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to serve

# CHILD PROTECTION HANDBOOK

MANUAL DE PROTEÇÃO À CRIANÇA

**2024-25**



**School of the Nations**  
Escola das Nações

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## Introduction

*“The education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind and draweth down the grace and favour of the All-Merciful, for education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence and alloweth man to work his way to the heights of abiding glory.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*

Child well-being is essential to realizing academic and holistic success.

All students have the right to a safe, secure, and nurturing environment. School of the Nations strives to create a school environment that protects students’ integral well-being and optimizes their growth and development. We embrace the diversity of backgrounds and cultures represented in our school community. We take active measures not only to preserve students’ rights but also to help them understand those rights and to find support through adult advocates.

Child abuse and neglect violate a child’s human rights and are impediments to the child’s education and healthy development. School of the Nations supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, Brazil, is a signatory. The School follows state and federal law, the Brazilian Statute of the Child and Adolescent (Federal Law 8.069/1990), and the Child Protection Assurances of our international accreditation agency, Cognia, on child welfare and protection.

As a school, we have the moral and legal duty to safeguard the welfare of students and children who use our facilities or who take part in our programs and activities.

School of the Nations’ Child Protection Handbook sets forth the steps our faculty, staff, parents, students, volunteers, contractors, and consultants must take to maximize child protection and safety, and to respond quickly and effectively should abuse be observed, suspected, or disclosed.

Our goal is to maintain an environment that protects children by either preventing child abuse before it occurs or by ensuring its earliest detection, intervention, and reporting. Our strategy is to ensure that all School personnel, outsourced personnel, student teachers, interns, volunteers, parents, and students can recognize signs and symptoms of abuse, understand the issues of child abuse and neglect, and are familiar with national, international, and local reporting procedures of mandated reporting, including how, when, and to whom to report.

## Definition of Child Abuse and Neglect

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” (World Health Organization).

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child’s health or development.

Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to recognize children who need help and protection. Educators, therefore, have an obligation to identify children who need help and protection and to ensure the

child and family make use of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

## **Prevalence of Child Abuse Worldwide**

Child abuse and neglect – particularly sexual abuse – are among the world’s most serious concerns, with millions of cases reported to various children’s protective service organizations each year. It is estimated globally that 150 million girls and seventy-three million boys under the age of eighteen have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact (International Center for Assault Prevention).

Yet, it is also estimated that much abuse is underreported either because the victims are afraid to tell anyone what has happened, or the adults who observe or suspect the abuse are unsure what to do.

## **Policy Statement**

School of the Nations strives to provide a healthy and safe (physical, psychological, well-being) environment in which community members’ rights and obligations are well defined. The School offers opportunities to all students to develop their potential and abilities as human beings and as citizens of the world.

Under Brazilian law, School of the Nations is obliged to report incidents of abuse and neglect to the proper authorities.

School of the Nations safeguards children, meaning we strive to protect our students from abuse and neglect and prevent impairment of their health and development so they can grow up in circumstances of safe and effective care that enables them to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully (Working Together 2013).

School of the Nations follows all local and federal law, the Brazilian Statute of the Child and Adolescent, Cognition Assurances on Child Protection, applicable Brazilian labor law, and all other laws, conventions, pacts, and decrees listed in the section of this Manual entitled Legal Documents Related to Child Protection.

## **Code of Conduct to Protect Minors**

School of the Nations is committed to the safety and protection of children. This Code of Conduct applies to all faculty, staff, employees, volunteers, and students who represent the School and who interact with children or young people.

The public and private conduct of faculty, staff, employees, students, and volunteers acting on behalf of School of the Nations can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact or can cause great harm if inappropriate. We must be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work.

We must be aware of our own and other persons’ vulnerability, especially when working alone with children and youth, and be particularly aware that we are responsible for keeping physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in such interactions. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behavior with those for whom we have responsibility. This

includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses.

We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially children and youth, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration. School of the Nations' personnel should be aware of cultural differences when interacting with other individuals. School of the Nations' personnel and volunteers are prohibited from physically disciplining a child.

Physical contact with children can be misinterpreted both by the recipient and by those who observe it and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate. One-on-one meetings with a child or young person must be in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with the door left open, and another staff member or supervisor is notified about the meeting.

During school trips, adults shall enter students' rooms only when accompanied by another staff member and with students waiting outside the room. In emergencies, adults may enter students' rooms while students are inside if at least one other staff member accompanies them.

All staff employed at School of the Nations must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered, is suffering, or might suffer abuse or neglect. Reporting and following up on all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed according to School of the Nations' Child Protection Policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect shall be reported to the appropriate School Administrator(s) and as required by law, to the respective local Child Protection agency and local authorities.

It is forbidden for faculty, staff, employees, and volunteers to illegally possess and/or use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products when working with children. Adults must never buy alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, videos, or reading material that is inappropriate and give it to young people. Staff members and volunteers should not accept gifts from or give gifts to children without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.

## **Communication with Minors**

Communication with children is governed by the key safety concept of transparency. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between parents, administrators, teachers, personnel, volunteers, and minors at School of the Nations:

- Communication between School of the Nations (including volunteers) and minors that is outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship (teacher, coach, host, etc.) is prohibited.
- Communication between a minor and a person acting on behalf of the School shall be made using one of the School's official communication channels, such as school email, Google Classroom, Google Chat, SeeSaw, for example.

## Child Protection Program

To lead the Child Protection Program, the School assigns a staff member, who is supported by Principals, Counselors, teachers, the School Board, the Executive Director, the Academic Director, and the Administrative and Finance Manager.

### Child Protection Program Roles and Responsibilities

The School defines roles and responsibilities to oversee and ensure child protection as follows:

- The School Board adopts a schoolwide Code of Conduct to ensure child protection.
- The School designates a trained staff member to lead the Child Protection Program.
- Principals
  - support the Child Protection Program;
  - follow the Child Protection Policy;
  - inform the Child Protection Lead in writing;
  - support the implementation of the Child Protection Curriculum;
  - ensure compliance with the Child Protection Policy, local and federal law, and international conventions and obligations;
  - request annual budgetary resources to ensure effective operation of the Child Protection Program;
  - ensure all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect are brought to the Child Protection Lead.
- The Child Protection Lead
  - Consults and follows the legal advice of the school lawyer.
- Counselors
  - help ensure a comprehensive Child Protection and Safety Program is in place;
  - act as first line responders to whom suspected cases of child abuse are reported;
  - follow up on all disclosures of abuse or neglect;
  - help report;
  - serve as a resource in cases that require child protection measures;
  - Inform the Principal in writing (email or Child Protection Form);
  - lead the Child Protection Initiatives in each section;
  - consult with the Executive Director, Academic Director, and Principals to develop, schedule, and provide professional development;
  - review Child Protection policies to ensure they are effective and promote child development;
  - meet with parents to develop a mutual understanding of the need for

- the Child Protection policies, answer questions, and provide support;
- identify resources available to the School
- Teachers
  - help parents and staff members understand the purpose of the Child Protection Initiatives;
  - train other teachers and staff on child protection;
  - ensure that teachers and staff fully understand and apply child protection policies and initiatives.

## Security and Surveillance

In addition to the policies, procedures, and guidelines contained in this Child Protection Handbook and staff training, the School employs security guards, monitoring personnel, and video surveillance at key points throughout the School to ensure child safety and protection.

## Definitions and Signs of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

Below are the three main categories of abuse, the concepts of neglect and at-risk behavior, and possible signs that can help identify whether any of them are taking place.

### At-Risk Behavior & Its Possible Signs

At-Risk Behavior is any behavior that puts youth at risk for future negative consequences, like poor health, injury, or death.

Possible signs of at-risk-behavior:

- unexplained bruises, scratches, or cuts on any part of the body
- refusal to dress properly for PE (long sleeves)
- resistance to eating or overeating
- sudden or constant academic failure
- unexplained burns or burns with a pattern
- secretive behaviors, spending unusual amounts of time in the bathroom or isolated areas on campus
- defiant or disrespectful behavior toward peers and adults
- indifference to advice and guidance
- social isolation

### Physical Abuse & Its Possible Signs

Physical Abuse may include but is not limited to hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child. (These symptoms could also suggest harm to self, such as cutting and suicide ideation).



Possible signs of physical abuse:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, or fractures on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages and colors
- Injuries reflecting the shape of an object
- Injuries that regularly appear after absences
- Unexplained burns or burns with a pattern
- Bald patches where hair might have been pulled out
- Fear of going home
- May flinch if touched unexpectedly
- Extremely aggressive or withdrawn
- Poor sleeping patterns, frequent nightmares
- Poor memory and concentration
- Changes in emotions or behavior

## Sexual Abuse & Its Possible Signs

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. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (that is, rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual abuse could include but is not limited to:

- penetrative or non-penetrative sexual acts
- sexual intercourse, anal or oral sex
- touching of genitals or breasts
- undressing or exposing oneself
- forced viewing of sexual acts, genitals, or pornographic media
- developmentally inappropriate conversations about sexual content
- exploiting a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse

- sexual knowledge, behavior, or language inappropriate for age
- unusual relationship pattern
- sexually transmitted infection in a child of any age
- frequent urinary tract infections in both boys and girls
- evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital, or anal areas
- difficulty walking or sitting
- bed-wetting
- not wanting to be alone with an individual

- pregnancy, especially at an early age
- extremely protective parenting
- secrets they cannot tell anyone
- reluctance to change into physical education clothes
- fear of bathrooms
- behavioral or emotional disturbances
- low self-esteem, depression
- frequent psychosomatic complaints (headache, nausea, stomachache)
- diarrhea
- eating disorders

## Grooming

The following explanation of grooming is adapted from the explanation of Forensic psychiatrist, Dr. Michael Welner, who is the lead researcher of an evidence-based measure to standardize the worst of crimes at DepravityScale.org. Dr. Welner is an associate professor of psychiatry at NYU School of Medicine and is chair of The Forensic Panel.

Grooming is the process by which an offender draws a victim into a sexual relationship and keeps that relationship in secrecy. Below are six stages that can lead to sexual molestation.

The grooming sex offender works to separate the victim from peers, typically by engendering in the child a sense that they are special to the child and giving a kind of love to the child that the child needs.

Since there are various models that explain grooming, it is best to think of it as a gradual, calculated process that ensnares children into a world in which they are ultimately a willing part of the sex abuse.

### Stage 1: Targeting the Victim

The offender targets a victim by sizing up the child's vulnerability—emotional neediness, isolation, and low self-confidence. Children with less parental oversight are more desirable prey.

### Stage 2: Gaining the Victim's Trust

The sex offender gains trust by watching and gathering information about the child, getting to know their needs and how to fill them.

### Stage 3: Filling a Need

Once the sex offender begins to fill the child's needs, that adult may assume noticeably more importance in the child's life and may become idealized. Gifts, extra attention, and affection may distinguish one adult in particular and should raise concern and greater vigilance.

#### **Stage 4: Isolating the Child**

The grooming sex offender uses the developing special relationship with the child to create situations in which they are alone together. This isolation further reinforces a special connection. Babysitting, tutoring, coaching, and special trips all enable this isolation.

#### **Stage 5: Sexualizing the Relationship**

At a stage of sufficient emotional dependence and trust, the offender progressively sexualizes the relationship. Desensitization occurs through talking, pictures, even creating situations (like going swimming) in which both offender and victim are naked. At that point, the adult exploits a child's natural curiosity, using feelings of stimulation to advance the sexuality of the relationship.

When teaching a child, the grooming sex offender has the opportunity to shape the child's sexual preferences and can manipulate what a child finds exciting and extend the relationship in this way.

#### **Stage 6: Maintaining Control**

Once the sex abuse is occurring, offenders commonly use secrecy and blame to maintain the child's continued participation and silence—particularly because the sexual activity may cause the child to withdraw from the relationship.

The child may feel that the loss of the relationship and the consequences of exposing it will humiliate and render them even more unwanted.

## **Emotional Abuse & Its Possible Signs**

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child 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 while they meet the needs of another person; imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children; often causing children to feel frightened; or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

Emotional abuse may include but is not limited to excessive criticism, negative comparisons, insults, rejection, put-downs, harmful threats, inappropriate expectations, and yelling.

#### **Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse**

- fear of failing
- fear of consequences (can lead to lying)
- mood swings, withdrawal, aggressiveness
- mental or emotional development lags
- social isolation
- acting out
- irritability

## Neglect & Its Possible Signs

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect could include but is not limited to:

- inadequate food, shelter, and clothing
- lack of hygiene
- not protecting a child from other forms of abuse
- lack of supervision by a parent or legal guardian
- not providing needed medical treatment
- emotional isolation, lack of affection or attention
- failure to support a child's educational needs

Possible Signs of Neglect:

- the child is hungry or inadequately dressed or unwashed
- parents are uninterested in the child's academic performance
- parents do not respond to repeated communications from the School
- parents or legal guardians are absent for more than twenty-four hours
- parents or legal guardians cannot be reached in case of an emergency
- the child does not want to go home, feels lonely and uncared for at home
- unattended medical or dental needs
- developmental delays
- irregular attendance or absence from school
- demands constant attention and affection
- regularly displays fatigue or indifference
- self-destructive behaviors
- lack of trust in others

## Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, acts to traffic, or other activities directed against a person using coercion by any person, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home, school, and work. The ability to give consent is an important consideration in any sexual act. A person who is unable to understand the nature or condition of the act in order to decline participation, or to communicate unwillingness to engage in the sexual act, for example, because of illness, disability, age, or the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or because of intimidation or pressure, cannot give consent.

## Stalking

Stalking is the unwanted pursuit of another person. By its nature, stalking is not a one-time event. The individual's actions must be considered in connection with other actions to determine whether someone is being stalked.

It includes repeated harassing or threatening behavior toward another person, whether that person is a total stranger, slight acquaintance, current or former intimate partner, or anyone else.

Stalking is also:

- a terrorizing crime with no identified beginning and seemingly no end;
- a crime that can cause tremendous fear without the slightest physical injury;
- a behavior with a high correlation to physical and sexual violence;
- a crime that can be lethal; and
- a highly effective tactic of control for domestic violence abusers.

## Sexual Exploitation and Commercial Exploitation

Sexual and Commercial Exploitation includes, but is not limited to the inducement, coercion, or encouragement of a child to engage in any sexual activity; the use of children in prostitution or other sexual practices; the use of children in pornographic activities, performances, or materials.

School of the Nations takes all possible measures to protect children from all forms of sexual and commercial exploitation.

## Field Trips

The School Administration recognizes the value of field trips that enrich students' learning experience and encourages teachers to consider trips as important to student learning. Extracurricular trips must contribute to the total development of students and expand their learning beyond the classroom; therefore, the educational merits and value to student learning must be clearly stated to be approved.

Our School policies and commitment to the safety of students and staff on school trips are conducted with rigor in planning and setting up field trips and outings.

School of the Nations staff fulfill specific duties in the context of field trips to help ensure the safety of all students. These duties are summarized below.

- The duty to warn and inform
- The duty to provide proper instruction
- The duty to condition and equip participants properly
- The duty to provide proper supervision
- The duty to provide safe facilities on field trips
- The duty to provide safe equipment
- The duty to provide prompt and appropriate post-injury care

Some activities pose risk to staff and students involved. Before approving a field trip, the School decides whether the curricular and learning objectives outweigh the potential risk of injury to those involved. Parents receive in writing all information about field trip activities, hazards, and risks and must sign a physical authorization slip for their child to go on the field trip and to take part in the activities. Physical authorization slips must be with the designated staff lead during the entirety of the field trip.

As a rule, adult supervision for school field trips is one adult for every ten students; however, the adult-to-student ratio may increase depending on the age, maturity, and number of students, the types of activities they will do, facilities, duration of the field trip, type of transport, and safety considerations (such as emergency procedures).

The competencies and qualifications of the staff, teacher assistants, and adult chaperones must be directly related to the activity. **All chaperones must participate in a pre-field trip meeting to review child protection policies and sign the Code of Conduct.**

For more information, please see the School's full Field Trip Policy in the Faculty Manual.

## Field Trips Involving Overnight Stays

Before all field trips involving overnight stays, students are reminded that they are representing their family, their team, their School, and their community.

When students travel overnight, the School, without exception, books accommodations and room allocations in advance to ensure students, accompanied by School personnel, stay together in a hotel, regardless of whether accommodations are offered by families at the host school.

Schools whose students visit School of the Nations are expected to provide hotel accommodations for their students as well.

School of the Nations requires that when students under the age of eighteen go on a field trip involving an overnight stay, the teacher organizing the field trip must ensure there is a designated trained person responsible for child protection on the trip. This person will respond to concerns, supervise and coordinate accommodations, hold preventive welfare briefings and daily debriefs, and monitor compliance with the Codes of Conduct. This person must not be related to or in a relationship with the teacher(s) attending the trip.

The training of the designated person must be the same given to all School of the Nations staff regarding Child Protection.

When mixed-gender groups are involved, at least one male and one female trained staff member must accompany the group.

Public displays of affection such as kissing or sitting on another's lap are considered inappropriate on campus and during school-sponsored activities such as special events, dances, or excursions. A student who demonstrates inappropriate behavior may receive a disciplinary measure such as a warning or suspension, among others, from a teacher, assistant, or Principal or be invited to return from the school excursion. The Counselor will speak with the student about proper behavior for school-sponsored activities.

A list of emergency contact numbers, medical information on each child attending the event, and a first aid box must be taken on all field trips.

Parents are informed of:

- Transport arrangements
- Key timings – pick up, departure, and return
- Destination and contact details
- Room allocation
- Code of Conduct
- Contact details for trip staff
- Trip requirements – pocket money, kit, etc.

## **Accommodations for Overnight Stays**

- Where accommodation is needed for overnight stays, student accommodations must be suitable for their age and gender.
- It is unsuitable for 18-year-old students to share a room with students under the age of sixteen.
- Teachers, coaches, chaperones, helpers, and volunteers are not allowed to share a room with any student except if the student is their own child.
- Teachers and chaperones must arrange their accommodations to be at least on the same floor as students, preferably in the room next door to students.
- Adults should enter a student's room only when accompanied by another staff member with the students being asked to wait outside. In cases of emergencies, staff members may enter student rooms while students are inside as long as at least one other staff member accompanies them.
- All students must be given an emergency contact number for them to call in the night should the necessity arise.

## **Reporting and Disclosures**

### **When Abuse is Suspected**

School staff must tell their section Principal or Counselor when they are made aware of students who present any of the aforementioned symptoms or characteristics or when they think they may be dealing with a student who is showing at-risk behaviors such as depression, self-harm, or substance abuse, or that a student may be a victim of harmful use of the internet or bullying.

### **When to Report Suspected Abuse**

When there is reason to believe that a child is being abused or has shown at-risk behavior, either by observation or disclosure, the faculty member must report to the section Principal or Counselor within twenty-four hours.

The report must be made when the reporter has knowledge of or has reason to suspect that a child has been abused, neglected, or is showing signs of at-risk behavior. The report must contain the name of the reporter for further investigation. The identity of the reporter shall be protected even when other information from the report is being disclosed.

You may use this [Child Protection Report Form](#)

## **Procedures to Report Suspected Cases of Child Abuse, Neglect, and Disclosures**

The section Principal and Counselor will gather information about the concern and meet with the Child Protection Lead and Executive Director. The following actions may take place depending on information obtained:

- The section Principal and Counselor will interview staff members, review the child's school records as needed, and document relevant information.
- If a student is at risk of harm, the School shall notify local authorities.
- The Counselor will meet with the child to learn more information.
- The Child Protection Team will consult with the School attorney.
- The Child Protection Team will meet to discuss the report and decide next steps.
- When necessary, the section Principal and Counselor will meet with the family to express the School's concerns and refer the student and family to outside professional therapists.
- The Counselor will maintain contact with the student and family to give support and guidance as appropriate.
- The Counselor will offer resources to the student's teachers.
- The Counselor will follow up with outside professionals to learn about and inform on the progress of the student in and outside school.

School Counselors will handle many aspects of suspected cases of abuse, neglect, or loss such as those involving:

- student relationships with peers
- parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
- student-parent relationships
- emotional health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, and grieving

Some cases will be referred to outside professionals, for example those that deal with mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, dissociation, and suicide ideation.

Cases reported for investigation and outside resources include:

- severe and continuing parental abuse or neglect;
- sexual abuse;
- incest.

When it appears evident in cases of abuse or concerns about the safety of the child, reports must be made to the local Child Protection Services.

Teaching students about child protection and being a part of their support system invites them to come to you with a problem. School personnel must understand and know how to respond appropriately, knowing that it is often very difficult for children to disclose abuse. Students often cannot tell about a touching problem because of the fear of:



- **Memory.** Children often cope with their abuse by pushing it so far back in their minds that they “forget.” To remember means to feel hurt again.
- **Loss of Love.** Children often worry that their parents or friends will not love them once they know about their abuse because now, they are “dirty.” This is often because children will take responsibility for their abuse. Children also often fear their family will separate because of the telling. Offenders work hard to reinforce these feelings to keep the child silent.
- **Shame & Guilt.** Children either know or can sense that what happened, especially a sexual experience with an adult, is wrong. By telling someone and acknowledging that this happened, they fear the shame of the abuse. They fear they will get into trouble for telling. Older children will experience more of a sense of guilt than younger children, especially in sexual abuse.
- **Blame.** Children fear that they will be blamed for what happened and in the case of sexual abuse that they somehow wanted it. Adults tend to be believed over the child and offenders often say the child “asked” for the sexual touch or other abuse.
- **Harm.** Offenders often maintain control over their victims by threatening harm to them or their families if they tell. Children are then burdened with the inappropriate responsibility for keeping their families safe.

## Guidelines for Responding to Disclosure

- Do not let a child swear you to secrecy before telling you something. You may need to report, which the child will view as breaking your trust with them.
- If a child asks to speak with you, try to find a neutral, quiet setting with few interruptions.
- Do not lead the child in telling. Just listen, letting them explain in their own words.
- Do not pressure for a great amount of detail.
- Respond calmly and matter-of-factly. Even if the story the child tells you is difficult to listen to, do not register disgust or alarm.
- Do not make judgmental or disparaging comments about the alleged abuser. It is often someone the child loves or with whom they are close.
- Do not make promises to the child that things will get better.
- Do not confront the alleged abuser.
- If the child does not want to go home, consider it an emergency. Immediately report this by contacting the section Principal and Counselor. Do not take the child home with you.
- Respect the child’s confidentiality. Share with the section Principal and Counselor, but limit information from and with other staff.
- Explain to the child that you must tell someone else to get help.
- Let the child know that someone else also will need to talk with them and explain to the child why.
- Empower the student by allowing them to be a part of the process.

The reporting of abuse alone does not mean that abuse occurred, much less can reporting alone lead to condemnation of the accused. Hasty judgments must not be made, especially since statistics indicate that abuse within schools is rare. The right thing to do is to take immediate precautions to protect the alleged victim, in addition to holding an internal investigation, without prejudice to investigations of competent authorities.

Such investigations must always be conducted with civility and give all parties involved the opportunity to be heard.

## **Documentation, Child Protection Record Retention, and Record Destruction**

School policy on confidentiality and management of School records applies to all aspects of documenting incidents of abuse. The School follows all local, federal, and international laws and the advice of the School's legal team and local Child Protection Services.

Documentation includes where to keep the child's records and what information to give to the next school based on legal requirements and liability for non-reporting.

Parents must indicate their agreement with this requirement in the admission contract.

### **Child Protection Records**

Any concern about a child or young person's welfare or safety shall be recorded by School of the Nations regardless of whether the concerns are shared with the police or children's social care.

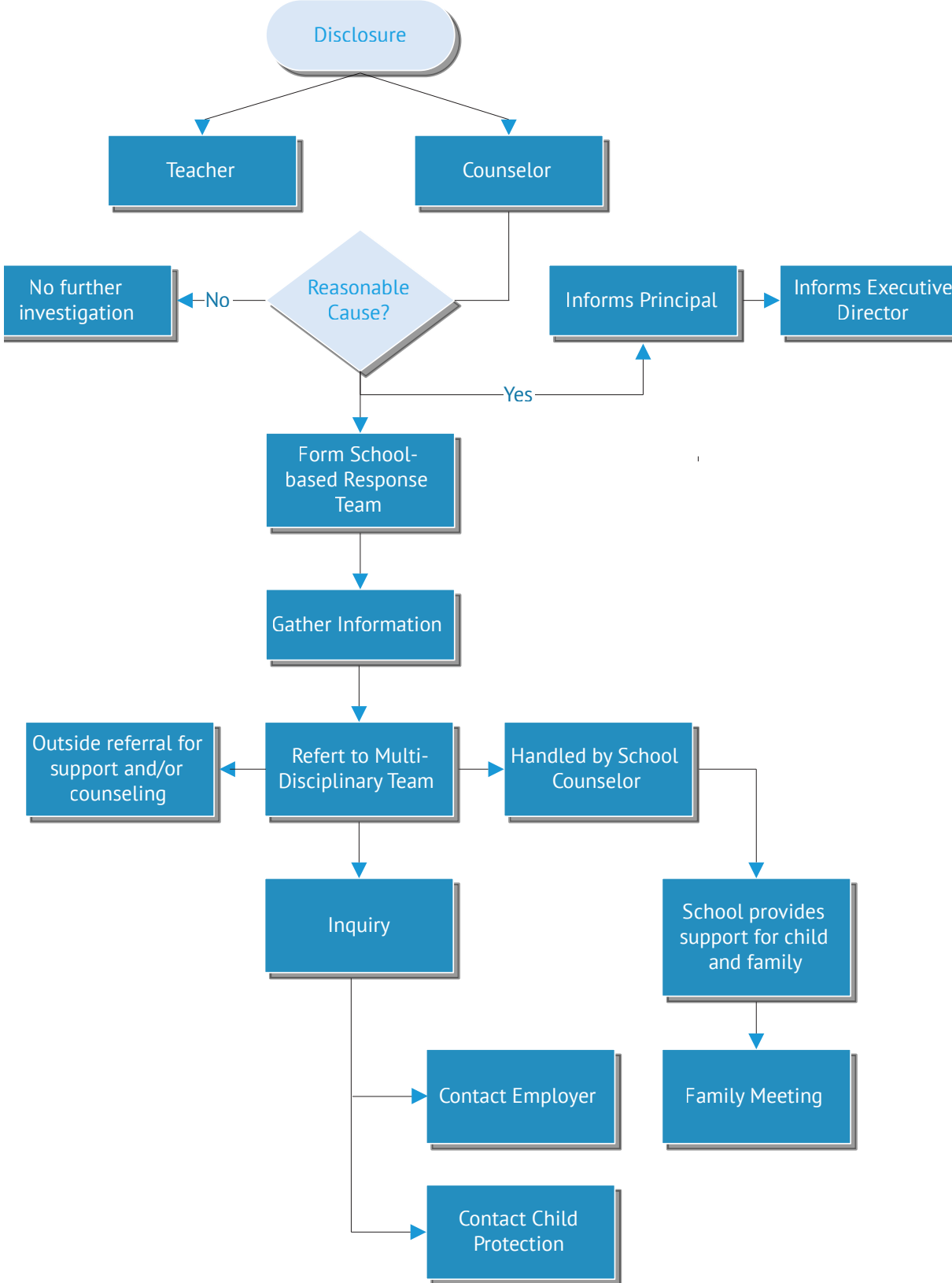
School of the Nations' Child Protection Lead shall keep an accurate record of:

- the date and time of the incident or disclosure;
- the date and time of the report;
- the name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details;
- the name and role of the person making the report (if this is different from the above) and their contact details;
- the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses to an event;
- what was said or done and by whom;
- any action taken to investigate the matter;
- any further action taken (such as a referral being made); and
- the reason the School decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant).

The report shall be factual. Any interpretation or inference drawn from what was observed, said, or alleged shall be clearly recorded as such. The record shall be signed by the person making the report.

### **Storage of Child Protection Records**

# Flowchart of Reporting and Actions to Take After Disclosure



Information about child protection concerns and referrals are kept in a separate child protection file for each child. A child protection file will be started as soon as the School becomes aware of any concerns.

Child protection files are kept separate from a child's general records. The general record of the child will be marked to indicate there is a separate child protection file.

## **Retention Period of Child Protection Records**

Child protection files will be passed on to any new school the child attends and kept until their twenty-sixth birthday (7 years after they reach the school leaving age).

If the School decides not to share its concerns about a child's welfare with the police or social services, a record of the issues that were raised will be kept.

## **Recording Concerns about Adult Behavior**

Concerns are sometimes raised about an adult who works or volunteers with children because he or she has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- committed a criminal offense against, or related to, a child; or
- behaved in a way that suggests they are unsuitable to work with young people.

School of the Nations shall keep clear and comprehensive records of all allegations made against adults working or volunteering with children, including:

- what the allegations were;
- how the allegations were followed up;
- how the allegations were resolved;
- any action taken; and
- decisions reached about the person's suitability to work with children.

School of the Nations keeps these records to give accurate information if ever asked for them. For example:

- in response to future requests for a reference;
- if a future employer asks for clarification about information disclosed as part of an employment reference check; or
- if allegations resurface later.

## **Storing Records Relating to Adults**

Records relating to concerns about an adult's behavior are kept in the person's confidential personnel file, and a copy is given to the individual.

### **Retention Periods: Concerns about Adults**

If concerns have been raised about an adult’s behavior around children, records are kept in their personnel file either until they reach normal retirement age or for ten years—whichever is longer.

Records are kept for the same amount of time regardless of whether the allegations were unfounded. If it is determined that allegations are malicious, the record will be destroyed immediately.

Information is kept for this length of time even if the person stops working or volunteering for the organization.

## **Exceptions**

In some cases, records can be kept for longer periods of time. For example, if:

- the records provide information about a child’s personal history, which the School might need to access later;
- the records have been maintained for the purposes of research;
- the information in the records is relevant to legal action that has been started but not finished; or
- the records have been archived for historical purposes (for example if the records are relevant to legal proceedings involving the organization).

If legal proceedings are underway, School of the Nations follows the advice of its legal counsel on how long to keep records.

When records are kept for longer than the recommended period, they are clearly marked with the reasons for the extension period.

## **Destruction of Child Protection Records**

When the retention period finishes, confidential records are incinerated or shredded in the presence of a School Administrator. At the same time, any electronic versions of the record are purged.

If not shredded immediately, all confidential records are labeled as confidential and locked in a secure place.

## **Review of Child Protection Records Retention and Storage Policy**

School of the Nations reviews its child protection records retention and storage policy regularly to ensure it is effective and follows current legislation.

## **Partnerships**

To help ensure all procedures described in this Manual are followed, School of the Nations partners with the following government agencies, embassies, School departments, and companies who offer support and advice on child protection.

- Local Child Protection Services (*Conselho Tutelar*)
- School Lawyer
- American Embassy

- Fire Department
- UTI Life
- School Nurses

## Hiring and Screening Personnel

The Human Resources Department of School of the Nations thoroughly checks references of all staff, teachers, and other members of the community whose potential employment involves direct contact with, or the potential for unmonitored access to children. School of the Nations uses Recommended Screening and Assessment Practices for international school recruitment.

The first and most effective means of preventing child abuse is screening out potential abusers before they come to the School. All personnel, staff, teachers, volunteers, and other members of the community whose potential employment or volunteer service involves direct contact with, and/or the potential for unmonitored access to children (including any individuals who regularly provide transport to children) will be given thorough reference checks.

The elements of a comprehensive reference check include:

- A written application and a “statement of suitability” requiring a signature stating the applicant knows of no reason or prior circumstance that would prevent them from working safely with minors
- A personal interview
- Verification of references and credentials

Misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in the information provided by the applicant, whenever discovered, may result in disqualification from, or termination of employment or volunteer service with the School.

## Continuing Professional Development of Staff and School Community

School of the Nations focuses on implementing policies and procedures that prevent incidents of child abuse from occurring. Ongoing training is one of the strategies that help ensure all School personnel are prepared to deal with a suspected case of abuse.

### Objectives of Training

- to provide child protection information to educational staff
- to understand what child abuse is
- to learn how to respond appropriately when one suspects or reports that a child in the School is being abused
- to identify how to protect children in School
- to define roles and responsibilities
- parent training: Child Protection Lead shall provide parents with Child Protection information and obligations

Throughout the school year, Counselors develop activities to teach students, parents, and staff about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Some of the activities include:

- Training staff members how to identify signs of abuse and at-risk behavior, respond to disclosure, and report.
- Offering lectures during the year to guide families, students, and teachers on healthy living (how to avoid substance abuse, peer pressure, etc.).
- Offering students age-appropriate ways to express their concerns and needs for further counseling and support.
- Providing parents information on how to keep themselves and their children safe. This includes personal safety, online safety, self-harm, and healthy sexual behavior.
- Training School Staff, including security guards, cleaning and maintenance personnel, drivers, food service personnel, administrative staff, after-school instructors, and faculty.

## Annual Review of Child Protection Program, Policies, and Procedures

In August each year, the Child Protection Lead shall review data from the previous school year and develop plans for the current school year.

MONTH	ACTIVITY	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
August	Inform Board, staff, students, and parents about Child Protection Program	Executive Director
	Inform new families of the Child Protection Program	Admissions Office and Child Protection Lead
September	Implement annual plan	Child Protection Team and Principals
	Train all staff on Child Protection Program, individual responsibilities, how to manage disclosure, and how to report	Principal, Counselors, Executive Director
	Teach lessons to students	Counselors and Teachers
	Inform parents in writing about the lessons being taught to students	Principals & Counselors
	Ensure all staff, volunteers, and contracted service providers sign Code of Conduct	Human Resources Coordinator
October	Continue lessons in classroom	Counselors and Teachers
	Inform parents in writing and hold meetings with parents about the lessons being taught to students	Child Protection Lead
November	Review implementation and curriculum and recommend resources as needed	Principals & Counselors
January	Update and review activities of first semester; recommend improvements	Principals and Counselors
	Orient new students, families, and staff about Child Protection Program	Counselors
February–May	Teach lessons to students; offer lectures to students from outside professionals; offer lectures to parents and School staff	Counselors and Teachers

MONTH	ACTIVITY	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
June	Update and review activities of second semester; make recommendations to improve; send budgetary requirements to Finance Department	Principals and Counselors

## Inappropriate Behavior of Children Toward Other Children

School of the Nations seeks to ensure the safety and well-being of its students on campus. To do so, the School has developed age-specific projects to help students develop social skills and to understand what acceptable and unacceptable behavior is.

Students are taught to recognize and respect others' limits and to follow rules that promote living together in harmony.

Students count on a safety net from which they can seek help and counsel and that includes teachers, assistants, counselors, Principals, and monitors.

Discipline at School of the Nations is based on justice, equality, mutual respect, and cooperation. Thus, we cultivate values and virtues among our students and staff and emphasize ethical behavior and attitudes. We expect all members of our community to abide by our three golden rules: be kind, be respectful, and be responsible. Also, please see the Student-Parent Manual on Inappropriate Behavior.

## Resources

### Legal Documents Related to Child Protection

Local, national, and international obligations with respect to protecting children of which schools should be aware include:

- Brazilian Statute of the Child and Adolescent (Federal Law 8.069/1990)
- Brazilian Law of Guidelines and Foundations of National Education (Federal Law n. 9.394/1996)
- The Constitution of Brazil
- Organic Law of the Federal District
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (Decree 99.710/1990)
- International Pact on Civil and Political Rights (Federal Decree 562/1992)
- International Pact on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Federal Decree 591/1992)
- American Convention on Human Rights (Federal Decree 678/1992)
- Brazilian Federal Law 13.257/2016 (Early Childhood Statute)
- National Education Plan of Brazil (Law 13.005/2014)
- Brazilian Federal Law 13.185/2015
- District Laws 4.824/2012, 4.837/2012, and 5.267/2013) on bullying

The laws above emphasize the high priority placed on protecting children from child abuse and neglect, its many forms, and the obligation to establish and strengthen structures and



organizations responsible for providing comprehensive services to child abuse victims and their families.

*\*The Local Child Protection Services (Conselho Tutelar) is located at SHIS QI 11 Área Especial 01 - CEP: 71.625-205 (61) 3248-2120 / 3248-7170, or Call CISDECA - (61) 3217 - 0657*

*This Manual was revised on October 17, 2022, and approved by the Educational Administrative Team of School of the Nations.*



# Escola das Nações

School of the Nations

SHIS QI 21 Conjunto C1  
Lago Sul, Brasília, DF-Brazil  
71655-600  
Telephone: 55 (61) 3366-1800  
Email: [school.nations@edn.org.br](mailto:school.nations@edn.org.br)

[www.schoolofthenations.com.br](http://www.schoolofthenations.com.br)