ABC Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding Children's wellbeing in schools has been a major focus of the last few years following a series of high profile cases of abuse and general concern over children's wellbeing. An International Task Force on Child Protection was set up in 2014 including Jane Larsson from CIS and as a result this statement was produced as a commitment for all of us involved in working with young people. The ABC recognises and respects this statement as a guide for its approach to safeguarding children.

Statement of Commitment to Child Protection for Schools

The principles have been identified by the ITFCP School Evaluation Committee as being the minimum requirement of schools to provide safeguarding and child protection for its students:

- All children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse.
- Everybody 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 with the best interests of the child, which are paramount.
- The school shall have in place formal learning programmes throughout the school experience related to child protection which cover areas such as bullying, personal safety, physical abuse, manipulation, grooming, online safety, healthy sexual behaviour, neglect and negligent behaviour, self-harm, staying safe away from home, commercial exploitation and disclosing abuse. These programmes should be delivered by members of faculty or external providers who are trained in these areas.

The United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) clearly indicates the right of all child to grow up in a safe and secure environment. The World Health Organisation clearly highlights the prevalence and dangers of child abuse in all children (anyone under the age of 18) in this WHO child abuse fact sheet .

In line with the UNCRC, El Salvadorian law and the WHO the ABC recognises the importance of providing and maintaining safe educational and social environments where children learn, develop and flourish. Staff are expected to promote a positive learning environment with positive relationships as laid out in the ABC document Promoting Positive Relationships. All ABC staff are trained to notice and respond to concerns in order to protect each individual student. All members of the school community are aware of, and accept their responsibilities, in all aspects relating to safeguarding and the importance of prioritising the wellbeing of each

student. Safeguarding is part of the expected culture of the ABC community and is considered to be a responsibility of all members of the community.

This policy includes the school's safeguarding and child protection policies, associated protocols and expectations of behaviour for all members of the ABC community. It explains how ABC staff and parents are expected to identify and respond to instances where children are mistreated, neglected or abused by adults in school, parents or carers at home or by other students. These abuses may be physical, emotional or based on attitudes of prejudice. This policy and the protocols are shared with the community and are subject to annual review.

The school understands that for some staff this policy and related training sessions may trigger personal discomfort or an emotional response. If any member of staff would like personal support they should contact a Safeguarding Officer, in confidence, who will make the appropriate arrangements.

All ABC staff receive appropriate child protection training which is updated annually. Staff also received an updated training with Robin Watts from the UK in February 2017 with updated training in February 2018. New staff receive basic training as part of their induction. Level Two trained Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) are Mathew Burdett (Secondary), Ana Mena and Marianne Taylor (Primary) who should be the first point of contact at any time with any safeguarding concern; Stephen Lang (Director) and Carmen Chavez(DH Student Wellbeing Seocndary) who is the Lead Safeguarding Officer, and can also be contacted at any time. Any issues relating to staff conduct and safeguarding should be reported to Stephen Lang. The Board of Governors has a specific member who oversees the safeguarding work of the school at the Board level. It is currently Patricia Lima who can be contacted via Elizabeth Rivas if necessary.

All Designated Safeguarding Officers will share information regarding concerns with each other and with Lead Safeguarding Officers at regular meetings held for this purpose. In an emergency situation for example where a child mentions suicide, or their is an apparent immediate threat to a child, the school authorities must be alerted and the child should not be allowed go home without informing a trusted family member and ensuring the child is delivered directly to them. The LSU team will help ensure appropriate protocols are followed in such emergency situations..

According to the ITFCP all aduluts working with children need to be trained to understand:

- SHARED RESPONSIBILITY - understand the collective and shared responsibility of the community;
- CHILD PROTECTION TEAM - know the school's child protection team to include their roles and responsibilities;
- POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND REPORTING - understand the school's child protection policies and procedures and each members' requirement for reporting;
- DEFINITIONS AND SIGNS - identify all types and signs of child abuse and neglect;
- NATURE OF STUDENT COMMUNITY - have an understanding of the nature of local and expatriate children and their specific areas of vulnerability;
- CURRICULUM - know the child protection education programmes at the school.

The heart of child protection lies in empowering children to reject inappropriate advances, refuse unwanted touches as well as communicate with their carer or other adults about incidents or concerns.

The ABC Safeguarding umbrella includes the following:

- A pastoral care curriculum and commitment to protecting and promoting the wellbeing of ALL ABC students at all times.
- Outside Normal School Hours Protection
- Staff Child Protection Code of Conduct
- Child Protection procedures as described in this Safeguarding Policy document
- A commitment to being a listening school which respects the student voice, parent and staff opinions and seeks to ensure a positive learning environment.
- A values based curriculum that builds healthy, strong relationships where students thrive.
- A clear Anti Bullying Policy and preventative programme for each of the main sections of the school Secondary and Primary
- Guidelines for Safe Student Parties for the ABC Community
- Internet Protection Expectations for ABC Community
- Protocol to support "at risk" students
- Educational Trips Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Statement
- Procedures and Expectations for Coaches, Visitors, Parents working with Students
- Annual INSET training on Safeguarding for Staff (currently provided by EduCare).
- A clear Charter for Parents to help them play their role in partnership with the school
- Safer Recruitment Policy and Induction of new staff
- Healthy Eating guidelines - the school seeks to promote healthy eating with advice to children and parents. There is a connection to this KidsHealth site on our website and in advice provided to children while studying and parents through Parent Partnership Meetings

ABC Child Protection Policy

The school has four Designated Safeguarding Officers with Level two training and trained Lead Safeguarding officers who are also members of the School Management Team. These members of staff have the appropriate authority and the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters based on international (CIS), local and UK best practice, and also lead any action taken to safeguard students. All of these roles have clear job descriptions.

The school maintains an up to date culture of safer recruitment with recruitment procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children including visiting speakers or temporary teachers at school. The school acts reasonably in making decisions about the suitability of the prospective employees based on checks and evidence including: current position checks, criminal record

checks (National country and UK ICC checks or equivalent), barred list and prohibition checks together with professional references and interview information.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- preventing harm
- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- taking action which enables all children to thrive and have the best outcomes in all areas of their life inside and outside school.

Where a child is suffering significant harm, or significant harm seems likely, action will be initiated by the school to protect that child. In addition action will be taken to promote the welfare of a child identified as being in need of additional support. (Even if they are not currently suffering harm or are not at immediate risk.) e.g. concerns may be raised when signs of depression, anxiety or extreme frustration become apparent.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. ABC Staff are routinely in a position to identify potential concerns early and report those concerns clearly to a Safeguarding Officer. The UK Teacher Standards 2012 and the Ley Lepina in El Salvador state that teachers, including headteachers, and all adults with responsibility, including board members and administration staff should be responsible for safeguarding children's wellbeing as part of their professional duties. ABC Staff members should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned and understand their obligation to report any incidents or concerns to a Safeguarding Officer.

All ABC Staff receive annual training to help them fulfill their safeguarding responsibilities. The scope of the training depends on the roles. Training for staff who work with children on a daily basis (including Office staff) includes recognising signs of abuse or neglect in children as well as completing specific Educare modules. Training for all staff includes awareness of reporting procedures for different situations in line with the school's values and mission.

When concerned about the welfare of a child, all staff members are trained to act in the best interests of the child and report their concerns to a Safeguarding Officer. ABC Staff are aware that there are recent cases in schools around the world where school staff and other professionals have missed obvious signs of child abuse because of an emotional tendency to assume all is well, to rationalise signs of abuse and complacency towards the possibility of abuse taking place in our community. Hence, ABC staff are trained to react to any signs of possible mistreatment, neglect or abuse whoever the potential, suspected perpetrator. In the event of an ABC member of staff raising a concern about another member of staff this will be treated confidentially and sensitively as will the referral of a concern from any member of the school community including students and parents. The school will protect sources of information whenever possible.

To reiterate, research and serious case reviews from around the world have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes: failing to act and to refer the early signs of abuse and neglect, poor record keeping, failing to listen to the views of the child, failing to re-assess

concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information too slowly and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

Staff are expected to abide by and sign the Child Protection Staff Code of Conduct and General Code of Conduct on this link

Procedure for Staff Reporting Concerns through the ABC Student Safeguarding Report Sheet

If a student or another member of the community approaches a member of staff or starts talking about a personal issue indicating neglect or abuse the member of staff should:

- Be welcoming even if the time is not convenient for you
- Try to have the conversation in a quiet place where your conversation will not be interrupted.
- Stay calm and listen carefully. Do not express shock, anger, distaste or other negative emotions but try to reassure them and empathise.
- Make accurate notes using the individual's own words and your responses
- Allow the child to tell you at their own pace. Do not ask leading questions but you may ask for clarification. Do not ask them for names or make comments about the possible abuser.
- Communicate in a way that is appropriate for their age and their ability to understand your language
- Reassure them. Tell them you are sorry this has happened and that you will do all you can to help them. If emergency help is required do not delay getting it. Explain you will be talking to someone who will be able to help them. Reassure them again!
- Do not investigate or promise confidentiality but reassure them they will be supported and that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Print off and fill in a hard copy ABC Safeguarding Report Sheet by hand at the end of the conversation and take it to a Safeguarding Officer as a matter of urgency

If a member of staff sees an incident or observes evidence of behaviour or changes in behaviour in a child which may indicate a cause for concern, they should fill in the ABC Safeguarding Report Sheet with their concerns and any appropriate evidence.

In any situation where a referral has been made to a Safeguarding Officer, members of staff should continue to monitor the child in their classroom to look for any signs that the situation may be deteriorating and report accordingly. They will not, however, intervene directly. The Safeguarding Officers will try to provide feedback to the report if possible but remember, the priority is to protect the wellbeing of the child.

The completed ABC Safeguarding Report Sheet will be kept on a central confidential file by the Safeguarding Officer and will be shared within the Safeguarding team.

Any concerns regarding an adult on campus, a parent at home or a fellow member of staff must be made directly to a Lead Safeguarding Officer and preferably the Director. You are passing on information and not making an allegation. The information will be investigated. The school is committed to whistleblowers protection.

Responsibilities of Safeguarding Officers

ABC Safeguarding Team:
Primary - Ana Gloria Mena, Marianne Taylor
Secondary - Carmen Chávez (Lead), Matthew Burdett
Director - Stephen Lang

1. To ensure the wellbeing of the student is paramount, including assessing the level of risk to the individual.
2. Any reported instances will be discussed with the appropriate parties and be followed up. The Safeguarding Officer will consider all parties involved in the incident or concern reported and discuss possible responses only as widely as necessary,
3. Any reports to outside agencies including CONNA will only be done after consultation with the Director.
4. The Safeguarding team will retain confidentiality as far as possible
5. Staff who reported the incident will receive some feedback within 72 hours from the Safeguarding Officer they reported to but this feedback may only be to continue monitoring and reporting any further instances or concerns.
6. To ensure they are aware of any issues with respect to the Ley Lepina
7. The Safeguarding Officer will not act in isolation and all proposed actions will be discussed with at least one other member of the safeguarding team.

More information can be seen on the Safeguarding Team job description link here

Types of abuse and neglect

Child abuse is any form of maltreatment of a child from pregnancy through to the age of 18, including neglect. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by directly inflicting harm, by failing to act to prevent harm or by not providing expected support or protection. The child may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. More than one form of abuse or neglect may take place and the different forms can be interlinked. When considering the possibility of abuse it is important to evaluate what you know about child development and then consider both the physical and behavioural signs that are giving you cause for concern.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Children regularly collect bumps and bruises in the course of their everyday play or social interaction, but it does not mean they are being abused. All injuries need to be considered in the light of the age of the child, their stage of development, their social background, where injuries are on their body and any explanation given.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in any type of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone. It may involve rejecting or ignoring a child completely; using degrading language or behaviour towards them; responding to their attempts to interact with emotional detachment; making fun of them; threatening them or encouraging them to develop behaviours that are self destructive; preventing the child from interacting socially with other children; a child seeing or hearing the ill treatment or bullying (including cyber bullying) pf another; causing children to feel frightened or in danger; the exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.. This may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or producing pornography, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet). Sexual abuse may include physical contact including assault by penetration, non penetrative acts such as kissing, rubbing and touching. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child sexual exploitation is illegal activity by people who have power over children and young people and use it to sexully abuse them. This can include seemingly consensual relationships or sexual activity in exchange for attention, a place to stay, gift, money, cigarettes or illegal substances. Behavioural signs of child sexual exploitation include: absence from school; possessing unexplained gifts; having an older boyfriend or girlfriend; mood swings; alcohol and drug misuse; inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic emotional, physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer being unresponsive and failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter; protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger (e.g. insecure storage of weapons); ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment; respond to a child's basic emotional needs.

Identifying Potential Abuse or Neglect

ABC staff have been trained to recognise symptoms of abuse or neglect and will be sensitive to changing moods and emotional or physical situations of children in their classrooms. They will report any concerns to the relevant Safeguarding Officer who will consult with the relevant Head of Year, Grade Leader, Deputy Head or member of LSU as required. No reports will go uninvestigated. The school and school leaders will take the child's wishes or feelings into account whenever possible, when determining what action to take and what services to provide to protect individual children through ensuring there are systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback. The school will ensure that staff do not agree confidentiality and always act in the interests of the child.

Safer Recruitment

The School recognises the vital role it plays in appointing staff who are suited to work with young people and have a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities to provide a safe and stimulating learning environment and ensuring that all staff, including new staff are not a threat to the wellbeing of our students. Job applicant will be asked relevant questions to establish whether they have the physical, emotional and mental capacity for the specific role they have applied for

When appointing new staff the school will:

• verify a candidate's identity and character from personal documentation and background checks with current employers including comprehensive, written references.

• obtain a certificate for an enhanced ICC style criminal record check with a barred list information or equivalent.

• verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities

• require all new staff to undertake an induction programme which covers their role and safeguarding responsibilities and expectations. This will be followed by a two week observation period to ensure their classroom's are safe places for students as part of their probationary period.

• sign a code of conduct with regard to child protection

• expect staff to report concerns safe in the knowledge the school will protect whistleblower confidentiality and job security.