

**CHILD  
PROTECTION  
AT AISCT**



**AISCT**

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF CAPE TOWN



**2019-2020**



Dear Parents and Guardians,

The American International School of Cape Town (AISCT) has adopted a child protection policy to guide our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety, and care of children in attendance at our school.

The AISCT child protection policy is based on international law and on the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** of which South Africa is a signatory. This key article from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is important, and we wish to draw your attention to it:

**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.**

By enrolling your child at AISCT, you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the child protection protocols in place. All of us at AISCT genuinely value our partnership with you in providing for the safety and care of your children. It is for this reason that AISCT has endorsed a child protection policy that defines the standards by which all AISCT students should be treated. As part of our overall educational programs and specific to our shared responsibility to educate children and to ensure a safe environment in which all children can learn and grow, AISCT 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 you better understand our programs and policy.
3. Annually review the child protection policy with faculty and staff to recognize and be able to report issues of abuse and neglect.

We hope to work together at home and school to ensure our children are safe and are knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities to themselves and to each other. Thank you for your support of our efforts. Please contact your school counselor or principal regarding any specific questions you may have in this regard.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Daniel Jubert  
Headmaster





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## AISCT CHILD PROTECTION 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 of Cape Town (AISCT) endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of which our host country, South Africa, is a signatory. Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors 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 every day and 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 ensure the safety of the child and to take steps to ensure that the child and family are aware of the available services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

All staff employed at AISCT 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. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations respective to this policy, which is based on the Western Cape Education Department's Abuse No More Protocol. AISCT seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. As such, AISCT will distribute our policy annually to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy annually to students, will provide 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 being reported as an alleged offender, AISCT will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process, keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority.

## DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. People may abuse or neglect a child by inducing harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or any setting, often by those who know them. It can be a stranger, but this is rare. They may be abused by an adult or another child.

Abuse and neglect fall into the following areas: Physical, Emotional, Sexual, and Neglect.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a child. IT IS NOT ACCIDENTAL.
- It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/scalding, drowning, or suffocating.
- Physical abuse/harm may also be caused when a parent/caregiver fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.
- It is important to remember that all children have accidents and that bumps and bruises do not necessarily mean that a child is being physical abused, BUT if the child often has injuries and there is a pattern or the explanation given does not match the injury, then we must take this further.

### POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colors)
- Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand)
- Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks
- Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
- Immersion burns with a distinct boundary line
- Unexplained laceration, abrasions, or fractures

## SEXUAL ABUSE

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child/young person to take part in sexual activities. This includes prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative rape, oral sex, or non-physical contact. They may include non-contact activities such as looking at sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in a sexual way, or grooming a child via the internet.
- Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child/young person to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or participation.
- They tend to be groomed online by a stranger or even someone they know of any age or gender.

### POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- Sexual knowledge, behavior, or use of language not appropriate to age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
- Venereal disease in a child of any age
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital, or anus areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Refusing to change into physical education (PE) clothes, fear of bathrooms
- Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual
- Pregnancy, especially at a young age
- Extremely protective parenting

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Emotional abuse is the ongoing maltreatment or emotional neglect of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects of the child's emotional development. It may convey to a child that they are worthless/unloved/inadequate. It can also involve deliberately trying to scare/humiliate the child or isolating and ignoring him. They may not have the opportunity to express their views and could involve making fun of what they say or how they say it.
- It could also feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on the child. These could include being overprotected and limiting their social interaction. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it could/may occur on its own.

## NEGLECT

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs within his own environment.

There are seven definitions of defying a child's needs:

- Basic care
  - Affection
  - Security
  - Stimulation and innate potential
  - Guidance and control
  - Responsibility
  - Independence
- Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet the child's needs, both basic physical and/or psychological needs which are likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.
  - Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, the parent/caregiver fails to provide food, shelter, or clothing. They fail to protect the child from physical, emotional danger/harm. They could miss hospital appointments and fail to give the appropriate medicine or treatment. They do not provide adequate supervision when they are not present.

## TYPES OF NEGLECT

**Physical:** Failure to ensure the child's basic needs and safety.

**Educational:** Failure to ensure the child receives an education.

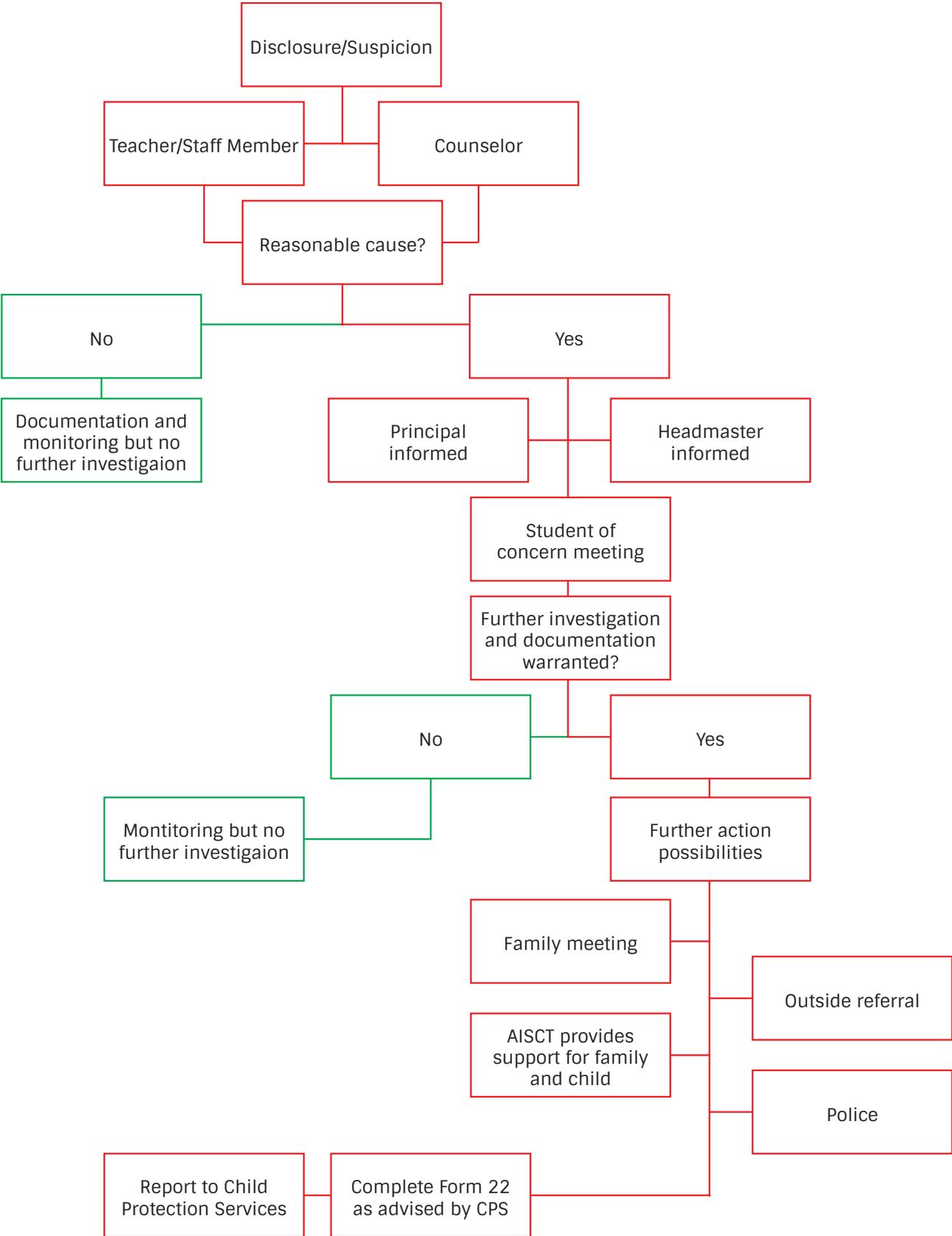
**Emotional:** Failure to meet the child's needs for nurturing and stimulation.

**Medical:** Failure to provide health care, including dental care.

## 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
- Parents cannot be reached in case of an emergency

# PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE



## RESOURCES AND LINKS

For further information, please make use of the following resources and links:

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

[http://www.unicef.org/crc/index\\_30160.html](http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30160.html)

**Abuse No More Protocol of the Western Cape Education Department**

<https://www.westerncape.gov.za/text/2014/October/amended-abuse-no-more-protocol.pdf>

**Childline South Africa**

<http://www.childlinesa.org.za/>

**Child Care and Protection Services of the Western Cape Government**

<https://www.westerncape.gov.za/service/child-care-and-protection-services>

**Cape Town Child Welfare**

<http://www.helpkids.org.za/>

**National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)**

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

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