

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:  
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# TEMPLATE

**[INSERT SCHOOL NAME]**

## CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

**[INSERT SCHOOL LOGO/PICTURE]**

**ORIGINAL POLICY STATEMENT DATE: [INSERT DATE]**

**LAST REVISION DATE: [INSERT DATE]**

**SOURCES INCLUDE (SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND THANKS TO):**

- ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN AFRICA (AISA) CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM GUIDE.
- THE WORK OF INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON CHILD PROTECTION (ITFCP)\* AND ACCREDITATION AGENCIES IN IN THE RECOMMENDATION OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION STANDARDS.
- INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON CHILD PROTECTION (ITFCP) RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED SCREENING PRACTICES & OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS.
- INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN (ICMEC) EDUCATION PORTAL'S CHECKLISTS AND SUMMARY RESOURCES ([HTTP://WWW.ICMEC.ORG/EDUCATION-PORTAL/](http://www.icmec.org/education-portal/)).

*\*The work of the International Task Force on Child Protection (ITFCP) has been undertaken by a coalition of 90+ volunteers, leaders of international education organizations, school leaders, counsellors, business and security managers and teachers, school accreditation, inspection and recruitment professionals, working collaboratively across professions with dedicated law enforcement officials and the medical community. It is this broad collaboration and diverse perspective from a variety of roles which has enriched their discussion and results. From its origin in May of 2014, its charter has been to apply its collective resources, expertise, and partnerships to help international school communities address child and youth protection challenges.*

# I. INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE, & ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Dear Parents [and Other School Community Members<sup>1</sup>],

At [XX School], we desire that our children and youth have the best available educational experience that is free from any type of bullying, neglect, or abuse of any kind. In this regard, and in keeping with [XX School] core values and mission statement, The Board of Directors has adopted a **Child and Youth Protection Policy** to guide our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety, and care of children in attendance at our school. This policy is so important to [XX School], as your superintendent, I am required to notify parents and other community members at the beginning of each school year, or as necessary, reminding them about this truly critical issue.

The [XX School]'s Child and Youth Protection Policy is based on international law and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in which [Name the school's country] is also a signatory.<sup>2</sup> 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.*

As a result of enrollment of a student at [XX School], our parents, as well as other community members who have contact with our students, agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted by the [XX School] Board. All of us at [XX School] want you to know that we genuinely value our partnership with you in providing for the safety and care of our students. It is for this reason that [XX School] has endorsed a Child and Youth Protection Policy that *defines the standards* by which all [XX School] students should be treated with respect and dignity at all times.

## **Educational Components of [XX School] Child and Youth Protection Policy**

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, [XX School] 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.

We will work together with parents at home and other community members to ensure that 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,

[Name of Superintendent] – Superintendent

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<sup>1</sup>This form letter as recommended by AISA (originally intended for parents only) was revised to include both parents and other school community members since the school may want to include this as an introduction to its Child and Youth Protection Policy for all of the school's community members as contained in this full document. Schools may decide to send parents only the letter portion of this Policy without details (*although details may be recommended for training purposes*).

<sup>2</sup> To determine if your school's country is a signatory/ratified the international law, see United Nations Treaty Collection: [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en).

## **II. TABLE OF CONTENTS - KEY POLICY & PROGRAM COMPONENTS <sup>3</sup>**

This policy addresses the following key components (and related procedures) in connection with child and youth protection:

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<sup>3</sup> Schools should consider adopting these “key components” related to its Child and Youth Protection Policy. The school may want to adopt additional “best practices” related to its overall Child Protection Program, and as recommended by the International Task Force on Child Protection (ITFCP) and Accreditation Agencies as disclosed in the last section of this document (see below).

### III. [XX SCHOOL’S] CORRESPONDING POLICIES & PROCEDURES

[XX School]’s Policies & Procedures approved by the Board of Trustees that speak to the key components for *implementation* of the school’s Child and Youth Protection Policy as contained in this document and the school’s related or more detailed safety framework/program is referenced as follows:

*[EXAMPLE LANGUAGE – VERIFY AGAINST EXISTING AND APPROVED P&P LANGUAGE<sup>4</sup>]:*

#### **[XX.XX] (Policy Ref. Number) - Child and Youth Protection Policies & Reporting Requirements**

[XX School] aims to ensure that all students are given a safe learning environment by maintaining appropriate practices and supervision in the school.

The school will establish appropriate procedures to ensure proper reporting of suspected child abuse which may have occurred in or out of school. Such reporting is the responsibility of any employee who suspects that a child/youth may have been abused and must also include 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 [Name applicable host country] law.

[XX School] endorses the Convention on the Rights of the Child\* of which the host country for the School, [Name host country], 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. [XX School] will distribute this policy annually to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy annually to students, will provide 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, [XX School] will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process.

This policy was endorsed by the XX School Board of Trustees.

(\*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>).

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<sup>4</sup> The school should reference its Board-approved written policies and procedures language (e.g., “Board/School Policies & Procedures) which contain key components and/or requires the school to implement its child & youth protection policies/program in this section; e.g., any existing reference related to the reporting of child abuse reporting, etc.

## IV. SUMMARY OF KEY RESPONSIBILITIES & APPLICABILITY

### *Introduction:*

The [XX School]'s Child and Youth Protection Policy is based on international law and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in which [Name the school's country] is also a signatory.<sup>5</sup> 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 & involvement in pornography.*

### *Key Responsibilities (“Child and Youth Protection”):*

- All members of [XX School]'s community are required to 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.

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<sup>5</sup> To determine if your school's country is a signatory/ratified the international law, see United Nations Treaty Collection: [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en).

### *Applicability:*

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

- All employees of [XX School] and employees of the school’s affiliated organizations.
- Individuals and entities with contractual relationships with the school.
- Board members/governors/owners 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.

\*[XX school] understands that “appropriate personal conduct” is also dependent of cultural expectations and the need to comply with the legal and ethical expectations and requirements regarding child/youth abuse within the country in which the school operates. In this regard, and as noted in this policy, the school attempts to inform and train applicable community members with regard to these factors.

### **V. CODES OF CONDUCT & COMMON AGREEMENT<sup>6</sup>**

The public and private conduct of faculty, staff, employees, students, and volunteers acting on behalf of the school can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact, or can cause great harm if inappropriate. In addition, [XX School] recognizes that every individual in the school community should be treated with dignity and respect, including having a special obligation toward children.

In this regard, [XX School] requires members of the school community to review and periodically sign-off on applicable codes of conduct. The school’s codes of conduct help to define and clarify the parameters of professional behavioral expectations and practices. In addition, the school’s “Common Agreement” is a set of written guidelines designed to safeguard children and all members of the school community, and ensure safe teaching, behavior, and practice within the school.

For a copy of the school’s code of conducts for applicable community members, see Appendix A.

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<sup>6</sup> The school should best summarize applicable “codes of conduct” and/or “common agreements” utilized by the school under this section. See Appendix A for examples of codes of conduct. These may also be combined as maybe useful.

## **VI. IMPORTANT POLICY TERMS, DEFINITIONS, & INDICATORS**

### **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 [School's host country] 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
- Falling to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above.

### **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.

### **NEGLECT IS:**

- failure to provide for a child's basic needs within their own environment.

### **NEGLECT MAY BE:**

- **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.
- **[To verify]:** Note, **[XX School]** requires one parent be a full-time resident of **[Host country]**. Should parents/guardian leave the country for any reason then the responsibility for informing the school of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian. Temporary Change of Guardian Forms are available from **[XX]**. These are expected to be completed 48 hours prior to parents/guardians leaving the country. **[Please include other applicable procedures]**.
- **Medical** (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment); and/or
- **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 unwanted or basic needs are not met.
- 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 cannot be reached in the case of emergency.

### **IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- Behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse or neglect.
- Together with other indicators, such as family dynamics, they may warrant a referral.



**SEXUAL ABUSE IS:**

- Sexual abuse is committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in either the [Host country] 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.
- Sexual abuse has some different characteristics of child abuse that warrant special attention. While physical abuse is often the result of immediate stress and not usually planned, sexual abuse requires planning with results that are more insidious. The planning, referred to as Grooming, often results in victims accepting the blame, responsibility, guilt and shame for the sexual behavior of the offender. Sexual abuse requires far more secrecy than other forms of child abuse, so is more difficult to report.
- Many victims, through the process of grooming, are taught that the sex is a form of love, so tend to love their offender and often present as happy and well-adjusted children with no negative symptoms because of their perception of being loved.
- Working with the sexual offender cannot be done by school counselors. Out-sourced professional assistance would be consulted.

**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 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.
- Pregnancy, especially at a young age.
- Extremely protective parenting.

## **VII. REPORTING OF INCIDENTS, SUSPICIONS & FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES**

### **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A TEACHER HAS REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE?**

1. Indicators of abuse and neglect as identified in this policy will be used by the staff member as a guideline for reporting to the counselor, who will determine if the case needs further attention.
2. A report must be made when a staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect.
3. All reports are confidential.

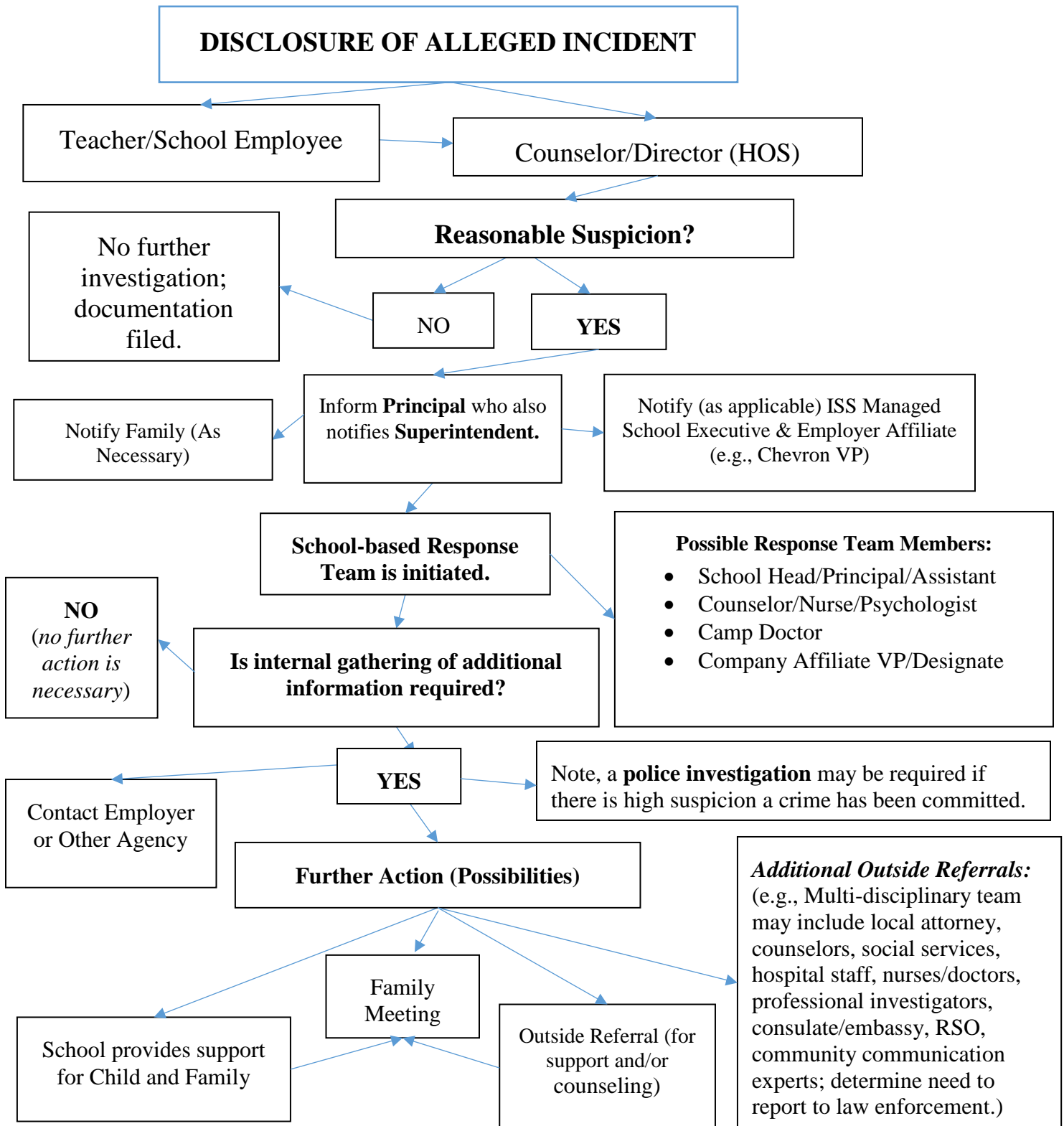
### **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT IS REPORTED?**

- 1) 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.
- 2) In all cases, the principal will be notified.
- 3) It is the responsibility of the principal to inform the superintendent of the suspected case of child abuse or neglect. \*
- 4) All staff, faculty and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect.
- 5) All school employees are also required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect.
- 6) All reports of abuse and neglect must be made to the counselor within 48 hours for immediate response.

\*In the event that the abuse or neglect involves a staff member or faculty member of the school, the principal/superintendent will also follow board policies pursuant to ethical professional behavior/conduct, including related disciplinary procedures. **[Note: The school should confirm which board policies apply here and reference them in this section].**

## STEPS FOLLOWED AFTER DISCLOSURE (FLOW-CHART) \*

*\*Caution in the Use of These Guidelines:* Each school incident can significantly vary from one another. No one template or recommended flow-chart will be able to appropriately address all of the circumstances related to the reporting and handling of a child abuse disclosure incident. Individuals are encouraged to review the matter with the school's principal or superintendent when in doubt.



## **CLARIFICATION OF “STEPS TO FOLLOW AFTER DISCLOSURE” (FLOW-CHART)**

### **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

#### **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 and will form a school-based response team as needed to address the report.
- The response team may include the school nurse, counselor, school psychologist, and other individuals as the principal sees 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.
- The following procedure will be used:
  - 1) Interview staff members as necessary & document information relative to the case.
  - 2) Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in school.
  - 3) Report status of case to superintendent.
  - 4) Determine the course of follow-up-actions.

#### **STEP 2**

- Based on acquired information, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child/youth and family.
- Actions that may take place are:
  - 1) Discussions between the child/youth and counselor in order to gain more information. Depending upon the age of the child/youth, these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with dolls to elicit more information as to what may have occurred.
  - 2) In-class observations of the child/youth by the teacher, counselor, or administrator.
  - 3) Meetings with the family to present the School's concerns.
  - 4) Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling.
  - 5) Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concern with the child/youth/family, or to the welfare office at the home-of-record.
  - 6) Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.
  - 7) Consultation with the school or another attorney.
  - 8) Informal consultation with local authorities.

**MOST CASES OF SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT WILL BE HANDLED BY SCHOOL COUNSELORS, SUCH AS THOSE INVOLVING:**

- Student relationships with peers.
- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home.
- Student-parent relationships.
- Mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, grieving.

**SOME CASES WILL BE REFERRED TO OUTSIDE RESOURCES, FOR EXAMPLE:**

- Mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, dissociation, suicide ideation.

**CASES REPORTED FOR INVESTIGATION AND OUTSIDE RESOURCES:**

- Severe and ongoing physical abuse or neglect
- Sexual abuse and incest.

**IN EXTREME CASES WHEN FAMILIES DO NOT STOP THE ABUSE OR CONCERNS REMAIN ABOUT THE SAFETY OF THE CHILD/YOUTH, REPORTS COULD BE MADE TO:**

- The consulate
- The employer
- The home-of-record welfare office.

**STEP 3:**

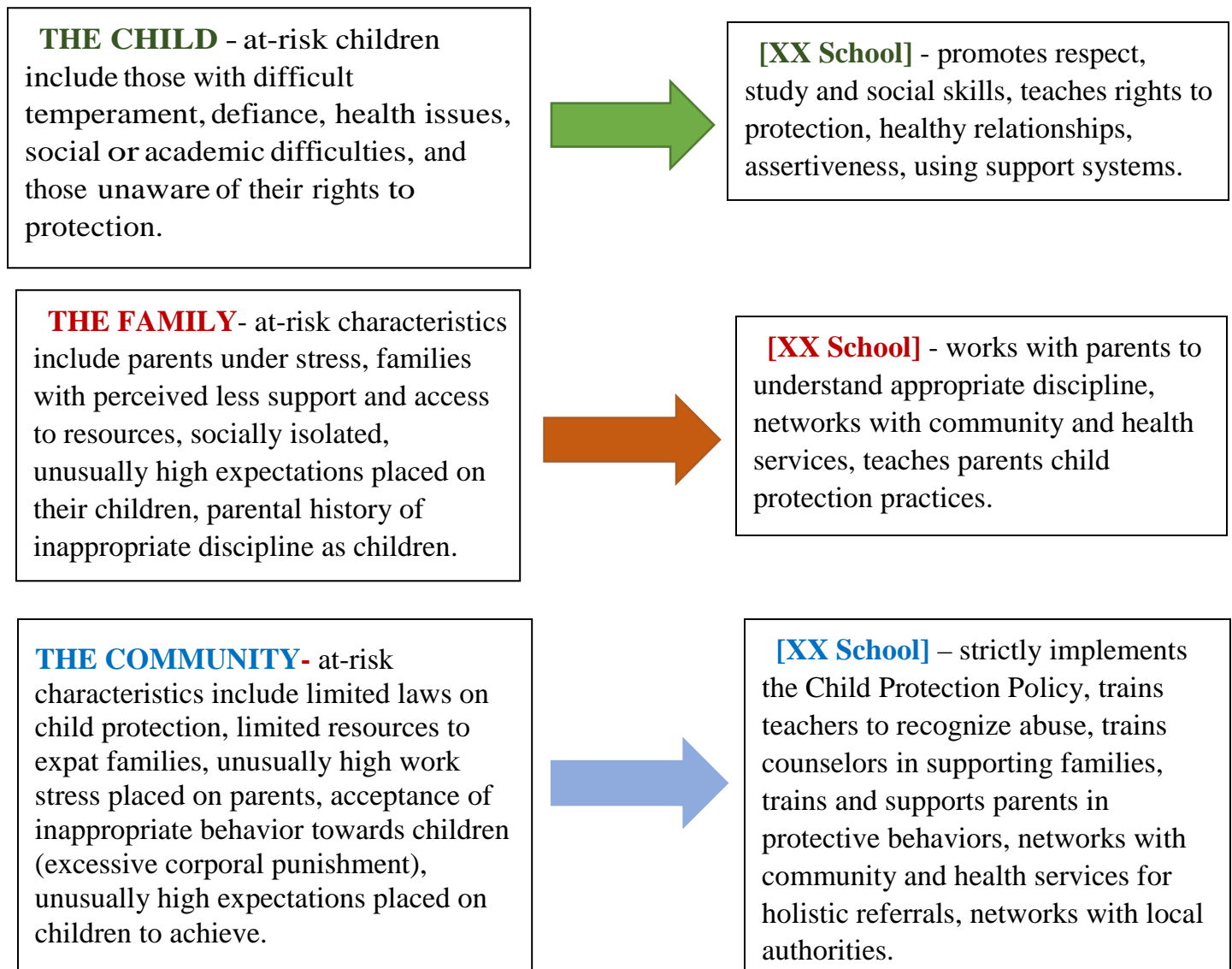
- Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect:
  - 1) The counselor will maintain contact with the child/youth and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
  - 2) The counselor will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.
  - 3) The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
  - 4) The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists to update the progress of the child in school.

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the student'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 student. The school will make every attempt to share this information to protect the student.

## VIII. AT-RISK CHARACTERISTICS & CHILD PROTECTION PROTOCOLS

### THE [XX SCHOOL] CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY WORKS FOR THE CHILD/YOUTH, THE FAMILY AND THE COMMUNITY.

- Research indicates that international communities are as prone to child abuse as communities in their home country. Child abuse is a multi-faceted issue that involves dynamics of the child, the family, and the community. The school's policy works to respond to all three levels:



## **IX. [XX SCHOOL'S] COMMITMENT TO ADDITIONAL BEST PRACTICES ("CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION PROGRAM")<sup>7</sup>**

### **WHAT DOES A CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY AND PROGRAM MEAN FOR THE [XX SCHOOL] COMMUNITY?**

- [XX School] is defining a standard for the treatment of all children and youth - that they be treated with respect and dignity at all times.
- Children and youth have legal and moral rights to their individuality, that when protected, will develop into the ability to meet the needs of the family, community, and global society. Child protection standards defined by [XX School] encompass all cultures and international law. When given reasonable cause to believe that these rights are violated, [XX School] will seek all available resources to restore those rights.
- While [XX School's] Child and Youth Protection Policy is intended to disclose key components and related procedures for the school's overall child and youth safety framework, the school also strives to maintain additional guidelines and "best practices" procedures for the school's on-going and pro-active child and youth protection program.
- Some of those additional areas in which the school is also committed to with respect to its comprehensive Child and Youth Protection Program, but in which limited details have been included in this policy, include:<sup>8</sup>
  - Roles of Child Protection Teams and the Child Protection Officer (CPO)
  - Recruitment/screening assessments and background checks for new hires
  - School curriculum considerations related to child and youth protection.
  - Training requirements for leadership, staff, parents, and students (*the school has a scheduled program of regular, systematic professional training for volunteers, contractors, faculty, and staff on student safeguarding, child abuse prevention, recognition, intervention, and reporting*).
  - Other formal learning programs throughout the school experience related to child protection may cover areas such as bullying, personal safety, physical abuse, manipulation, grooming, online safety, healthy sexual behavior, neglect and

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<sup>7</sup> Schools should only include those best practices it intends to adhere to under this Policy. This list (in addition to "key components" under Section II of this Policy) is reflective of accreditation standards and recommendations.

<sup>8</sup> Many of these are attributed to recommended accreditation standards (essential questions and auditing requirements).

negligent behavior, self-harm, staying safe away from home, commercial exploitation and disclosing abuse. (These programs are to be delivered by members of faculty or external providers who are trained in these areas)

- Overview of anti-bullying policies (including on-line/virtual safety)
- Special considerations for student trips & related transportation and lodging issues
- School safety and security considerations (school environment, building and facilities, protective equipment)
- Whistle-blowing (Anti-retaliation) procedures
- Procedures/Response for dealing with alleged staff offender
- Procedures/Response for dealing with student who has been harmed
- Procedures for domestic violence in employee families.
- Relationships with local resources & community partnerships & support agencies  
*(the school develops meaningful and effective relationships with external organizations and bodies that are able to provide appropriate support and advice on matters related to child protection)*
- Public communication of the school's child protection policy/procedures
- Confidentiality and record-keeping procedures
- Self-audit protocols (adherence to child and youth protection policies and procedures are reviewed with sufficient regularity and systematically).
- Community members' acknowledgment of obligations concerning child protection policy/applicable codes of conduct.



# Appendix A:

## [XX School] Code of Conduct

### For Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Staff, Volunteers, and Others

Effective Date: XX

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*This Code of Conduct (“Code”) serves as a guide to ethical conduct and professional behavior standards at XX SCHOOL.*

XX SCHOOL is committed to the safety and protection of children and all members of our school community. The Code applies to all faculty, staff, employees, volunteers and students who represent the school and who interact with children or young people in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity.

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#### **Introduction:**

The public and private conduct of faculty, staff, employees, students, and volunteers acting on behalf of XX SCHOOL can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact, or can cause great harm if inappropriate. We must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work, including procuring safe and healthy environments for all of our students.

The **Purpose** of this Code is to:

- Insure the health, welfare and safety of our students and other members of our school community.
- Define and clarify the parameters of professional behavioral expectations and practices with regard to our school.
- Assure our parent and community stakeholders, accreditation agencies, and others of the accountability of the educators/staff who work at our school.

**Background Checks** – Although XX SCHOOL understands that no background checks are 100% reliable, XX SCHOOL conducts professional background screening of the school’s personnel prior to employment and reserves the right to conduct periodic screenings of the school’s employees and other affiliates or contractors as may be deemed appropriate to insure the safety of our children and staff.

**Disciplinary Action** -- Failure to maintain good moral and ethical standards with regard to children and model professionalism with colleagues, parents and others in the school community as may or may not be defined exclusively in this Code may result in reprimand, censure, or dismissal.

**School Community Standards** – The following standards are intended to outline expectations and accountability for those individuals at our school who assume the important responsibility of working with children.

#### **Our School Community Standards:**

**Standard 1: Good Moral Character & Personal Fitness** — Because of the nature of their trusted positions, educators and staff members must exhibit good moral character and personal fitness. This is defined as the traits necessary to have contact with, teach, and/or perform supervision of children. These traits include but are not limited to those described in the school’s handbook policies and in this Code.

In addition, all employees who work with children must undergo a **background check** providing reasonable assurance as to the lack of conviction of any crime involving:

- The physical neglect of a child.
- The physical injury or death of a child.
- The sexual exploitation of a child.
- Sexual offenses involving children.
- The production, distribution, reception, or possession of child pornography.
- The sale or purchase of a child.
- A conviction of any crime that would call into question the individual’s worthiness to work with children.

**Standard 2: Ethical Conduct toward Students** — School employees and support staff should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and out of the classroom. They are also

responsible for maintaining **physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries** in such interactions.

**Unethical and/or Illegal Conduct** that also violates such boundaries includes, but is not limited to:

- Striking, hurting, or causing a student physical pain.
- Physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses.
- Engaging in any harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, sex, sexual identity, national origin, religion, or disability.
- Covert or overt sexual behaviors involving students.
- Any sexual advance or fostering an inappropriate relationship with a student; either written, verbal, or physical.
- Sexual intercourse or committing any unlawful sexual act.
- Seductive speech or gestures.
- Indecent exposure.
- Furnishing or allowing students to consume tobacco, alcohol, illegal/unauthorized drugs or inappropriate reading materials.
- Any other act of child abuse—including physical and verbal abuse, child endangerment, or acts of cruelty to children.

**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 XX SCHOOL parents, administration, teachers, personnel, volunteers, and minors:

- Where possible, email exchanges between a minor and a person acting on behalf of the school are to be made using a school email address.
- Faculty, staff, and volunteers who use any form of online communications including social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and text messaging to communicate with minors may only do so for activities involving school business.
- Electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.

**General Physical Contact** -- Physical contact with children can be misconstrued both by the recipient and by those who observe it, and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. School employees and support staff should 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.

**One-on-one Meetings & After-School Related Activities** – Interactions with a child or youth are best held in a public area or in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with an open door or window that provides visibility; including informing another adult when appropriate. The same prudence should be applied for after-school activities.

**Student Discipline** – School personnel and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child and should adhere to the school’s handbook policies on discipline.

**Standard 3: Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues** — Ethical conduct between colleagues and other community members upholds the following principles:

- A colleague does not engage in any verbal, physical, or sexual harassment of another colleague. **Sexual harassment** includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances and invitations, requests for sexual favors, unwanted physical contact, as well as other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as the display or transmission of sexually suggestive objects, pictures or cartoons; physical gestures of a sexual nature; sexual epithets, jokes and insults; or any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. **Harassment can also be** based on characteristics other than sexual or gender related, such as race, religion, national origin, sexual identity, or disability. It can take the form of epithets, jokes and insults or other forms of mistreatment.
- A colleague does not make false statements about other colleagues; falsify or misrepresent his or her credentials, school-related activities, or the school community.
- A colleague does not reveal confidential information about colleagues unless required by law.

**Standard 4: Ethical Conduct toward Performance and Confidentiality** — Ethical conduct by teachers and staff includes:

- **Student Assessment & Reporting** – Teachers must accurately report and record students test scores and provide fair and reliable assessments. Teachers are also strictly prohibited from assisting students during the taking of any standardized tests.

- Teacher Hiring & Evaluation Process – Supervisors should engage in practices that involve clearly defined rubrics, designed to ensure success, fairness, process integrity, and reliable evaluations.
- Falsification or Misrepresentation of Facts or Documents – School personnel must avoid the falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or the erroneously reporting of facts, reports, or other documents as may be requested from time to time from the school’s administration, outside police or governing authorities, or in the course of an official investigation.
- Unauthorized Professional Practices – Engagement in unauthorized professional practices such as the practice of medicine, including psychiatric medicine, or providing legal, financial, or medical advice (except in emergency situations where such behavior is used to protect the life of a student or colleague) is strictly prohibited.
- Other Professional & Ethical Practices -- includes maintaining the **confidentiality** of students and staff academic, health, disciplinary, and other personal records; and having an understanding as to when **transparency** is necessary (e.g., student has a nut allergy) in order to promote the health, welfare or safety of students/staff.

**Standard 5: Ethical Conduct in the Use of Alcohol or Controlled Substances in the Course of Working Hours** — Faculty, staff, employees, and volunteers should refrain from the illegal possession and/or illegal use of controlled substances and/or alcohol at all times, and from the use of tobacco products, alcohol and/or drugs when working with children.

**Standard 6: Ethical Conduct toward Remuneration and Gifts** — In the course of professional activity, coercing or forcing a student or parent to provide remuneration for items, services or favors as a private transaction is not allowed. This includes offering to pay students for favors, or taking money from students in return for goods or services. Other ethical conduct considerations are as follows:

- Vendors - School personnel are prohibited from accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal gain in which the appearance of a conflict of interest may exist.
- Gifts - School personnel should also not accept or give gifts to children without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.

- Tutoring – School personnel should adhere to the school’s handbook policies with regard to tutoring students or other services.

**Standard 7: Ethical Conduct toward Honoring Employment Contracts** — School personnel should honor all of the terms as contained in their employment contracts other than for unforeseeable reasons in which the school may formally release the employee from the contract prior to the employee abandoning any of its provisions.

**Standard 8: Ethical Conduct toward School Property and Funds** — the unauthorized, misuse, theft, or intentional damage of school property and the misappropriation of school funds is a violation of school policies and subject to severe discipline.

**Standard 9: Ethical Conduct toward Reporting Incidents** — School personnel must intervene when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that children are being abused in any way; or any other violation of this Code. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported to the appropriate school authorities as further described in handbook/policy of the school. In particular, the following are prohibited:

- Knowing failure to report physical abuse or sexual misconduct by another school employee, parent or adult.
- Knowing failure to inform the Head of School, counselor or authority about the commission of an act of unprofessional conduct by another educational practitioner.

**Standard 10: Ethical Conduct toward Acknowledgement and Adherence to this Code** — Members of the school community to which this Code applies must read this Code in its entirety and periodically sign-off; that is, agreeing to all of the Code’s standards as summarized below.

## XX SCHOOL 'S STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SIGNATURE

I promise to strictly follow all of the rules and guidelines as contained in the school's Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth participating in the school's programs. The Code includes the following key areas of my responsibility:

I will:

- To the best of my ability, promote the good health, welfare, and safety of all members of our school community and uphold high ethical standards.
- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with children and/or youth in settings that are open and visible to others; as well as never be alone at school activities without another adult being notified or present.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth, while also adhering to the school's policies on student discipline.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children – when necessary – only in ways that are appropriate, public, and non-sexual.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
- Avoid transactions with students, parents, or vendors that may be perceived as conflicts of interest.
- Comply fully with the school's policies on anti-harassment, representation and confidentiality standards, safeguarding of property and funds, and the honoring of contracts.
- Comply fully with the school's mandatory reporting requirements and the school's policy to report suspected child abuse; and other violations of the Code or other school policies.

I will not:

- Touch or speak to a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Inflict any physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading children and/or youth.
- Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with children and/or youth.
- Accept or give gifts to children or youth without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- Communicate with children over unmonitored e-mail.
- Use Twitter or similar forms of electronic or social media to communicate with students except for activities strictly involving school business.

I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to children and youth under the auspices of XX SCHOOL I am subject to a criminal history background check.

### **Acknowledgement and agreement to comply with the XX SCHOOL Code of Conduct**

My signature confirms that I have read this Code of Conduct and that as a person working with children and youth I agree to follow these standards. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from XX SCHOOL.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **XX School COMMON AGREEMENT (EXPECTATIONS OF CONDUCT WITH CHILDREN)**

*“To ensure the safety of children and the well-being of our school community”*

Every individual in the school community should be treated with dignity and respect. As a school we have a special obligation to children. As such, we promote a safe and positive community. The XX SCHOOL Common Agreement is a set of written guidelines designed to safeguard children and all members of the school community, and ensure safe teaching, behavior, and practice within XX SCHOOL.

### **Appropriate Practice**

It is our responsibility to promote the welfare of children. As a member of the XX SCHOOL community, **I will:**

- Act as a role model for students through my words and actions.
- Respond to student physical contact such as hugs or handshakes in a culturally-sensitive and age-appropriate manner.
- Ensure that bathroom visits are safe and respectful of student privacy.
- Exhibit and encourage open communication.
- Follow XX SCHOOL protocols for child safety when supervising school field trips and overnight trips.
- Alert another staff member when working with students after school.
- Hold myself and others accountable for keeping children safe.
- Report suspected child abuse to my administrator.

### **Inappropriate Practice**

It is our responsibility to act if we have concerns about the welfare of a child.

**I will not:**

- Initiate or encourage any physical contact while alone with a student.
- Transport students without parent consent unless it is a medical emergency.
- Use alcohol or other inappropriate substances on school property or while attending student-related school functions away from XX SCHOOL.
- Accept gifts or give gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents.
- Invite a student to my home or arrange to meet with a student away from school property without parent consent.
- Meet individually with a student in a closed or unobservable setting.
- Communicate privately with students by phone or through social media platforms for non-school related reasons.
- Post photos or other information about students for non-school related reasons that could increase the vulnerability of students.

I confirm that I have read and understood the **XX SCHOOL Common Agreement** and agree to follow the above standards of practice. I understand that any action inconsistent with this, or failure to take action as mandated by this Common Agreement, may result in disciplinary action.

Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_