

Code of Conduct for Child Safety – Staff and Volunteers

Introduction

The welfare and safety of children are paramount to the success of XIA. XIA's intent is to provide a safe and loving environment where children are educated and cared for in a way that allows them to become all they are capable of being. This includes valuing them, regarding them positively, and treating them with respect and care.

Having a common set of expectations will also serve to protect adults interacting with children from invalid reports of inappropriate behavior. By putting these guidelines into place, an adult's interaction with a child is much more transparent to others and less likely to be interpreted incorrectly. Adults¹ (including local and expat employees and volunteers) assume the full burden of setting and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all interaction with children.

In light of our multinational workforce, the definitions and guidelines below take into consideration international definitions of child sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and neglect.

The most effective way to prevent abuse of children is to be vigilant. By being vigilant in adhering to the following standards for interaction with children, we hope to protect children from abuse.

This Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following expectations of staff and volunteers. In any situation with children, be it inside the classroom, at recess, or on field trips, we should use as many of these safeguards as possible with a minimum of at least one. This will reduce risk and demonstrate professionalism and wisdom resulting in healthy interaction with children.

Child Abuse Definition

Four kinds of abuse: Physical, Neglect, Sexual Abuse, and Emotional Abuse

Physical- An act that results in non-accidental injuries to a child

Neglect- The failure to provide for a child's basic physical, educational, or emotional needs

Sexual Abuse- The involvement of a child in sexual activities with an adult or another child

Emotional- When a parent or caretaker acts or fails to act in a way that has caused or may cause serious behavioral, cognitive, or emotional disorders.

Visibility

All work with children should be planned in a way that minimizes risks as far as possible. This includes being visible to other adults when working with children.

This can be accomplished by planning activities in areas where other adults are present and at a time when other activities are occurring.

Overcoming Isolation

At least two unrelated adults should be present in work with children that is off school grounds. An adequate number of adults should supervise youth events, especially overnight activities. Isolation can also be overcome by avoiding being alone with one child. For example, take two or more children to the bathroom together, rather than only one; drop off siblings last from the bus, or employ the principles of visibility (explained above) or accountability (explained below).

Accountability

All staff and volunteers are expected to interact with children in a mature, capable, safe, caring, and responsible manner, with a high level of accountability. All staff and volunteers are responsible for giving and accepting feedback from others in order to maintain a high level of professionalism and integrity in interactions with children.

When teaching a child involves one-on-one contact, the following procedures should be followed, as applicable:

- Always be accountable to other adults regarding your interactions with children (your plans should be known to others beside yourself).
- Parents and/or supervisors are to be notified beforehand of any activities with children, for example, before transporting a child, keeping a child after school, a youth activity, or when tutoring a child.
- Counseling or other necessarily confidential meetings with children should be done in a place where the adult and child are visible to others such as in an office with a window in the door and only when another adult is in close vicinity, aware that the meeting is occurring, and willing to stay in the vicinity until it is completed.
- In an emergency situation, such as needing to transport a child alone or supervise a child alone, find an additional person to be involved if at all possible, or notify the office staff.

Balancing Power and Control

When working with children balance the age, size, strength, power, and authority between staff and children to help to lower risk. This can be done by such things as sending two same age children to the bathroom together with an adolescent or adult helper, dropping off siblings last from the bus, or having a friend play in the room while talking to a student after school, or inviting two or more students to your home to work on a project.

Supervision

Supervision also reduces risk. XIA administration should periodically and randomly inspect classrooms, offices, work areas and other areas where children and adults are together.

Differential Treatment

Staff and volunteers should avoid favoring or showing differential treatment to particular children to the exclusion of and in the presence of others, or excluding children in a derogatory or embarrassing way in the presence of others.

Technology

Technology should be used appropriately to protect children from abuse and exploitation. For example, filters should be used on computers to prevent individuals from using, downloading, or showing inappropriate internet content to children.

Discipline

Discipline should be used to teach and correct rather than punish. Our intention here is to clarify which actions are more likely to approach physical or emotional abuse than they are to be good, healthy forms of discipline. The following actions may involve abuse and are to be avoided: derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation or shaming, publicly singling out a child for negative treatment or exclusion, yelling at (loud speech that harms by bringing emotional degradation) or belittling a child or other forms of hostile or rejecting treatment. Other behaviors to be avoided include: hitting (including slapping) or any behavior that assaults a child. Also, to be avoided, are pushing or holding a child against their will outside the goals of protecting them from danger, providing them medical care or keeping them from harming themselves or others.

Touch

Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children but unhealthy touch is abusive, the following guidelines apply:

- Touch should be in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult.
- Touch should be open rather than secretive. For example, a hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult. It should be with the child's permission and resistance from the child should be respected.
- Touch should always communicate respect for the child. Staff and volunteers should avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they are able to do for themselves, including dressing, going to the bathroom, etc.

The following signs of affection are generally appropriate: verbal praise, side hugs, or shoulder to shoulder hugs. For smaller children, touching their hands, faces, shoulders and arms, arms around their shoulders (when culturally appropriate), hugs, or holding them when others are present. The following behaviors are inappropriate or may be perceived as inappropriate and should not be engaged in: touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs; showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child; sleeping with a child not your own or lying on a bed with a child not your own; flirtatious or seductive looks; any form of affection that is unwanted by the child; sexually suggestive or explicit language, showing sexually-suggestive pictures or videos or playing sexually suggestive games with a child; any behavior that could be

interpreted as sexual in nature. Adults should monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

Verbal Interaction

Adults should use words to support and encourage a child, such as praise, positive reinforcement, and appropriate jokes. Inappropriate verbal interaction includes the following: shaming, belittling, humiliating, name calling, using harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate the child, cursing, or making derogatory remarks about the child, their family, and/or their place of origin. Inappropriate verbal interaction also includes inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development, telling derogatory or sexual jokes, making sexually suggestive comments, telling inappropriate secrets, or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with children.

Reporting

Individuals may make an oral or written complaint of sexual harassment/child abuse, or retaliation if they:

- believe they are the subject of sexual harassment/child abuse, or retaliation;
- have knowledge of sexual harassment conduct/child abuse, or retaliation; or
- believe that they have been retaliated against for making a good faith complaint or report of sexual harassment/child abuse, or for participating or aiding in an investigation of such complaints.

Reporting Procedures

Timely Reporting: Complaints of sexual harassment/child abuse, retaliation or other violations of this policy shall be made within 30 calendar days of the sexual harassment complained of. Nothing in this policy prevents anyone from submitting a report of sexual harassment/child abuse, retaliation or non-compliance with this policy of which they have witnessed or have knowledge of.

A. Complaints by Students:

General- A student, or a parent/guardian on the student's behalf, may make a complaint of sexual harassment/child abuse or retaliation to the school principal or teacher. The principal or teacher shall investigate the matter and, if the complaint is substantiated, commence appropriate disciplinary action against the offending student.

If a student, parent or guardian making the complaint to the school principal or teacher feels that the intervention rendered by the school principal or

teacher is insufficient he or she may appeal the matter within 15 calendar days to the School Board.

B. Principal/teacher responses to complaints:

Complaint- When an individual seeks resolution of a sexual harassment/child abuse or retaliation complaint, the principal or teacher will begin an investigation within fifteen calendar days after receiving notice of the complaint.

Investigation- After receipt of the complaint, the principal will begin an investigation into the complaint. At the conclusion of the investigation, the principal will prepare and issue a summary report containing a synopsis of the evidence and findings. Both the complainant and respondent will receive notification of the investigation outcome and determination.

Disciplinary Determination- Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken according to the investigation findings at the discretion of the principal. The disciplinary action will be within the following range: Education and Admonition; Warning; Suspension; Expulsion; or criminal proceedings.

Final comments:

We recognize that there are different standards of sexual related conduct among different cultures. Where there are differing standards, the most conservative standard will be the standard that is followed.

Parent Involvement

Parents should be informed of all planned school activities and be expected to sign a consent form. Parents should be encouraged to participate in these activities.

Monitoring Child-to-Child Behavior

The following actions may involve abuse or inappropriate behavior of one child to another and are to be avoided: bullying, hazing, derogatory name-calling, ridicule or humiliation, publicly singling out another child for negative treatment or exclusion, child-to-child inappropriate sexual touch, inappropriate sexually explicit language, showing of sexually explicit images, hitting, slapping, pushing, holding against their will, or otherwise assaulting another child.

Acknowledgement Statement

This acknowledgment is to be updated annually for all staff and volunteers. It is the responsibility of XIA administration to ensure that all staff and volunteers, local and national, have signed this statement prior to beginning work with children.

I acknowledge that I have read the above, agree to abide by it and (for all staff) have attended XIA's training in Child Safety Awareness and Prevention.

I declare that I have not engaged in sexual harassment, sexual abuse, physical abuse, a pattern of emotional abuse, or neglect of a child. If I have engaged in any of these abusive actions, they have been reported to the school board and I have either successfully concluded the required follow-up or am engaged actively in it. Further, I have never been the subject of a complaint, disciplinary action, or dismissal by an employer, church, ministry, or other volunteer organization following an allegation of any such acts. Nor have I been the subject of an investigation of such acts by civil authorities. If I have been the subject of an allegation of such acts, regardless of the outcome of the allegation, I have notified the principal or hiring authority. I understand my responsibility to report abuse and other inappropriate conduct toward a child to the principal or board member who will implement reporting procedures. I understand XIA takes allegations of child abuse seriously and that abuse in any form will not be tolerated. I understand that XIA will investigate any report of abuse. I understand that my sending organization will be notified of any allegations and XIA will work with them as the Child Safety Procedures are implemented.

Signature

Printed Name

Date