



# CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY



# AIŠV GUIDING STATEMENTS



## OUR MISSION



## OUR VISION

Prepared to realize our personal potential, pursue our passions  
and positively impact our ever-changing world.

*Pasiruošę atskleisti savo asmeninį potencialą, siekti tikslų  
ir pozityviai veikti besikeičiantį pasaulį.*

## OUR VALUES

Empathy | Open-Mindedness | Curiosity | Accountability | Perseverance

*Empatija | Atvirumas | Smalsumas | Atsakomybė | Atkaklumas*

# AISV CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

AISV believes all students have the right to be assured of safety and protection from harm while at school. Towards this end, the school has a duty and responsibility to create and sustain a school culture of awareness, prevention and responsiveness to child protection through the development and enforcement of a child protection policy and protocols related to child protection for AISV students, their families, and visiting students.

## **AISV will adhere to the following laws and school requirements:**

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 19 (protection from all forms of violence) of which host country Lithuania is a signatory. Article 19 stipulates that governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
- The Lithuanian Child Rights protection System which provides the legal process and resources for child protection in Lithuania.
- Central and Eastern Europe Schools Association (CEESA) child protection requirements.
- Middle Schools Association of School Accreditation and Council of International Schools Accreditation child protection requirements.
- US Office of Overseas Education child protection requirements.

## **AISV will assure that students will be protected through the following protocols:**

1. AISV staff (new hires and currently employed staff) will submit a criminal background check to the administration Human Resources Manager. Staff must be clear of any background associated with child abuse. The Director has the discretion to determine if other issues of criminal background check warrant the non-employment at AISV.
2. AISV volunteers who will offer an ongoing school related activity (e.g. after school activity) or chaperoning of an activity (e.g. field trip or CEESA event) will submit a back-ground check to the Human Resources Manager. This does not apply to parents who come to a one-time classroom event, a school assembly, or the like.
3. AISV staff will report suspected child abuse of a student to the school administration in a timely manner (within 24 hours of suspicion). The administration will respond within 24 hours of receipt of suspicion.
4. AISV administration and staff will provide annual education to students, parents and staff on child protection awareness, prevention and responsiveness.
5. AISV will follow CEESA child protection requirements when participating in a CEESA sponsored event.
6. AISV will assure that staff working with students is informed and proactive in the implementation of appropriate best practices of child protection. Specific practices will be identified in the AISV Employee Handbook.
7. AISV will assure the volunteers who offer an ongoing school related activity will receive training to be informed and proactive in the implementation of appropriate best practices of child protection.

8. AISV will assure campus security through the enforcement of gate access protocols for staff and visitors (e.g. usage of badge) and suspicious behavior and access immediately reported.

9. AISV will assure the E-Safety policies and protocols are in place for students and staff.

10. AISV will assure that students are safely supervised (e.g. adequate staff: student ratio) to safeguard child protection during school hours or during a school sponsored event after school hours.

11. AISV will assure confidentiality is maintained with all incidents of reporting and staff/volunteer screening matters related to child protection.

## INTRODUCTION

The health, safety and well-being of all our children is of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school.

All staff employed at AISV must report suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse or neglect. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations respective to this policy.

## RECOGNITIONS AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF VILNIUS

This policy is based on the Child Protection work of Jakarta Intercultural School and acknowledges the advanced work in Child Safeguarding JIS has developed. This policy has been developed in line with the International Task Force on Child Protection, The Association of International Schools in Africa, the relevant Lithuanian Child Protection Law and the United Nations Convention on Child Rights.

Nations Convention on Child Rights. We also thank The Central and East European Schools Association (CEESA), the US State Department and Office of Overseas Schools and the Regional Security Officer in Vilnius who contributed to the development of this policy and are acknowledged as Child Safeguarding advocates. This policy is endorsed by the AISV School

Board and will be reviewed annually.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy ensures that all staff in our school can follow the necessary procedures with regard to a child protection issue.

### It aims:

- To raise awareness and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse;
- To ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues;
- To inform all parties of the correct procedures to use in the case of a child protection issue.



## DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The American International School of Vilnius has a rich and diverse community with multiple cultural beliefs, values and practices. To respect the global nature of the community, for the purposes of our Child Safeguarding policy, we have chosen to follow the World Health Organization's (WHO's) definition of abuse and neglect. The WHO declares:

*"Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, 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."*

For the purposes of this document a CHILD is defined as being any person under the age of 18 or any person enrolled at AISV as a full-time student, even if that person has reached his/her 18 birthday. A detailed explanation of the different types of child abuse and possible symptoms is given in our emergency and safety Handbook.

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)

There are three main elements to our Child Safeguarding policy and procedures:

- Prevention through the creation of a positive school atmosphere and the teaching and pastoral support offered to students.
- Protection by following agreed procedures, ensuring all staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Safeguarding concerns.
- Support for students who may have been abused.

## ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Child Safeguarding is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with students. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the AISV Leadership Team and the AISV emergency and safety Committee.

## THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR (CSC)

The CSC is responsible for ensuring that the Emergency and Safety Committee is convened at least twice a year to:

- Review the Child Safeguarding Policy and The Emergency and Safety Handbook (annually)
- Plan and report on training.
- Review and consider lessons learnt from specific incidents.

The names of those carrying out these responsibilities for the current year are listed in the AISV Emergency and Safety Handbook.

## SAFER RECRUITMENT

It is the school's responsibility to ensure, as far as is practicable, that its employees are suitable people to work with children. AISV has implemented a number of checks during its recruitment process with the aim of ensuring that:

- Candidates with a tendency towards child molestation are deterred from applying to the school.
- Candidates who have a criminal record or about whom there have been some concerns about their suitability to work with children are not offered a position.
- Successful candidates fully understand their responsibilities towards Child Safeguarding while employed at the school.

- AISV maintains appropriate records that might be required in a possible future investigation or inquiry.

AISV will work with the Recruitment Agencies to ensure that the reference checks and background screening undertaken by such agencies compliments AISV's own recruitment protocols. Background checks will be carried out for all local staff and for those expatriate staff who are not able to provide a police clearance certificate or there are concerns about the reliability of such certificates.

## EMPLOYMENT RECORDS

The following records in accordance with our GDPR policy will be maintained by AISV in respect of every employee, either in hard copy or digital format.

- Full CV (any gaps in employment accounted for)
- Reference checks that cover the last two places of employment
- Police Reports from Home of Record
- Background Check ordered by AISV and performed by an external agency (ESA)
- Certified copies of education certificates/degrees
- Signed contract that includes "Acknowledgement of all handbooks"
- Record of Child Safeguarding training.

## TRAINING

All adults who are regularly on AISV's campus will be expected to undergo appropriate training on a regular basis. Initial training will be delivered in-house, normally during the orientation process. Staff will also be expected to complete safety and security classes online through Educare and earn the certificates. Certification of training taken must be filed with the HR department. Training will also be given to volunteers and coaches who regularly interact with students on campus.

## REPORTING CONCERNS

"Doing nothing is not an option."

All adults have a duty to act if they have a concern about a child's welfare. Abuse can take many forms. Frequently both victims and perpetrators work hard to conceal that abuse is taking place. A concern may just be a "gut reaction" to something heard or observed which doesn't feel right. It may be more specific by way of a witnessed event or disclosure. Whatever the nature of the concern, adults will be expected to:

- Recognize their concern.
- Make a written report by completing a Record of Concern Form, Annex 6 which can be downloaded from AISV website.
- Pass on their concern to the Child Safeguarding Coordinator within 24 hours.
- A specific disclosure by a student must be reported before the close of the school day.

### Concerns or alerts may be as a result of:

- Observed student behavior (physical, emotional, change in behavior)
- Hearsay (third party disclosure)
- Disclosure (specific report made by a student directly or via a trusted adult)
- Observed adult behavior (breach of Code of Conduct)

## RECORD KEEPING

Record keeping is essential to the gathering of information and intelligence and detailed notes must be kept of all meetings relating to a Child Safeguarding issue.

A log of key events, documents, meetings and final conclusion as a historical record of each case will be maintained. The detailed, confidential case files relating to the incident will be gathered and separate guidelines will be developed on what and how evidence should be collected and/or preserved at the time that concern is reported in case of a



subsequent investigation. Completed case files, with all original documentary evidence, will be kept for up to 10 years after the student graduates.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is an issue, which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with students, particularly in the context of Child Safeguarding. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the student. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a student nor should they agree with a student to keep a secret, as where there is a Child Safeguarding concern this must be reported to a Child Safeguarding Coordinator and may require further investigation in line with school procedure. Other staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding Child Safeguarding on a “need to know” basis only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held confidentially to themselves.

In cases where a Report of Concern involves the disclosure of a Breach in the Code of Conduct observed by a colleague, reports must be made direct to the Director of the School / Principals and confidentiality as to the source of the report will be preserved as far as practicable. The Report of Concern will be filed in a confidential file in the HR Department.

## PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

All parents are required to commit to AISV's Child Safeguarding Policy. In particular, parents are required to inform the school if they are going to be absent from town and who will be the designated caregiver in their absence. Other information and training sessions will be provided periodically to all AISV parents.

## USE OF AISV FACILITIES BY OUTSIDE GROUPS

AISV will endeavor to ensure that all community groups and instructors, who use our facilities outside of normal school hours, understand our Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and those coaches and other adults have received Child Safeguarding orientation and training as appropriate.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

AISV Staff and parents (upon written request) have access to specific emergency and safety procedures as well as a list of additional resources and annexes, in the Emergency and Safety Handbook. These provide useful background reading for those who need further clarification or guidance.