

**YANGON ACADEMY
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

**Child Protection:
Policies & Procedures Handbook**

2023 - 2024

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SECTION 1: Introduction of Policy

Child Protection Policy Statement

Yangon Academy International School fully understands that its first commitment in realizing its School Purpose is to ensure the protection and well-being of all its students. With this responsibility as the foundation of our work with students, the child protection policies and procedures outlined in this Handbook should be viewed as just one element in the School fulfilling its commitment to protecting children from abuse and neglect. This Handbook is informed and inspired by the best policy and practices as recommended by the *International Task Force on the Protection of Children* and by the rights of children as declared by the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, of which Myanmar is a signatory.

The child protection policies and procedures, as expressed within this Handbook, have been, and will be, annually reviewed, approved, and adopted by the School's Board of Directors and, as such, serves as the School's formal commitment to child protection. This Handbook is to be read, understood, and upheld by all Yangon Academy stakeholders, to include but not limited to, our parents and volunteers and our faculty and staff. Moreover, through curriculum integration, and, in an age-appropriate manner, the policies and procedures within this Handbook will be shared with, and understood by, the students of Yangon Academy.

To facilitate a thorough understanding of our child protection policies and procedures, this Handbook will be translated into Burmese, posted on our school's website, and be widely disseminated to members of the school community. Moreover, all faculty and staff will undergo annual child protection training at the beginning of the school year, reinforced by a mid-year review session of the best practices to protect children. Similarly, all parents and volunteers will be offered the opportunity to attend child protection workshops during the school year. Further, as part of the application process, all faculty candidates will undergo a thorough screening process and be required to read this Handbook and sign a statement declaring their suitability to work with children.

In the effort to continually improve our child protection policies and procedures, a child protection audit will take place at the end each school year. This audit will include a review and, if needed, a revision, of this Handbook and its policies and procedures.

Lastly, beyond reading, understanding, and upholding the policies and procedures within this Handbook, the faculty and staff must embrace their special duty of care in protecting all of our students. Only through mutual collaboration in protecting every student can Yangon Academy realize its School Purpose.



David Miller,

School Director.

School Purpose

Vision: Yangon Academy empowers students to reach their full potential.

Mission: Yangon Academy is a dynamic international school that provides a challenging K-12 American-based education which prepares our students for excellence in university and life. Our community inspires students to love learning and to contribute positively within a diverse and ever-changing world.

Schoolwide Learning Outcomes:

1. Effective Communicators

- Listen respectfully and ask questions to facilitate understanding.
- Present information and ideas clearly and honestly with sensitivity to others.
- Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate in multiple ways; e.g., speaking, writing, artistic/musical expression, kinesthetic/movement, mathematical/logical, interpersonal/social, intrapersonal/reflective, media/technology.
- Use appropriate technology as a tool to convey ideas.

2. Creative and Critical Thinkers

- Create, adapt and evaluate new ideas in the light of the common good.
- Think reflectively and creatively to evaluate and solve problems.
- Achieve excellence, originality and integrity in their own work.
- Analyze and employ the arts, media and technology to enhance the quality of life.

3. Healthy Individuals

- Participate in leisure and fitness activities for a balanced and healthy lifestyle.
- Support the health and safety of self and others.
- Demonstrate a robust sense of physical and emotional happiness.

4. Collaborative Team Players

- Demonstrate the skills of effective collaboration to achieve personal and group goals.
- Collaborate meaningfully, supportively, and efficiently on teams.
- Demonstrate leadership through collaboration and teamwork.
- Understand that each member of a team plays an essential role, and all roles are interdependent.

5. Responsible Global Citizens

- Demonstrate a positive sense of respect for the dignity and welfare of others.
- Act ethically, taking responsibility for their own actions.
- Value and honor the role of family in society.
- Embrace awareness and respect for the rights of others, both locally and globally.
- Respect and affirm the diversity and interdependence of the world's peoples and cultures.
- Demonstrate care and concern for the environment and community.
- Use resources wisely.

6. Lovers of Learning

- Demonstrate attributes of passion, curiosity and inquiry.
- Continually develop their given potential.
- Take risks to imagine and innovate.
- Accept responsibility for learning.

Guiding Principles

The following four principles serve as a guide in the formation and implementation of the School's Child Protection Policies:

1. Children have the right to be protected from harm, abuse, and neglect.
2. Children have the right to advocate for themselves and to express their opinions, including in the security and maintenance of their safety and well-being.
3. Adults have a duty of care to protect children from harm, abuse, and neglect.
4. School policies, procedures, decisions, and actions, taken on behalf of child protection, will always be in the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified by Myanmar - 1991.

The following declarations from the CRC serve as underpinnings upon which the School's Child Protection principles and subsequent policies were formulated:

Preamble (Summary): *Every child is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status.*

Article 3.1: *In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by the public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.*

Article 13.1: *The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds...*

Article 19.1: *State parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardians, or any other person who has the care of the child.*

Article 34 (Summary): *State parties shall undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.*

Student Rights at Yangon Academy

While at school, the human dignity of every student will be honored and upheld. Toward those ends, every student has the right to be safe and protected from all forms of harm, including, but not limited to, protections from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as well as from neglect and negligence. Moreover, every student has the right to be informed of, and to understand, the School's child protection policies and procedures. Lastly, every student has the right to report freely any allegation, disclosure, or suspicion of abuse and/or neglect.

It is the responsibility of all Yangon Academy faculty and staff to honor and uphold the human dignity of all students and to ensure their student rights are validated and protected.

Definitions of Terms

Child Protection: The fundamental responsibility of the School as expressed by the collection of policies, procedures, and practices designed to protect children from all forms of harm, abuse, and neglect.

The School: Refers to Yangon Academy and is interchangeable with the School's official name, Yangon Academy International School.

School Purpose: Best highlighted by the School's vision, mission, and schoolwide learning outcomes, the School Purpose reflects Yangon Academy's core values and its aspirations for students.

International Task Force on the Protection of Children (ITFPC): Working in collaboration with the *International Center for Missing and Exploited Children*, the ITFPC is a broad coalition of international school leaders, child protection experts, school accreditation organizations, faculty recruitment agencies, law enforcement, and members of the medical community working together to address the wide range of issues surrounding child protection. For child protection policy recommendations, best practices, and educational resources, please see their educational portal, www.icmec.org/education-portal/

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: This human rights treaty, the most widely ratified treaty in the world – with 196 signatory countries, sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children. Countries that ratified the treaty are bound by international law in the protection of their children. Myanmar ratified the treaty in 1991. For more information, please see the UNICEF website, www.unicef.org/crc/

Board of Directors: The School's 3-person ownership group whose responsibilities include approving and adopting school policy as set by the Director.

School Stakeholders: An umbrella term, interchangeable with school community, to include students, parents, volunteers, faculty, and staff.

Definitions of Terms, continued...

Administration Team: Overseeing the daily operation and strategic planning of the School, the Administration Team is comprised of the C.E.O., the G.M., the Director, and the Section Principals and Assistant Principals.

Staff: The non-teaching/coaching employees of the School, to include office personnel, secretaries, security guards, cleaners, and drivers.

Faculty: The teaching and coaching employees of the School, to include expat and local teachers as well as substitute teachers.

Volunteers Those adults who may, from time to time, support the School and the student experience; most often through chaperoning field trips and in assisting with school events.

Students: Any child or young adult enrolled at Yangon Academy. Relatedly, there is a responsibility to protect those children and young adults, who, although not enrolled at the School, may be visiting the School and/or interacting with the faculty or staff.

Parents: The reference to “parents”, includes step-parents, foster parents, and legal guardians.

Caregiver: A person or people, who at the time of the abuse is in a permanent or temporary custodial role. In a custodial role, the person is responsible for the child’s overall health and welfare. Primary caregivers must live with the child at least part of the time and can include, but are not limited to, a relative, a legal guardian, or a biological parent, adoptive, step-, or foster parents, or a person with an intimate relationship with the primary caregiver. Temporary caregivers include, but are not limited to, teachers, coaches, babysitters, clergy, and relatives.

Child Protection Officer (CPO): Designated by the School Director, the Child Protection Officer has five primary responsibilities:

1. Oversees the development and implementation of child protection policies.
2. Facilitates training of the faculty, staff, and parents.
3. Leads investigations of abuse and/or neglect.
4. Evaluates child protection curriculum integration across all grade levels.
5. Conducts the annual child protection and safety audit.

Definitions of Terms, continued...

Child Protection Team: Comprised of the Administration Team and designated faculty, the Child Protection Team, supports teachers in lesson planning integration for students; assists the CPO with training sessions, investigations, and the annual audit.

Duty of Care: In light of the inherent vulnerability of children, there exists a special responsibility of adults working with, and caring for, children and young adults. This duty of care requires caregivers to reasonably protect children and young adults from commissions of abuse and omissions of neglect. For example, one provision within the duty of care standard at Yangon Academy is a reporting requirement within 24-hours of an allegation, a disclosure, and/or a suspicion of abuse and/or neglect.

SECTION 2: Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

For the school community to fulfill its responsibilities in protecting children, it is critical there exist shared understandings among all school community members as to what are the varied and valid forms of child abuse and neglect. In an international school setting, such as Yangon Academy, developing these shared understandings can be a challenge as school stakeholders, representing different countries and cultures, may have differing attitudes toward child abuse and neglect. As such, the School has adopted definitions to provide a framework for our shared understandings.

Where cited, the following definitions are taken from two sources:

1. The World Health Organization (WHO), "The World Report on Violence and Health" *Chapter 3 – Child Abuse and Neglect by Parents and Other Caregivers*.
www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/chap3.pdf
2. The Center for Disease Control (CDC), "Child Maltreatment Surveillance: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements."
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/CM_Surveillance-a.pdf

Child Abuse

Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power (1).

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as the intentional use of force against a child that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury. Physical abuse includes acts ranging from those which do not leave a physical mark on the child to physical acts which can cause permanent disfigurement, or death. Physical abuse can result from discipline or physical punishment (2).

- Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse:
 - Unexplained bruises or welts on any part of the body
 - Bruises of different ages (various colors)
 - Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electric chord, belt, buckle, paddle, hand)
 - Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
 - Burns on hands, leg, buttocks, neck, or torso
 - Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
 - Unexplained lacerations, abrasions, or fractures

Sexual Abuse

Any completed (contact) or attempted (contact/non-completed) sexual act, sexual contact with, or exploitation (non-contact) of a child by a caregiver (2).

- Contact forms of sexual abuse, such as:
 - Fondling a child's genitals or getting a child to fondle the perpetrator
 - Rubbing the perpetrator's genitals against the child's body
 - Masturbation
 - Oral sex
 - Vaginal and anal penetration

Sexual Abuse

- Non-Contact forms of sexual abuse, such as:
 - Making sexual comments (verbal, letter, social media, email, text, cell phone)
 - Voyeurism
 - Exposure to pornography
 - Inappropriate photographs (sexual poses/nudity) of children
- Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse:
 - Sexual knowledge, behavior, or language not age-appropriate
 - Unusual relationship patterns with an individual
 - Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding in the oral, genital, or anal area
 - Difficulty walking or sitting
 - Refusing to change into PE clothes and/or fear of using the school bathroom
 - Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint
 - Not wanting to be alone with an individual
 - Extremely protective parenting

Psychological/Emotional Abuse

Intentional caregiver behavior(s) that conveys to a child that he/she is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or valued only in meeting another's needs. Psychological/Emotional abuse can be continual or episodic. Abusive behaviors may include, but are not limited to, the following: threatening, blaming, belittling, degrading, terrorizing, isolating, exploiting, spurning.

The behavior(s) is harmful or potentially harmful to the child's developmental needs or can potentially damage the child psychologically or emotionally (2).

- Possible Indicators of Psychological/Emotional Abuse:
 - Highly anxious
 - Developmental delays
 - Speech disorders
 - Fear of new situations
 - Low Self Esteem
 - Chronic running away
 - Substance abuse
 - Compulsive stealing/lying
 - Attention-seeking behaviors
 - Obsessions or phobias

Neglect

The failure of a parent to provide for the development of the child – where the parent is in a position to do so – in one or more of the following areas: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions (1).

- Possible Indicators of Neglect:
 - Child is unwashed and/or consistently hungry
 - Parents are consistently unresponsive to school communication
 - Parents are uninterested in the child's academic performance
 - Child does not want to go home
 - Evidence of child abandonment for 24 hours, without appointing a guardian

Grooming

A systematic method used by child predators to sexually abuse children. Most often the approach is subtle and carried out by a trusted adult in a position of authority over the child. Grooming is designed to achieve the following aims: Gain the trust of the child; manipulate other adults who care for the child; psychologically isolate the child into being a co-operating participant; reduce the risks of the child being believed if the abuse is disclosed; and, reduce the likelihood of the abuse being detected (*U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Sex Offender, Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking – SMART*).

- Possible warning signs of Grooming Behaviors:
 - Adult seems overly interested in the child
 - Adult creates opportunities to be alone with the child
 - Adult shows favoritism, gives special privileges and/or gifts to the child
 - Adult displays specific age and gender preferences

SECTION 3: Reporting an Allegation, Disclosure, or Suspicion of Abuse/Neglect

Duty to Report

It is a mandatory requirement for faculty, staff, administrators, and the Board of Directors to report allegations, disclosures, and/or suspicions of abuse and/or neglect to the Child Protection Officer or to a member of the Administration Team. Please refer to Appendix 1, the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Form.

The reporting timeline and criteria are as follows:

- Belief that the child is in imminent jeopardy*: Upon receipt of the disclosure, immediate oral notification to the Child Protection Officer, a member of the Child Protection Team, and/or a member of the Administration Team, followed by submission of a written report within 24 hours.
- Belief that the child is not in imminent jeopardy: Oral notification of disclosure receipt within 24 hours to the Child Protection Officer, a member of the Child Protection Team, and/or to a member of the Administration Team and submission of written report within 48-hours.
- *If the adult employee believes a child is in imminent jeopardy, the adult employee should not take the child to his/her home; instead, arrangements will be made by the Child Protection Officer and the Administration Team for the child's immediate, short-term protection.
- Students are encouraged to report incidents of abuse and/or neglect for which they themselves or others may be victims. In such an instance, the student may orally communicate the allegation to any school employee, who, in turn, will notify the Child Protection Officer and/or a member of the Administration Team. Upon receipt, the above timeline and criteria will be followed.

Guidelines for Responding to a Child's Disclosure

Should a child or young adult disclose an incident of abuse and/or neglect to an employee of the School or to a volunteer, it is best practice when first speaking with the child to follow these guidelines:

- Do not let the child swear you to secrecy before telling you something.
- If a child asks to speak with you, try to find a neutral setting in school where you can have few interruptions.
- Do not lead the child with questions; instead, just listen and let the child tell his or her story.

Guidelines for Responding to a Child's Disclosure, continued...

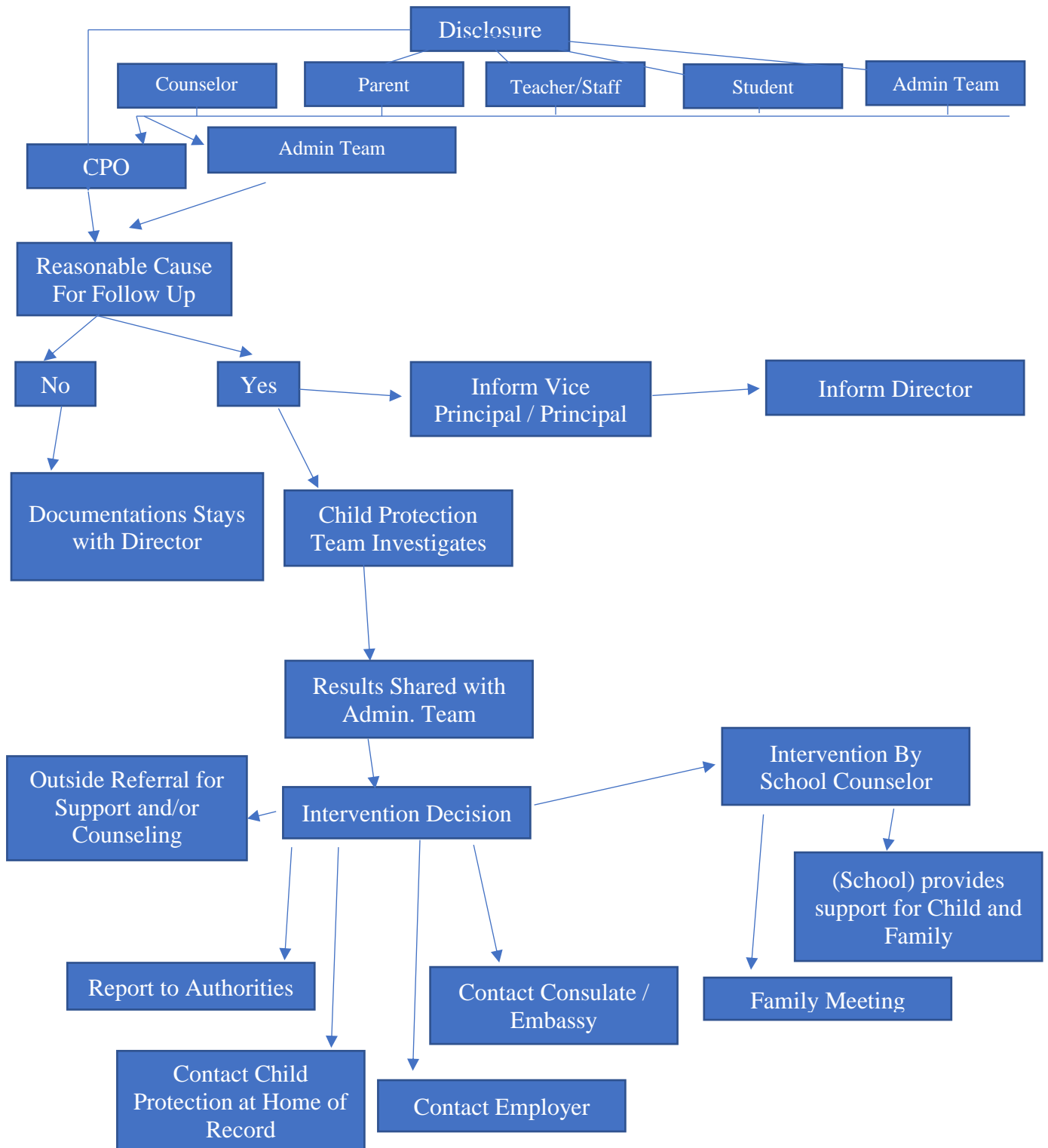
- Do not pressure the child for a great amount of detail. Details can be investigated at a later time.
- Regardless of how you feel, respond calmly and matter-of-factly. Do not register disgust, alarm, or anger.
- Do not make disparaging comments about the alleged perpetrator. It is often someone whom the child loves or whom the child is close.
- Do not make promises to the child that everything will be better.
- If the child does not wish to go home, this is an emergency, and you need to contact the Child Protection officer or a member of the Administration Team, immediately.
- Respect the child's confidence. You should only share what you have learned with the Child Protection Officer (CPO) or a member of the Administration Team.
- Inform the child that you will need to tell the CPO or an administrator, so that the child can get the help and protection he/she needs.
- It is important to understand that the employee or volunteer, who has received the disclosure, should neither investigate the allegation nor confront the alleged perpetrator.
- After the conversation, follow the timeline criteria for mandatory reporting.

Disclosure Process Guidelines

Upon receipt of a disclosure of abuse and/or neglect, the CPO will gather and document all relevant information, including the date, the person(s) involved, and any other pertinent information. If there is reasonable cause to believe child abuse and/or neglect has occurred, the CPO will report the allegation and supporting documentation to the Director of the School, who will authorize an investigation and any resulting actions. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Meeting with student(s)
- Parent notification and meeting
- Meeting with alleged perpetrator, if relevant
- Contacting the local authorities and/or local embassy
- Contacting parent employer
- Contact Child Welfare Department of home country
- Mandatory counselling/psychological services for victim and/or perpetrator
- Termination of employment

Yangon Academy Child Abuse/Neglect Disclosure Flow Chart



SECTION 3: Reporting an Allegation, Disclosure, or Suspicion of Child Abuse/Neglect, continued...

Allegations Against Faculty and Staff

Should an allegation of abuse – physical, sexual, or emotional – be made against a faculty or staff member, an investigation will take place directed by the School Director in conjunction with the Child Protection Officer. In addition to overseeing the investigation, the School Director will do the following: 1) Immediately notify the parents as to the allegation and offer appropriate support; 2) If the allegation warrants it, the faculty or staff member will be placed on forced, paid leave for 3-school days or until the investigation has been completed.

Managing Historical Allegations of Abuse

Any allegation of abuse reported by a former student, directed at a current or former faculty or staff member, will be handled with respect and sensitivity. An investigation will be conducted and appropriate actions taken. For instance, if the allegation is deemed valid, and the perpetrator is still an employee of the School, that faculty or staff member will be subject to consequences, including the possible notification of appropriate authorities and termination of employment. However, if the faculty or staff member is no longer employed at the School, and the abuse allegation is deemed valid, the Director will, as is possible, notify the appropriate authorities as well as the current employer of the abuse incident.

Procedure for Transferring/Transfer Students

It is not uncommon for a child victim of abuse and/or neglect to transfer to a new school during the school year as a means of hiding and/or perpetuating the abuse and/or neglect. As such, when a student transfers during the school year to Yangon Academy, the School will speak directly with the prior school to ascertain the circumstance(s) for the transfer. Likewise, should a Yangon Academy student transfer during the school year as a result of an abuse/neglect allegation or investigation, the School will proactively notify the student's new school as to the circumstances and allegations.

Intentionally False Allegations

Should a student, parent, volunteer, or employee of the School make an intentionally false allegation of abuse and/or neglect against another member of the school community, including faculty and staff, the consequences for the accuser could include the following:

- False allegation by faculty or staff member: Termination of Employment
- False allegation by a student and/or parent against a faculty or staff member: Expulsion from the School
- False allegation by a student against a parent: Required Counseling

Documentation and Confidentiality

All documentation regarding a child protection incident is confidential and will be secured in a locked file cabinet in the Director's office. This documentation includes, but is not limited to, the standard reporting form, the minutes of child protection and investigative meetings, and any records from prior schools, where abuse and/or neglect is recorded.

Through the admissions process and application form, parents must be given a copy of the Handbook for Child Protection and be made aware of, and agree to, the Child Protection policies and procedures, including the sharing of information and records with subsequent schools.

SECTION 4: Ethical Codes of Conduct with Students

The public and private interactions of faculty, staff, and volunteers with students must adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct. The following Codes of Conduct will help ensure the protection of faculty, staff, volunteers and, most importantly, the students of Yangon Academy.

Professional Boundaries

- Faculty, staff, and volunteers should maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and out of the classroom. This includes maintaining physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in all interactions.
- Faculty, staff, and volunteer relationships with students should be characterized by showing respect, upholding student dignity, and demonstrating the highest ideals of caregiving.

General Physical Contact and “Safe Touch” with Students

For schools, and their faculty and staff, physical contact and touching children can be a contentious and complex topic to navigate. Indeed, as such acts can be ambiguous and misunderstood, there are schools that have opted for a “no touch” policy. Yangon Academy does not believe such a blanket prohibition is realistic, necessary, or helpful to children. The School does, however, require faculty and staff to take great care when making physical contact and touching children. When used appropriately, physical contact and “safe touch” is both a developmentally healthy experience for children as well as a necessary method of keeping children safe and having them feel secure. With the needs of the child as Yangon Academy’s paramount consideration, this policy does not seek to be prescriptive with specific “do’s and don’ts”; rather, the policy seeks to outline a few ethical principles, which all faculty and staff must adhere:

- Physical contact with students must be professional, appropriate, and nonsexual in nature.
- When physical contact is initiated by, or received by, an adult, it must meet the healthy needs of the child and not be for the fulfillment of any adult physical, psychological, or emotional need.
- In most all instances, physical contact and touching children should take place within view of others. One example of an instance of exception is when a very young child needs assistance in the toilet or when changing.

Note: At the beginning of each school year, and, if needed as a mid-year refresher, the faculty and staff will be given guidance and training on age-appropriate forms of physical contact and best “safe touch” practices.

Sexual Misconduct

-Any sexual act (contact or non-contact) between an employee or volunteer of the School with a Yangon Academy student – a child or young adult - is prohibited and will be grounds for immediate termination of employment or, in the case of a volunteer, a termination of the school-volunteer relationship. This prohibition includes any romantic or sexual relationship with a student even if he/she is of the age of legal consent.

Ethical Codes of Conduct with Students: Sexual Misconduct, continued...

- A platonic relationship formed between an older student and an employee of the School, who is in a position of authority over the older student, must not become a sexual relationship for a period of 2 years past the time of the student turning 18 years-old.
- Should an older student attempt to initiate an intimate relationship with an employee of the School or with a volunteer, the employee or volunteer must respectfully discourage the approach and notify the Child Protection Officer and/or a member of the Administration Team.

One-to-One Interactions

- When interacting alone an individual student, the interaction should, if practical, be visible to others, and the faculty and staff member or volunteer should notify the administration that such isolated, one-to-one interaction is taking place.
- Faculty, staff, and volunteers are prohibited from inviting a student(s) to visit their home. Likewise, faculty, staff, and volunteers are prohibited from arranging to meet a student(s) away from school property, for non-school purposes. Exception: Only with parent consent and with administration approval should such social interactions occur.

Supervision of Students

- The overall supervision of students is the responsibility of all faculty and staff, regardless of roles and responsibilities. In the event a faculty or staff member observes an unsafe situation with a student(s), that adult member is required to intervene.
- All students from KG – Grade 8, who are on campus, require direct supervision by a faculty member, including before and after-school. Students in Grades 9-12 should be directly supervised when possible; however, high school students may be on their own while on campus as long as there is indirect supervision in close proximity.

Supervision of Contractors and Visitors

- Contractors and visitors, upon signing in at the main office and receiving a Visitor's Pass, should be supervised by a faculty or staff member. Contractors and visitors should never be alone with students.

Gift-Giving

- Faculty, staff, and volunteers should not give or accept gifts from students without the knowledge of their parents. Faculty, staff, and volunteers are prohibited from giving an individual child a gift or at the exclusion of other children.

Photographing Students

- It is inappropriate for faculty, staff, and volunteers to post photographs, videos, or other information about students for non-school related reasons that could increase the vulnerability of students. For further details on photographing/videotaping students, please see Appendix 4, "Photographing/Videotaping Students Policy".

SECTION 4: Ethical Codes of Conduct with Students, continued...

Communication with Students

Guided by the concept of transparency, the following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication among Yangon Academy parents, administrators, teachers, staff, volunteers, and students (For details, please see [Appendix 5, Acceptable-Use Agreement](#)):

- Where possible, email exchanges between a student and a person acting on behalf of the School are to be made using a school email address.
- Faculty, staff, and volunteers who use any form of online communications including social media and text messaging to communicate with a student may only do so for activities involving directly or indirectly with school business. Any exceptions need the approval of the student's parent.
- Electronic communication that takes place over the School's network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring without prior notification or consent of the school employee or student.

Overnight Field Trips

- Faculty, staff, volunteers, and tour guides must never sleep in the same room as a student(s).
- When traveling on overnight trips, students have the right to contact their parents or guardian at any time if they feel unsafe.
- A student should not share another bed with a fellow student, and students should be assigned a room with members of the same gender.
- Students should be provided with privacy when bathing and dressing, and students should not be exposed to adult nudity.
- No student should be left in the care of unauthorized adults.
- For further safety guidelines, please refer to [Appendix 7, the Chaperone Rules for Overnight Trips](#).

Transportation

- Except in the case of emergency, faculty, staff, and volunteers should never drive a student in his/her personal car.
- Except in the case of emergency, faculty, staff, and volunteers should never ride in a student's car.
- Students should never be left alone in the company of a tour bus operator or the like.

SECTION 4: Ethical Codes of Conduct with Students, continued.

Locker Room and Bathrooms

- Yangon Academy adults must respect the privacy of students when they are using the locker rooms, changing rooms, and bathrooms.
- Depending on the student age and circumstance, locker room and changing room supervision should only be conducted in close proximity to the changing area.
- Yangon Academy adults, volunteers, and visitors should use the designated “Adult Bathrooms”, and they should not use a bathroom designated for students.

Use of Drugs and Alcohol

- Supplying students with drugs (including tobacco) and alcohol is prohibited and grounds for immediate termination of employment.
- School employees and volunteers must not be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol when responsible for the supervision of students.
- School employees and volunteers must not be incapacitated by any legal drug, such as prescription medicine, when responsible for the supervision of students.

Prohibition on Corporal and Emotional Punishment

- Faculty, staff, and volunteers are prohibited from using corporal and/or emotional punishment as a means of school discipline. For details, please see [Appendix 6, Student Restraint Policy](#).
 - Examples of corporal and emotional punishment could include the following: spanking, striking, shaking, slapping, forced confinement, threatening, humiliating, and ridiculing.

Violations of Ethical Conduct

- Faculty, staff, and volunteers are required to report within 48-hours to the administration any known or suspected breaches of the Codes of Conduct; however, should the breach involve the abuse of a child or young adult, the reporting must adhere to the Reporting Policy’s timeline criteria.
- Alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct will be investigated by the Administration Team and, when deemed a breach of conduct has taken place, sanctions will be leveled from among the following options:
 - Warning with guidance and/or training
 - Formal reprimand with guidance and/or training
 - Termination of volunteer’s role
 - Termination of employment
 - Notify the authorities
 - Any reasonable measure as determined by the School Director

SECTION 5: Recruitment, Screening, and Hiring

The most effective means in preventing child abuse at the School is to screen out potential abusers before they are hired by the School. At Yangon Academy, there is a comprehensive recruitment, screening, and hiring process designed to keep our students protected while at school.

Checklist for Candidate Employment

- Submission of application form and complete CV
- Submission of credentials and verification
- 2 forms of identification, passport required
- Minimum 2 professional references and verification
- Letters of recommendation
- Initial interview(s)
- Background Check
- Read Handbook and submit signed Statement of Suitability
- Employment history review
- Complete Sex Offender Registry check

Advertising Positions of Employment

In advertising positions of employment, whether through print or online media, the School will include a statement declaring its commitment to child protection. This, in itself, is often an effective, first-line of deterrence to would-be predators from targeting our school. Further, the School's website will feature prominently on its website home page a statement declaring our commitment to child protection.

Employment Application

As part of the employment application process, candidates must read the Child Protection Handbook and sign the Statement of Suitability. Moreover, all applicants must submit with their application a criminal background check from their home country and, when possible, from the country of last employment.

Upon Submission of Employment Application

Once an employment application has been submitted, the following will take place along with a checklist to record adherence to the proper procedures (This checklist will be kept on file with the Director):

- Interview(s): An initial interview will be conducted by the Director or his designee (with child protection training), and the candidate must be explicitly asked if there is any reason, or would anyone have a reason, why he/she would be precluded from working with children. Further questions surrounding child protection awareness should also be asked, with an emphasis on how Yangon Academy views child protection as its first priority.
- Statement of Suitability: Candidates are required to sign and submit The Statement of Suitability (Please see Appendix 4).

SECTION 5: Recruitment, Screening, and Hiring, continued...

Upon Submission of Employment Application, continued...

- **Identity Check:** During the initial application process, the candidate must provide two forms of identification, one of which must be a valid passport and/or a driver's license.
- **References and Prior Employment:** Beyond reading and evaluating the minimum, required two letters of professional reference, the School Director or his designee must speak directly with the candidate's most recent employer, seeking information on the candidate's suitability to work with children. Telephone calls and email exchanges between Yangon Academy and the candidate's prior employer must be initiated by Yangon Academy and be received by the prior employer/school's official telephone numbers and email addresses.
- **Employment History Review:** Particular attention and scrutiny should be paid attention to any gaps in a candidate's employment history. The School Director or his designee must follow-up and closely examine the reason(s) for these employment gaps.
- **Criminal Background Checks & Sex Offender Registries:** Candidates must be notified during the initial application process that the School will conduct a criminal background check and research their names against available sex offender registries, both in the United States and in other countries.

Upon Appointment

Once a candidate has been hired by the School, he or she must read and sign the Child Protection Pledge and submit the document along with the signed employment contract. Upon arrival to the School, whether during opening orientation meetings or in the event of a mid-year hire, the employee will receive the required child protection training.

SECTION 6: Child Protection Policy and Procedures Audit

The Child Protection Officer, in collaboration with the Child Protection Team, will undertake a comprehensive audit of the Child Protection policies, procedures, and practices. This audit will take place throughout the month of May and will include the following elements:

1. A review of the Handbook and its policies and procedures. Any revisions, deletions, and/or additions must be submitted by the CPO to the Director by the last Friday in May. The Director will approve and/or revise the Handbook, whereupon, he will submit, by the end of June, the final policies and procedures document to the Board of Directors or the CEO for ratification.
2. A review of the year's child protection training/workshop sessions to determine if revisions to professional development are needed to stay current with the best child protection practices. This review will include parent training workshops. Recommendations will be submitted on the last Friday in May to the Director for his approval.
3. The Child Protection Team will review and, if necessary, revise the year's child protection curriculum and lesson plans.
4. A review of any investigation, child protection experience, or formal abuse/neglect report submitted. An evaluation of these investigation(s), experience(s), and report(s) will be submitted on the last Friday in May to the Director.

Section 7: Citations and Acknowledgements

In addition to sources specifically cited within the document, this Handbook and its policies and procedures were created by referring to the recommendations set forth by the *International Task Force on the Protection of Children* (ITFPC). Of particular help was the policy sample provided by ITFPC from the Association of International Schools of Africa (AISA).

In addition, Yangon Academy extends special thanks to International School Yangon (ISY). ISY's generosity in meeting with Yangon Academy, in sharing its Handbook, and in providing advice in policy development, training, and implementation is acknowledged with gratitude. In developing this Handbook, Yangon Academy, in some instances, and, with permission, used word-for-word ISYs policy language.

PPENDIX

The following appendices - forms and policies - are included in this Handbook as they are either directly or indirectly related to Child Protection. All forms and policies will be audited and updated at the end of each school year or as needed.



Appendix 1 Child Abuse & Neglect Report

As an employee of Yangon Academy, you have a required "duty of care" responsibility, which includes directly reporting any disclosed, alleged, or suspected child abuse and/or neglect. This required duty of care cannot be delegated to another person on the campus, such as a school nurse or counselor. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and submit to the Child Protection Officer or to a member of the Administration Team within 24 hours of the disclosure or suspicion. Should you believe the child is in imminent jeopardy, please contact the Child Protection Officer or a member of the Administration Team, immediately.

Please check the appropriate form of report:

Direct Disclosure from Student Victim _____
Allegation from another Student/Adult _____
Suspicion from Reporter _____

1. Please indicate the time and date of receiving the disclosure or allegation (if allegation, by whom):
2. Student Victim Information: Name, age, gender, grade-level, and address:
3. Please indicate the time and date of report submission as well as to whom it was submitted:
4. Nature and extent of the injury or condition observed:
5. If applicable, prior injuries and when observed:
6. If possible, provide exact language or paraphrase the language from the child:
7. Actions taken by the reporter (e.g., talking with the child):
8. Where the act(s) occurred:
9. Any additional information that may help the Child Protection Officer:
10. Reporter's name, location, and contact information:



Appendix 2 Employee Child Protection Pledge

As an employee of Yangon Academy International School, I agree to abide by all school policies, protocols, and practices pertaining to the Codes of Conduct as outlined in the *Employment Contract*, the *Child Protection Handbook*, and in the *Faculty and Staff Handbook*. I further acknowledge and agree that, in my role as an adult working with children, there exists a special duty of care to protect children from harm and to safeguard their well-being. As such, I understand that should I not meet this duty of care, whether in full or in part, my employment with the School may be terminated at any time. This Child Protection duty of care includes, but is not limited to, the following Five Obligations for Protecting Students:

1. If I receive a report of student abuse or neglect, or if I suspect a student is the victim of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse or neglect, I am required to report such allegations and suspicions within 24-hours to the Child Protection Officer, and/or to a member of the Child Protection Team, and/or to a member of the Administration Team.
2. I will neither schedule school-related meetings with a student(s) away from the school campus, without the specific approval of an administrator and the student's parent/guardian, nor will I socialize with students outside of the school day, without the specific approval of the student's parent/guardian and a member of the Administration Team.
3. In my 1-to-1 interactions with students, I will ensure that my conduct is professional and there is a reasonable attempt at remaining visible to members of the school community.
4. I will maintain appropriate professional boundaries between myself and my students, including in my speech, in my actions, and with all forms of online communication and social media.
5. I have read and understand, and agree to abide by, the policies and procedures outlined in the *Handbook for Child Protection*. Further, I will commit to all Child Protection-related Professional Development training offered by the School and, by striving to implement the best practices of Child Protection, I will help ensure that every child's protection, safety, and well-being are schoolwide priorities.

Employee Name: _____ Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____



Appendix 4

Photographing/Videotaping Students

The following policy statements apply to all faculty, administrators, staff, and volunteers:

1. When taking and posting online photographs/videos of children, avoid using their first or last name in the caption. When posting a child's name on the school website, Facebook, or other social media platforms, do not include an accompanying photograph of the child.
2. Upon enrolling their child, parents will provide written consent for their child to be photographed for school-related purposes. A list of those parents who do not provide consent will be created and distributed to the appropriate faculty and staff.
3. Only use images of children in suitable dress. Some activities, such as swimming, provide a much greater risk of potential misuse.
4. All members of the School community should take caution in providing online personal information about a child.
5. Professional photographers or members of the press, who are invited to a school event, should never be left alone with a child. Moreover, the School's photography/videotaping policy should be shared with the photographer or member of the press.



Appendix 5

Acceptable-Use Agreement

For All Faculty and Staff

As an adult member of Yangon Academy, I must ensure that my use of technology while I am at school, including all forms of electronic communication and Internet usage, conforms to the highest virtues of honesty and respect and always provides a wholesome example of safety and security for the students to emulate. Whether using the School's equipment or network or my own equipment or any other computer or electronic device or outside network, I will adhere to the following *Acceptable Use Agreement*.

Privileges and Responsibilities

- I will not reveal my password to others.
- I understand that the School may review my account, including any e-mails, Internet search histories, or other files I send or receive, at any time.
- I will remain vigilant regarding students' use of technologies as outlined in their own Acceptable Use Agreement and, should I be made aware of any violations, I will promptly report those violations to my section Principal.
- I understand that I may not portray myself, the School, or anyone associated with the School in a manner that is in conflict with the School's policies and practices with respect to honesty, integrity, and general standards for community behavior.
- For security reasons, I understand that I should exercise care in portraying the School in any manner in any public forum; at all times, and in the interests of protecting students, I will adhere to the School's photography/videotaping policy.
- I understand that bullying, harassment, hazing and discrimination of any kind are in conflict with the School's ideals and, in such an instance, may result in the immediate termination of my employment as well as exposing me to any legal remedy that may be relevant.
- I will not give out or put online personal information that compromises my own well-being, the well-being of others, or the security of the School community.
- I understand that I may not access inappropriate websites, content, or materials using the School's network or another outside network.
- I will not download or copy commercial software in violation of copyright laws.

Acceptable Use: Privileges and Responsibilities, continued...

- I will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to network resources or disrupt the network, including by unplugging or tampering with computers, printers, or other hardware resources.
- I will log off when I complete my work or when I leave a computer.
- I will not access or use the accounts or files of others.
- I understand that I am accountable for my use of technologies beyond communications on Yangon Academy's network and during school hours, especially when my online activity and/or my electronic communications harms the reputation of the School or impacts negatively my colleagues and/or the students of Yangon Academy.
- In the event I need to take home with me the School's laptop or other ICT resources, I assume all financial obligations, in replacement or repair, should the laptop or resource(s) become lost, stolen, or damaged.
- I understand that no software (even public domain and shareware) may be installed or used on a School computer without the permission of a Technology Department staff member. I further agree that I will not participate in illegal file-sharing programs.

Personal Laptops and Other Technology Devices

If I bring a personal laptop or other network-accessing device (e.g., iPad, iPod, iPhone, Blackberry, Droid, PDA) to School, I understand that this Agreement also governs my use of such personal devices.

I respectfully pledge that I will follow these rules for acceptable use of technological resources, at School. I understand that breaking these rules may be disruptive to the educational process and may be considered a major disciplinary offense. Violations of this policy may invoke consequences including immediate termination of employment.

Signature of Faculty/Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Print Full Name of Faculty/Staff Member: _____



Appendix 6

Student Restraint Guidelines

Physically restraining a student is a serious intervention and should only be taken in an extreme emergency. The following definition and accompanying guidelines should be adhered to when considering physical restraint (Source: *Summary of Seclusion and Restraint Statutes, Regulations, Policies, and Guidance, U.S. Department of Education*).

Physical Restraint: Using physical force to prevent, restrict, or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of his/her body. A faculty or staff member should only use physical restraint under the following conditions:

- The faculty or staff member has a reasonable belief that the physical safety of the student and/or another person(s) is at serious and imminent risk.
- The faculty or staff member has a reasonable belief that significant damage to school property is taking place.
- The form of restraint is proportionate to the circumstance.
- An alternative intervention(s) has been attempted, including de-escalation techniques.

Prohibitions on Restraint: The following examples of student restraint, while not a complete list, are prohibited:

- Using a mechanical device or material that restricts free movement of all or of a portion of the student's body.
- Obstructing a student's airway (choke-hold) or preventing a student from communicating distress.
- Applying force to pressure points and pain holds (head lock); hyperextension of joints.
- Placing pressure on a student's head, neck, chest, or torso; or, straddling a student's torso (pinning).

Appendix 6, Student Restraint Guidelines, continued...

- Physical restraint should never be used as a form of discipline, punishment, classroom management strategy, or for retaliation.

Acceptable Restraint: The following forms of student restraint are acceptable:

- Guiding the student with one's palm by applying firm pressure on the back.
- Guiding a student by holding his/her hand or arm.
- Physically separating students by moving between/among the students.

De-Escalation Guidance:

- Should a faculty or staff member not have the skill set or confidence to intervene, he or she should call for immediate help.
- Remove the audience; ask students to move away from the area.
- Give the student physical space.
- Remain calm, speak quietly, and maintain the student's dignity.
- Provide clear choices and/or directions to help the student regain control of his/her emotions.

Confinement

It is school policy to never place a student secluded in confinement for longer than 30 minutes. In the event such seclusion/confinement is warranted, the student should be monitored at all times by a faculty or staff member.

Reporting Requirement

All interventions, whether by physical restraint or by seclusion/confinement must be reported to the parents on the same day and documentation will be submitted to the school principal.



Appendix 7 Trip Leaders and Chaperones: Rules, Guidelines, and Expectations

1. Trip leaders and chaperones must be suitably qualified and/or experienced to confidently lead the trip and make the appropriate judgments when assessing risk.
2. Trip leaders and chaperones will take every precaution to ensure the safety and health of all student participants.
3. Prior to the trip, trip leaders and the administration will conduct a risk-assessment analysis and modify the trip itinerary as needed.
4. Trip leaders and chaperones will communicate to students the *Student Behavioral Agreement* and enforce all its provisions.
5. Trip leaders and chaperones will develop and communicate to the students a packing list of items necessary for the trip.
6. Trip leaders and chaperones will develop and communicate appropriate, grade-level ICT rules for student cell phone, tablet, and laptop use.
7. Trip leaders and chaperones will abide by the School's *ICT Acceptable Use Agreement*.
8. When appropriate, trip leaders and chaperones will develop and distribute to the students before the trip a list of daily guide questions related to the trip's projected itinerary. The students will reflect and respond each day to these questions in their individual notebooks, along with other impressions or conclusions that they may have felt to be important to their experience or learning.
9. For the protection of both the student and the chaperone, chaperones will not place themselves in situations in which they are alone with a student in a closed environment.
10. Room checks must be completed each night by trip leaders and chaperones. When possible, chaperones should perform the nightly room-check in pairs, rather than by themselves.

Appendix 7 Trip Leaders and Chaperones, continued...

11. Trip leaders and chaperones are expected to comply with school policies and model appropriate behavior for students.
12. For the protection of both student and chaperone, trip leaders and chaperones will not use or consume alcohol or drugs at all, or use tobacco while students are present. This includes time spent traveling, for example, on a bus, train or at an airport.
13. Trip leaders and chaperones are to be informed of student health and emergency contact information (provided by the Business Office).
14. Trip leaders and chaperones will have the contacts numbers of all trip adults, administrators, and parents; and, when traveling overseas, they will have the contact information for the Myanmar embassy and/or consulate.
15. Students will be provided with emergency contact cards/contact numbers by the trip leader.
16. When traveling throughout Myanmar, at least one of the trip leaders or chaperones will be a Myanmar staff person or teacher.
17. Trip leaders and chaperones will ensure that First Aid kits are present.
18. Should a health issue arise during the trip, the trip leader will contact parents and the school administration. In the event that parents cannot be contacted, the permission form enables the trip leader to seek appropriate medical attention.
19. An emergency fund will be provided for each trip leader.
20. Throughout the trip, trip leaders and chaperones will support each other and will strive to work collaboratively with one another.



Appendix 8 Extended Visitor-Volunteer: Child Protection Pledge

As an extended visitor or as a volunteer to Yangon Academy International School, I agree to abide by all school policies, protocols, and practices pertaining to the Codes of Conduct as outlined in the *Child Protection Handbook*, I further acknowledge and agree that, in my role as an adult working with children, there exists a special duty of care to protect children from harm and to safeguard their well-being. This Child Protection duty of care includes, but is not limited to, the following Obligations for Protecting Students:

1. If I receive a report of student abuse or neglect, or if I suspect a student is the victim of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse or neglect, I am required to report such allegations and suspicions within 24-hours to the Child Protection Officer (Mike Gordon), and/or to a member of the Child Protection Team, and/or to a member of the Administration Team.
2. I will neither schedule school-related meetings with a student(s) away from the school campus, without the specific approval of an administrator and the student's parent/guardian, nor will I socialize with students outside of the school day, without the specific approval of the student's parent/guardian and a member of the Administration Team.
3. In my 1-to-1 interactions with students, I will ensure that my conduct is professional and there is a reasonable attempt at remaining visible to members of the school community.
4. I will maintain appropriate professional boundaries between myself and students, including in my speech, in my actions, and with all forms of online communication and social media.

Visitor Name: _____

Visitor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 9: Scope of Policy and Current Child Protection Roles

Policy Scope

The Child Protection policies, procedures, and guidelines within this Handbook are applicable to all employees and volunteers of Yangon Academy International School. As such, this Handbook must be read, understood, and adhered to by the following stakeholders:

- Board of Directors, CEO, and General Manager
- School Director
- Section Principals and Assistant Principals
- School Counselor(s)
- Administrative Staff
- Faculty, including coaches, local and international teachers
- Volunteers
- Parents
- Security Staff
- School Cleaners
- School Drivers
- School Maintenance

Current Child Protection Leadership Roles (August 2023)

Child Protection Officer: Mr. Mike Gordon, Secondary School Principal

Child Protection Team: Ms. Nyo Nyo Aye, General Manager
Mr. David Miller, School Director
Ms. Chit Hnin Pwint, Human Resource Manager
Dr. Frano Ivezaj, Elementary School, Principal
Mr. Michael Schneller, Assistant Principal, Secondary
Ms. Kay Zar Thein, Certified School Nurse
Ms. Magda Von Benecke, Social-Emotional Counselor, Secondary
Ms. Lea Woodward, Social-Emotional Counselor, Elementary

The policies, procedures, and forms within this Handbook will be reviewed and updated, as needed, by June 2024.



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