CHILD PROTECTION

This policy outlines the responsibility of MSA-CESS to ensure that its staff, practices and programs do not jeopardize the safety of children. It is based on Middle States Association's belief in the following:

- All children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse.
- Everyone has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- All schools have a duty of care to children enrolled in the school and those who are affected by the operations of the school.
- All actions on child protection are taken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

Section 1: Staff and Volunteers

All MSA-CESS employees who may visit schools or interact with children in the course of their job responsibilities must go through a standardized recruitment process including application, interview, reference check, and child abuse and criminal background checks. The same may be requested of volunteers and independent contractors at the discretion of MSA-CESS. All staff and volunteers shall provide truthful and complete information during the screening process. Any employee or volunteer who provides incorrect information during the screening process may be subject to disciplinary action including termination.

Section 2: Working with Children in Professional Settings

Staff who have incidental contact with children in their work will abide by institutional or MSA-CESS child protection policy, whichever is more restrictive. The taking of photographs is by consent only, and images should be cleared by an institution representative to ensure no children are pictured without their consent. One on one contact with children must be avoided and any contact with children should be observable and interruptible. Under no circumstances should staff or volunteers contact children under 18 or share their personal contact details with children encountered during the course of their work. If this occurs incidentally it must be reported to the employee's supervisor. MSA-CESS representatives should refrain from touch or actions not required by your professional services, that appears inappropriate to a reasonable person and lacks consent from the child. It is understood that staff and volunteers will never seek contact with, personal information about, or correspond with a child as part of their work role unless this is approved as integral to their work and safeguards are in place.

Section 3: Failure to Comply/Disciplinary Action

Non-compliance with the Policy shall be taken seriously. Any MSA-CESS employee or volunteer who fails to comply with the Policy shall be subject to disciplinary action/ formal reprimand to be noted in the personnel record. Information about substantiated child protection concerns will be conveyed in references. In the case of any violation of children's rights by an employee, intern, volunteer, or independent contractor, the case shall be referred to the designated authority and/or social services for further investigation.