



Special Educational Needs Policy

Zhuhai International School

2017-18

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I. OUR COMMITMENT

ZIS is committed to the prevention of abuse and to the well-being of members, children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families.

ZIS is committed to acting at all times in the best interest of the children, young people and vulnerable adults to whom it provides a service.

ZIS is committed to dealing with abuse, suspected abuse or disclosure of abuse in a timely fashion.

ZIS recognises that the family's primary role in caring and protecting the child should be valued and maintained. However the child's safety and wellbeing should have priority.

ZIS acknowledges that in cases of suspected child abuse, support for families is important.

ZIS agrees that working in accordance with this policy requires staff to be trained and supported.

ZIS will ensure any disclosures about alleged abuse are acknowledged and appropriate action taken to ensure the safety of children who make disclosures.

ZIS is committed to complying with all relevant legislation.

II. AIMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Objective:

The safety of the child is our prime consideration at all times.

Related Documents:

The child protection policy is to be used in conjunction with the following existing policies:

- Learning Services Policy

Scope:

This policy applies to all students registered at ZIS, and to those with whom personnel come into contact in the course of their work with our school.

It applies to staff, volunteers and management of ZIS.

It also applies to any contracted personnel providing support services to families and members, and to those providing support services to staff.

Definitions:

A child is normally defined as anyone under the age of 18, however this definition must extend to include any young person under our care, regardless of age.

'Staff' is defined as those who are employed directly by or volunteer for ZIS as well as staff and volunteers of partner organisations whilst they are working with children and young people in the care or supervision of ZIS.

Responsibilities:

The person who holds the responsibility for child protection, and therefore this policy, within ZIS is the Head of School. The Head of School and the other divisional Heads may act as the Designated Person for Child Protection.

Review:

The child protection policy will be reviewed annually.

III. DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

Identification of Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse is the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person. The definitions set out below provide some indicators of abuse though these should not be seen as an exhaustive list or as a check list.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes the seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative, for example, rape, kissing, touching, masturbation) as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours. Staff should be aware of their 'duty of care' which precludes developing a sexual relationship with or grooming of a child. A sexual relationship between an adult and a child will always be wrong, unequal and unacceptable.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack: of action, emotion or basic needs.

IV. CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Summary:

Any issues of suspected child abuse will be taken seriously and handled in an appropriate manner that ensures the child's safety.

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that the procedure for reporting child abuse is effective and timely. If a member of staff has a child protection concern then they must inform the Head of School as soon as possible.

Procedures for Responding and Reporting Child Abuse:

Follow these steps when a case of abuse is reported.

1. Respond

Respond to the concern. Reassure the person who has given you the information. Or, when abuse is suspected, respond to these concerns.

2. Record

Record all information. Remember to distinguish between fact and opinion.

3. Consult

Consult with the Head of School (or, in case of absence, another Head) along with this policy.

4. Report

Reporting and follow-up will be carried out by the Head of School.

Should there be dissatisfaction with how the Head of School (or, in case of absence, another Head) follows policy, staff are to raise this with the Senior Leadership Team.

When there is an allegation brought forward against someone closely associated with a member of staff, these procedures should be followed.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

ZIS recognises that all staff must act within the legal requirements set by the Peoples Republic of China. ZIS will respect the requirements related to the sharing of information needed to protect children and enable other people to carry out their legitimate functions. In general staff will not share information if they believe that by doing so this will endanger the child.

ZIS encourages the sharing of information when appropriate steps have been taken.

Information sharing will be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children.

When a staff member is contacted for information that staff member must first refer to their Head for clearance before providing the information.

Information will be only be given after the staff member has identified the person making the request, the actual purpose of the request, what use the information will be put to, and who will see the information.

A child's records will be kept as factual as possible, and nothing will be recorded as fact without evidence to back it up.

V. MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Any allegation that a member of staff has behaved in an inappropriate or unsafe way will be taken seriously and handled in an appropriate manner that ensures the child's safety.

ZIS will respond to suspicions and allegations of child abuse by a member of staff in a manner which best ensures children's or young persons' immediate and long-term safety and will treat suspicions or allegations against a staff member with the same seriousness as suspicions or allegations made against any other person.

ZIS will not act alone, and will refer all suspected situations of child abuse to local authorities. The safety of the child will be the primary consideration, and no person in this organisation will collude to protect an adult or an organisation.

Allegations will be treated in such a way that the rights of adults and the stress upon the staff member are also taken into consideration.

When abuse is suspected or an allegation made against a staff member, the first consideration will be to ensure the safety of child.

When abuse is suspected, staff will follow the process for Responding to Suspected Child Abuse included in this policy.

When there are suspicions of abuse by a staff member, both staff and children's rights are to be attended to. This means that the safety of the child is of first concern, and that the staff member must have access to legal and professional advice.

The person managing the child abuse issue will not be the same person as that managing the employment issue. The Head of School must manage the employment issue, therefore another Head must manage the child abuse issue.

The suspected staff member (or volunteer) will be prevented from having further unsupervised access to children during any investigation and will be informed fully of their rights.

Staff will declare to a senior person any situation where there could be a conflict of interest, and provision made on a case-by-case basis about who will handle the process.

The Designated Person for Child Protection must immediately ensure that the suspected individual does not have any contact with the child making the allegation. A risk assessment must be undertaken to determine what level of access, if any, that person should have, to other children.

If the police decide to undertake a criminal investigation then the member of staff may be suspended, without prejudice, as a precautionary measure. It is important that no internal investigation is undertaken, and no evidence gathered that might prejudice the criminal investigation.

If ZIS is aware that a member of staff it has placed on precautionary suspension also works with children for another organisation, either as an employee or a volunteer, it should ensure that the other organisation is informed of the suspension and the subsequent outcome.

If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then a disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken if there is "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse may have occurred. The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour of poor practice by a member of staff which needs to be considered under internal disciplinary procedures.

Role and Responsibilities of Staff

This section of the child protection policy outlines the expectations of staff, and the procedures followed by ZIS to ensure that all members of staff are clear of their role and responsibility to keep children safe. This includes the safe recruitment and training of staff.

Safe Recruitment of Staff

ZIS ensures that all staff working with children, both paid and voluntary, have been appropriately vetted and screened.

“Screening” means verifying applicant’s identity, gathering information about them through application forms, interviews and reference checks, and finally checking what you know through the use of external checks like the Police vetting service.

“Vetting” means the formal process of obtaining checks from another agency, e.g. the Police vetting service, criminal record checks. This is a necessary part of the application for a work visa in China.

VI. SAFE WORKING PRACTICES

Summary:

In all organisations there is a need for high standards of staff behaviour in order to protect children from abuse and at-risk situations, and to protect staff from unwarranted suspicion.

This policy should be consulted along with “Safe Working Practices - Guidance” located in Appendix 1.

ZIS believes that as far as possible, staff working with children and families should keep their personal and professional lives separate, and does not encourage close personal relationships or care-taking activities outside the work environment.

All members of staff, whether paid or voluntary, are expected to follow guidelines that clarify appropriate behaviour. ZIS will review these regularly with staff to ensure that the guidelines meet the needs arising from ever-changing environments and situations.

All staff are to have a clear understanding of, and to agree to the *Ethical Standards for the Teachers of ZIS* (located in Appendix 2).

Staff are to inform their senior manager of any existing relationships with members, students, clients or their families which could constitute a conflict of interest, or place the staff member in a position of compromise.

Staff are to inform their senior manager of any potential situations of possible compromise or conflict of interest that arise as part of their work.

No staff member is to enter into any relationship with a child, young person or family, which could mean that any other section of this policy, is compromised.

APPENDIX 1

SAFE WORKING PRACTICES - GUIDANCE

Summary:

This section sets out to provide clear guidance on safe ways of working. These situations are general and varied, and do not cover every eventuality.

All adults who work with children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare. No guidance can provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not appropriate behaviour for adults in all circumstances. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge. Such judgements should always be recorded and shared with a member of the senior management team and with the parent or carer. In undertaking these actions individuals will be seen to be acting reasonably.

A. RESPONSIBILITY OF STAFF

Power and Positions of Trust

A relationship between an adult and a child or young person is not a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Adults therefore have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

Confidentiality

Adults may have access to confidential information about children in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. This may be highly sensitive and private information. Care and consideration must be taken with the sharing of information. It is important that if a child is at risk of, or suffering, abuse then that information is passed to the appropriate person to take action.

Sharing Concerns and Reporting Incidents

As adults, we acknowledge our individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

As individuals we must be aware of ZIS' process for reporting incidents, including concerns that staff may have about colleagues or other professionals. Staff are to self-report any situations that occurred that in hindsight might be viewed as inappropriate.

It is essential that accurate and comprehensive records are maintained wherever concerns are raised about the conduct or actions of adults working with or on behalf of children.

B. COMMUNICATION INCLUDING THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

All interactions with children and young people need to be carefully considered and planned for as to how these may occur in a way that reduces potential risk to children. As adults, we should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their communication with children, and expectations around boundaries need to be firmly established to provide guidance to adults. These situations include communicating with children at work, at home, in public settings and through the use of mobile technology and social media. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.

Children are at increased risk of sexual abuse and exploitation where adults have the opportunity to gain access to children and young people in a setting that is not open to casual observation by other adults. As adults we should also be circumspect in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.

Photography & Video Images

Working with children may involve the taking or recording of images. Informed written consent from parents or carers and agreement, where possible, from the child or young person, should always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose.

One to One Situations

It is not realistic to state that one to one situations should never take place. ZIS recognizes that one to one situations have the potential to make child/young person more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Adults working in one to one settings with children may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. When one to one situations are unavoidable or planned, reasonable and sensible precautions must be taken. Reasonable precautions include meeting in with an open door and meeting in a highly visible space.

C. PHYSICAL INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

When physical contact is made with a child this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

Children and Young People in Distress

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance and this may involve physical contact. Young children, in particular, may need

immediate physical comfort, for example after a fall, separation from parent etc. Adults should use their professional judgement to comfort or reassure a child in an age-appropriate way whilst maintaining clear professional boundaries.

Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention

There are circumstances in which adults working with children displaying extreme behaviours can legitimately intervene by using either non-restrictive or restrictive physical interventions.

The use of physical intervention should, wherever possible, be avoided. It should only be used to manage a child or young person's behaviour if it is necessary to prevent personal injury to the child, other children or an adult, to prevent serious damage to property or in what would reasonably be regarded as exceptional circumstances. When physical intervention is used it should be undertaken in such a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned.

The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled and the nature of the harm they may cause. The minimum necessary force should be used and the techniques deployed in line with recommended policy and practice.

Other activities that require physical contact

Some adults who work in certain settings, for example sports, drama or outdoor activities or teach specific subjects such as PE or music, will have to initiate some physical contact with children, for example to demonstrate technique in the use of a particular piece of equipment, adjust posture, or perhaps to support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury. Such activities should be carried out in accordance with professional judgment, training, and best practice.

Sexual contact

All adults are expected to clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with children. Intimate or sexual relationships between children/young people and the adults who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is also unacceptable.

Any sexual activity between an adult and the child or young person with whom they work may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action. There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Adults should be aware that consistently conferring inappropriate special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process and as such will give rise to concerns about their behaviour.

D. INTIMATE CARE

Some job responsibilities necessitate intimate physical contact with children on a regular basis, for example assisting young children with toileting, providing intimate care for children with disabilities or in the provision of medical care. The nature, circumstances and context of such contact must comply with professional codes of practice or guidance and/or be part of a formally agreed plan, which is regularly reviewed. The additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical or learning disability should be taken into account and be recorded as part of an agreed care plan. The emotional responses of any child to intimate care should be carefully and sensitively observed, and where necessary, any concerns passed to senior managers and parents/carers.

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of a physical or intimate nature is required and depending on their abilities, age and maturity should be encouraged to act as independently as possible.

The views of the child should be actively sought, wherever possible, when drawing up and reviewing formal arrangements.

As with all individual arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, parents/carers and your organisation must be negotiated and recorded.

Personal care

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, changing clothes, bathing or undertaking any form of personal care. There are occasions where there will be a need for an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people and/or satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment. Adults need to be vigilant about their own behaviour, ensure they follow agreed guidelines and be mindful of the needs of the children with whom they work.

First Aid and the administration of medication

Some children may need medication to be administered while in the care of your organisation. In circumstances where children need medication regularly a health care plan is maintained by the nurse to ensure the safety and protection of children and staff. With the permission of parents, children should be encouraged to self-administer medication or treatment including, for example any ointment, sun cream or use of inhalers.

When administering first aid, wherever possible, staff should ensure that another adult is present, or aware of the action being taken. Parents should always be informed when first aid has been administered.

E. WORKING WITH CHILDREN OFF-SITE

There may be occasions when work with children takes places outside of the normal work environment. This can be due to trips, camps, home visits or any number of reasons. Special care must be taken to ensure that safe practices are maintained.

The Use of Personal Space:

No child or young person should be in or invited into, the home or vehicle of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents/ carers and a senior manager.

It is not appropriate for any organisation/service to expect or request that private living space be used for work with children.

Day Trips, After Hours Activities and Overnight Camp

Adults are expected to take particular care when supervising children on trips and outings, where the setting is less formal than the usual workplace. Adults remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Children, young people, adults and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip. In all circumstances, those organising trips and outings must pay careful attention to ensuring safe staff/child ratios and to the gender mix of staff especially on overnight stays.

APPENDIX 2

Ethical Standards for the Teachers of ZIS

INTRODUCTION

The *Ethical Standards for the Teachers of ZIS* represent a vision of professional practice. At the heart of a strong and effective teaching profession is a commitment to students and their learning.

The teachers of ZIS, in their position of trust, demonstrate responsibility in their relationships with students, parents, guardians, colleagues, educational partners, other professionals, the environment and the public.

THE PURPOSES OF THESE ETHICAL STANDARDS ARE:

- to inspire teachers to reflect and uphold the honour and dignity of the teaching profession
- to identify the ethical responsibilities and commitments in the teaching profession
- to guide ethical decisions and actions in the teaching profession
- to promote public trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

THE ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION ARE:

Care

The ethical standard of *Care* includes compassion, acceptance, interest and insight for developing students' potential. Teachers at ZIS express their commitment to students' well-being and learning through positive influence, professional judgment and empathy in practice.

Respect

Intrinsic to the ethical standard of *Respect* are trust and fair-mindedness. Teachers at ZIS honour human dignity, emotional wellness and cognitive development. In their professional practice, they model respect for spiritual and cultural values, social justice, confidentiality, freedom, democracy and the environment.

Trust

The ethical standard of *Trust* embodies fairness, openness and honesty. Teachers at ZIS work to ensure that relationships with students, colleagues, parents, guardians and the public are based on trust.

Integrity

Honesty, reliability and moral action are embodied in the ethical standard of *Integrity*. Continual reflection assists the teachers at ZIS in exercising integrity in their professional commitments and responsibilities.

Modeled after the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* of the Ontario College of Teachers (Canada).

<http://www.oct.ca/public/professional-standards/ethical-standards>