

Student Protection Policy

International American School Warsaw (IAS)

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Essential information

Pastoral Care Coordinators

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Table of contents

Definitions used in the Student Protection Policy	4
Introduction - Why we need a Student Protection Policy	4
General definitions of abuse	5
Student safety code of conduct for teachers	7
Procedures to prevent situations of abuse	9
Roles, responsibilities and guidelines for staff	9
What to do if you are concerned that a student is being abused	10
What to do if a student tells you about abuse	10
Suspensions about members of staff	11
Annex 1 – Cause for Concern Report	12
Annex 2 – Incident Report	13
Annex 3 – Staff Self-declaration	14

DEFINITIONS USED IN THE STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

For ease of reading the Policy, we have used the following terms:

Student: This refers to any student enrolled in full time education at IAS

Staff: The term staff applies to all those working in IAS Warsaw, irrespective of the type of contract used. This covers paid staff and contracted temporary personnel engaged in a one off, short- or longer-term basis.

We/IAS: These terms represent the IAS administration and senior leadership team

Homeroom Teachers: Teachers that are assigned to specific classes and serve as the point of contact for students, parents, and teachers for academic and behavior issues related to that class

Pastoral Care Coordinators: These are administrators that oversee the implementation of the Student Protection Policy. They primarily support homeroom teachers in their role. In the case of serious breaches of this policy, students, parents or subject teachers may bypass homeroom teachers and report directly to a Pastoral Care Coordinator.

INTRODUCTION - WHY WE NEED A STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

IAS seeks to provide a school environment where all students are safe, secure, valued, respected, and heard.

IAS recognizes its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all students, by a commitment to procedures that protects them.

For this purpose, IAS has appointed Pastoral Care Coordinators who serve as points of contact for homeroom teachers for support and advice.

STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

We fully recognize our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the students who are entrusted with our care. This responsibility encompasses the following principles:

- The welfare of our students is paramount;
- To protect our students from maltreatment;
- To protect students from abuse regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs;
- All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to with due care;
- The Student Protection Policy applies to all staff and other adults involved with IAS, e.g. external contractors;
- To review the policy and procedures regarding student welfare and safety on an annual basis to see whether they are still relevant and effective.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

- The purpose of this policy is to provide protection for the students enrolled in IAS
- To provide staff with guidance on procedures they should adopt should they suspect that a student may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm.

GENERAL DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Five main categories of abuse are recognized under the Student Protection Policy:

Physical Abuse: This includes but is not limited to, hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a student. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or guardian feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a student.

Emotional Abuse: This is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a student such as to cause severe and long-lasting effects on the student's emotional and psychological development. It may involve conveying to students that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It can also involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on students, or causing students frequently to feel frightened or in danger. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a student although it may occur alone.

Neglect: This is the persistent failure to meet the student's basic physical and/or psychological needs, where the parent, guardian, and/or IAS staff have the means to do so and is likely to result in the serious impairment of the student's development. For example, inadequate supervision, which leaves a student in a dangerous situation where they could be harmed (but only if this can be avoided). Neglect can be particularly difficult to recognize, especially where there are cultural/generational differences and/or language barriers.

Sexual Abuse: This involves forcing or enticing a student to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the student is aware of what is happening or gives consent. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving students in looking at pornography, in making indecent images of students, or encouraging students to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Bullying: This will be some combination of the types of abuse that are detailed above resulting in actual or potential harm to the student's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Although we commonly think of adults as those who abuse, students can also be perpetrators of abuse.

Abuse can be a single, one-off event or ongoing, including the accumulation of a number of seemingly less serious incidents. It can take place in all settings including in the family, school, community, institutions or online (for example, digital and augmented technologies such as smart phones). Abuse online can take many forms including sexual harassment and student abuse images.

When considering specific cases, all decisions regarding what constitutes abuse must be made in consultation with the Pastoral Care Coordinators.

STUDENT SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF

This Code of Conduct aims to protect students, minimize any opportunity for abuse or harm to occur, and encourage student safety in our school. It also provides guidance on how teachers and staff can best support students, by avoiding or better managing difficult situations.

Should the Code of Conduct be breached, the IAS administration may take disciplinary action. The response of the administration will be proportional to the seriousness of the breach and will follow Polish Kuratorium guidelines

The following behaviors refer to all teaching and non-teaching staff who interact with students within our school. All parties involved are required to:

- Set the standard of acceptable behavior at all times and treat all students with respect.
- All digital contact with students shall be made via IAS-approved digital services. This includes Microsoft (MS) Outlook, MS Teams, and Managebac/Seesaw
 - Students may initiate contact via other social media platforms but should be guided back to school approved platforms. In certain delicate situations, exceptions can be made. These exceptional cases should be reported to an admin when they begin.
 - In some cases, teachers may administer social media pages on Facebook, Instagram etc. with permission from the administration. Staff members may interact publicly on these pages in their role as teachers. However, private communication should still occur via IAS-approved digital services.
- Maintain a duty of care towards students.
- Maintain appropriate emotional boundaries in their interactions with students.
 - The administration recognizes the valuable role of teachers as the point of contact to support students' emotional well-being. However, teachers should refrain from sharing details of their private lives unless it contributes to constructive classroom discussion or reflects the nature of the professional relationship
- Protect all students from violence, abuse, bullying, torment, ridicule and neglect, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or beliefs.
- Respect differences at IAS regardless of age, gender, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity, or ability.
- Listen to and respond to views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they, or another student, has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/safety of another student.
- Respect the student's right to personal privacy and communicate honestly about what kinds of information will be shared and with whom.

- Follow the school reporting system for matters that threaten the well-being of any member of IAS: this includes abuse as well as the act/intent to harm oneself or others. All incidents must be documented on managebac.
- Intervene when you see students engaging in inappropriate behavior towards others, regardless of whether the student is from your class or not.
- Avoid initiating physical interaction with students unless providing first aid to a student. Acceptable contact includes:
 - That which falls within conventional greeting and social gestures for a given context, e.g. high fives and team huddles for sporting events, handshakes for ceremonies, etc. Alternatives such as waving, nodding, clapping, and thumbs up should be used for students who do not initiate such interaction.
 - Interactions to get the attention of a distracted student e.g. tapping on the shoulder
 - Interaction for the immediate safety of the student, e.g. putting out arm to prevent a student from walking into traffic, intervening to break up an altercation, or catching a student who is falling. In emergency situations it may not be possible to ask for consent and is not viewed as inappropriate if the failure to act would put the child in physical harm (and do not violate the other terms of appropriate conduct)
 - Interaction for the instruction of a student, e.g. positioning a child's shoulders/arms in physical education or placing their fingers in the correct position to hold a pen. Such interactions should include the child's consent.
 - Interactions which include assisting a student in activities that they are physically/developmentally unable to do themselves, such as helping a student tie their shoes, assistance with buttoning a coat, or providing support for an injured student unable to walk/climb stairs, etc.
 - Interactions of comfort initiated by the student out of emotional duress such as fear or grief. Assuming the staff member does not extend/escalate this gesture, limited and extreme cases of this may be acceptable.
 - It should be noted that any physical interaction which can be constituted as the physical or sexual abuse of the student is immediately categorized as inappropriate conduct on the part of the staff member, regardless of who initiated the interaction.
- Accompany students when they are with a third party, e.g. a coach / bus service.
- Refrain from smoking or drinking alcohol in the presence of students at IAS or when on school trips with students.
- If an allegation of student abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student(s) is (are) safe.
- Record the details of any breach of this code on managebac. Depending on its severity you can also report the breach directly to the appropriate pastoral care coordinator

Teaching and non-teaching staff working in the International American School Warsaw environment **will not:**

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed student abuse.
- Lie, withhold, or in any other way misrepresent what information will be reported to administrators or parents.
- Disclose confidential information about a student that is not related to the immediate issue or share any confidential information with staff members who are not connected to the case.
- Behave in a discriminatory way towards students.
- Engage in conduct towards or in the presence of a student that suggests contempt, ridicule or intolerance because of the student's or another person's race, culture, religion, sex or disability.
- Engage in prejudicial, oppressive, or threatening behavior towards a student.
- Express personal views on cultures, race, or sexuality in the presence of students. Staff should maintain a neutral stance unless the goal is to encourage discussion.
- Use offensive, discriminatory, or abusive language towards or in the presence of a student.
- Communicate privately with students outside of their professional relationship.
 - o Professional relationship includes the role of subject teacher and emotional/academic support as a homeroom teacher, school counsellor, sports coach etc. Teachers should not discuss their private lives unless it is relevant to the professional relationship
- Be in the presence of a student in the school environment when under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. This includes but is not limited to field trips, green school, after-school activities etc.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as offering favoritism.
 - o For example, receiving/offering gifts for special treatment of specific students. In general, gifts should be associated with specific annual occasions and suitable once-off reasons.
- Offer extra paid lessons to students in your classes. This is a conflict of interest and is discouraged. Any exceptions must be requested from the administration.
- Invite students to their private residence under any circumstances
- Have any online contact with a student (including by social media, email, instant messaging, etc.) unless the service is approved by IAS.
 - o Do not accept students as 'friends' or as 'followers' on social media where possible.
- Publish photos or videos of IAS students, that are not for authorized school purposes, or published without the authorization of the student or the student's parents/guardians. Any photos taken on private devices must be uploaded to the IAS onedrive and deleted from private devices. Do not post photos of any IAS students to private social media without written parental permission.

I confirm that I have read and understood the Student Protection Policy and the Student Safety Code of Conduct for Staff and I agree to comply with both the Policy and Code of Conduct.

I understand that a breach of the Policy or Code may result in disciplinary action against me.

Name and Surname: _____

Position: _____

*IAS reviews this Code of Conduct on an annual basis to see whether it is still relevant and effective, and whether additional amendments need to be made.

PROCEDURES TO PREVENT SITUATIONS OF ABUSE

Pastoral Care Coordinators support the implementation of our Student Protection Policy and provide guidance in the event of a student protection allegation or concern. Pastoral Care Coordinators also ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to minimize the risk of harm to student's welfare.

Pastoral Care Coordinators:

- Provide support to homeroom teachers who act as the primary point of contact for students, subject teachers and parents
- Directly supervise the response to serious breaches of the Student Protection Policy
- Establish a positive, caring and safe environment in which students can learn and develop together.
- Ensure that students are aware of whom they can turn to and talk about their concerns.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED THAT A STUDENT IS BEING ABUSED

- If you recognize signs of abuse, keep a written record of any physical or behavioral signs or symptoms. If signs become frequent, follow the steps outlined in the Cause for Concern Report in Annex 1.
- If you have concerns about physical/sexual abuse or if the student appears very frightened of their parents, you must not talk to the parents about it as it could jeopardize the student's safety.
- When completing the Cause for Concern Report (Annex 1):
 - Distinguish between fact and opinion
 - Describe what happened in detail
- If you believe that a student is in immediate physical danger, share the information with your Pastoral Care Coordinator or any available administrator

WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT TELLS YOU ABOUT ABUSE

- Stay calm and reassuring. Respond with tact and sensitivity.
- Do not promise confidentiality, but do discuss with the student who and what you need to tell.
- Say that you will do your best to protect and support the student.
- Listen, possibly confirm details but do not press for information or ask leading questions.
- Make brief notes using the student's own words. Do not interpret what has been said.
- Say that you are glad that the student told you.
- Ensure the safety of the student and that they are away from the alleged abuser.
- Follow procedures and report allegations to homeroom teachers via managebac. Depending on the severity of the allegations, you may also email your report directly to your Pastoral Care Coordinator.
- Complete an Incident Report (Annex 2)

SUSPICIONS ABOUT MEMBERS OF STAFF

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff is dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the student and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

What Is meant by an allegation against a member of staff

You should be concerned if you believe that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a student, or may have harmed a student.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a student.
- Behaved towards a student or students in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with students.

Where there is reason to suspect that the individual of concern may be unsuitable to work with students, the matter must be reported directly to your Pastoral Care Coordinator, who will make arrangements to coordinate the response. Once it is clear that the individual should be referred, this should occur without delay, so that an agreement can be made about immediate action and what information can and cannot be shared.

Action by all staff

If you are concerned that a member of staff may have abused a student you must:

- Ensure that the student is safe.
- Make a written note of the concerns ensuring names and times are clearly recorded.
- Do not speak to the student, or the member of staff in respect of the allegation.
- Talk immediately to your Pastoral Care Coordinator.

In deciding whether to take immediate action in respect of the member of staff against whom the allegation was made, it will be necessary to balance any ongoing risks to students, against the risks of alerting the member of staff in such a way that they may silence students, or destroy evidence.

Annex 1

Cause for Concern Report

The Cause for Concern Report may be completed via the behavior tab on a student's Managebac profile and (if necessary) it may also be an email sent directly to your Pastoral Care Coordinator. Below are the details to be included for a complete submission. Please note that submissions via Managebac are visible to all administrators but you must inform them as only the assigned homeroom teacher receives the notification. Depending on the nature of the concern, you may choose whether the details will be visible to parents or not. The aim of completing the Cause for Concern Report is to ensure that staff are aware of any issue of concern at the earliest possible stage. It is better to report an issue of concern early. Postponing and hoping for an improvement may delay effective intervention.

A Cause for Concern Report should be completed by a member of staff in cases of:

- Cause for concern about the student's well being

The student shows signs of ill health, he/she cannot cope with stressful situations, etc.

- Lack of Progress

A student is considered to be way behind or is failing to meet the required standards of the subject. This may happen during a student progress meeting or independent of it. Details current status and changes to be implemented should be recorded formally for parents and admin

- Student shows unusual behavior

For example: is late for school, has difficulties in maintaining the relationship with other students and staff, has uncommon mood swings, etc.

The form should be completed with the student present or based on written notes from a meeting with the student.

Details to be included on Managebac and/or email

1. Role of initiator (e.g. homeroom teacher, subject teacher)
2. Nature of concern
3. Evidence of concern
4. Agreed action/targets
5. Date for review (if necessary)
6. Conclusion of process (to be completed at time of review)

Annex 2

Incident Report

The Incident Report may be completed via the behavior tab on a student's Managebac profile, and (if necessary) it may be an email sent directly to your Pastoral Care Coordinator. Below are the details to be included for a complete submission. Please note that submissions via Managebac are visible to all administrators but you must inform them as only the assigned homeroom teacher receives the notification. Depending on the nature of the incident, you may choose whether the details will be visible to parents or not.

The aim of completing the Incident Report is to formalize the reporting of all incidents in a central location and early.

Details to be included:

1. Staff member reporting the incident
2. Date and time of incident
3. Details of the incident
4. Ensure the following factual information is provided – who, what, when and where. Include names of witnesses, if relevant, and
5. State immediate actions taken if applicable

Pastoral Care Coordinator Actions

The homeroom teacher is the primary point of contact in the majority of cases. Teachers may, at their discretion contact their Pastoral Care Coordinator directly but this should happen sparingly and only for urgent and/or serious breaches of the Student Protection Policy. The Homeroom teacher/Pastoral Care Coordinator must record the response to the incident and outcomes on Managebac. If the report is initiated via email or in-person, the response and outcomes should eventually be recorded on Managebac. Depending on the severity of the incident, this may be delegated to the Homeroom teacher.

1. Response to the incident

Note actions taken, including names of anyone to whom the information was passed.

2. Investigation

Confirm details of incident with witnesses and/or school cameras. Assess whether it is a once-off incident or if there is evidence of ongoing issues.

3. Outcomes

Record outcomes of the actions taken.