ISZL

CHILD PROTECTION HANDBOOK

SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITY



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LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents,

At ISZL, the safety and well-being of our students are central to every decision we make. Our commitment to child protection and safeguarding informs how we design our curriculum, structure our classrooms, and shape our co-curricular programmes. We believe that all children, regardless of their background or culture, have the right to grow and learn in a safe and supportive environment. Ensuring this is a responsibility we all share. This handbook outlines the systems and practices ISZL has in place to uphold these rights and create a culture of safeguarding across our school. If you are reading this because you have a concern about a child, please turn directly to page 7, where you will find clear guidance on the appropriate next steps. ISZL fully endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which our host country, Switzerland, is a signatory. In particular, we draw your attention to the following articles:

Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect them.
Article 12: Every child has the right to express their views, feelings, and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.
Article 19: Governments must do all they can to ensure children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, and mistreatment.
Article 39: Children who have experienced harm must receive support to help them recover their health, dignity, and self-respect.

By enrolling your child at ISZL, you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted by the ISZL Board of Trustees. We value our partnership with you in providing for the safety and care of your children. The ISZL Child Protection Policy defines standards by which ISZL students should be treated at all times, and identifies courses of action should concerns be raised.

As part of our shared commitment to child protection, ISZL will:

- Deliver age-appropriate lessons to help students understand their rights and personal safety.
- Inform all community members of our safeguarding procedures and promote a culture of attentiveness and care.
- Provide responsive support to students when concerns are raised.
- We encourage you to review this handbook carefully. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's counsellor, school nurse, Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead, or me directly.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and trust.

Kind regards,
BARRY DEQUANNE
ISZL Director



ISZL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

ESSENTIAL AGREEMENTS

The welfare of our children is the school's paramount concern. All ISZL staff are committed to providing a caring, safe and supportive environment that promotes wellbeing for all students. We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff, volunteers and Board members, have a full and active part to play in protecting our children from harm. For the purposes of this handbook, the word "child" refers to any student at ISZL.

DEFINITIONS

ISZL has adopted the definition of child abuse and neglect as defined by the World Health Organization:

"Child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results 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. Exposure to intimate partner violence is also sometimes included as a form of child maltreatment."

THE FOLLOWING ISZL-SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS APPLY:

Physical abuse

Any action that results in deliberately hurting a child, which could cause injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts, including corporal punishment.

Emotional abuse

Anything that causes significant and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development such as bullying, belittling, making them feel worthless, or unloved.

Sexual abuse

When a child is forced or persuaded to take part in, or witness, sexual activities. This does not have to be physical contact and it can happen online.

Neglect

The persistent failure to ensure that a child's basic physical, mental, and/or psychological needs are met (lack of food, lack of adequate supervision, delayed or denied medical attention, etc.).

THROUGHOUT THIS HANDBOOK, THE FOLLOWING SAFEGUARDING TERMS ARE USED:

Child Protection Officer: Also known as a CPO, is a trained individual responsible for coordinating and overseeing child protection efforts within an organisation. They ensure that concerns are reported and acted upon appropriately.

Child Protection Response Team: A group of trained Child Protection Officers responsible for responding to child protection concerns within an organisation. The team operates under the leadership of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and includes at least three members. Its composition is flexible and may be adjusted based on the nature and needs of each specific case. The team works collaboratively to assess risks, coordinate appropriate actions, and ensure that affected children receive the necessary support and protection.

Consent: The informed, voluntary, and mutual agreement to participate in an activity. In child protection, it is es-

pecially important to ensure children understand their right to say "no" and to have their boundaries respected.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Also known as a DSL, is an identified staff member who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in a school or organisation. They manage concerns, referrals, and work with external agencies as necessary.

Duty of Care: A legal and moral obligation held by individuals and organisations to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in their care. It requires taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm.

Grooming: A manipulative process used by perpetrators to gain a child's trust and lower their inhibitions in order to exploit or abuse them. Grooming can happen in person or online.

Identity-based Harm: Abuse or discrimination directed at a child based on their identity, such as race, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, or cultural background. It includes bias-based bullying and hate-motivated behaviour.

Peer-on-Peer Abuse: Harmful behaviour where a child or young person abuses another child or young person. This can include physical violence, sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, and coercive control.

Prevention: Actions and strategies aimed at stopping abuse before it happens. This includes education, awareness-raising, and building safe environments that reduce risk and strengthen protective factors.

Safeguarding: The proactive measures taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm, including abuse, neglect, and exploitation. It involves creating safe environments and supporting children's development and wellbeing.

Safe Touch: Physical contact that is appropriate, respectful, and necessary for the care and comfort of a child. Examples include a high-five, a pat on the back, or helping with physical needs when done respectfully.

Self-Report: When someone discloses a safeguarding report related to their own behaviour, actions or experiences. Self-reporting is encouraged and promotes a transparent and trusting environment.

Trusted Adult: A grown-up or adult that a child feels safe with and can go to for help or support. Trusted adults listen, believe the child, and take action to protect them when necessary.

Unsafe Touch: Physical contact that is inappropriate, unwanted, or causes harm or discomfort to a child. This includes any touch that is sexually abusive, aggressive, or violates personal boundaries.

THE AIMS OF THIS POLICY ARE:

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence, and independence
- To promote an environment where students know how and when to report concerns related to safeguarding
- To raise the awareness of the ISZL community of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in sharing concerns and reporting possible cases of abuse
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and to ensure the school contributes to assessments of need and support for those children
- To emphasise the need for effective communication between all members of staff
- To set out our procedure to be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including the police and Swiss Child Protection authorities
- To ensure that all staff working within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including relevant background checks and mandatory annual child protection training

PROCEDURES

STAFF VERIFICATION AND TRAINING

All ISZL staff are provided with the document *Guidelines for Safer Working Practices* and are expected to read and follow its guidance in line with the school's standards. To ensure the suitability of prospective employees to work with children, ISZL conducts police checks, reference checks, and verbal reference verifications as part of the recruitment process. All staff at ISZL complete child protection training on an annual basis. All Child Protection Officers (CPOs) at ISZL are trained at a higher level of safeguarding through the Council of International Schools (CIS) and internal training facilitated by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

HANDLING REPORTS

All cases of suspected child abuse or neglect require careful, confidential and prompt inquiry. All ISZL staff must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever they have cause to believe a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse or neglect. ISZL community members (including students) are encouraged to report safeguarding concerns to an ISZL Child Protection Officer or online. In serious or significant cases, *the local child protection authorities will be contacted* (see page 8). Should a staff member be concerned that our procedures are not being adequately followed, they have the right to liaise privately with these authorities. In the case of allegations against an ISZL staff member, ISZL will conduct a prompt inquiry in accordance with the administrative procedures for this policy, keeping the safety of the child(ren) at the highest priority.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. Information about a student will be disclosed to other members of staff only on a need to know basis.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing
- Should there be a need to refer a child to local authorities, this intention should be communicated to their parents/carers, unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal inquiry
- Any files or documents recorded on the computer of a staff member will be deleted from that computer once the item has been saved in the MyConcern database

RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT OUR PROCESSES

If there is a concern that the school's safeguarding system is failing to adequately address a situation of abuse or neglect, the issue should be brought to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Director, or Director. Should there be serious doubt in the ability of the school's systems to adequately address a safeguarding concern, individuals may raise their concerns directly with the local authorities.

REPORTING PROCESSES

SECTION 1
CONCERNS RELATED TO AN ISZL STUDENT

IDENTIFYING WHAT CONSTITUTES AS A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN:

Education and prevention are central to ISZL's safeguarding approach. We are committed to ensuring that all members of our community understand what constitutes a safeguarding concern. Topics such as consent, safe and unsafe touch, grooming, different forms of abuse, peer-on-peer abuse, identity-based harm, and how to report to a trusted adult are integrated into the ISZL curriculum and the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Scope and Sequence. Our Child Protection Officers also work collaboratively to promote awareness and implement proactive measures to help keep students safe. Community members are encouraged to consult with a Child Protection Officer or the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are uncertain if something constitutes a safeguarding concern.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS:

ISZL encourages all community members to report safeguarding concerns. We have a team of Child Protection Officers (CPOs) that work closely with our Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure all reports are followed-up on in a timely manner. Community members can either report their concern directly to a Child Protection Officer, online via the Parent Portal, or by emailing concern@iszl.ch.

ISZL students are encouraged to always report safeguarding concerns to a trusted adult at ISZL. While the trusted adult may or may not be a Child Protection Officer, staff are trained to ensure that all reports are documented and communicated to a CPO or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

ISZL High School Students also have access to the digital platform MyConcern and are able to make an anonymous report. ISZL uses a digital platform called MyConcern to record, manage, and report concerns relating to students. It allows the Designated Safeguarding Lead to build a picture of a child protection case from multiple stakeholders. Only the specified notification groups of the divisional Child Protection Team can see the concerns raised, so confidentiality is maintained.

If the matter is urgent (i.e. the child is in immediate danger or is at-risk), the staff member must inform a Child Protection Officer immediately and then file a MyConcern report afterwards (within 24 hours). Every logged concern is received by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Director, and the Director. Other team members may receive the concern depending on the notification group assigned by the person reporting the concern or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

AFTER MAKING A REPORT

All child protection concerns are treated with strict confidentiality. To safeguard the privacy and wellbeing of those involved, the Child Protection Response Team may not be able to share outcomes or updates with the individual who made the report. However, anyone who raises a concern is encouraged to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead with any questions, while understanding that specific details may not be disclosed.

1. STEP 1: REPORT IS MADE

After an initial review of the report, a Child Protection Officer or the Designated Safeguarding Lead may form a Child Protection Response Team to review the concern and consider next steps. A record of this meeting is documented in the MyConcern platform.

A Child Protection Officer will be recused from participating in an inquiry under the following circumstances:

- If they are the parent or a close family friend of the child involved in the concern
- If they have a personal relationship or connection with the individual accused
- If they request to step back due to personal or extenuating circumstances

In all cases, information will be documented on MyConcern and strict confidentiality will be maintained. The following procedures will be used:

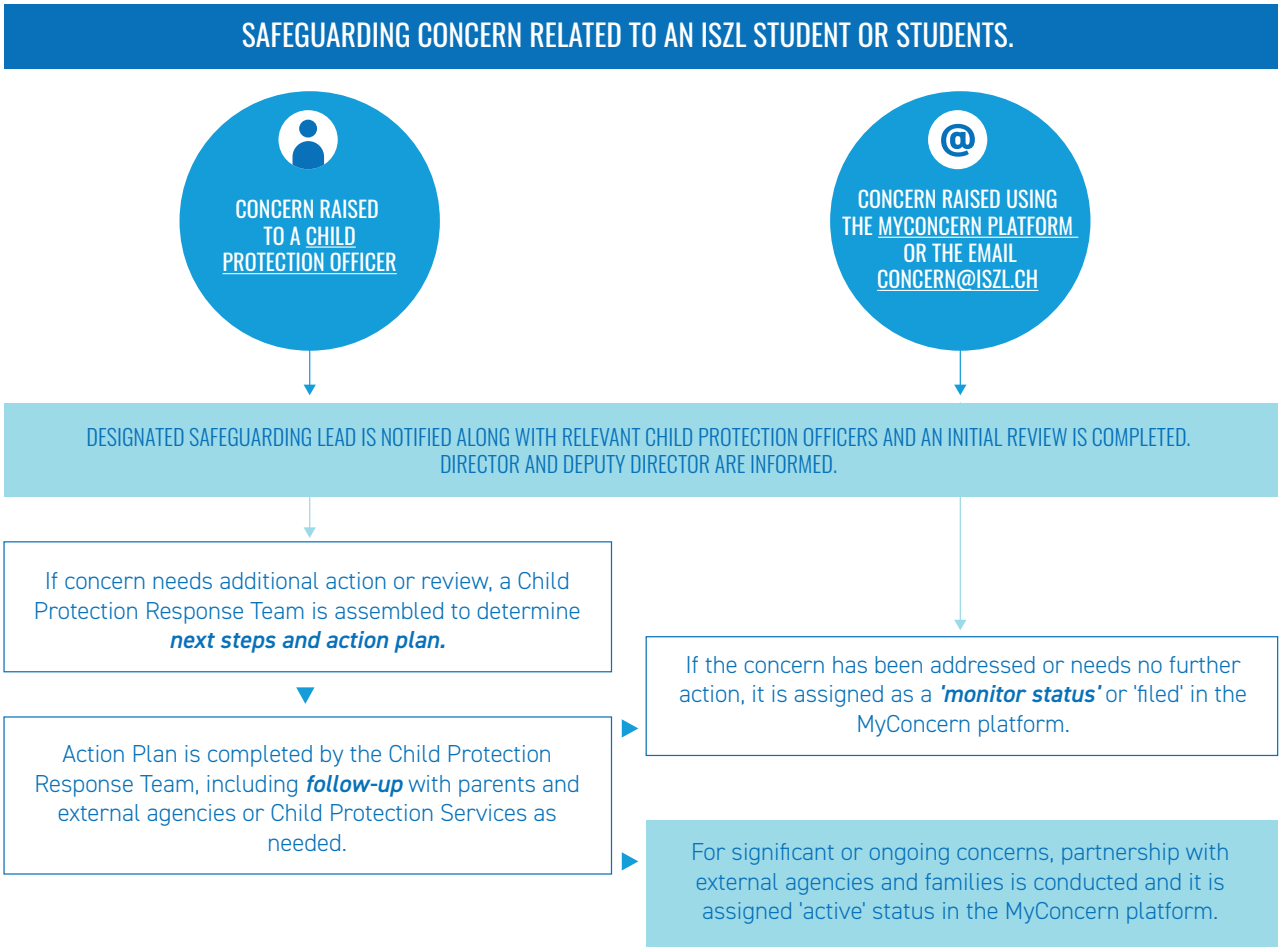
1. When a report is received by a Child Protection Officer (CPO) or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), an initial review is carried out to determine next steps. Based on this review, the CPO or DSL will decide whether to convene a Child Protection Response Team, gather additional information, or classify the case as one to be filed or monitored.
2. If the concern involves suspected significant abuse or may result in a referral to external agencies, the DSL will be directly involved in the response team. The DSL also provides ongoing support to the response team as needed.
3. The response team will examine the concern, review any relevant history, and determine appropriate next steps.
4. All documents or files related to the concern must be deleted from individual staff members' computers after they are securely saved in the MyConcern database.

2. STEP 2: ACTION PLAN

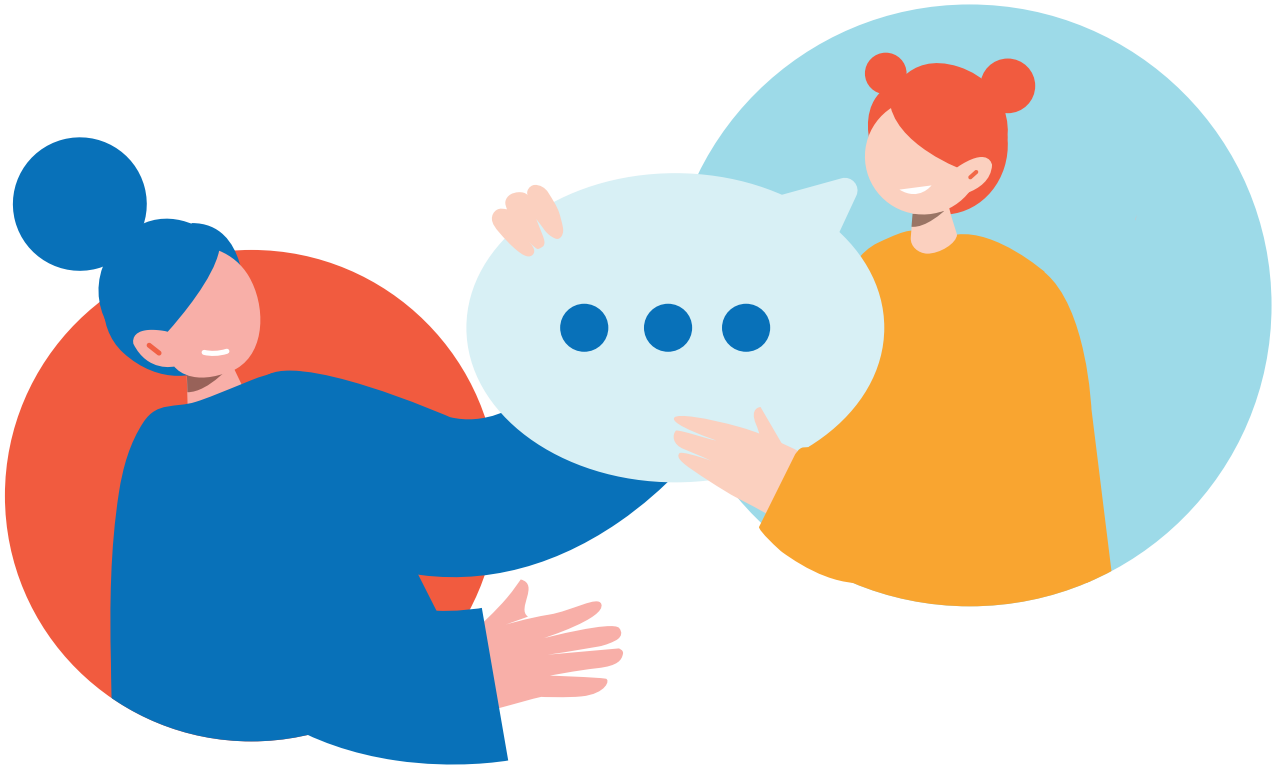
The response team will consider all information gathered and recommend a course of action. In most instances, the actions will be carried out by members of the response team so that as few people as possible are involved in the management of a concern. This is to ensure confidentiality and maintain clear lines of communication.

For reports of abuse against a child, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions that may take place are:

- The identified Child Protection Officer may engage in further conversations with the child to gather additional information or insight. Age-appropriate strategies will be used to help the child share what may have happened in a safe and supportive manner. The child should be involved in discussions about possible next steps and be supported throughout the process, including any decisions involving parents or external authorities.
- In-class observations of the child or additional inquiry by the Child Protection Officer(s).
- Meetings with the family to present ISZL's concerns and partner on next steps. This is often facilitated by the responding Child Protection Officers or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counselling or support services.
- In cases where external authority intervention is deemed necessary, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will act as direct liaison with the authorities, keeping the Director and Deputy Director informed throughout the process.



*The Team will not include anyone with a known/declared link to the case
**In all matters that potentially threaten the reputation of the school, the Director is responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees



3. STEP 3: FOLLOW UP

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect, the members of the response team will:

- Ensure that all reports are updated and filed accordingly.
- Maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- Provide the child's teachers and support staff with support, including providing resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
- Maintain contact with any outside professionals and organisations involved in order to update the progress of the child in school.
- Staff that have become involved with the child who has suffered harm may find this situation stressful or upsetting. ISZL will provide the opportunity for staff to receive further support as appropriate.

All documentation of the inquiry will be kept in the child's confidential records file in the MyConcern database. Any documents downloaded from MyConcern should be deleted from the staff member's computer and the computer's trash folder immediately after viewing. Downloaded documents will not be saved in any location other than the My Concern database. If a student with an ongoing child protection case is withdrawn from ISZL by their parents, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will meet with the Director to decide whether communication with the child's next school is required.

SECTION 2
RELATING TO AN ISZL MEMBER OF STAFF.

If the safeguarding concern involves an ISZL staff member, the concern should be reported using the Confide platform or directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Confide uses a similar approach to MyConcern. It records, manages, and reports concerns relating to staff members. It allows the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to build a picture of a staff member's conduct from multiple stakeholders. Confidentiality is maintained. If a staff member has a safeguarding concern about a colleague, they should log it on the Confide platform. If the concern is urgent, they should also contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team, or the DSL.

If a community member has a concern about an ISZL member of staff, they should email **concern@iszl.ch**. Their email will be read by the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will enter the information into the Confide platform.

RESPONSE

For concerns related to ISZL staff members, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with the relevant Senior Leadership Team Member and the Director and/or Deputy Director regarding an inquiry process. An inquiry into the concerns will be led by external specialists in cases where:

- Inquiries would be needed beyond the ISZL school community
- Initial inquiries lead to suspicion that the allegations may be justified and are serious

In all other cases, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Director consider appropriate action relating to the concerns. In minor cases, this may lead to a conversation with a staff member. In serious cases, it will lead to a disciplinary process.



STUDENT INFORMATION
TELL AN ADULT

REPORT TO A TRUSTED ADULT:

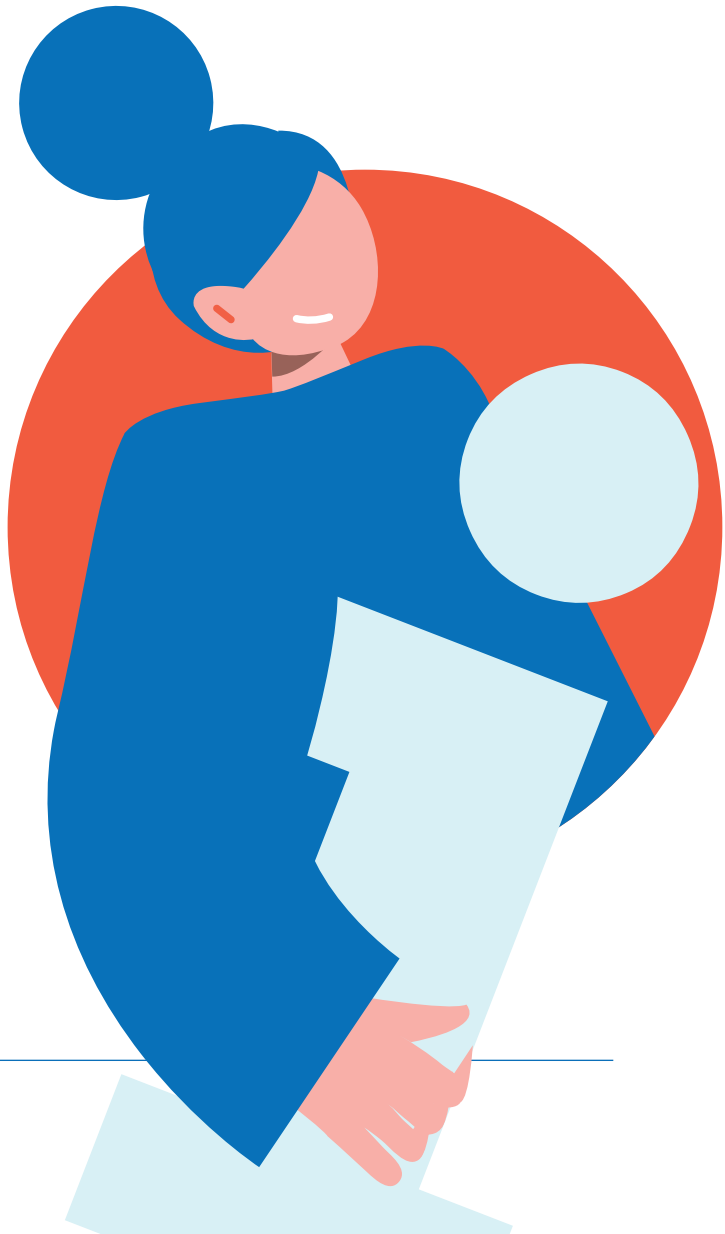
If someone is hurting you or someone else or if someone is in danger, report to an ISZL adult you trust:

- Your Teacher
- A Counsellor
- Your Principal
- Your Assistant Principal
- A School Nurse
- Or email **concern@iszl.ch**

In addition, you are always encouraged to report a concern to your Parents or a Trusted Family Member.

NO SECRETS:

- Some things must not be a secret. If someone is hurting you or a friend, you must tell someone.
- Similarly, if adults are concerned about you, they are also expected to tell a Child Protection Officer.
- We are here to help and support you.
- We promise to do so discreetly, but if it is serious, we may need to talk to other people who can help.



CHILD PROTECTION IN THE ISZL CURRICULUM

At ISZL, Child Protection education is embedded across all grade levels as a core component of our safeguarding commitment. The curriculum is carefully designed to be developmentally appropriate, with key concepts introduced and revisited in increasing depth as students progress through each stage of their educational journey. This scaffolded approach ensures that children build a strong and age-appropriate understanding of personal safety, boundaries, consent, grooming and how to seek help when needed.

The promotion of personal safety and overall wellbeing is integrated throughout our learning environments, not only in formal curriculum delivery but also through our duty of care and school culture. Students are encouraged to develop self-awareness, resilience, and healthy relationships as essential aspects of their personal development. Child Protection Officers play an active role in both the development and implementation of this curriculum. Their collaboration with educators ensures that safeguarding principles are embedded across subject areas and aligned with best practice in international education.

Comprehensive Sexual Health Education forms a fundamental pillar of our safeguarding framework. It equips students with accurate, inclusive, and age-appropriate information to make informed decisions, respect others, and understand their rights. Through this, we aim to foster a safe, respectful, and empowering environment for all students.

For further information on Child Protection in the ISZL curriculum, refer to our curriculum documentation.

PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE AND IDENTITY-BASED HARM

At ISZL, we are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive school environment where every student feels valued and protected. As part of our safeguarding responsibilities, we actively address and educate our community about peer-on-peer abuse, which includes any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or verbal harm caused by one student to another. This includes bullying, harassment, coercion, and any behaviour intended to intimidate or undermine another's sense of safety or well-being.

Identity-based harm, which targets individuals or groups based on aspects of their identity — such as race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or cultural background — is particularly concerning. This form of harm not only affects the targeted individual's emotional and psychological safety, but also undermines the inclusive ethos we strive to uphold as a school community.

Such behaviour is explicitly prohibited under **ISZL's Code of Conduct,** which outlines clear expectations for respectful and responsible behaviour. All students are expected to treat others with dignity, empathy, and fairness, and to speak up or seek help when witnessing or experiencing harm. Breaches of this code are taken seriously and are addressed through restorative, educational, and disciplinary measures as appropriate.

Our approach to preventing identity-based harm is rooted in the belief that diversity is a strength, and that inclusion is a shared responsibility. Through intentional curriculum choices, staff training, student-led initiatives, and a culture of open dialogue, we work to ensure that every learner feels seen, heard, and respected. This aligns with our school-wide commitment to the belief that "We are All ISZL"— a message that celebrates each individual's identity while reinforcing our collective responsibility to create a safe and supportive environment for all.



REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

PARENTS

ISZL has several policies which support our Child Protection and Safeguarding measures, including but not limited to:

- ISZL Policy for the Handling of Student Bullying Issues
- Signs & Symptoms of Child Abuse or Neglect
- ISZL Volunteers Policy
- ISZL Student Responsible Use Agreement (Educational Technology)
- ISZL Parent Absence Policy
- ISZL Parent Absence Form

For more information relating to our Child Protection and Safeguarding policies, as well as to obtain a copy of these policies, parents and guardians are encouraged to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Sara Tat (sara.tat@iszl.ch).

FACULTY AND STAFF

Additional documentation regarding operational procedures can be found on the Staff Portal under "Child Safeguarding."

SUPPORT AGENCIES

POLICE: 117

MEDICAL EMERGENCY: 144

TOX INFO SUISSE: 145
24/7 Switzerland-based poison information centre

HELPING HANDS: 143
If you need to talk to someone anonymously

KESB (ZUG): +41 41 594 59 10
Swiss Child and Adult Protection Agency

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS A CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER?

A Child Protection Officer (CPO) is someone that has special training to help keep all students safe.

WHO ARE THE ISZL CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS?

All of our School Counsellors, Nurses, Principals and Assistant Principals are Child Protection Officers.

I AM CONCERNED ABOUT A STUDENT OR ISZL COMMUNITY MEMBER, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

You can contact any ISZL staff member and ask to speak with a Child Protection Officer of your choice. You can also email your concern to concern@iszl.ch or submit a MyVoice report (HS).

I AM NOT SURE IF IT IS SERIOUS OR NOT, SHOULD I STILL REPORT?

You are always encouraged to report.
By speaking up, you could help someone stay safe!



WE CARE ABOUT YOU

TALK TO ANY ISZL STAFF MEMBER OR ONE OF OUR CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS.



WHO CAN I TALK TO?

Remember: You can talk to any ISZL adult that you feel safe with.