

CAYMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY



Table of Contents

Introduction from the Director	2
Student Protection Overview	4
Key Responsibilities and Applicability of Child Youth Protection	5
Realities of Child Abuse and the International Community	6
Sexual and Non-Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Violence	10
Procedures: Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect	12
Staff Behavior Expectations	14
Addendum A: Cayman International School's Student Protection Agreement	16
Acknowledgements	18

Introduction from the Director

Dear CIS Community,

At Cayman International School (CIS) we want students to have the best available educational experience free from any type of bullying, neglect, or abuse of any kind. As your Director, I am taking this opportunity to notify parents and other community members as necessary, reminding them about this critical issue.

CIS's Student Protection Policy is based on international law and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in which the Cayman Islands is also a signatory. In particular, the two key articles which address protection to children are:

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 victims.

Article 34 – Sexual exploitation

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

By enrolling your child at CIS, you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted by the school. All of us at CIS want you to know we genuinely value our partnership with you in providing for the safety and care of our children. It is for this reason that Cayman International School has endorsed a Student Protection Policy that defines the standards by which all CIS students should be treated with respect and dignity at all times.

As part of our overall educational programs and specific to our shared responsibility to educate children, to protect them, and to learn and grow in a safe environment, CIS will:

1. Provide age appropriate lessons for all grade levels to help students understand personal safety, needs and rights.
2. Provide parent materials and information sessions to help parents better understand our programs and policy.
3. Annually train faculty to recognize and report issues of abuse and neglect.

Working together we can ensure our children are safe and are knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities to themselves and to each other so that they can grow and learn free of

fear in a safe and supportive environment. I thank you for your support of our efforts and invite you to contact the school counselor or principal regarding any specific questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Moore
Director

Student Protection Overview

Student protection is an important concern in schools throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect are a violation of a child's human rights and create significant obstacles to a student's education and the physical, emotional, and social development of the student.

Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of students. Schools need to ensure that all children in their care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with students over time are in a unique position to identify students who need help and protection. As such, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify students who are in need of help and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect. Cayman International School aims to ensure that all students are given a safe learning environment by maintaining appropriate practices and supervision in the school.

The school is committed to maintaining the appropriate procedures to ensure proper reporting of suspected child abuse that may occur in or out of school. Such reporting is the responsibility of any employee who suspects that a child/youth has been abused and includes provisions for self-reporting of abuse by students. The school will investigate all reports and will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the child/youth in accordance with Cayman Island law.

Cayman International School (CIS) endorses the Convention on the Rights of the Child* of which the host country, Cayman Islands, 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. CIS is committed to communicating this policy annually to all parents and applicants, communicating this policy annually to students, providing annual training for all staff, and will make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, CIS will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process.

(*Sources: Amnesty International Unofficial Summary of the UN Rights of the Child: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/children-s-rights/convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child>; and Actual Convention on the Rights of the Child: <http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/uncrc.asp#Nineteen>).

Credit to The American School of Muscat (TAISM) as a resource

Key Responsibilities and Applicability of Child Youth Protection

Key Responsibilities:

- All members of CIS's community will take reasonable precautions and/or measures to protect the safety and well-being of the school's children and youth from bullying, neglect, and child abuse including physical, emotional or sexual abuse, and sexual or commercial exploitation.
- In summary, all school community members contribute to the school being a "safe haven" for children.

This is best accomplished through:

(Adult community members):

- Appropriate personal conduct whenever interacting with children and youth;
- Awareness or increased understanding of potential harmful conduct or behaviors in the prevention or mediation of potential abuse or neglect;
- Removal of a child or youth from an immediate dangerous situation; and
- The reporting of inappropriate conduct, neglect, or abuse; or reasonable suspicion thereof.

(Children and Youth):

- Children and youth should also exemplify respectful and dignified conduct toward one another and other members of the community in conjunction with the school's code of conduct
- In consideration of age and grade appropriateness, children and youth should receive training for appropriate/inappropriate conduct and the reporting of reasonable incidents/procedures.

Applicability:

Members of the school community in which this policy applies include:

- All employees of CIS and employees of the school's affiliated organizations.
- Individuals and entities with contractual relationships with the school.
- Board members and other school leaders.
- All students, parents, and legal guardians; in particular, with respect to upholding the school's code of conduct, respect for one another, and the reporting of incidents/reasonable suspicions.
- All school chaperones and volunteers who work with children and youth; or participate in school programs and activities involving children and youth.
- Visitors, vendors, or guests on school premises.

Realities of Child Abuse and the International Community

It is important to understand the realities of child abuse. Abuse often occurs against the background of secrecy, insularity, isolation and limited resources, which can be factors in international communities.

Offenders come from all walks of life and child abuse occurs in all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural sectors of society. Both men and women offend, although men offend more often. Notably juvenile offenders (under the age of 18) are responsible for 30% of child abuse¹.

Over 90% of offenders are individuals known and trusted by the child and the family². Friendly and likable, they integrate themselves into a child's life through his or her family, school, house of worship, sports and hobbies. This is often referred to as the grooming process. Secrets typically play a significant role in the process and most incidents of child sexual abuse occur in one-to-one situations. It is important to teach children early on that there should be no secrets from parents, even seemingly innocent ones. In addition, limiting opportunities for individuals to be alone with children is important in keeping children safe.

How is abuse and neglect defined?

Definitions of abuse are complex and based in various cultures of child-rearing behaviors, gender and role responsibilities and expectations. The primary determination of **abuse** is that it is dependent on some form of a relationship that is used to meet the need of the more powerful person, either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides much of the definitions that are based in understanding the impact of certain behaviors.

Abuse is:

- Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means, causing skin bruising, burns, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function death; and/or
- Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning; and/or
- Committing acts that are cruel or inhumane regardless of observable injury. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain and/or mental suffering; and/or
- Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the Cayman Island criminal code or school policy; and/or
- Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury to, or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child; and/or
- Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above.

^{1,2}Jennifer Mitchell and Rosemary Webb, Child Lures Prevention/Teen Lures Prevention

Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse:

- Unexplained bruises, injuries or burns
- Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child

Emotional Abuse is:

- Persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child (threats, humiliation, sarcasm, degrading punishments) so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development.
- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved and inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Causing children to frequently feel frightened
- Putting developmentally inappropriate expectations on children

Possible Indicators of Emotional Abuse:

- Highly anxious or fearful of new situations
- Physical, mental or emotional development is delayed
- Delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Sudden underachievement, lack of concentration and persistent tiredness
- Chronic running away, compulsive stealing, obsessions or phobias, and lying

Sexual Abuse is:

- Committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in either the Cayman Island criminal code or school policy, or intentionally touching either directly or through clothing, the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child for other than hygiene or child care purposes.

Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse:

- Sexual knowledge, behavior, or use of language not appropriate to age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
- Sudden underachievement, lack of concentration and persistent tiredness
- Sexually transmitted infections in a child of any age, or pregnancy at a young age
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital, or anal areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Refusing to change into PE clothes, fear of bathrooms
- Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual

Neglect is:

- Failure to provide for a child's basic needs within their own environment
 - **Physical** (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision-this would include failure to provide proper adult guardianship such as leaving children unsupervised at home for any extended period of time.)
Note, CIS requires one parent be a full-time resident of the Cayman Islands. Should parents/guardian leave the country for any reason, the responsibility for informing the school of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian.
 - **Medical** (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment);
 - **Emotional** (e.g., a pattern of actions, such as: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to abuse alcohol or other drugs, specific examples may include verbal humiliation, refusing to acknowledge presence of child, invasion of privacy for no specific reason, violent threats, etc.)

Possible Indicators of Neglect:

- Child is unwashed or hungry
- Parents are uninterested in child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- Child does not want to go home
- Child is left for extended periods of time (age appropriate) without parents or a guardian
- Parents or legal guardian cannot be reached in the case of emergency

Preparing for a Disclosure of Abuse or Neglect

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

- Try to forget it in order to cope
- Worry they will lose the love of their parents or friends
- Fear the shame of abuse or getting in trouble for telling (especially older children)
- Be under the threat by an offender to harm them or their family

Understanding these fears of disclosure will help you in your response. Respond calmly and matter-of-factly. Even if the story the student tells you is difficult to hear, it is important not to register disgust or alarm.

Do:

- Accept what the student tells you, even though your first reaction may be, “This can’t be true.” It is very unlikely the student will make up an abuse experience, particularly a sexual abuse experience. It is important to report to the counselor immediately. If the counselor is unavailable, report to the school nurse and/or the principal. Ask the student to accompany you to the office.
- Affirm the student by acknowledging the importance of talking about the abuse and getting help. Do not assume the student knows how to talk about it.
- Support the student. Reinforce that a student who has been victimized is not to blame.
- Empower the student. A victim often feels helpless and powerless. Affirm and support feelings; listen to fears, concerns and needs; assure that every effort will be made to keep them safe.

Don’t:

- Do not promise the student that “you won’t tell” -- You are required to tell.
- Do not lead the student in telling (just listen, letting the student explain in his or her own words).
- Do not pressure the student for a great amount of detail.
- Do not make judgmental or disparaging comments about the offender -- it is often someone the student loves or with whom he or she is close.
- Do not make promises to the student that things will get better.
- Do not confront the offender.

When preparing for a disclosure it is important to respect the student’s confidence. Share with a counselor or administrator, but limit information to other staff. Explain to the student that you must tell someone else to get help. Try to let the student know that someone else might also need to talk with him or her and explain why. If the student does not want to go home, this should be considered an emergency. Report to a counselor or administrator immediately.

Sexual and Non-Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Violence

Harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, violence, or bullying, or any other behavior that has the purpose of causing harm, either verbally, physically, mentally, or emotionally, or used to intimidate others, in person or via the internet, is also unacceptable. This includes behavior directed between staff members, between students, or between staff members and students. Procedures for reporting abuse or neglect should be followed for reporting harassment, bullying or violence.

Sexual harassment is:

- Uninvited or unwelcome sexual advances
- Requests for sexual favors
- Sexually motivated physical conduct
- Other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature

Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education, evaluation of a student's academic performance, or condition of participation in student activities or in other events or activities sanctioned by the school; Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions or other decisions about participation in student activities or other events or activities sanctioned by the school; or Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working and/or educational environment.

- **Verbal:** Unwelcome requests for sex, sexual innuendoes, suggestive comments, and jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, intrusive questions or insinuations of a sexual nature about a person's private life, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, and related threats.
- **Non-verbal:** Sexually suggestive objects or pictures, graphic commentaries, displays of offensive or pornographic materials such as posters, pinups, cartoons, graffiti or calendars, staring or leering at a person or at parts of his/her body, suggestive or insulting sounds, leering, whistling, obscene gestures.
- **Physical:** Unwanted physical contact, including touching, pinching, brushing the body, massaging, pushing, touching or fiddling with a person's clothing in a suggestive manner. The unwelcome behavior needs not be repeated or continuous. A single incident can amount to sexual harassment.

What is Not Considered to be Sexual Harassment:

Sexual interaction, flirtation, attraction or friendship which is invited, mutual, consensual and reciprocated between staff members of legal age is not sexual harassment. All staff members,

however, must be mindful of any relationship with other staff members that may present a potential conflict of interest in which an individual's personal interests materially interferes with their ability to adequately accomplish the responsibilities of their employment with the school or the relationship contributes to creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Non-Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Violence are:

- Intentionally aggravating another individual persistently either verbally or physically
- Negative, repeated and persistent actions, which tend to intimidate, oppress, injure, distress or discomfort another individual
 - **Student Bullying** is defined as aggressive, deliberate, and premeditated action by an individual pupil to inflict physical, verbal, mental, or emotional suffering on another pupil or group of pupils. The school defines a pupil as being bullied or picked on when another pupil or group of pupils say or write nasty or unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a pupil is hit, kicked, threatened, sent nasty notes/emails, or when he/she is ostracized or intentionally ignored.
 - **Violence** includes physical assault, threatening another with bodily harm, or any other related illegal act.

Procedures: Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report their suspicions to the counselor, or to the principal. In all cases, the principal will be notified. It is the responsibility of the principal to inform the director of the suspected case of child abuse or neglect.

All staff, faculty and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect. All CIS employees are also required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect must be made to the counselor within 48 hours for immediate response.

Step 1

When a child/youth reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the teacher will seek advice from the grade level counselor within 24 hours. The counselor will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident. If there is reasonable cause to continue, the counselor will contact the principal and a School-Based Response Team will be assembled as needed to address the report. The principal will inform the director. The response team may include the school nurse, counselor and other individuals as the principal and director see fit. In all cases, follow-up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained.

Step 2

Based on acquired information, the Response Team will develop a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. This plan may include the following actions:

- Age-appropriate discussions between the child and counselor in order to gain more information.
- In-class observations of the child/youth by the teacher, counselor, or administrator.
- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling.
- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer.
- Notification of the Welfare Services office at the home-of-record.
- Director consults with the relevant consulate, legal advisor/attorney, and/or the local law enforcement agency as required by the local laws of the Cayman Islands.

Step 3:

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect, support from the Response Team may include any of the following:

- The counselor will provide support and guidance to the child and family.
- The counselor may provide the child's teachers with ongoing support such as resource materials and strategies.
- The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists, pending a release of information, to update the progress of the child in school.

All documentation of the inquiry will be kept in the child's school confidential records file. Records sent to schools to which their student may transfer will be flagged to let the receiving school know there is a confidential file for the child.

In the event that the abuse or neglect involves a staff or faculty member of CIS, the director and principal will follow board policies pursuant to ethical professional behavior.

Staff Behavior Expectations

As a measure of prevention and of setting clear expectations to protect students and staff a Student Protection Agreement is important to be agreed to by all school personnel and all volunteers who are part of the school community.

Adult's Position of Trust and Authority

- An adult is not a peer of the students. Adults are in a position of trust and authority in relationship to students and therefore their interactions with students must focus on meeting the needs of the student. In working with students, adults must take great care that their actions and motivations will not be misinterpreted.
- The burden of responsibility and accountability rests with the adult. It is the adult's responsibility to remove himself or herself from any physical or verbal contact with students that could lead to the initiation or perception of any form of abuse or harassment.

Personal and Professional Boundaries

Adults must respect each student's right to personal boundaries in all interactions. It is the responsibility of the adult to be sensitive to, and respectful of, the personal boundaries of all students whether or not the student communicates discomfort with the interaction.

When interacting with a student, an adult is advised to consider the appropriateness of his or her conduct in relation to such factors as the student's age, developmental level, cultural and educational background.

- If a student's behavior toward an adult is, or appears to be, of a sexual nature, the adult must let the student know the behavior is inappropriate and not allow it to continue.
- If an adult has an interaction with a student which is a cause of concern, he or she should discuss the situation immediately with an administrator or counselor. Adults are expected to refer to matters beyond their expertise or role to the appropriate resource person.

Physical Contact

While physical contact can be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child, the following should be factors in assessing its appropriateness:

- It is acceptable to the child concerned
- It is open and not secretive
- It is appropriate to the age and development stage of the child
- School personnel should not do things of a personal nature for a child which the child can do for himself or herself

- Inappropriate physical contact also includes rough physical play and horseplay (tickling, wrestling, etc.)

Examples of Acceptable Behavior are:

- Respectful language, tone and attitude towards students;
- Respect for students' personal/physical boundaries
- Age-appropriate forms of touching such as comforting a hurt or upset child with side-by-side hug or pats on the shoulder or back as positive reinforcement;
- School-related communication with students through the use of professional email accounts. When communications do not have a strictly academic focus, include a copy to the student's parent or guardian, or communicate by telephone through the student's family/home phone;
- Support diversity within the school population (e.g. ethnic groups, gay and lesbian students/families)

Examples of Unacceptable Behavior are:

- Humiliation of students (e.g. demeaning comments, intimidation);
- Inappropriate touching of students (e.g. massaging, stroking, caressing);
- Physical or corporal discipline of students (e.g. shoving, hitting);
- Discrimination or harassment including that based on race, color, ancestry, place of origin, religion, family status, socio-economic status, physical or mental disability, sex or sexual orientation);
- Being under the influence of recreational drugs and alcohol while supervising or professionally interacting with students;
- Disrespectful language towards students;
- Sharing or soliciting overly personal/private information;
- Texting or online communication with students on the adult's personal email, or being "friends" on a social networking site;
- Engaging in any sexual behavior with a student, with or without consent;
- Exposing students to, or involving students in, any activities involving staff, volunteer or student nudity;
- Inappropriately disclosing confidential student-related information (beyond a "need to know" basis);
- Asking students to keep secrets.

Addendum A: Cayman International School's Student Protection Agreement

As an employee of CIS, I shall be responsible for the following rules and guidelines in the *Staff Expectations That Clarify Appropriate Professional Boundaries and Interactions Between Staff and Students*, as well as the "I will" and "I will not" rules and guidelines listed below:

I will:

- Treat students with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with students.
- Maintain professional boundaries with students at all times.
- Establish and clarify appropriate boundaries when the student initiates inappropriate physical contact.
- Avoid situations in which I am alone with a student out of sightline.
- Only touch students in ways that are appropriate, public and non-sexual.
- Avoid touching areas that are normally covered by swimsuits.
- Respect the privacy of students in situations such as toileting, showering and changing clothes.
- Only hug students when appropriate and do so in a professional manner.
- Use technology communication and interactions through the internet with students for activities only involving school business.
- Comply fully with the school's policies on student protection, anti-harassment, anti-bullying and anti-violence.
- Comply fully in any investigation regarding student protection.

I will not:

- Touch or speak to a student in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Inflict any physical or emotional abuse on a student.
- Create opportunities to be alone around students outside the context of my role as a staff member.
- Engage in any school or non-school activities on evenings or weekends alone with a student without another staff member being notified.
- Transport any student alone in my car without express permission of the parent and my supervisor in advance.
- Engage in private communications with students using social media in ways that are outside my professional relationship with students.
- Accept or give gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents or guardians and division administrator. This includes not making any gifts secretive.
- Use profanity in the presence of students

- Smoke, use or possess tobacco products, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with students.

I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to students under the auspices of Cayman International School I am subject to a criminal history background check.

Acknowledgement and agreement to comply with the CIS Code of Conduct

My signature in the back-to-school contracts packet for all employees confirms that I have read this Student Protection Agreement and that as a person working with students I agree to follow these standards. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Student Protection Agreement or failure to take action mandated by this Student Protection Agreement may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from Cayman International School.

Acknowledgements

A special thanks to the following associations and school for the resources and guidance in this publication.

The Association of American Schools in South America (AASSA): *Student Protection documents*

International School Services: *Child Protection Template*

The American International School of Muscat (TAISM): *Student Protection at TAISM*