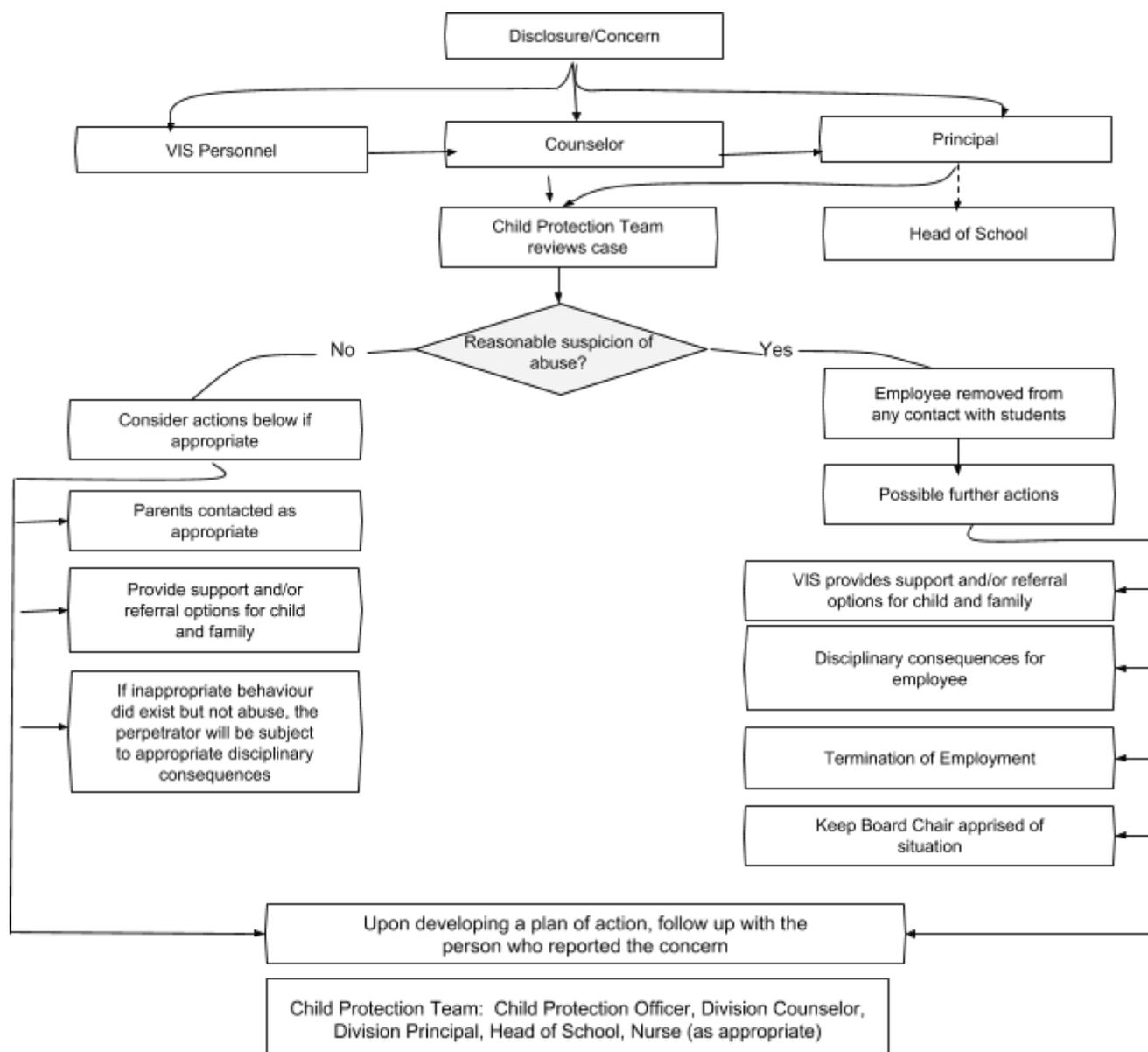


2. The Head of School will determine who will lead the investigation. The investigator will conduct a prompt, confidential and thorough investigation to determine whether reasonable grounds exist to believe that abuse occurred. A written report will be submitted to the Head of School.
3. The lead investigator will forward reports to the Head of School. If an employee in the reporting chain is implicated, the report should go to the next level. If the Head of School is implicated, the Board Chair should be informed.

### *Consequences*

1. If the investigation indicates that reasonable grounds do not exist to support allegations of abuse, a statement to that effect will be given by the Head of School to the VIS employee in question.
2. VIS employees who violate any of the regulations above will, at a minimum, be officially reprimanded in writing. This will take place in a meeting involving the Head of School and/or division principal. The first offense may lead to immediate termination depending on the circumstances.
3. If inappropriate behavior did exist but does not constitute abuse, the perpetrator will be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences.
4. If the investigation indicates that reasonable grounds exist to believe that abuse has occurred, the Head of School will submit a copy of the report to the board chair.
5. The Head of School will determine suitable disciplinary action, which could result in termination of employment.

## Student Protection Incident Response





## **Documenting Suspected Abuse / Neglect**

All reporting adults will be asked to complete the student protection reporting form (Addendum B) when they report concerns to the Child Protection Officer, counselor or principal. The form serves the purpose of recording the concerns factually.

The following information will be collected and filed:

- Notes from Child Protection Team discussions
- Emails that pertain to the case
- Description of action taken
- Correspondence with the student
- Correspondence with the student's family
- Correspondence with external agencies

All documentation of the case will be kept securely by the Child Protection Team.

## **Student Curriculum Modules**

Research shows that age appropriate personal safety / abuse prevention programs for children are successful when they are based on the most current research in prevention education. VIS's child protection curriculum will be developmentally sequenced from Early Years to grade 12.

Child protection education aims to assist students to develop skills in:

- Recognizing and responding to unsafe situations
- Seeking assistance effectively
- Establishing and maintaining non-coercive relationships and strengthening attitudes and values related to equality, respect and responsibility

### **Primary School**

- Students will understand they have the right to be safe at VIS
- Students will gain an understanding of what to do when other kids or adults threaten with concerning behaviors.
- Students will identify and describe various abusive behaviors.
- Students will learn the three R's - Recognize, Respond, and Report.
- Students will recognize that teachers, counselors and principals are the adults they should report to if they are concerned about the behavior of others.

### **Secondary School**

- Students will understand their right to be safe at VIS
- Students will gain awareness and understanding of what is abusive behavior and what it looks like.
- Students will understand what to do when something happens to oneself or another person (friends and/or family)
- Students will understand who to report to, the importance of reporting and what to say



- Students will gain a better understanding of confidentiality and mandatory reporting.
- Students will gain a better understanding of the role of a counselor in academic, career and personal/social domains.

## Parent Education

Child protection at school is a partnership with parents. Through P&F and other school organized parent meetings child safety education and training lessons will be held. These lessons will include the following:

- Understanding school policies and procedures related to abuse
- Understanding the school's curriculum in this area
- Signs and symptoms of abuse
- Awareness of risks to which students are exposed
- How to talk to children and prevention strategies
- Handling disclosure and reporting as a parent
- Community resources

## Social Meanness / Bullying: Student-to-Student Protection

We believe that every child has the right to learn in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Social meanness, harassment and bullying are not acceptable behaviors at VIS. We, as a school, undertake proactive and preventive approaches to ensure a safe environment. Our policy is to promote a positive school environment in the classroom, common areas, and at school-sponsored activities.

Mean behavior, harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, behavior based on a person's actual or perceived race, religion, nationality, color of skin, gender, sexual preference, physical handicaps or physical appearance. They do not include the naturally occurring, occasional conflict, which is an inevitable part of social interaction.

Mean behavior is purposeful and hurtful, but may happen only once or twice. It can be exhibited through acts such as teasing or name-calling, social exclusion, insults, threats, hitting, pushing, kicking and may occur either in person or electronically. Bullying is defined as any of the above acts that are intentionally cruel, usually repeated, and with a social or interpersonal power imbalance, where one person feels they do not have the power to stop it.

Mean behavior, harassment and bullying can take many forms including social, verbal, online, and/or physical incidents and, in addition to the examples above, might include:

*Physical Aggression:* Unwelcome physical contact, inflicting bodily harm

*Social Alienation:* Public humiliation, malicious exclusion, malicious rumor mongering, threats of isolation

*Verbal Aggression:* Intimidating phone calls, texts, emails, verbal threats of aggression of property and possessions, verbal threats of bodily harm; and/or

*Intimidation:* extortion, taunting, threats toward family members, coercion.



For the purpose of these guidelines, harassment and bullying consist of the repeated exposure over time to negative actions targeted at a specific victim(s). However, should the act be grievous, repeated exposure is unnecessary for the behavior to be considered in violation of the school's behavioral expectations and for disciplinary action to be taken.

### **Guidelines for Situations involving Social Meanness / Bullying**

Consistent with processes for resolving other complaints or grievances at VIS reports of harassment and bullying will be resolved at the lowest level possible. Therefore, a member of the school community who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or bullying should first consider telling the person(s) that the conduct is offensive and request them to stop.

If it is difficult for a student to speak directly to the person, or if the offensive behavior does not stop after the request to cease, or if the student or parent feel that they need assistance with an ongoing issue of social meanness or bullying, they should bring it to the attention of a teacher, division counselor and /or division Principals. The situation will be assessed as either a counseling issue or a discipline issue (by the divisional principal) and referred accordingly for further action. These actions will be developmentally appropriate and may range from a session with the counselor to disciplinary meetings with the administration. For serious or repeated incidents of misconduct, consequences may include suspension or expulsion from VIS.

Note: A person who knowingly makes a false report of harassment and bullying may also be considered to have violated this policy, and subject to the courses of action and consequences herein.

### **Education and prevention**

The prevention of social meanness and bullying requires a thoughtful educational program. The school will include in its educational program, information about social meanness and bullying as appropriate so that everyone will understand the intention of this policy, the appropriate ways to interact with others, and what to do if a person feels they are being impacted by social meanness or bullying as defined by the policy.



## **Addendum A: VIS Child Protection Agreement**

(To be signed by VIS personnel)

I pledge to follow the Child Protection Procedure Manual and abide by the guidelines of the Child Protection Agreement (below) as a condition of my being employed by VIS.

### **I will:**

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Report within 24 hours of observing or reasonably suspecting abuse to the Child Protection Officer, a division principal, or division counselor.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of students.
- Exercise care with my use of language in my professional capacities.
- In situations where I need to communicate electronically with students, I will whenever possible, use a school email or other VIS communication platform. Any electronic communication that takes place over a school network may be subject to review and / or monitoring.
- When using other electronic communication modes, including social media and text messaging, I will ensure that messages relate only to a student's school life. Only group messages should be sent with at least two adults included in the group.

### **I will not:**

- Touch or speak to a student in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Be alone with students at school or non-school activities on weekends or evenings.
- Intentionally expose students to embarrassment or disparagement.
- Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol, or illegal drugs in the presence of students while in a professional capacity.
- Accept intimate and elaborate gifts or give private gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents/guardians and division administrator.
- Engage with current, individual students on social media platforms.

I understand that as a person working with students under the auspices of VIS, I am subject to a criminal background check. My signature confirms that I have read this child protection agreement and that as a person working with students I agree to follow these standards. I understand that any action inconsistent with this child protection agreement or failure to take action mandated by this child protection agreement may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from VIS.

Name:

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Date /Signature:

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## Addendum B: Child Protection Reporting Form (Reporter)

Submit to the Child Protection Officer, a counselor in your division or principal as soon as possible after knowledge or suspicion of abuse occurs.

### Reporter(s)

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Position at VIS: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time reporter(s) became aware of the situation: \_\_\_\_\_

### Alleged Victim/Student

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Male       Female      Birthday (dd / mm / yyyy): \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### Information Giving Rise to Reasonable Suspicion or Concern

Include date, time, and location of incident, any physical evidence such as emails/notes from phone conversations and/or direct quotes from victim/perpetrator (use back of form for additional information). If the student is in Secondary, the student should also be offered the opportunity to write the story themselves (use a separate piece of paper).

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### Information concerning Individuals who might have abused or neglected the child or who might be involved the situation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to victim: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation/Job title (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Other pertinent information: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of Reporter(s): \_\_\_\_\_



Date of Report (dd / mm / yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**To Be filled out by Child Protection Officer:**

**Alleged Victim / Student Family Information**

*Name and Telephone number for parent(s) / guardian(s)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation of parent(s) /guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_

*Name and age of others living in the home*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_



## Addendum C: Commonly Held Myths About Child Abuse and Neglect

1. Myth: Child abuse is carried out by strangers. Fact: Research indicates that 90% of abuse is from domestic causes and is committed by individuals known to the child. International school communities tend to have families that move often and are separated from their extended families in their home of-road. When abuse is within the family, the transient life-style then increases the risk to international school students who tend not to have access to outside resource, and therefore cannot get help.
2. Myth: Learning about child protection is harmful to your children. Fact: Research indicates that developmentally appropriate education makes children more confident and able to react to dangerous situations. Teaching using a specific population context increases protective behavior.
3. Myth: Abuse education is sex education. Fact: Research-based programs prepare students to develop the skills and attitudes to keep themselves safe from perpetrators, and behaviors that include bullying, harassment and other forms of exploitation.
4. Myth: Abuse is a matter of culture; physical or sexual abuse falls within the norms of some cultures and is acceptable. Fact: The reality is that there no excuse for child abuse! No culture supports harming children.
5. Myth: Child abuse is a result of poverty and happens in low socioeconomic circumstances. Fact: Research indicates that child abuse occurs in all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and culture sectors of society. A common characteristic of an abusive family is isolation, such as that commonly found in our international school families who move often or are separated from their extended families at home.
6. Myth: International schools do not have to report abuse to local authorities. Fact: International schools are bound by the laws of the host country. Furthermore, international schools are legally and ethically liable for any violation of existing laws related to repeated, and with a social or interpersonal power imbalance, where one person feels they do not have the power to stop it.

Mean behavior, harassment and bullying can take many forms including social, verbal, online, and/or physical incidents and, in addition to the example above, might include:

Physical Aggression: Unwelcome physical contact, inflicting bodily harm

Social Alienation: Public humiliation, malicious exclusion, malicious rumor mongering, threats of isolation

Verbal Aggression: Intimidating phone calls, texts, emails, verbal threats of aggression of property and possessions, verbal threats of bodily harm; and/or

Intimidation: Extortion, taunting, threats toward family members, coercion.

For the purpose of these guidelines, harassment and bullying consist of the repeated exposure over time to negative actions targeted at a specific victim(s). However, should the act be grievous, repeated exposure is unnecessary for the behavior to be considered in violation of the school's behavioral expectations and for disciplinary action to be taken.



## **Guidelines for Situations Involving Social Meanness/ Bullying**

Consistent with processes for resolving other complaints or grievances at VIS reports of harassment and bullying will be resolved at the lowest level possible. Therefore, a member of the school community who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or bullying should first consider telling the person(s) that the conduct is offensive and request them to stop.

If it is difficult for a student to speak directly to the person, or if the offensive behavior does not stop after the request to cease, or if the student or parent feel that they need assistance with an ongoing issue of social meanness or bullying, they should bring it to the attention of a teacher, division counselor and/or division Principals. The situation will be assessed as either a counseling issue or a discipline issue and referred accordingly for further action. These actions will be developmentally meetings with the administration. For serious incidents of misconduct, consequences may include suspension or expulsion from VIS.

Note: A person who knowingly makes a false report of harassment and bullying may also be considered to have violated this policy, and subject to the courses of action and consequences herein.

## **Education and Prevention**

The prevention of social meanness and bullying requires a thoughtful educational program. The school will include in its educational program, information about social reporting of cases of abuse or neglect; there are cases now pending where schools are facing legal action in regard to non-compliance.



## **Addendum D: Lao PDR Law**

### Lao PDR Laws

Individuals should approach the respective Naiban. The Naiban will then speak to the parents. If the situation does not improve, the Naiban should be approached a second time. Following this, the case would be brought to the attention of a prosecutor.

Lao Laws are on file with the Head of School and Child Protection Team.