



# **CHILD PROTECTION AT SHANGHAI AMERICAN SCHOOL**

ENGLISH 2017-2018



Shanghai American School  
An International Community

Dear Parents,

Nothing is more important than the safety of our children. When they are safe and happy, they learn and thrive.

Shanghai American School, in keeping with our core values and vision statements, has a Child Protection Policy that guides our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety and care of children in attendance at our school. By enrolling your child at SAS, you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted by the SAS Board.

The SAS Child Protection Policy defines the standards by which all SAS students should be treated with respect and dignity at all times. It is based on international law and on the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child of which China is a signatory. Along with the United Nations Convention, SAS is required to follow local Chinese Law. The most recent update demands that SAS shall report all cases of domestic abuse to local law enforcement agencies. The two key UN articles we wish to draw your attention to are these:

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

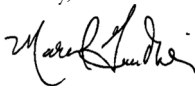
The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

Please know that we genuinely value our partnership with you in providing for the safety and care of your children. 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, SAS follows the following protocols:

- Provide age appropriate lessons for all grade levels to help students understand personal safety, needs, and rights.
- Provide parent materials and information sessions to help you better understand our programs and policy.
- Annually train school employees and contracted staff to recognize and report issues of abuse and neglect.

At SAS we know that we can work together to ensure that our children are safe and knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities. I thank you for your support of our efforts and invite you to contact a school counselor or principal regarding any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Marcel G. Gauthier  
Head of School

## 8.6018 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Child abuse and neglect are of growing concern in schools 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 their physical, emotional, and spiritual development.

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. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify children who need help and protection. As such, educators have a professional, legal, and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

All staff employed at Shanghai American School must report suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse or neglect. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations respective to this policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate in Shanghai, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities.

Shanghai American School endorses the Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which the host country, China, 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. Shanghai American 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, Shanghai American School will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process.

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\* Sources: Amnesty International Unofficial Summary of the UN Rights Convention of the Child:  
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/children-s-rights/convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child>

\* Actual Convention on the Rights of the Child:  
[http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC\\_PRESS200910web.pdf](http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC_PRESS200910web.pdf)

## How is abuse and neglect defined?

Definitions of abuse are complex and can differ across various cultures according to their 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, typically 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
- Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning
- 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
- Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the criminal code or school policy
- 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
- Failing 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. Note: SAS requires one parent be a full-time resident of Shanghai. Should parents/guardians 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 Guardianship Forms are available through PowerSchool. These are expected to be completed prior to parents/guardians leaving the country.)
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment)
- Emotional (e.g., a pattern of actions, such as: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs. Specific examples may include verbal humiliation, refusing to acknowledge presence of child, invasion of privacy for no specific reason, violent threats, etc.)

### POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF NEGLECT

- Child is unwashed or hungry
- Parents are uninterested in child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- Child does not want to go home
- Both parents or legal guardians are absent from Shanghai for any period of 24 hours or greater, without appropriate provision made for child's care, and a temporary guardian named
- Parents can not be reached in the case of emergency

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 committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in either the criminal code of the host country 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.

## 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 in 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

## What happens when a teacher has reasonable cause to believe?

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

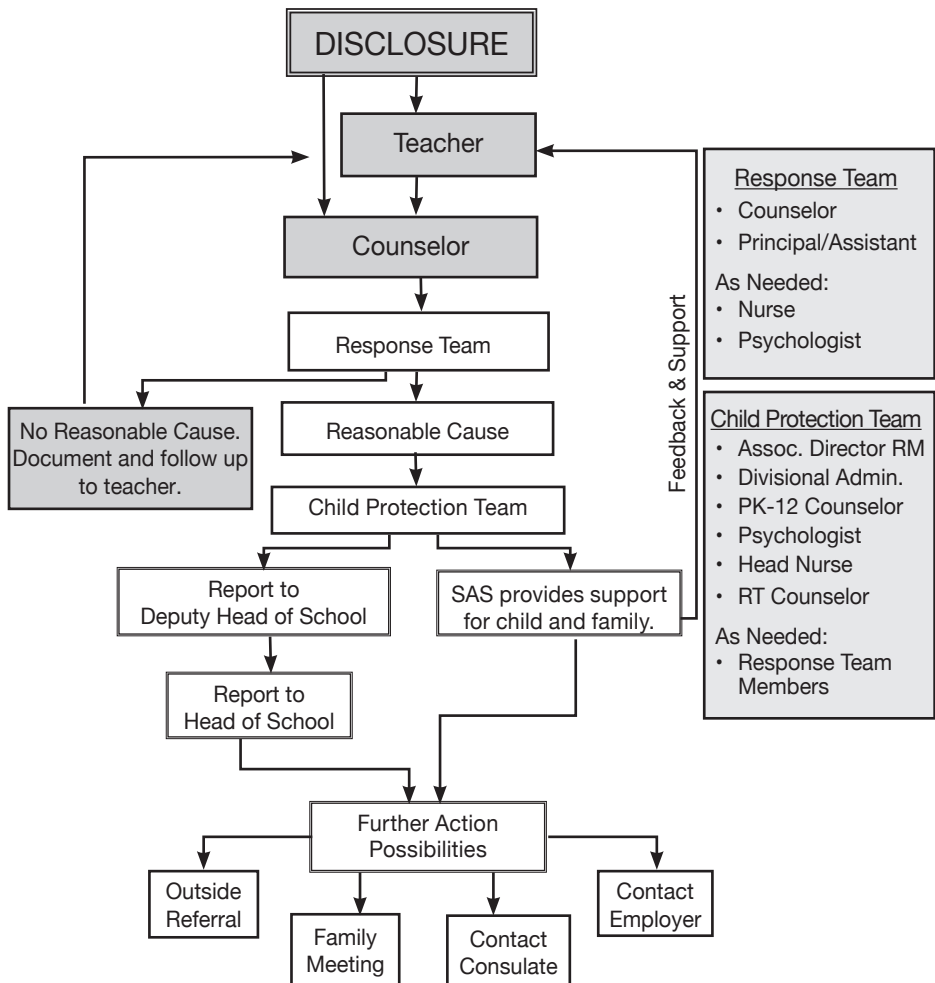


## What happens after suspected abuse or neglect is reported?

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

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

## Steps followed after disclosure



## Reporting Procedures

### Step 1: INFORMATION GATHERING

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the teacher will seek advice from the grade level counselor within 48 hours. The counselor will notify the school-based response team, and then take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident. The response team will include the division administrator, counselor, psychologist, school nurse, 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 and document information relative to the case.
2. Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school.
3. A) If warranted, forward report to the Child Protection Team (Move to Step 2)  
B) If report is not substantiated, enter case into Counselor Log on PowerSchool and report update to the original reporter.





## Step 2: FAMILY CONSULTATION

Based on acquired information, a plan of action will be developed by the Child Protection Team to assist the child and family. Actions that shall take place are:

- Administrator and counselor (and others as deemed necessary) meet with family, present the School's concerns, review the Child Protection Policy, and establish an action plan.
- On-going observations of the child by the teacher, counselor, or administrator.

### **Possible follow-up actions include:**

- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling with Release of Information to counselor
- Contact sponsoring employer regarding concerns
- Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.
- Consultation with the school's legal advisor
- Report to local authorities, as per the Anti-Domestic Violence Law of the PRC, adopted at the 18TH Session of the Standing Committee of the 12TH National People's Congress

### **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, and suicidal 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, reports could be made to:**

- The consulate of the country of the involved family
- The employer sponsoring the involved family
- Local law enforcement

### Step 3: FOLLOW UP PROCEDURES

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect:

- The counselor will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The counselor will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.
- The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teachers.
- The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists to update the progress of the child in school.
- Follow up meeting with administrator and counselor to evaluate progress, debriefing on progress.

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the child's confidential file. Confidential records may only be released with parental consent. One exception to this is if the School believes the child continues to be at risk. In these cases, SAS has the responsibility to relay potential safety concerns to the new school.

*Board Policy 8.90 subsection E*

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves a staff or faculty member of SAS, the administration will follow board policy pursuant to ethical professional behavior.

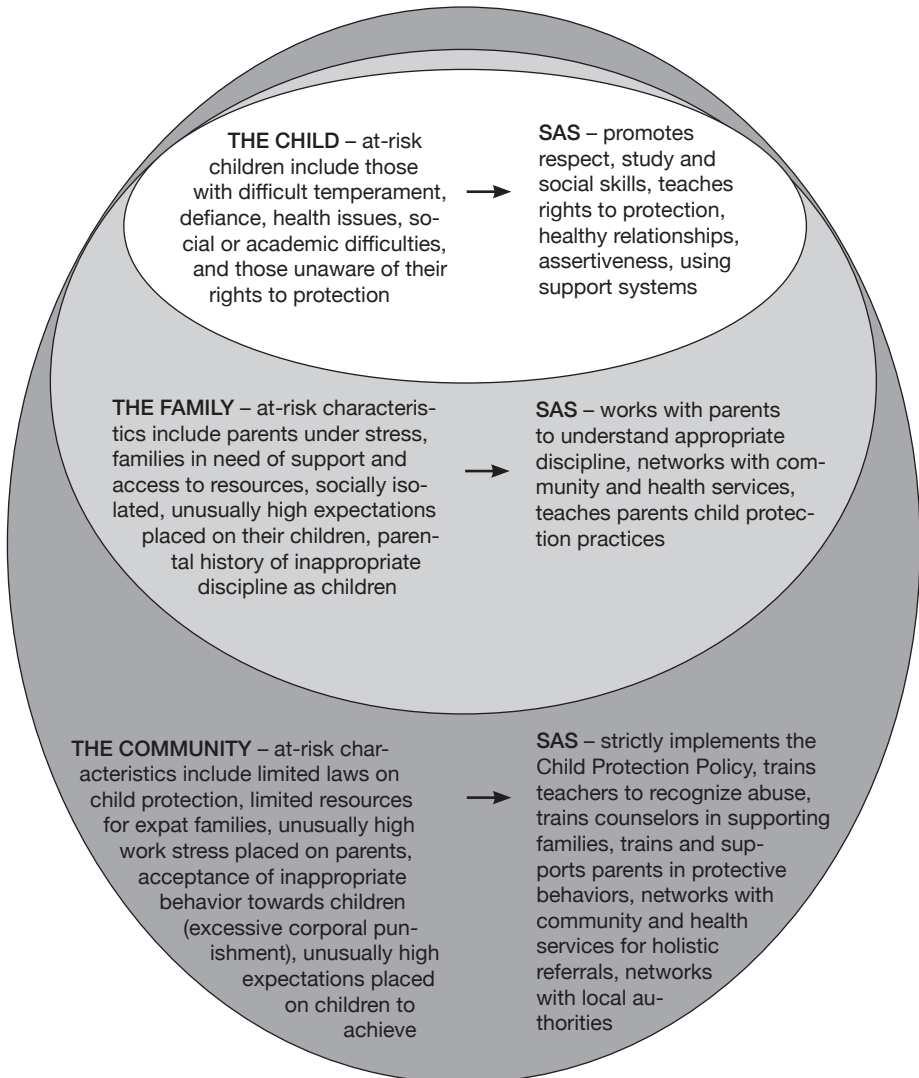
*SAS Board Policy 5.201*



## The SAS child protection policy supports the child, the family and the community.

Child abuse is a multifaceted issue that involves dynamics of the child, the family, and the community. In international communities we can assume that child abuse occurs, that certain factors and characteristics of international communities make expat children vulnerable to abuse, that international schools tend to be isolated from service resources, and that we care about our students and their families.

*AISA Child Protection Handbook for Teachers, Administrators and Board Members  
By The Association of International Schools in Africa, May 2014*



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## What does a Child Protection Policy mean for the SAS community?

SAS is defining a standard for the treatment of all children – that they be treated with respect and dignity at all times.

Children 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 SAS encompass all cultures and international law. When given reasonable cause to believe that these rights are violated, SAS will seek all available resources to restore those rights.

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