



## INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BOLOGNA

### CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

#### **Mission Statement**

*Our mission is to provide stimulating learning experiences through the medium of the English language, in which children of internationally minded parents can develop the essential skills and knowledge required to make an active contribution as they take their place in our ever-evolving global society.*

#### **Child protection team:**

- HOS (John Searle)
- Divisional Principals (Rachel Burgess, Michael Andreatta)
- School Counsellor (Maartje Koster)

## **Introduction**

#### **Overarching Principles**

The International School of Bologna believes that every student has the right to develop themselves emotionally, intellectually and physically. All children have equal rights to protection from any form of violence, abuse or neglect.

- Every member of staff in the International School of Bologna has the responsibility to safeguard and promote the physical and social-emotional wellbeing of all children.
- The International School of Bologna is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all the children is taken into consideration when developing and delivering school activities.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to report to a child protection team member any suspicion or disclosure suggesting a child is at risk of harm, to himself or others, in accordance with the protection procedures described in this policy.
- Every member of staff will sign and adhere to the ISB staff code of conduct. This agreement has guidelines of safe professional practice for the protection of the whole community.
- All students and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support from the child protection team and school administration who are charged with applying this policy.



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#### **Aims:**

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children
- To ensure best practices are consistent across the school
- To maintain hiring practices that ensure the safety of children
- To demonstrate the school's commitment and compliance with procedures with regard to safeguarding children

## **Policy Statement**

Child abuse and neglect are concerns throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to the child's education as well as to their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. The International School of Bologna endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, Italy, is a signatory and seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives.

Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of children. The ISB community must ensure that all children in our care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop. ISB staff, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, is in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection.

All ISB staff has the obligation to understand the main crimes against minors for Italian law and the related duties to report these crimes.

Therefore, all ISB members of staff are legal mandatory reporters and have a professional and ethical obligation to be alert to the signs of neglect or abuse and inform a member of the Child Protection Team of suspected abuse or neglect. Procedures are initiated as directed by school policy and regulations in accordance with local authorities and Italian child protection laws.



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The International School of Bologna will distribute this policy annually to all parents, applicants, and ISB members of staff. ISB will provide developmentally appropriate education to ISB students on child protection issues and will provide training for all staff. ISB will make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children and will review the policy annually for child protection law and regulation compliance and effectiveness. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, the International School of Bologna will follow a carefully designed course of action in accordance with Italian law and regulations, keeping the safety and wellbeing of the child as the highest priority.

## Definition of terms

### What is child abuse?

According to the World Health Organization (Krug EG et al., 2002), 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.”

A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional (e.g. school) or community setting; children may be abused by individuals known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. Often children may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, further complicating the problem. Most child abuse is inflicted by someone the child knows, respects or trusts.

The World report on violence and health and the 1999 WHO Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention distinguish four types of child maltreatment:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional and psychological abuse
- neglect



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#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse of a child is defined as the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in – or has a high likelihood of resulting in – harm for the child’s health, survival, development or dignity. This includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating. Much physical violence against children in the home is inflicted with the objective of punishing.

Crimes related to this kind of abuse: art 571 c.p.; art 572 c.p.; art 582 c.p.

#### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Children can be sexually abused by both adults and other children who are – by virtue of their age or stage of development – in a position of responsibility, trust or power over the victim.

Crimes related to this kind of abuse: sexual offences ( from art 609 bis c.p.)

#### **Emotional and psychological abuse**

Emotional and psychological abuse involves both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or caregiver to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment. Acts in this category may have a high probability of damaging the child’s physical or mental health, or its physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Abuse of this type includes: the restriction of movement; patterns of belittling, blaming, threatening, frightening, discriminating against or ridiculing; and other non-physical forms of rejection or hostile treatment.

Crimes related to this kind of abuse: art 572 c.p.; art 571 c.p.

#### **Neglect**

Neglect includes both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or other family member to provide for the development and well-being of the child – where the parent is in a position to do so – in one or more of the following areas:

- health;



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- education;
- emotional development;
- nutrition;
- shelter and safe living conditions.

The parents of neglected children are not necessarily poor. They may equally be financially well-off.

Crimes related to this kind of abuse: art 570 c.p.; art 591 c.p.; art 731 c.p.

#### **Legal obligation to report situations prejudicial to minors (criminal ambit).**

A “prejudicial” situation is one occurring in the home or outside where the minor is subjected to suffering, distress or neglect such as to impair his/her potential for growth and development. Certain offences against minors are prosecutable *ex officio* (the Judiciary may intervene without any need for a formal complaint by the injured party. All that is required is that a magistrate be notified of the offence). If public officials and those in public service come to hear of such offences (or sufficiently substantiated suspicion thereof), they are in duty bound to report them (art. 331 c.p.p.), and commit a crime in omitting to do so (art 361 c.p.; art 362 c.p.).

#### **Offences against minors prosecutable *ex officio*:**

- A. Ill-treatment in the family (art. 572 c.p.), meaning non-occasional acts by parents or relatives damaging to the young person’s soundness of body or mind
- B. Abuse of means of punishment (art. 571 c.p.), meaning punishment on a non-occasional basis that is unmotivated or goes beyond the acknowledged educational powers of a parent
- C. Personal injury (art. 582 c.p.) entailing a prognosis of over 20 days, or (if less) such as to cause a life-threatening condition
- D. Abandonment of minors or incapacitated persons (art. 591 c.p.)
- E. Trafficking or commerce with a view to prostitution of minors (art 600 Bis ff c.p.)
- F. Sexual offences (Law 66/96 “rules against sexual violence”), meaning any sexual activity, even without coercion, involving a minor under 10 years old; sexual activity with physical or psychological coercion or abuse of authority, involving minors under 14 years of age; sexual activity with an under-16-year-old if perpetrated by a parent, or by a cohabiting party, a guardian, or



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any other person charged with looking after, educating, protecting or safeguarding the said minor (Law 269/99 so-called anti-paedophilia law, as modified by Law 38/2006” Regulations to prevent the sexual exploitation of children and paedo-pornography including that on the Internet”)

- G. Violation of the obligation to provide family maintenance (art 570/Co 2, c.p.)
- H. Failure to attend school (art. 731).

#### Resources:

1. Krug EG et al., eds. World report on violence and health. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002
2. Child Protection Handbook: For teachers, administrators and board members, Association of International Schools in Africa, May 2014
3. Giunta della Regione Emilia Romagna, Allegato B: Linee di Indirizzo Regionali per L'accoglienza e la cura di bambini e adolescent vittime di maltrattamento/abuso, Direzione Generale Sanità e Politiche Sociali, November 2013
4. Il faro nella scuola: individuazione di buone pratiche di collaborazione e azione nei casi di abuso e maltrattamento all'infanzia/adolescenza, Servizio Sanitario Regionale Emilia-Romagna.
5. Child Protection Policy and Procedures, American School of Paris.