



# AISC Child Protection Policy & Statement of Suitability Signature

(Can be found in the AISC Family Handbook and Organizational Policy Manual)

## Rationale for the Policy

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 American International School in Cyprus endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, Cyprus, is a signatory.

## Statement on the role of the School and staff in protecting children and supporting families to remedy issues of child abuse or neglect (safe haven for children):

Schools fill a special institutional role in society as proctors of children. Schools need to ensure that all children in their care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop, both at school and away. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection. As such, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection, and to take steps to ensure that the child and the family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

By working in or volunteering at AISC, you agree to work in partnership with the school and to abide by the policies adopted by the Board of Directors outlined in the AISC Child Protection Policy. We genuinely value our partnership with our parents and staff in providing for the safety and care of all children. It is for this reason that AISC has endorsed a Child Protection Policy and Human Rights Policy that define the standards by which all AISC students should be treated with respect and dignity. Please refer to our [Human Rights Policy](#) for the expectations for how all children and adults are to be treated in this school.

## Mandate for Reporting Suspected Abuse

All staff employed at The American International School in Cyprus (AISC) must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered, or is at significant risk of suffering abuse or neglect. Reports of physical or psychological violence, aggression, harassment, and physical or sexual abuse must be reported immediately or within 24 hours to a Crisis Management Team member, or Counselor or Administrator. Students are encouraged to report incidents for which they themselves or others may be victims. Reporting and follow-up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations respective to this policy.

Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate/Embassy in Cyprus, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities.

## Actions may include (not in order and not limited to one or the following):

1. Conference with Student Involved
2. Parent Notification
3. Meeting with parents
4. Meeting with others pertinent to case, including the alleged perpetrator(s)
5. Contact with School Nurse
6. Psychological Assessment
7. Mandatory Counseling Sessions
8. Referral to the School-based Support Team
9. Reporting the child to the Cyprus Protection Services
10. Reporting the child to the relevant Embassy or Consulates
11. Reporting the situation to the parent's employers
12. Legal action and prosecution by the authorities
13. Suspension of employment (if School employee)
14. Termination of employment (if School employee)



## School-based Support Team

AISC has a School-based Support Team set up for the reporting of suspected abuse or neglect. All procedures and protocols are written in the Crisis Management Manual and are reviewed each year by the Crisis Management Team. The School-based Support Team consists of individuals in our school communities who have the tools, background and capacity to assist with a suspected abuse or neglect report. AISC has written steps and protocols for handling abuse or neglect cases. All local laws will apply.

## Communicating our Policies

AISC seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. As such, AISC will distribute the AISC Student Protection Policy each year to all community members in the Family Handbook, on the School's website and internally in the Staff Organizational Policy Manual. At the start of each year, students will be informed of the policy by their respective Counsellors at each division of the School.

## Hiring and Human Resource Practices & Documentation to ensure safety of children

AISC will make every effort to implement hiring practices to insure the safety of all children. AISC conducts effective screening for each employee at the school, and requires screening for subcontractors at the school long term. Employees of subcontractors and volunteers are also required to sign a Child Protection Policy at the start of their work or volunteer position at AISC.

### Each staff member's background check consists of:

1. A personal interview
2. Credential Checks
3. Reference Checks
4. Criminal History Background Check
5. Statement of Suitability - *requiring a signature stating that the applicant knows no reason or prior circumstance that would preclude him/her from working safely with minor children*

## Procedures for dealing with an alleged staff offender

In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, AISC will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process, keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority. Plans and procedures are located in AISC's Crisis Management Manual.

## Local and international laws and local resources

The AISC Child Protection Policy is based on international law and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of which, Cyprus, is a signatory. These two key articles from the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child are important and we wish to draw your attention to them:

### Article 19: Protection from abuse and neglect

*The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of the victims.*

### Article 34: Sexual Exploitation

*The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.*

For more information on the Rights of your Child in Cyprus, including all relevant laws, please go to the website of the Commissioner for Child's Rights here in Cyprus (the information is in both Greek and English):

[http://www.childcom.org.cy/ccr/ccr.nsf/index\\_gr/index\\_gr?opendocument](http://www.childcom.org.cy/ccr/ccr.nsf/index_gr/index_gr?opendocument)