



# **COLEGIO INTERAMERICANO CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

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This policy was created based on an international model template available at ICMEC (International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children).

We would like to thank and recognize the following sources:

- Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA). Child protection program guide.
- The work of international task force on Child Protection (ITFCP)\* and accreditation agencies in the recommendation of Child and Youth Protection standards.
- International task force on Child Protection (ITFCP) recruitment committee recommended screening practices and other recommendations.
- International Centre for missing and exploited children (ICMEC) education portal's checklist and summary resources (<http://www.icmec.org/education-portal/>).

*\*The work of the International Task Force on Child Protection (ITFCP) has been undertaken by a coalition of 90+ volunteers, leaders of international education organizations, school leaders, counsellors, business and security managers and teachers, school accreditation, inspection and recruitment professionals, working collaboratively across professions with dedicated law enforcement officials and the medical community. It is this broad collaboration and diverse perspective from a variety of roles which has enriched their discussion and results. From its origin in May of 2014, its charter has been to apply its collective resources, expertise, and partnerships to help international school communities address child and youth protection challenges.*



## **OUR VISION**

The vision of Colegio Interamericano is to be recognized as the best dual diploma internationally accredited school in Guatemala

## **OUR MISSION**

To prepare global citizens with the knowledge, skills and values to lead and improve a rapidly changing world.



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## **I. Introduction, purpose and essential communications**

At Colegio Interamericano we desire that our students have the best available educational experience that is free from any type of bullying, neglect, or abuse of any kind. In this regard, and in keeping with Colegio Interamericano's core values and mission statement, the Board of Directors has adopted a **Child and Youth Protection Policy** to guide our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety, and care of children in attendance at our school. This policy will be presented to all community members at the beginning of each school year and reinforced as necessary.

The Colegio Interamericano Child and Youth Protection Policy is based on international law and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in which Guatemala is also a signatory, as well as the local law regarding children rights, particularly the **Law for Integral Protection for Children and Adolescents** (known as "*Ley Pina*", Decree number 27-2003) and the **Law against sexual violence, exploitation and human trafficking** ( Decree number 09- 2009).

As a result of enrollment of a student at Colegio Interamericano, our parents, as well as other community members who have contact with our students, agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted by the Colegio Interamericano Board. All of us at Colegio Interamericano want you to know that we genuinely value our partnership with you in providing for the safety and care of our students. It is for this reason that Colegio Interamericano has endorsed a Child and Youth Protection Policy that defines the standards by which all Colegio Interamericano students should be treated with respect and dignity at all times.

### **Educational Components of Colegio Interamericano's Child and Youth Protection Policy**

As part of our overall educational programs and specific to our shared responsibility to educate children, to protect them, and to learn and grow in a safe environment, Colegio Interamericano will:

- 1) Provide age appropriate lessons for all grade levels to help students understand personal safety, needs, and rights.
- 2) Provide parent materials and information sessions to help parents better understand our programs and policy.
- 3) Annually train faculty and staff to recognize and report issues of abuse and neglect.



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We will work together with parents and other community members to ensure that our children are safe and are knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities to themselves and to each other so that they can grow and learn free of fear in a safe and supportive environment.

Any member of the school community is invited to contact the safeguarding lead, the level counselor, or principal regarding any specific questions they may have.

## **Colegio Interamericano´s Child Protection Unit:**

**Safeguarding Lead:** Technical Director  
Victoria Pira de Quiñónez  
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**Counseling Department:**  
Anahí Peláez- Head Counselor/ Counselor gr. 9-10  
Aura de Mejía - ECE Counselor  
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## **II. Colegio Interamericano corresponding policies and procedures**

Colegio Interamericano's policies and procedures approved by the Board of Trustees that speak to the key components for implementation of the school's Child and Youth Protection Policy as contained in this document and the school's related or more detailed safety framework/program is referenced as follows:

### **Child and Youth Protection Policies & Reporting Requirements**

Colegio Interamericano aims to ensure that all students are given a safe learning environment by maintaining appropriate practices and supervision in the school.

The school will establish appropriate procedures to ensure proper reporting of suspected child abuse which may have occurred in or out of school. Such reporting is the responsibility of any employee who suspects that a child/youth may have been abused and must also include provisions for self-reporting of abuse by students. The school will investigate all reports submitted and take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the child/youth in accordance with Guatemalan law.

Colegio Interamericano endorses the Convention on the Rights of the Child\* of which the host country for the school, Guatemala, is a signatory, and seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. Colegio Interamericano will publish this policy annually and make it available to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy annually to students, will provide annual training for all staff, and will make every effort to reinforce hiring practices to ensure the safety of children.

In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, Colegio Interamericano will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process.

This policy was endorsed by the Colegio Interamericano Board of Trustees (Fundación Educativa Guatemala).

**\*Sources:** Amnesty International Unofficial Summary of the UN Rights of the Child: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/children-s-rights/convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child>; and Actual Convention on the Rights of the Child: <http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/uncrc.asp#Nineteen>.



### III. Summary of key responsibilities and applicability

#### Introduction:

The Colegio Interamericano's Child and Youth Protection Policy is based on international law and on the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** in which Guatemala is also a signatory. In particular, the two key articles which address protection to children are:

Article 19 – Protection from abuse and neglect: *The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.*

Article 34 – Sexual exploitation: *The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution & involvement in pornography.*

In Guatemala, the **Law for Integral Protection for Children and Adolescents** (known as “*Ley Pina*”, Decree number 27-2003) and the **Law against sexual violence, exploitation and human trafficking** ( Decree number 09- 2009) promote the protection of children and youth in the country, particularly through the following articles:

Article 54. Protection from abuse. *The State shall prevent and protect children and adolescents from any type of abuse or neglect.*

Article 56. Sexual abuse or exploitation. *The State shall protect children and adolescents from any type of sexual abuse and exploitation.*

#### Key Responsibilities (Child and Youth Protection):

- All members of Colegio Interamericano's community are required to take reasonable precautions and/or measures to protect the safety and well-being of the school's children and youth from bullying, neglect, and child abuse including physical, emotional or sexual abuse, and sexual or commercial exploitation.
- All school community members contribute to the school being a “safe haven” for children.

#### This is best accomplished through:

##### Adult community members:

- Appropriate personal conduct whenever interacting with children and youth. Colegio Interamericano understands that “appropriate personal conduct” is also dependent of cultural expectations and the need to comply with the legal and ethical expectations and requirements regarding child/youth abuse within the country in which the school operates. In this regard, and as noted in this policy, the school attempts to inform and train applicable community members with regard to these factors.





## **Colegio Interamericano Child and youth protection policy**

- Awareness or increased understanding of potential harmful conduct or behaviors in the prevention or mediation of potential abuse or neglect.
- Removal of a child or youth from an immediate dangerous situation.
- The reporting of inappropriate conduct, neglect, or abuse; or reasonable suspicion thereof.

### **Children and Youth:**

- Children and youth should also exemplify respectful and dignified conduct toward one another, and other members of the community in conjunction with the school's code of conduct.
- In consideration of age and grade appropriateness, children and youth should receive informative sessions for appropriate/inappropriate conduct and the reporting of reasonable incidents/procedures.

### **Applicability:**

Members of the school community in which this policy applies include:

- All employees of Colegio Interamericano and employees of the school's affiliated organizations.
- Individuals and entities with contractual relationships with the school.
- Board members, governors and other school leaders.
- All students, parents, and legal guardians; in particular, with respect to upholding.
- The school's code of conduct, respect for one another, and the reporting of incidents/reasonable suspicions.
- All school chaperones and volunteers who work with children and youth, or participate in school programs and activities involving children and youth.
- Visitors, vendors, or guests on school premises.

## **IV. Codes of conduct**

The public and private conduct of faculty, staff, employees, students, and volunteers acting on behalf of the school can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact, or can cause great harm if inappropriate. In addition, Colegio Interamericano recognizes that every individual in the school community should be treated with dignity and respect, emphasizing our special obligation toward children.

In this regard, Colegio Interamericano requires members of the school community to review and periodically sign-off on applicable codes of conduct. The school's codes of conduct help define and clarify the parameters of professional behavioral expectations and practices. In addition, the school's "Common Agreement" is a set of written guidelines



designed to safeguard children and all members of the school community, and ensure safe teaching, behavior, and practice within the school.

For a copy of the school's code of conducts for applicable community members, see Appendix A.

## **V. Important policy terms, definitions and indicators**

Definitions of abuse are complex and based in various cultures of 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, either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides much of the definitions that are based in understanding the impact of certain behaviors.

For the purpose of this policy, we will define abuse as a form of maltreatment of a child.

- Abuse or neglect by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm
- Children may be abused in a family, or in an institutional, educational, community setting by those known to them or by others unknown to them (ex. via the internet).
- They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

### **Physical abuse:**

- Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means, causing skin bruising, burns, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function death; and/or
- Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning; and/or
- Committing acts that are cruel or inhumane regardless of observable injury. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain and/or mental suffering; and/or
- Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the criminal code or school policy; and/or
- Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury to, or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child; and/or
- Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above.



### **Possible indicators of physical abuse:**

- 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, etc.).
- 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 laceration, abrasions, or fractures.

### **Neglect:**

Failure to provide for a child's basic needs within their own environment.

### **Forms of neglect:**

- **Physical** (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision-this would include failure to provide proper adult guardianship such as leaving children unsupervised at home for any extended period of time.
- **Medical** (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment); and/or
- **Emotional** (e.g., a pattern of actions, such as: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to abuse alcohol or other drugs, specific examples may include verbal humiliation, refusing to acknowledge presence of child, invasion of privacy for no specific reason, violent threats, etc.).

### **Possible indicators of neglect:**

- Child is unwanted, or basic needs are not met.
- 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.
- Child is left for extended periods of time (age appropriate) without parents or a guardian.
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of emergency.

### **Important notes:**



- Behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse or neglect.
- Together with other indicators, such as family dynamics, they may warrant a referral.

### **Sexual abuse:**

- Sexual abuse is committing or allowing any sexual offense to be committed against a child as defined in either the criminal code of the country or the school policy, or intentionally touching either directly or through clothing, the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child for other than hygiene or child care purposes.
- It can include kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, involving children in looking at/or in the production of: sexually inappropriate images, grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- Sexual abuse has some different characteristics of child abuse that warrant special attention. While physical abuse is often the result of immediate stress and not usually planned, sexual abuse requires planning with results that are more insidious. The planning, referred to as **grooming**, often results in victims accepting the blame, responsibility, guilt and shame for the sexual behavior of the offender. Sexual abuse requires far more secrecy than other forms of child abuse, so it is more difficult to report.
- Many victims, through the process of grooming, are taught that sex is a form of love, so they tend to love their offender and often present as happy and well-adjusted children with no negative symptoms because of their perception of being loved.

Working with the sexual offender cannot be done by school counselors. Outside sources of professional assistance would be consulted.

### **Possible indicators of sexual abuse:**

- Sexual knowledge, behavior, or use of language not appropriate to age level.
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns.
- Venereal disease in a child of any age.
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to 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.
- Pregnancy, especially at a young age.
- Extremely protective parenting.



### **Emotional/ Psychological abuse:**

- Emotional abuse is the continuous emotional mistreatment of a child. It can happen by itself, for example through the form of humiliating or degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement or isolation.
- It can include rejecting or ignoring a child, making them feel worthless or unloved, inadequate, the constant pressure on children to achieve to a far higher level than they can attain, using degrading language or behaviours, threatening them or encouraging them to develop behaviours that are self-destructive, preventing the child from interacting socially with other children or adults, experiences of bullying, including online bullying, the exploitation or corruption of children.

### **Possible indicators of emotional abuse:**

- Severe developmental gaps
- Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
- Severe symptoms of self destructive behaviour – self harming, suicide attempts, engaging in drug or alcohol abuse
- Overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean
- Displays attention seeking behaviours or displays extreme inhibition in play
- When at play, behaviour may model or copy negative behaviour and language used at home
- Violent behavior (screaming, cursing, threatening)
- Cruel teasing, bullying
- Telling lies

### **Sexual exploitation:**

Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of a child.

### **Commercial Exploitation:**

Any form of exploitation of children for the purpose of financial gain by an individual. Examples include:

- Exploitation through child labor and in accordance with international law;
- The sale and trafficking of children and adolescents;
- The removal of human organs or tissues, as well as their marketing;
- The contemporary forms of slavery and practices similar to debt bondage, the condition of a servant with forced labor without payment;



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- The work whose nature or the circumstances is likely to harm the health,
- safety or morals of children and adolescents;
- The recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts or military activities
- The use of children and adolescents for the illicit activities such as the production and trafficking of drugs and other narcotics.

## **Bullying**

A specific type of aggression (physical, verbal, online or social) which includes behavior that is intended to harm, disturb, intimidate, or humiliate and is characterized by an imbalance of power between individuals or groups.

Please refer to appendix D for more information on the Anti-bullying policy at Colegio Interamericano.

## **Other safeguarding concerns:**

- Drug and alcohol use and abuse, including electronic cigarettes
- Relationship abuse
- Sexting
- Cyber-etiquette and cyberbullying
- Self- inflicted situations, including self-harm and eating disorders
- Suicidal thoughts



## VI. Reporting of incidents, suspicions and follow-up procedures

### What happens when a teacher has reasonable cause to believe?

Indicators of abuse and neglect as identified in this policy will be used by the staff member as a guideline for reporting to the counselor or the Principal, who will determine if the case needs further attention. A report must be made when a staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect. All reports are kept confidential.

### What happens after suspected abuse or neglect is reported?

Teachers and staff play a vital part in helping to protect children by being aware that abuse exists and being prepared to take action should they suspect abuse. It is not their responsibility to investigate, but they do have an obligation to pass on disclosures, allegations or concerns to the counselor or level principal so that they can act to protect a child should it be necessary.

### Recommendations for staff to handle disclosure:

- If a child or young person tells you that they are being abused; be welcoming, it may have taken a great deal of courage for them to approach you and they may not do so again.
- Stay calm and listen very carefully.
- Provide reassurance and support.
- Allow the child to tell you at their own pace.
- Report IMMEDIATELY

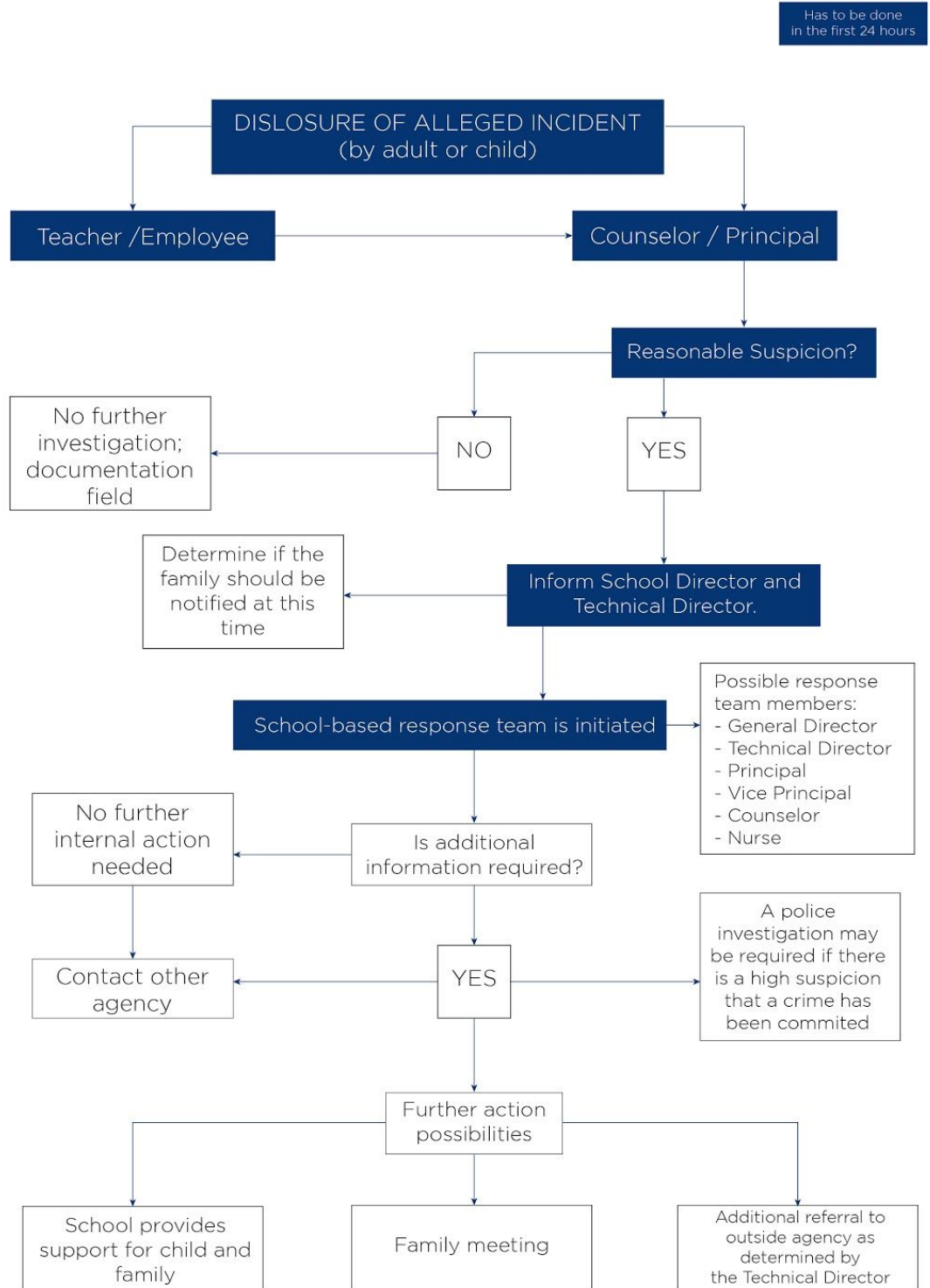
### Procedure to report:

- 1) Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report their suspicions to the counselor, or to the principal.
- 2) In all cases, the **Principal** will be notified.
- 3) It is the responsibility of the Principal to inform the **Technical Director and the General Director** of the suspected case of child abuse or neglect.\*
- 4) All staff, faculty and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect.
- 5) All school employees are also required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect.
- 6) All reports of abuse and neglect must be made to the counselor within 48 hours for immediate response.

\*In the event that the abuse or neglect involves a staff member or faculty member of the school, the Principal will also follow board and school policies (See appendix C).



## Steps followed after disclosure







## **Clarification of “steps to follow after disclosure (from flow-chart)**

### **Procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect**

#### **Step 1**

- When a child/youth reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the teacher will seek advice from the grade level counselor or principal within 24 hours.
- The counselor or principal will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident and will form a school-based response team as needed to address the report.
- The response team may include the Safeguarding Lead (Technical Director), General Director, School Nurse, Counselor, and other individuals as the Principal and Safeguarding Lead sees fit.
- In all cases, follow-up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained.
- The following procedure will be used:
  - 1) Interview staff members as necessary & document information relative to the case.
  - 2) Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in school.
  - 3) Report status of case to General Director and Technical Director.
  - 4) Determine the course of follow-up-actions.

#### **Step 2**

Based on acquired information, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child/youth and family.

Actions that may take place are:

- Discussions between the child/youth and counselor in order to gain more information. Depending upon the age of the child/youth, these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with dolls to elicit more information as to what may have occurred.
- In-class observations of the child/youth 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.
- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concern with the child/youth/family, or to the welfare office at the home-of-record.



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- Consultation with the representatives of the country of the involved family.
- Consultation with the school or another attorney.
- Informal consultation with local authorities.

**Most cases of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled by school counselors, such as those involving:**

- Student relationships with peers.
- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home.
- Student-parent relationships.
- Mental health issues such as sadness, low self-esteem, grieving.

**Some cases will be referred to outside resources, for example:**

Mental health disorders, such as (but not limited to):

- Depression, psychosis, dissociation, suicide ideation
  - Self- inflicted harm (including self- cutting, eating disorders)
  - Intent to harm others.

**Cases that will be reported for investigation and outside resources/agencies:**

- Severe and ongoing physical abuse or neglect
- Sexual abuse and incest.

**In extreme cases when families do not stop the abuse or concerns remain about the safety of the child/ youth, reports could be made to:**

- Procuraduría General de la Nación
- Human Rights (Defensoría de la niñez y adolescencia)
- The consulate
- The employer
- The home-of-record welfare office.

**Step 3:**

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

- 1) The counselor will maintain contact with the child/youth and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- 2) The counselor will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.
- 3) The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.



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4) The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists to update the progress of the child in school.

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the student's school confidential records file. Records sent to schools to which their student may transfer will be flagged to let the receiving school know there is a confidential file for the student.

The school will make every attempt to share this information only as needed to protect the student.



## VII. At risk characteristics and Child Protection protocols

### The Colegio Interamericano Child and Youth protection Policy works for the child/ Youth, the family and the community

Research indicates that international communities are as prone to child abuse as communities in their home country. Child abuse is a multi-faceted issue that involves dynamics of the child, the family, and the community. The school's policy works to respond to all three levels:

#### THE CHILD

At risk children, including those with difficult temperament, defiance, health issues, social, emotional or academic difficulties, and those unaware of their rights to protection.



**Colegio Interamericano** promotes values -especially respect-, study and social skills, teachers rights to protection, healthy relationships, assertiveness, support systems.

#### THE FAMILY

At risk characteristics include parents under stress, families with perceived less support and access to resources, socially isolated, unusually high expectations placed on their children, parental history of inappropriate discipline as children.



**Colegio Interamericano** works with parents to illustrate appropriate discipline, networks with community and health services and child protection practices.

#### THE COMMUNITY

At risk characteristics include limited laws on child protection, limited resources to expat families, unusually high work stress placed on parents, acceptance of inappropriate behavior towards children (excessive corporal punishment), unusually high expectations placed on children to achieve.





**Colegio Interamericano** promotes values -respect-, study and social skills, teachers rights to protection, healthy relationships, assertiveness, support systems.

## **VIII. Colegio Interamericano commitment to additional best practices (“ Child and Youth Protection Program”)**

### **What does a Child and Youth Protection Policy and Program mean for the Colegio Interamericano Community?**

Colegio Interamericano is defining a standard for the treatment of all children and youth - that they be treated with respect and dignity at all times.

Children and youth have legal and moral rights to their individuality, that when protected, will develop into the ability to meet the needs of the family, community, and global society. Child protection standards defined by Colegio Interamericano, encompass all cultures and international law. When given reasonable cause to believe that these rights are violated, Colegio Interamericano will seek all available resources to restore those rights.

While the Colegio Interamericano Child and Youth Protection Policy is intended to disclose key components and related procedures for the school’s overall child and youth safety framework, the school also strives to maintain additional guidelines and “best practices” procedures for the school’s ongoing and pro-active child and youth protection program.

Some of those additional areas in which the school is also committed to with respect to its comprehensive Child and Youth Protection Program, but in which limited details have been included in this policy, include:

- Roles of Child Protection Teams.
- Recruitment/screening assessments and background checks for new hires.
- School curriculum considerations related to child and youth protection.
- Training requirements for leadership, staff, parents, and students (the school has a scheduled program of regular, systematic professional training for volunteers, contractors, faculty, and staff on student safeguarding, child abuse prevention, recognition, intervention, and reporting).
- Other formal learning programs throughout the school experience related to child protection may cover areas such as bullying, personal safety, physical abuse, manipulation, grooming, online safety, healthy sexual behavior, neglect and negligent behavior, self-harm, staying safe away from home, commercial exploitation and disclosing abuse. (These programs are to be delivered by members of faculty or external providers who are trained in these areas).
- Overview of anti-bullying policies (including online/virtual safety)
- Special considerations for student trips & related transportation and lodging issues.



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- School safety and security considerations (school environment, building and facilities, protective equipment).
- Whistle-blowing (anti-retaliation) procedures.
- Procedures/response for dealing with alleged staff offender.
- Procedures/response for dealing with student who has been harmed.
- Procedures for domestic violence in employee families.
- Relationships with local resources & community partnerships & support agencies (*the school develops meaningful and effective relationships with external organizations and bodies that are able to provide appropriate support and advice on matters related to child protection*).
- Public communication of the school's child protection policy/procedures.
- Confidentiality and record-keeping procedures.
- Self-audit protocols (adherence to child and youth protection policies and procedures are reviewed with sufficient regularity and systematically).
- Community members' acknowledgment of obligations concerning child protection policy/applicable codes of conduct.



## Appendix A: Colegio Interamericano Code of Conduct

### For Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Staff, Volunteers, and Others Effective Date: 2018

**This Code of Conduct (“Code”) serves as a guide to ethical conduct and professional behavior standards at Colegio Interamericano**

Colegio Interamericano is committed to the safety and protection of children and all members of our school community. The Code applies to all faculty, staff, outsourcing employees, visiting fellows, volunteers and students who represent the school and who interact with children or young people in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity.

#### **Introduction:**

The public and private conduct of faculty, staff, employees, students, and volunteers acting on behalf of Colegio Interamericano can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact, or can cause great harm if inappropriate. We must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work, including procuring safe and healthy environments for all of our students.

The purpose of this Code is to:

- Insure the health, welfare and safety of our students and other members of our school community.
- Define and clarify the parameters of professional behavioral expectations and practices with regard to our school.
- Assure our parent and community stakeholders, accreditation agencies, and others of the accountability of the educators/staff who work at our school.

**Background Checks** – Although Colegio Interamericano understands that no background checks are 100% reliable, Colegio Interamericano conducts professional background screening of the school’s personnel prior to employment and reserves the right to conduct periodic screenings of the school’s employees and other affiliates or contractors as may be

deemed appropriate to insure the safety of our children and staff.

**School Community Standards** – The following standards are intended to outline expectations and accountability for those individuals at our school who assume the important responsibility of working with children.

**Disciplinary Action** - Failure to maintain good moral and ethical standards with regard to children and model professionalism with colleagues, parents and others in the school community as may or may not be defined exclusively in this Code may result in reprimand, censure, or dismissal.

#### **Our School Community Standards:**

**Standard 1: Good Moral Character & Personal Fitness** — Because of the nature of their trusted positions, educators and staff members must exhibit good moral character and personal fitness. This is defined as the traits necessary to have contact with, teach, and/or perform supervision of children. These traits include but are not limited to those described in the school’s handbook policies and in this Code.

In addition, all employees who work with children must undergo a **background check** providing



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reasonable assurance as to the lack of conviction of any crime involving:

- The physical neglect of a child.
- The physical injury or death of a child.
- The sexual exploitation of a child.
- Sexual offenses involving children.
- The production, distribution, reception, or possession of child pornography.
- The sale or purchase of a child.
- A conviction of any crime that would call into question the individual's worthiness to work with children.

**Standard 2: Ethical Conduct toward Student**— School employees and support staff should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and out of the classroom. They are also responsible for maintaining **physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries** in such interactions.

**Unethical and/or Illegal Conduct** that also violates such boundaries includes, but is not limited to:

- Striking, hurting, or causing a student physical pain.
- Physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses.
- Engaging in any harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, sex, sexual identity, national origin, religion, or disability.
- Covert or overt sexual behaviors involving students.
- Any sexual advance or fostering an inappropriate relationship with a student; either written, verbal, or physical.
- Sexual intercourse or committing any unlawful sexual act.
- Seductive speech or gestures.
- Indecent exposure.
- Furnishing or allowing students to consume tobacco,

alcohol, illegal/unauthorized drugs or inappropriate reading materials.

- Any other act of child abuse—including physical and verbal abuse, child endangerment, or acts of cruelty to children.

**Communication with Children** – is governed by the key safety concept of transparency. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between Colegio Interamericano parents, administration, teachers, personnel, volunteers, and minors:

- All email exchanges between a minor and a person acting on behalf of the school are to be made using a school email address. If an exception needs to be made, the Division Principal should approve the request, for educational purposes only.
- Faculty, staff, and volunteers who use any form of online communications including social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and text messaging to communicate with minors should request approval from the Division Principal, for educational purposes only.
- Electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.

**General Physical Contact** -Physical contact with children can be misconstrued both by the recipient and by those who observe it, and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. School employees and support staff should show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially children and youth, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration.

**One-on-one Meetings & After-School Related Activities** – Interactions with a





child or youth are best held in a public area or in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with an open door or window that provides visibility; including informing another adult when appropriate. The same prudence should be applied for after-school activities.

**Student Discipline** – School personnel and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child and should adhere to the school's handbook policies on discipline.

**Standard 3: Ethical Conduct towards Professional Colleagues** — Ethical conduct between colleagues and other community members upholds the following principles:

- A colleague does not engage in any verbal, physical, or sexual harassment of another colleague. **Sexual harassment** includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances and invitations, requests for sexual favors, unwanted physical contact, as well as other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as the display or transmission of sexually suggestive objects, pictures or cartoons; physical gestures of a sexual nature; sexual epithets, jokes and insults; or any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Harassment can also be based on characteristics other than sexual or gender related, such as race, religion, national origin, sexual identity, or disability. It can take the form of epithets, jokes and insults or other forms of mistreatment.
- A colleague does not make false statements about other colleagues; falsify or misrepresent his or her credentials, school-related activities, or the school community.
- A colleague does not reveal confidential information about colleagues unless required by law.

**Standard 4: Ethical Conduct toward Performance and Confidentiality** —

Ethical conduct by teachers and staff includes:

- Student Assessment & Reporting – Teachers must accurately report and record students test scores and provide fair and reliable assessments. Teachers are also strictly prohibited from assisting students during the taking of any standardized tests.

Teacher Hiring & Evaluation Process – Supervisors should engage in practices that involve clearly defined rubrics, designed to ensure success, fairness, process integrity, and reliable evaluations.

- Falsification or Misrepresentation of Facts or Documents – School personnel must avoid the falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or the erroneously reporting of facts, reports, or other documents as may be requested from time to time from the school's administration, outside police or governing authorities, or in the course of an official investigation.
- Unauthorized Professional Practices – Engagement in unauthorized professional practices such as the practice of medicine, including psychiatric medicine, or providing legal, financial, or medical advice (except in emergency situations where such behavior is used to protect the life of a student or colleague) is strictly prohibited.
- Other Professional & Ethical Practices -- includes maintaining the **confidentiality** of students and staff academic, health, disciplinary, and other personal records; and having an understanding as to when **transparency** is necessary (e.g., student has a nut allergy) in order to promote the health, welfare or safety of students/staff.

**Standard 5: Ethical Conduct in the Use of Alcohol or Controlled Substances in the Course of Working Hours** — Faculty, staff, employees, and volunteers should refrain from the



illegal possession and/or illegal use of controlled substances and/or alcohol at all times, and from the use of tobacco products, alcohol and/or drugs when working with children.

**Standard 6: Ethical Conduct toward Remuneration and Gifts**

— In the course of professional activity, coercing or forcing a student or parent to provide remuneration for items, services or favors as a private transaction is not allowed. This includes offering to pay students for favors, or taking money from students in return for goods or services. Other ethical conduct considerations are as follows:

- Vendors - School personnel are prohibited from accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal gain in which the appearance of a conflict of interest may exist.
- Gifts - School personnel should also not accept or give gifts to children without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- Tutoring - School personnel should adhere to the school's handbook policies with regard to tutoring students or other services.

**Standard 7: Ethical Conduct toward Honoring Employment Contracts**

— School personnel should honor all of the terms as contained in their employment contracts other than for unforeseeable reasons in which the school may formally release the employee from the contract prior to the employee abandoning any of its provisions.

**Standard 8: Ethical Conduct toward School Property and Funds**

— the unauthorized, misuse, theft, or intentional damage of school property and the misappropriation of school funds is a violation of school policies and subject to severe discipline.

**Standard 9: Ethical Conduct toward Reporting Incidents**

— School

personnel must intervene when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that children are being abused in any way; or any other violation of this Code. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported to the appropriate school authorities as further described in handbook/policy of the school. In particular, the following are prohibited:

- Knowing failure to report physical abuse or sexual misconduct by another school employee, parent or adult.
- Knowing failure to inform the Head of School, counselor or authority about the commission of an act of unprofessional conduct by another educational practitioner.

**Standard 10: Ethical Conduct toward Acknowledgement and Adherence to this Code**

— Members of the school community to which this Code applies must read this Code in its entirety and periodically sign-off; that is, agreeing to all of the Code's standards as summarized below.



## **Appendix B: Colegio Interamericano statement of acknowledgment of code of conduct**

I promise to strictly follow all of the rules and guidelines as contained in the school’s Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth participating in the school’s programs. The Code includes the following key areas of my responsibility. I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to children and youth under the auspices of Colegio Interamericano, I am subject to a criminal history background check.

**I will:**

- To the best of my ability, promote the good health, welfare, and safety of all members of our school community and uphold high ethical standards.
- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with children and/or youth in settings that are open and visible to others; as well as never be alone at school activities without another adult being notified or present.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth, while adhering to the school’s policies on student discipline.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children – when necessary – only in ways that are appropriate, public, and non-sexual.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
- Avoid transactions with students, parents, or vendors that may be perceived as conflicts of interest.
- Comply fully with the school’s policies on anti-harassment, representation and confidentiality standards, safeguarding of property and funds, and the honoring of contracts.
- Comply with the school’s mandatory reporting requirements and the school’s policy to report suspected child abuse and other violations of the Code or other school policies.

**I will not:**

- Touch or speak to a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Inflict any physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading children and/or youth.
- Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with children and/or youth.
- Accept or give gifts to children or youth without the knowledge of their parents.
- Communicate with children over unmonitored email.
- Use Twitter or similar forms of electronic or social media to communicate with students except for activities strictly involving school business.

### **Acknowledgement and agreement to comply with the Colegio Interamericano Code of Conduct**

My electronic signature confirms that I have read this Code of Conduct and that I agree to follow these standards. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from Colegio Interamericano.

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## **Appendix C: Abstract from Colegio Interamericano teacher/ staff handbook 2018- 2019**

### **Ethical Conduct toward students**

The Educator accepts personal responsibility for teaching students character qualities that will help them evaluate consequences of their behavior and accept responsibility of their actions and choices. Even when we accept parents are the primary moral educators of their children, we believe all educators and school employees are obligated to help foster civic virtues. The professional educator:

- Deals directly with each student to resolve problems of learning and discipline, according to the school policies and will modify learning tools for students as needs arise to work together with the Support Program team.
- Does not intentionally expose students to physical mistreatment or disparagement.
- Protects the students from conditions detrimental to learning, health or safety at all times.
- Accepts that the relationship with the students is teaching-learning, not a personal one. Any inappropriate conduct from faculty member must be directly reported to the Human Talent Manager immediately.

### **Towards Professional Colleagues**

At Colegio Interamericano, all faculty and administrative staff members have a just and equitable treatment to all members of our community.

As professional colleagues we:

- Do not reveal confidential information concerning colleagues or the school unless required by law, nor make false statements about its community.
- Respect the freedom of choice, ideologies, culture, traditions and preferences of our colleagues and community.
- Relate and treat other colleagues with respect at all times.

### **Towards parents**

Faculty and Administrative staff recognize that parents are our principal client and that teamwork is required to attain the goal of quality education for our students.

- All Colegio Interamericano employees must understand and respect the values and traditions of the diverse cultures represented in the community. Treat parents with respect at all times.
- Educators must make concrete efforts to share with the parents all information that should be revealed in the interest of the student.
- No private enterprises can be promoted with students and families in our community.

### **Towards Practices and Performance**

All Interamericano faculty and staff assume responsibility and accountability for his or her performance, striving to demonstrate personal dignity and competence for the role; endeavoring to maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law.

All faculty and staff at Colegio Interamericano:



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- Accept a position under the responsible basis of professional qualifications, adhering to the terms of his or her contract, this handbook, internal policies and law.
- Respect and does not intentionally misrepresent official policies of the school, and clearly distinguishes those views from his or her own personal opinions.
- Accounts for all funds and goods committed to his or her charge and shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert or use equipment, money or personnel as working tools to his or gain or advantage.
- Does not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.
- Protects the personal data of any member of the school community, in accordance with the provisions of the local law.
- Must not consume alcohol, drugs or smoke on campus and during school activities or comment about his or her consumption preferences or personal opinions with students.
- Is responsible and accountable for complying with the internal programs and procedures, and his or her personal performance in the time frames established by the project owner.



## **Appendix D: Colegio Interamericano anti-bullying policy**

### **Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy**

#### **1. Policy Statement**

1.1 The School is committed to a working and learning environment where people can achieve their full potential free of bullying and harassment. Appropriate action and procedures are needed to try to eliminate bullying and harassment, resolving complaints as swiftly and amicably as possible. School procedures, through the Discipline Committee, will also make provision for disciplinary action to be taken.

1.2 For the purposes of this Policy, references to 'the Interamericano community' includes all members of staff (including outsourced staff on campus), students, parents, visitors and lay governors (Board and Foundation members) of the School. The School expects other relevant parties to comply with the required standards of behavior in this Policy by way of contract.

#### **2. Definition of Bullying and Harassment**

2.1 For the purpose of this Policy:

2.1.1 "A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself." (Dan Olweus, UNESCO)

Bullying includes three important components:

- It involves an imbalance of power or strength, resulting difficult for the target to defend.
- It involves repetitive actions over time, including patterns of relational aggression.
- It involves intentional actions with aggressive behavior that include unwanted, negative actions.

2.1.2 "Harassment is defined as any improper and unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person." ([www.un.org/womenwatch/antiharassment](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/antiharassment))

- Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate or embarrass another or which create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
- Harassment normally implies a series of incidents.
- Disagreement on work performance or on other work-related issues is normally not considered harassment.

2.1.3 Harassment also occurs when a person treats another person less favorably for any reason related to gender identity or sex or because that person has rejected or submitted to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, and has had the purpose or effect described in this section. In this scenario, the person who is treating someone less favorably might not be the person who engaged in the unwanted conduct.

#### **3. Action Against Bullying and Harassment**

3.1 In deciding whether a conduct constitutes bullying or harassment, the School Administration and Discipline Committee will take account of the following factors:

- the circumstances of the case;



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- the alleged victim's (or victims') perception of the conduct;
- whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have had the effect of bullying or harassment, based on the definition above.

3.2 It should be noted that a member of the Interamericano community is personally liable for their actions, which in some instances could lead to legal actions.

3.3 The School may use their own separate procedures to investigate and take appropriate actions to resolve the same allegation of bullying or harassment.

3.4 The School will take appropriate steps to deal with behavior, intentional or unintentional, that results in a breach of this Policy. The School, with the Discipline Committee, will conduct confidential and impartial investigations into allegations of bullying and/or harassment.

3.5 Disciplinary action may be taken if allegations of bullying or harassment are found to be malicious or vexatious.

### **4. Scope of Policy**

4.1 This Policy applies to the Interamericano community and relates to bullying or harassment perpetrated by a school community member. It also includes bullying and harassment by or against any other party who is contracted to abide by this Policy.

4.2 The School will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment within its community or against its members, which may go beyond the physical premises and normal business hours of the School, such as conduct outside of School, at events and trips abroad or on social media that is brought to the attention of the School.

4.3 Bullying and harassment can occur between any members of the community.

### **5. Responsibility of the Interamericano Community**

5.1 All members of the Interamericano community should:

- prevent bullying and harassment by being sensitive to the reactions and needs of others, and ensuring that their conduct does not cause offence;
- discourage bullying and harassment by making it clear that such conduct is unacceptable, and supporting colleagues and peers who are taking steps to stop the harassment;
- understand bullying and harassment by attending training sessions and/or seeking advice from the School's counselors or other School representatives.

5.2 The School is committed to:

- taking steps to eliminate bullying and harassment and other unlawful discrimination, as well as to actively promote equality to provide a collegiate, lawful and harmonious working environment for all the members of the community;
- taking appropriate action when it is aware that bullying or harassment may be or is taking place;
- raising awareness to help members of the INTERAMERICANO Community identify and deal with bullying and harassment.

### **6. Monitoring of Bullying and Harassment Cases**

6.1 The School can compile anonymous information about the number, nature and outcome of bullying and harassment cases each academic year.

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