

ISU

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CHILD SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES



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VISION

Dear ISU Community,

“Diversity is a fact. Equity is a choice. Inclusion is an action. Belonging is an outcome.” (Arthur Chan) An ultimate goal for each member of our International School of Uganda community is a strong sense of belonging. We strive for ISU to be a safe, respectful, and kind place where student wellbeing is a priority. To achieve this we must be proactive in establishing learning opportunities, systems and practices that allow for each person’s voice to be heard.

A priority for ISU is having a clear Wellbeing Program, Child Safeguarding Practices and Child Protection Policies that guide our work in supporting the safety and wellbeing of our students. Communicating our beliefs, ensuring everyone is educated on this topic and having resources and systems in place will help in keeping our children safe.

“Research suggests that the development of positive social and emotional skills is fundamental to children’s mental health and well-being. Social and emotional skills are also important for children’s learning. Recent evidence suggests that children who participate in social and emotional learning (SEL) programmes demonstrate increased academic outcomes in addition to significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes and behavior.” (AISA - Wellbeing for All).

I often share the story of when I was “kidnapped” as a child. I was 5 years old, it was afterschool, and I was on the playground waiting to be collected by my mom. It was winter, cold, and I remember wearing my blue snowsuit with a fur lined hood (If you grew up in North America, you know the one I am talking about). A man approached me, took me by the hand and placed me in the backseat of the car. I went willingly, and did not question the man, who was a stranger. In my mind, I decided that mom had sent someone to pick me up as she wasn’t available. Shortly after departing, the man looked in the rearview mirror and suddenly realized he had taken the wrong child, immediately taking me back to the playground and picking up his son or daughter. While this story ended well, the point I would like to highlight, is that children are vulnerable, and we must protect them. We must educate them, and we must provide them with tools, and with strong trusting relationships that they can count on for help.

This guide “Child Safeguarding Guidelines” has been created by the ISU Child Protection Team with resource and support from our membership organizations: The Association of International Schools in Africa (www.aisa.or.ke) and the Council of International Schools (www.cois.org). Both organizations have been leaders in supporting our international schools with research, resources, professional learning and guidance to ensure we have strong practices in place. The purpose of this handbook is to provide detail on child protection and wellbeing, the resources and systems we have in place to respond to any situations that arise, and a proactive model of educating all members of our community on keeping everyone safe.

When children know they have a voice, and that they belong, they will advocate for themselves and others to ensure they are experiencing childhood as they should - with care, encouragement and opportunities to grow, develop and achieve their passions.

Yours in Education,

Simon Gillespie, Ed.D.
ISU Head of School

CREATING A CULTURE OF WELLBEING AT ISU

Creating a culture of wellbeing is a priority at ISU. We recognise that wellbeing is an essential part of all peoples' lives and particularly important for students so that they can learn effectively and grow into the best versions of themselves.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO):

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.

Student wellbeing is essential to the development of balanced, happy, healthy and successful young people. A focus on wellbeing ties together our vision, learning principles, values, approaches to learning and learning areas and skills. Wellbeing clearly positions learners and their development as confident young people, at the centre of what we do.

Our approach is proactive so as to foster wellbeing in all our community members so that each individual understands what makes a person well physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually, and provides opportunities and support to develop wellbeing practices. With this approach, we aim to reduce and prevent, as much as possible, safety, social, emotional and health-related issues.

Wellbeing is central to all aspects of the school and fully embedded as a strategic area:

Strategic Goal:

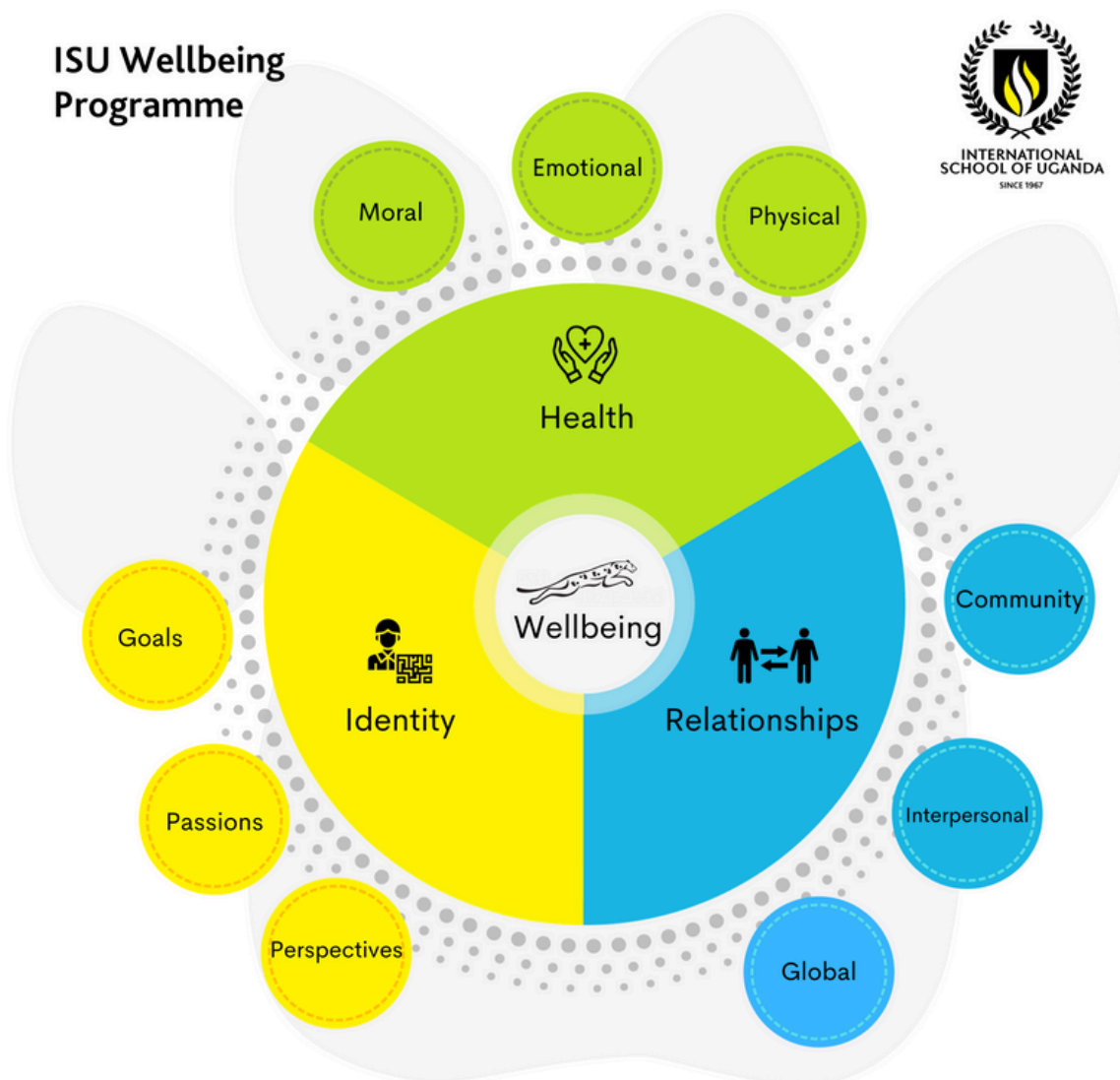
Wellbeing will be at the core of living our mission, driving program development, decision making and ensuring that students, teachers and staff are balanced and happy individuals.

Rationale:

When students, teachers and staff are healthy, happy, balanced and engaged this leads to greater learning and opportunities for growth and developing their passions. This will lead to greater success and everyone being contributing members of the community at ISU and beyond through living the IB Learner Profile characteristics.

The Junior School and Senior School focus on three main components of wellbeing: health, identity and relationships as highlighted in our wellbeing programme model which aims to promote balanced, healthy and happy young people. This model is implemented and embedded throughout the school experience and curriculum and also as a stand-alone wellbeing programme in the Senior School.

ISU Wellbeing Programme



ISU CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The ISU community is responsible for creating a safe and nurturing environment, protecting the safety and well being of all children.

Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's basic human rights and as such present obstacles to the child's education as well as to their physical, emotional and intellectual development. All staff shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the UNCRC, to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status. Schools fill an institutional role in society as protectors of children. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection. As such, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify child abuse and neglect and to take steps to ensure that the child and family have full access to the services needed.

All staff employed at the International School of Uganda must report to a member of the Child Protection Team all suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered, or is at significant risk of suffering, abuse or neglect. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with the procedures outlined in this document. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective embassy in Uganda, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country and/or to local authorities.

This policy will be distributed to all staff annually and be included in the application package to families. Training, guided by the contents of this document, will be provided on an annual basis to ensure ISU staff are informed and educated about child protection issues, indicators of abuse or neglect, and how to respond to disclosure of abuse or neglect. Every effort will be made to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, the Head of School will conduct a full investigation, keeping the safety of the child as the highest priority.

STATEMENTS AND DEFINITIONS

Definitions of Abuse

Definitions of abuse are complex and can differ across various cultures according to their child-rearing behaviors, gender and role responsibilities and expectations. The primary determination of abuse is that it is dependent on some form of a relationship that is used to meet the need of the more powerful person, typically either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides much of the definition that is based in understanding the impact of certain behaviors. ISU defines child abuse (but does not limit the definition of abuse) as the following: Sexual Abuse, Neglect and Negligent Treatment, Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse, Child Exploitation. Details about each one are below.

Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend is unable to give informed consent to, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who, by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power; the activity is intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity including but not limited to:

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

Non-contact forms of sexual abuse such as:

- Making sexual comments (verbal, letter, telephone, email, text)
- Voyeurism
- Exposure to pornography
- Perpetrator exposing parts of their body or the child's body
- Inappropriate (sexual poses or nudity) photography of children

Possible Indicators:

- Sexual knowledge, behavior, or use of language not appropriate to age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding in the oral, genital, or anal areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Refusing to change into PE clothes, fear of bathrooms
- Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual
- Extremely protective parenting

Neglect and Negligent Treatment

Neglect is defined as the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, emotional, or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

Possible Indicators:

- Child is unwashed or hungry
- Parents are uninterested in child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- Child does not want to go home
- Both parents or legal guardians are absent from the home for any period of 24 hours or greater, without appropriate provision made for child's care, and a temporary guardian named
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of emergency

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse occurs when a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child, uses threats to frighten the child or undermines the child's feelings of self-worth. This may involve name calling, insults or continual ignoring from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development. It also involves repeated exposure to violence and being used as a tool for spying or psychological pressure.

Possible Indicators:

- Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed
- Highly anxious
- Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
- Fear of new situations
- Low self-esteem
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Lying

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child's parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child.

Possible Indicators:

- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colors)
- Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand)
- Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks
- Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
- Immersion burns with a distinct boundary line
- Unexplained lacerations, abrasions, or fractures

Child Exploitation

Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labor and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, or emotional, moral or social-emotional development.

Use of Technology

Technology can be used in inappropriate ways such as viewing or playing excessively violent or sexualized video games, viewing pornography or accessing or viewing other harmful content or engaging in cyberbullying. These activities can be detrimental to a child's mental health, educational or social-emotional development. It is for this reason that ISU has an Agreement of Acceptable Technology Use.

Grooming

Grooming is defined as the predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. It occurs when an adult communicates, by words or conduct, whether that be in person or online with a student or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult. Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity. For example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or caregiver for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time. It does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.

Early Warning Signs for in Potential Offenders:

- Has "favorite" student or child
- Attempts to find ways to be alone with child(ren) or connecting online
- Inappropriate language, jokes and discussions about students/children
- Sexualised talk in the presence of students/children

Peer to Peer or Sibling Abuse

Peer to peer or sibling abuse occurs when a child or young person uses their power to engage a child in unwanted sexual contact or activity causing physical and emotional harm. It may be garnered by one or all of the following factors:

- Superior age
- Developmental stage
- Intellectual status
- Physical strength or position of strength

Peer to peer or sibling abuse may involve (but is not limited to) the following:

- Unusual interest in sex, sexualising inanimate objects and activities
- Uses force and coercion in social situations
- Socialises with children much younger
- Gives gifts, requires secrecy in relationships
- Sexual harassment
- Sexting
- Unwanted kissing and sexual touching
- Sexual pressure and coercion
- Sexual assault including rape

Perpetrators of child abuse sometimes use social media or other forms of electronic communication to secretly groom children for the purposes of sexual abuse or to enact forms of sexual abuse (e.g., exposure to pornography or photographing the child in forms of undress). For this reason, ISU requires that when staff and volunteers are using any electronic communication, it must be related to school matters only. For example, emails to students must be related to school matters and only be sent from a staff member's school email account. The use of social media to communicate with students is not permitted.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL LAWS

Ugandan Laws

ISU strictly adheres to all applicable local statutes and laws with regard to Child Protection, Safeguarding and Student Wellbeing.

International Laws and Practices

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - ISU endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), of which Uganda is a signatory. Nations that ratify this convention are bound to it by international law.

International Task Force on Child Protection (ITFCP)

The international task force on child protection is a coalition of a diverse range of stakeholders with child-related work that seeks to gather diverse perspectives for the betterment of child protection. They seek to apply collective resources, expertise, and partnerships to help international school communities address child protection challenges.

Responsibilities to Accreditation Agencies

International Baccalaureate Organisation Programme Standards and Practices 2020 set aspirational guidance for IB teaching and learning. These standards and practices guide us as an IB School:

- The School verifies that Teachers meet the local and legal requirements for their roles to which they are appointed.
- The School provides safe and effective learning spaces and learning environments.
- The School demonstrates in its systems, processes and policies, attention to the social, emotional and physical well being of its students and teachers.

ISU is accredited by the Council of International School and Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges. CIS and MSA are committed to child protection and student well-being. Member communities need to provide comprehensive, effective education and support for children and young adults, focused on their physical, social and emotional well-being. CIS and MSA empower schools to learn how to educate their communities and develop capacity to prevent and manage all aspects of abuse.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY OF STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Board

The ISU Board of Directors and School Leadership are responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of the school community through developing policies that guide the school's operations and preparedness for crisis management.

Organisational Leadership Team (OLT)

The OLT (Head of School, Principals and Business Manager) is responsible for developing and implementing procedures that guide the school's operations and preparedness for ensuring health, safety and crisis management.

Educational Leadership Team (ELT)

The ELT consists of OLT, the Learning Support Coordinators, IB Coordinators, Assistant Principals, ICT Director, Librarian, and Director of Strategic Initiatives. The ELT is responsible for implementing procedures regarding safety and protection of learners in the educational contexts. This includes preventive education, training and professional development and oversight of technology safeguards.

Child Protection Team

The child protection team consists of the Head of School, the Principals, the Counselors and Director of Health Services. The team is responsible for supporting prevention and response to child protection concerns, this includes education and training of the community, responding to concerns and developing systems for safeguarding children.

Director of Operations and Security

The operations and security manager oversees the campus security and facilities safety procedures including security staff, access control and safety drills.

Counselors

The school counselors are responsible for developing and providing preventative and responsive support to the ISU community, through working with staff, parents and students.

Health and Wellness Clinic

The nursing team is responsible for preventative and responsive health support for the students and staff at the school. This includes education, health screening and first aid support.

Student Support Services

The student support services team are responsible for designing and developing learning support for children with specific challenges. The learning support teachers are case managers for supporting interventions that might address concerns with wellbeing.

Teachers

The teaching teams are responsible for supporting the day to day safety and wellbeing of students in their care including learning and play areas as well as supporting departure procedures.

Support Staff

The support staff are responsible for supporting the schools operations in accordance with published procedures.

Families and Caregivers

Families and Caregivers are responsible for supporting the schools health and safety procedures, through adhering to the health and safety procedures, child protection policy and alerting the school to any safety concerns or issues. Parents are a key partner in the children's learning and they support the school by reinforcing our child protection concerns and safeguarding expectations. Parents also support these aims through educating and training staff and family members who are part of their homes.

Students

Students are responsible for taking care of themselves and others through following the schools guidelines for safety of self and others, as well as reporting any concerns or issues to their teaching teams.

Coaches

Coaches are required to adhere to the school's safety policy and procedures as required for all contracted staff. They are responsible for supporting the day to day safety and wellbeing of students in their care.

Volunteers

Volunteers are required to adhere to the school's safety policy and procedures as required for all contracted staff. Volunteers should not accept oversight of students without a member of staff being present.

Consultants and other professionals and resources

External consultants and other professionals are required to follow the school's expectations for health and safety.

Contracted Services

Contractors are required to adhere to the school's safety policy and procedures as required for all contracted staff. Contractors should not accept oversight of students without a member of staff being present.

ROLE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION TEAM

Composition of the Team

The child protection team is composed of the Head of School, Senior School Principal, Junior School Principal, Senior School Counselor, Junior School Counselor and the Director of Health Services.

Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities

The child protection team is responsible for developing guidelines that are designed to safeguard children through education, training and operational procedures. The team meets once a month to: review cases where there are child protection concerns, to develop opportunities for education and ensure guidelines are effective in safeguarding children.

Promoting Education and Awareness

The child protection team develops annual plans for education and awareness for all community members including annual training for staff, onboarding new staff and families as well as ongoing student education.

Responding to Child Protection situations

The team meets on a monthly basis to review reported and ongoing cases of child protection, but can also meet as required for situations that necessitate an urgent response. The team makes decisions together to determine actions that need to be taken and any communication that should follow.

Review of guidelines and resources

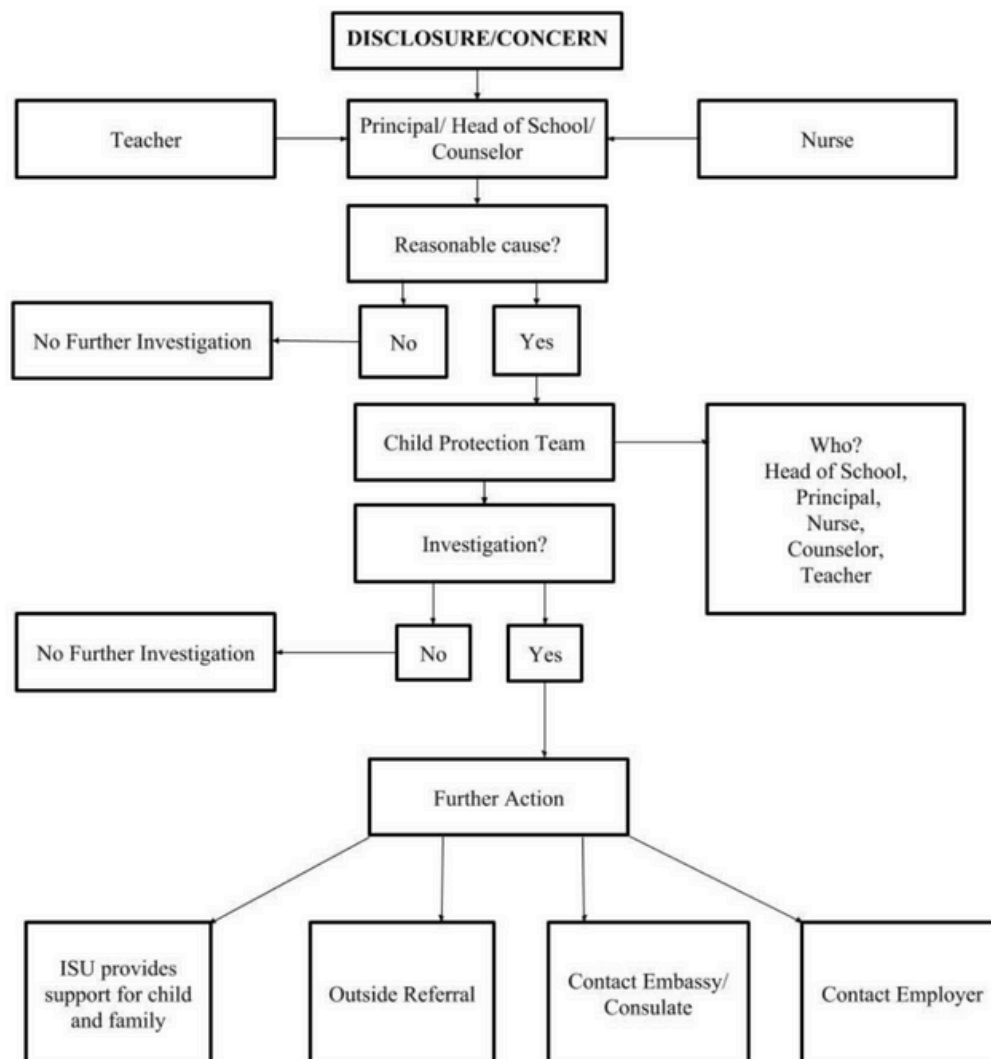
An annual review of procedures and guidelines takes place throughout the year to strengthen practices in safeguarding, based on the school context and the changing landscape of child protection.

APPROACHES TO CHILD PROTECTION

Reporting Pathways

If a child protection concern arises, the following reporting pathways are followed:

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES



Referrals

If a member of staff or member of the community is concerned about a child or suspects child abuse, a referral must be made to the Counselor or Principal in person or via the Child Protection Referral Form as soon as possible. All information shared should remain confidential and not shared with anyone outside of the Child Protection Team. The Counselor and Principal will investigate the situation and determine if it is necessary to convene the Child Protection Team.

Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse

Children or young people may disclose abuse to you. The welfare of the child is paramount. The child's best interests should guide your response. How a disclosure is handled can affect the child's self-concept, sense of shame and blame and long term prospects for recovery from the incident of abuse. The abuse may have been perpetrated by another staff member or volunteer, an adult in the student's immediate or extended family, an unrelated adult or another child or young person or a sibling. In some rare cases, abuse may be perpetrated by a stranger. Regardless of the relationship of the alleged perpetrator to the child, the guidelines for handling the disclosure in a sensitive manner are the same. They are as follows:

- Do not agree to keep their disclosure a secret. If you agree to keep a secret and then make a report, the child will view you as breaking your trust with them.
- Do not lead the child in telling. Your role is to listen, letting the child explain what happened in their own words. Do not pressure the child for a great amount of detail.
- In age appropriate language, praise the child for being courageous enough to tell you about this incident. Assure them that they are understood; that their disclosure is being taken seriously, that you believe the child and that what happened is not their fault and they are not in trouble.
- Explain that you may need to write down information so that you can remember it later. Take notes recording the child's words, descriptions, phrases and terms.
- Take note of the time, date, place and any physical marks on the child resulting from the abuse. Sign and date the notes.
- Respond calmly and matter-of-factly. Even if the story that the child tells you is difficult to hear, it is important not to express disgust or alarm.
- Do not make judgmental or negative comments about the alleged perpetrator.
- Do not make promises to the child that things will get better or promises that you can't keep.
- Do not confront the alleged perpetrator of abuse.
- If the child does not want to go home, this should be considered an emergency. Report immediately to the counselor or administration. Do not take the child to your home.
- Respect the child's confidence. Treat the disclosure as a confidential matter.
- Explain to the child what will happen next and that you must tell someone else to get help; they will need to talk with other people about the incident so that help can be sought.

Privacy

- Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all parties concerned. All documentation must be kept in a secure environment.
- When the HOS feels it is appropriate, the board of management of the school will be informed of the incident; however privacy regarding identities should be upheld when possible.
- When appropriate, the response team may consult with external agencies. Privacy regarding identities should be upheld when possible.

Procedures for Reporting Suspected Cases of Abuse and Neglect

Step 1

When abuse is disclosed or suspected, the Child Protection Team should be alerted. The counselor will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident and will meet with the division principal. In all cases, follow up will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained while ensuring the safety of the child.

The following steps will be taken:

1. Gather all relevant information concerning the child and context of the situation.
2. Document the reported abuse and store the report in a secure location.
3. Report status of case to Head of School (HOS). Determine the course of follow-up actions.

Step 2

If there is reasonable cause for concern, the Child Protection Team and other staff members as needed, will be convened. A plan of action will be developed by the CP Team to assist the child and family. Actions that may take place are:

- Discussions between the child and counselor in order to gain more information.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counselor, or administrator.
- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling.

In cases of severe abuse or where outside authority is deemed necessary, further investigation and possible actions include:

- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concern with the child/family, or to the welfare office at the home-of-record.
- Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.
- Consultation with the school or another attorney.
- Consultation with local authorities.

Step 3

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect:

- The counselor will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The counselor will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.
- The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
- The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists and multidisciplinary teams to update the progress of the child in school.

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the confidential child protection secure folder. In the case of a student transferring to another school, ISU will make every attempt to share this information with the receiving school, to protect the child.

Most cases of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled by the teaching teams, school counselors and principals.

Key areas of support include:

- parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
- student-parent relationships
- mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, grieving

When further support is deemed necessary, referral to outside agencies will be made, for example:

- mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, dissociation, suicide ideation

Cases reported for investigation and outside resources:

- Severe and ongoing physical abuse, neglect and emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse in extreme cases, when families do not stop the abuse or concerns remain about the safety of the child, reports could be made to:
 - The consulate
 - The employer
 - A local authority

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves someone from outside the family, the same procedures will be followed, with the focus of the school's efforts to protect the child and work with the family.

Response

Child protection cases are always treated seriously, with sensitivity and with the child's best interest in mind. The Child Protection Team determines the appropriate response, actions and monitoring required.

Communication

Communication will be made with the person who is referring the case to reassure them that action is being taken. Details of the investigation and situation will not be shared due to confidentiality. Follow up debriefing and counseling will be provided as needed.

If the child would benefit from teachers and staff knowing certain aspects of the situation in order to protect them, communication will be shared with the relevant staff.

Communication with the child's family and other stakeholders will be determined by the Child Protection Team.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Student Programs

Senior School

- Wellbeing

In the Senior School, students' wellbeing is supported through a wellbeing program that is offered once in an eight day cycle. Students are mixed into cross grade level groups based on their workshop choice. The aim of the programme is to ensure that students, teachers and staff are balanced and happy individuals by empowering the development of three key components of wellbeing: positive health, identity and relationships.

Key SEL lessons are offered in the Middle School once in an eight day cycle. In High School, these lessons are planned for throughout the year. In addition the counselor offers individual support or/and small group sessions for students as well as their parents. Child Protection information sessions are run annually at an age appropriate level.

- Advisory

Almost every class in the Senior School is assigned two advisors who will meet with them in their Home Room every morning for registration and for 85 minutes once in an eight day cycle. Grade 10 and 12 each have one advisor per class. The advisor's role is to support smaller groups of students, get to know their strengths and areas for growth, encourage reflection and goal setting and be aware of student wellbeing and progress. The advisor will be an important point of contact for your child and you.

Junior School

The JS counselor works closely with the teaching team/LST to ensure the wellbeing of all students and support as needed in various ways.

Students gain personal, emotional and social skills through the Advisory program that is offered throughout the year. Resources from the lessons are shared with teachers, parents/carers for home use and to reinforce the lesson content

Wellbeing activities can be part of the class lessons, small-group and individual sessions.

Child Protection Team

The Child Protection team consists of the HoS, SS principal, JS principal, the SS and JS counselors and the Director of Health Services. An important part of child protection is prevention through proactive programs for students, teachers, the CP team and the wider ISU Community. Students are empowered through SEL and the Wellbeing programs in both JS and SS. Some members of the Child Protection team are also part of the ASIA Child Protection Group who meet virtually every 2-3 weeks for professional development and training. Members of the team also attend regular Child Protection training to ensure the standards we maintain are in keeping with international best practice. The CP team meets on a monthly basis to review cases of concern, address any issues that may have arisen and engage in professional learning guided by the ASIA CP group.

Teacher and Staff training

The JS and SS counselors ensure that teacher and staff training in relation to child protection happens on an annual basis, as early in the school year as possible. The bus drivers and maintenance team, including ground staff and cleaners, security staff, administration team and catering staff take part in an annual workshop in which they are made aware of the child protection expectations at ISU. The team members receive relevant information and resources.

Volunteer and Coaches training

The counselors work alongside the Athletics Director and After School Activities coordinator to ensure any volunteers or coaches working with our students also receive the child protection training, and are made aware of child protection expectations at ISU. Relevant child protection information is shared with volunteers and coaches by the counselors.

Parents and Guardians

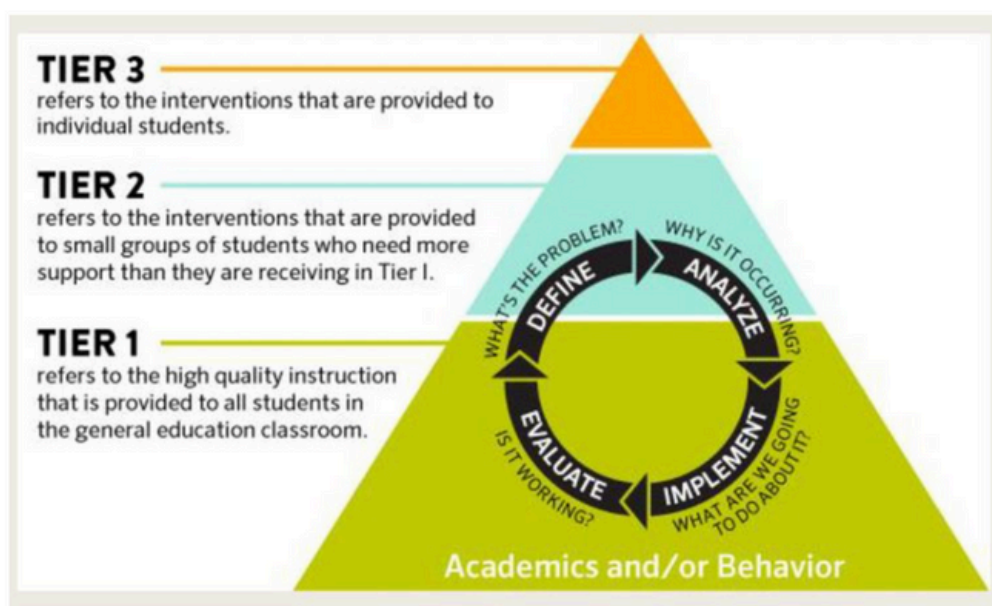
Parents and Guardians are made aware of child protection expectations at ISU. Relevant child protection information is shared with parents and guardians. ISU therefore values, promotes and cultivates Parent-School Partnership. ISU teachers as well as parents share responsibilities to help students learn, fully meet their potential and their educational goals. To build and support this partnership the school counselors collaborate with parents, teachers and school administrators. They promote, foster and support two-way communication between home and school environment. In cooperation with teachers, school counselors provide opportunities for parents to connect with the school and get involved.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Junior School and Senior School

At ISU there are two Counselors that support the general wellbeing of our diverse community, one in Junior School and one in Senior School. Counselors collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, external professionals, organizations and agencies to promote and support wellbeing and the developmental personal growth of the individual.

The counseling service implements a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). This allows us to support the school as a whole as well as the individual student.



Tier 1

- Promote and cultivate a culture of wellbeing in cooperation with teachers and other members of the school community;
- Collaborate with other stakeholders to promote student achievement and development;
- Address the needs of all students through prevention and intervention programs that are part of a comprehensive, solution focused, school counseling programme;
- Proactively serve as advocates for all students;
- Develop core competencies to address the unique cultural needs of the students, including promoting inclusive language and cultural recognition, becoming knowledgeable with respect to cultural bias, supporting students in establishing clubs that are culturally competent
- Help to create a welcoming, inclusive school climate and work to safeguard the human rights of all members of the school community;
- Support parent-school partnership through cooperation with teachers, interaction with parents on regular basis and hosting parent forums
- Help students gain personal insight and develop social emotional competence through whole class or grade wellbeing and SEL sessions.

Tier 2

- Mediate in conflict situations;
- Help students gain personal insight and develop social emotional competence through group sessions

Tier 3

- The point of contact for student's social emotional difficulties;
- Help students gain personal insight and develop social emotional competence through individual sessions
- Help to remove social/emotional/behavioral barriers to learning
- Abide by ASCA's professional school counseling ethics
- Engage in professional development including taking part in regular supervision sessions with qualified mental health practitioners in a confidential platform.

Teaching and Support

The Junior and Senior School Counselors are part of the Learning Support Departments. Each school level has a Student Support Team (SST) that includes the Principals and Learning Specialists. The members of SST meet regularly to go over concerns regarding students' well being and performance at school and plan what actions need to be taken to support them.

Teachers and Learning Support Teachers refer students to the counselors as needed.

Learning Support

We believe that inclusion is a holistic approach that serves to provide barrier-free, strength-based access to all learners and to facilitate solutions that enhance the learning environment.

Junior School:

Teachers co-teach, co-assess and co-plan with grades 1-5 (and consult with EC/K) to facilitate access to learning for all learners. This is done through: EAL instruction, weekly co-planning, planning retreats, differentiated instruction, small group learning and consultation (and more) to ensure teachers and children feel confident at school. Additionally, the team case manager and draft IEPs, facilitate referrals and oversee educational psychologist assessments. Intensive Learning Support is provided for children who are in Tier 4 through a dedicated classroom, a dedicated teacher and two TAs. Multi-disciplinary team meetings are held biweekly to ensure purposeful inclusion and individualized instruction. The Learning Support Department also has a fully qualified Speech Therapist and Occupational Therapist on the team.

Senior School

Students approach learning through many different modalities. Their primary experiences are in their classrooms with their subject teachers. Those teachers plan lessons with their cohort of students in mind, adjusting the delivery of subject content and the ways that students show what they've learned to accommodate for all the unique students in their classroom. Learning support teachers and teacher assistants collaborate with subject area teachers to make sure students receive any accommodations necessary. A Learning Support class is available for students with a specific learning need that has been identified in an Educational Psychologist's report. This is structured time for interventions designed to help individual students in the areas they need to improve to get the most out of their learning at ISU.

Transition

The ISU Counselors work closely with all new students, families and their teachers during times of transition.

Students new to or leaving ISU

The Counselors support those who know they will be moving to another school by offering transition workshops to up skill the students, both leaving and remaining, in coping with what can be a very difficult time. Counselors are also a referral point for new students and their families. The teachers/counselors assign a buddy to new students and regularly check on them in school. Parents and teachers also monitor their progress and wellbeing and can inform the counselors if they feel further support is needed.

Counselors also work with students and families who join during the year, making sure they are able to settle in and receive the necessary help from the School Community. Students are supported and prepared for Grade level transitions through a variety of activities, including 'Jump Up Days' and grade level visits. One of the key transition times is that from Junior School to Senior School, planning for which begins several months in advance.

Transition from Grade 5 to Grade 6

Counselors collaborate with Grade 5 and Grade 6 teachers in facilitating and supporting student transition from Junior School to Senior School. Amongst other things, a 'Jump-up day' is organized for the Grade 5s. This is a chance to visit Senior School, meet and talk to teachers and students, attend some lessons and take part in various activities, aimed at familiarizing them with people and places in Senior School. A peer mentoring program between Grade 5 and 6 is implemented and opportunities are created for Grade 5 students to connect with their Grade 6 mentor and build a supportive relationship. Grade 5 and Grade 6 teachers are also offered the opportunity to spend time in each other's classes to better understand the expectations of students in the different Grade levels. Parents also have a jump up day/workshop to familiarise them with the systems of the high school. Learning Support meets with Grade 5 teachers & JS Learning Support Team at the end of the school year to discuss the transition. PLPs created in EC are passed on. The School counselor meets with Grade 5s and shares a presentation on the upcoming transition. The JS counselor and SS counselor have a handover meeting. Individual support is available for students as well as their parents/carers.

Once the students begin Grade 6, Grade 5 teachers (incl LST) meet with Grade 6 teachers early in the school year to complete the handover. The counselor meets with the new Grade 6 on an individual basis where possible, either formally or informally. Another check in happens before the half-term break in Oct. Any students new to ISU are paired with a buddy in their advisory group. The buddy is guided in supporting the new student.

Transition from MYP to DP

This significant transition in the life of our students is supported and scaffolded in a variety of ways

- An options evening is offered for guardians to help develop an understanding of the subject choices that are available
- An options meeting for students to help develop an understanding of the subject choices that are available
- Teachers offer feedback, support and guidance for preliminary choices to help with final choices
- MYP coordinator meets with all G10s two times a year to support the options process
- An introduction to careers and university counseling is offered
- Students from DP speak to Grade 10 students to help them prepare for the DP program

Grade 12s Transitions

We offer support through intensive college counseling as well as preparatory workshops throughout the year on a wide range of topics covering personal health and safety, relationships and transitions.

The college counselor acts as an academic advisor and helps students with their post-secondary and career plans.

College counseling begins toward the end of Grade 10, starting with interest and aptitude tests, career exploration, and guidance on choosing Grade 11 and 12 courses. During Grade 11, counseling continues and a more concentrated program begins during the second semester of Grade 11. All students attend regular information sessions with the college counselor that allow for guided research leading them to a short-list of universities. We subscribe to BridgeU, a platform that matches students to universities based on their grades, test scores, interests and preferences. For some countries, it also streamlines the application process and allows for the tracking of information and documents. In addition, a number of resources are made available and explained to students to help them research, make decisions about their future and prepare their university applications.

Beginning in Grade 11 and continuing into Grade 12, students are encouraged to meet with the College Counselor to have personalized advising sessions. Parents are also invited to these meetings, which are available through Zoom or in person.

College/University Counseling and guidance at ISU includes:

- Organization of PSAT testing in Grade 10 and Grade 11
- Meeting all students regularly for careers, university/college, and scholarship guidance
- Access to a BridgeU account and advice on how best to use it
- A subscription to YouScience, a platform that tests students to identify personal strengths and interests and recommend a number of careers and university courses that are good matches
- Information sessions for students and parents
- One-to-one meetings with parents and students to discuss applications
- Organization and guidance on SAT testing (held at the school)
- Assisting students to register on Common App and UCAS
- Attendance to local College Fairs when available
- Informing students of online College Fairs, Information Sessions, and relevant workshops
- Transcript preparation and sending
- Guidance on college choices
- Assistance with Personal Statement and Essay writing
- Guidance on requesting letters of recommendation
- Resume and CV writing advice, as needed
- Tips on improving college applications and chances of success
- Advising Grade 12 students on applying for student visas

Adult Support

ISU counselors offer support for parents, teachers as well as other adults in the school community. This happens on an individual as well as a group basis through general talks, educational talks and parent forums.

ISU counselors actively build and maintain strong relationships with external mental health care providers. Referral for additional external mental health care/counseling support for adults in the school community may be initiated by the school counselors in case of more extensive needs.

The counselors are available for all staff in the School, as well as the wider school community, to support them with individual concerns and offer strategies and techniques to improve their personal and professional wellbeing.

Referrals

Counselors work closely with the whole school community, are part of the Learning Support Team and the Child Protection Team. Students in need of internal counseling support are referred to the counselors by teachers, Learning Support teachers, parents or are self-referred. If additional external counseling support is needed, in cooperation with the teaching team, the counselors refer individuals/families to a licensed and known external health care provider.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential UNLESS someone discloses that they or someone else is in danger. Then, it is our responsibility to do whatever is necessary to get help. In this situation, the Counselors will let the individual know when they have to disclose any information to a third party for safeguarding purposes. Sharing relevant information within the teaching team in order to best support the student with her/his learning can happen with the student's consent.

Developing a culture of wellbeing

The ISU programmes offered by the counselors and wellbeing team are designed to support the development of the school community's understanding of their own wellbeing and ways to enhance it.

Counselors help in creating an atmosphere of openness and communication, where school community members feel comfortable sharing about their wellbeing, concerns, as well as stress related issues. They help resolve stress related issues, or refer for external support if needed.

Counselors emphasise and promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle by:

- Living a balanced life themselves
- Showing concerns for the wellbeing of the whole school community
- Providing and sharing relevant information on wellbeing
- Offering targeted programs for students and adults of the school community
- Offering counseling support services as needed
- Supporting individuals and groups in resolving issues
- Taking part in regular supervision sessions with qualified mental health practitioners in a confidential platform to discuss challenging cases, find creative solutions to difficult situations, and to share what's going well.

SYSTEM OF RECRUITING

Procedures for Recruiting and interviewing

- The first step in the annual recruiting process is to determine the position openings we will have for the upcoming school year. This takes place in October with an assessment of any program changes, recommendations for staffing and enrollment projections for the coming school year. Recommendations will be made to the board who approve the staffing numbers. This will be done through the finance committee and the whole board at the November FinCom and board meeting.
- Starting in October discussions will take place between the Head of School and teachers based on their contract status. A decision is made as to whether they will be offered a new contract, a written letter will be provided to express intentions on both sides. The teacher then has until November 15 to respond to whether to accept the contract or not. Contracts will be provided in December based on any changes to the teacher salary scale determined by the board.
- Once positions are known (even in advance of the November 15 deadline), they are advertised on our webpage (www.isu.ac.ug) under the Employment section, and on International School recruiting websites that we are members of: The International Educator (www.tieonline); International School Services (www.iss.edu); Global Recruitment Collaborative, and Search Associates (www.searchassociates.com).
- A teacher may apply by sending their letter of interest, resume and references to the email address of the Head of School (hos@isumail.ac.ug). After a review of the file, communication is sent as to whether they are a suitable candidate or not.
- Together with the principal team we interview teachers using online tools (zoom). Each applicant is interviewed by both the principal and the head of school. Depending on the position other members of staff may be involved in the process. If the candidate is in Uganda, then face-to-face interviews are conducted.
- The first interview usually lasts a minimum of one hour. If both parties would like to proceed, a second interview takes place. Before a decision is made a thorough reference check is completed (minimum of two written confidential references, and two on phone/zoom). A contract may then be offered, and if accepted the teacher signs and scans a copy to return to the school. A file is then made with HR and the process of relocation and orientation begins. Successful teachers must then also submit criminal clearance background checks, medical clearance and other documents required for the work visa process. We have a comprehensive relocation guide and resources that are sent to the teacher. We start our orientation with new teachers virtually with a monthly group meeting in April and May, along with individual check-in meetings in April and June.

Reference Checks and Criminal Background Checks

All staff must have multiple reference checks from previous employers and criminal background checks. This includes interpol clearance for all staff from Uganda if employed locally or from previous countries of employment if employed from outside of Uganda. A reference check form will be completed for each staff member to confirm completion by a member of the leadership team and kept in their personnel file organized by the Human Resource team.

Specific questions that are asked of references:

1. Have you had any concerns about the individual related to child protection and safeguarding?
2. To your knowledge has the individual had any complaints or cases filed against them related to child protection and safeguarding?
3. To your knowledge, has the individual had any disciplinary action taken against them?

HEALTH AND WELLNESS CLINIC

Health and wellness provides care for students, staff and parents to ensure that they can be as healthy as possible. We provide care for acute and chronic illnesses first aid, health education, health screening. We are a resource for the school community about the health care system in Uganda.

First aid training

- First aid training is conducted for all members of staff yearly. Teachers also have the option of attending an external certified training. First aid kits are placed in different locations in the school with AEDs at major points, which are regularly checked by the Director of Health Services.

Health screening

- We carry out health screening for all students focusing on height, weight, vision and hearing. A follow up letter is sent to the parents.

Healthcare system in Uganda.

- We carry out orientation for all new teachers and parents where we talk about the different health services in Uganda, procedures to access care, immunization schedule and common ailments in Uganda.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Sleeping Arrangements and Privacy When on Field Trips

From time to time, staff may be required to accompany students on trips, including, for example, Week Without Walls and sporting matches away from home. When away on field trips with students, staff must adhere to the Code of Conduct at all times. When arranging sleeping configurations, the following must be adhered to:

- Students have a right to feel safe and protected at all times. It is the responsibility of staff that students have sleeping arrangements that do not compromise their safety.
- A one to one bed to student ratio should be applied to all sleepover venues. In the case in which an accommodation can not supply a one to one ratio, the student's parents will be contacted. If parents and students agree, two students may share a bed.
- It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that students are not left in the care of unauthorized persons.
- Students need to be provided with privacy when bathing, and dressing and students should not be exposed to adult nudity.

Transporting students

- It is advisable that staff should decline all invitations to travel in cars driven by students.
- The transportation of students by staff to or from an activity in a private vehicle is strongly discouraged.
- It is recognised that it is not practical to prohibit it and that from time to time school staff may be required to transport children in their own vehicle. In this instance the staff's supervisor and child's guardian must be notified.
- The School strongly discourages staff from being alone in a vehicle with a student. It is recommended that when adults transport students, another school representative or adult should be present. This action is designed to protect both the child and the adult.
- Only in the case of an emergency when all other possible options have been explored and a second adult is not available, are adults permitted to transport students alone in a vehicle. When this occurs it needs to be communicated to the parent and to the immediate supervisor before the journey takes place.
- In the case whereby the school hires a bus company to take students on an activity, care needs to be taken to ensure that a student should not be left alone with the bus driver or any other unscreened, unsupervised third party.

APPROACHES TO CRISIS

Overview

Alongside protecting the immediate physical safety of students and staff, it is a priority of the school to provide an appropriate counseling intervention in situations that affect the psychological well-being of students. Thus, this document is meant to summarize procedures and policies to be followed in the event of a situation or behavior that affects the emotional or psychological health of students, staff or families. It is intended to guide the Head of School, Principals, Counselors, staff, and teachers in responding to such situations. These procedures cannot anticipate all possible scenarios, however the manual shall be reviewed regularly to provide updates and changes to best reflect current knowledge and available resources.

Communication and Media

In the event of media interest in a school situation, all questions will be referred to the Head of School, who will handle all communication.

Support Provided

The crisis team is made up of the division principals, the counselors, the Director of Health Services and the Head of School. In the event of a crisis, the team convenes and coordinates their action plan and responsive steps. This typically involves the counselors offering social and emotional support to those affected, and other members of the team offering practical and logistical support, using local resources as needed. If deemed necessary, a staff meeting will be convened, where specific information and procedures will be discussed. A written announcement will be given out to all teachers, to be read and discussed with the students at the beginning of the next session/class. The Counselors and perhaps other determined support specialists will be available throughout the day to provide support to both students and staff. Teachers are encouraged to handle student expressions of grief or loss in their classes by talking openly about the occurrence. Any student who is excessively distraught, should be referred to the counselor or identified support specialists. It is healthy for all classes to return to their normal routine as soon as it is possible.

Follow up

Another staff meeting will be held to discuss the intervention process and provide staff with a time for reflection and support. Teachers are reminded to continue to monitor the behaviour of all students, especially those identified as "high risk" and report them to the HOS/Principal/Counselor.

PARTNERSHIPS

Local Agencies

ISU Counselors initiate and maintain contacts, and review cooperation and support options with local agencies, within Uganda on regular basis by:

- Initiating and maintaining contacts with local professionals
- Networking with colleagues from other international schools in Uganda

A referral contact list is made available and regularly updated.

Online resources (counselors)

Online counseling resources are made available to students, parents and teachers to support with:

- Learning social/emotional skills
- Inter and intrapersonal skills growth
- Developing positive coping strategies
- Support general personal development growth
- Transition

International School, Regional Resources

Counselors regularly meet with their colleagues from other International schools in Kampala. This serves:

- To discuss best practices in school/student support
- Exchange knowledge and experiences
- Keep each other informed about external support contacts
- Keep each other informed about PD opportunities, workshops, forums etc.
- Advise and support one another

UCA Ugandan Counseling Association

Counselors working in Uganda are required to register with UCA. A number of workshops are offered annually by UCA.

RESOURCES

[Association of International Schools \(AISA\) Child Protection Guidelines](#)

[AISA Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice \(DEIJ\) Resource Guide](#)

[Council of International Schools Child Safeguarding Resources](#)

[EDIT - International Educational Consulting \(specializing in social-emotional education and digital citizenship\)](#)

[Common Sense Media](#)

[The Global Safeguarding Collaborative](#)

[International Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#)