



Child Protection Policy

Revision History

Version	Date	Author/Owner	Approval Log
1.0	22-10-2015	Designated Person / School Counsellors	Initial Policy
2.0	24-05-2017 19-08-2019	Designated Person / School Counsellors	Second Draft Due date extension due to move to new building
	20-02-2020	Designated Person / School Counsellors	Approved by Board on 20-02-2020
3.0	30-7-2020	Designated Person / School Counsellors	Updated to reflect new policy template
	21-09-2020	Designated Person / School Counsellors	Approved by the SDSC on 09-09- 2020 Approved by the compliance Manager on 18-08-2020 Approved by the Board 21-09- 2020



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1. Introduction / Purpose

GESS is committed to promoting the physical and emotional health of its students. GESS endeavors to deliver on this commitment by safeguarding the well-being of its students by taking necessary measures to protect them from all forms of abuse that comes to the attention of its staff and by promoting the physical and emotional health of its students. GESS child protection standards were developed in part by recommendations set by International Taskforce on Child Protection, a taskforce jointly organized by the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the International Baccalaureate (IB).

GESS has a professional responsibility to comply with the Children and Young Persons Act by following the Ministry of Social and Family Development's Manual on Management of Child Abuse in Singapore (2008). In keeping with the United Nations charter, GESS understands that our children have the right to feel safe, supported and cared for. They must be able to grow and develop in an environment that is free from intimidation, distress, and hurt.

2. Scope / Applicability

This policy applies to the whole GESS community.

3. Policy

3.1 Principles

- A positive school atmosphere is fostered with well-trained teachers, counsellors, and pastoral support staff.
- GESS must ensure that all staff undergo annual child protection training.
- Volunteers and external providers (Co-curricular Activities coaches and Vocal and Instrumental Programme teachers) who work directly with students obtain annual child protection training and sign a GESS Support Staff Code of Conduct before working with students.
- GESS is committed to safeguarding our students by implementing a mandatory Child Protection curriculum for all age groups.
- The principal must appoint a Designated Person (DP) in consultation with the Child Protection Team. The Designated Person ensures all aspects of the policy is fully implemented.
- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. Child protection cases must not be discussed with any other members of staff, children, or people outside

of GESS. It will be considered a serious breach of school protocol and may lead to disciplinary action.

- As part of their induction, all adults must read and familiarize themselves with GESS Child Protection Policy and related procedures.
- All adults must be aware of how to prevent, recognize and respond to suspected cases of child abuse.
- The recruitment process reflects the Child Protection Policy. Police clearance check and further background checks are required for shortlisted candidates.
- First aid must be administered in any kind of emergency. Follow-up care and counselling must commence as soon as is practical.
- A Designated Board Member for Child Protection is established by the Board in consultation with the principal. The Board member's role would be to liaise with the Child Protection Team as a member of the working group to review child protection matters.

3.2 Key Roles and Responsibilities

Protecting the welfare of the child is the professional responsibility of all staff working at GESS and requires that all know how to respond to suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. If a member of staff is aware of a suspected case, he or she must contact either a Child Protection Officer or a member of the Child Protection Team as soon as possible.

1. The Child Protection Officer (CPO) is an additional member of staff to whom a suspected abuse case can also be reported to. The CPO will then consult with the Child Protection Team member to begin the investigation process. The CPO is not a part of the investigation process. Here at GESS, the Heads of Department are the CPOs.
2. The Child Protection Team consists of the Early Intervention Specialist, School Counsellor, and the Designated Person (DP).

Areas of Responsibility	Early Intervention Specialist	School Counsellor	Designated Person (DP)
Establish procedures to identify and handle different types of child abuse	x	x	x
Manage full breadth of cases from documentation, investigation, to on-going family or child support	x	x	x
Manage Child Protection curriculum by consulting with and providing materials for teachers, provide in-class lessons as needed	x	x	
Educate the community about child protection at GESS via written or in-person sessions	x	x	x
Review and write the Child Protection Policy	x	x	x

Consult with HR on hiring practices or documentation	As Needed	x	x
Conduct annual staff training to ensure staff are made aware of procedures, guidelines, and the referral process	x	x	x
Conduct new hire staff training	x	x	x
Liaise with outside referral sources such as Child Protective Services here in Singapore	x	x	x

4. Definitions

Child abuse is a generic term used to describe a range of behaviors that occur in the lives of children and young people. Often it occurs in environments that are isolated and stressful and affects those who are most vulnerable. It is the term used to describe four different types of maltreatment inflicted on a child or young person: non-accidental physical injury, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse that includes the psychological harm of children and young people.

Physical Abuse is physical injury to a child where there is reasonable suspicion that the injury was intentionally inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

It involves any potentially non-accidental injury where adults physically hurt a child. This can involve hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, and biting. It also includes giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs, or alcohol.

Signs or symptoms, which may indicate physical abuse include:

- Bruising with an inconsistent account of how such injuries occurred
- Bald patches
- Burns or scalds
- Fear of going home or parents being contacted
- Fear of medical help
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying.

Neglect is the persistent or severe neglect of a child, which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

This can occur when parents/guardians fail to meet the basic and essential needs of their children such as food, clothing, and medical care. Leaving small children alone and unsupervised is another example of neglect. Parents refusing or failing to give love and affection to their child/ren is a case of emotional neglect.

Signs or symptoms, which may possibly indicate neglect include:

- Hunger
- Tiredness or listlessness
- Child dirty or unkempt
- Poor school attendance or often late for school
- Poor concentration
- Affection - demanding or attention-seeking behavior
- Stealing or scavenging compulsively
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones

Sexual Abuse occurs when children and young persons are involved in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend, and which violate the social taboos of family roles. It occurs when the older person uses his/her power over the child/young person to involve the latter in a sexual activity.

It may involve:

- Sexual grooming
- Inappropriate exposure to sexual acts or materials
- Passive use of children and young persons as sexual stimuli for adults
- The child and young person may be subjected to exhibitionist activities, voyeurism or be coerced into posing for pornographic materials
- Inappropriate sexual contact or acts between older individuals and the child/young person
- Intercourse as a result of rape, assault, and coercion.

Signs or symptoms, which may indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sexually explicit play or behavior or age inappropriate behavior
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness, or scratching
- Persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains
- Eating disorders
- Attention-seeking behavior including sexual harassment or molestation
- Regressive behavior
- Difficulty controlling bladder or soiling oneself

- Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming
- Bruises, scratches in genital area
- Lack of trust of a familiar or particular adult
- Unusually compliant.

Psychological or Emotional Abuse is the persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection of a child or young person. This occurs where constant lack of love and affection, threats, verbal attacks, taunting, shouting, can lead to a child's loss of self-esteem. It can also include harassment or indifference based on race, culture, gender, or disability.

Aspects of psychological and emotional abuse include:

- Hostile rejecting/degrading (e.g. taunts)
- Terrorizing (e.g. threats or acts that induce fear)
- Actively isolating (e.g. locking a child in a room for extended periods of time)
- Exploiting/corrupting (e.g. teaching a child to steal)
- Denying emotional responsiveness (e.g. denying affection and shows of love).

Signs or symptoms, which may indicate psychological abuse include:

- Regression (e.g. rocking, banging head)
- Self-mutilation, drug, or solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Running away, compulsive stealing
- Masturbation
- Eating disorders
- Soiling, smearing feces, difficulty controlling bladder
- Sudden speech disorders, selective mutism
- Over-reaction to mistakes, continual self-deprecation
- Delayed physical/mental/emotional development

5. Policy Authority

Policy Owner: Designated Person / School Counsellors
Governing school subcommittee: School Development subcommittee
Final approval: Board of Governors
Next required review date: August 2021

6. Related Policies / References / Processes

[Disciplinary Policy](#)
[Whistleblowing Policy](#)
[Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
[Child Protection Procedures](#)

7. Policy Compliance

7.1 Compliance Measurement

Compliance / Audit will verify compliance to this policy through various methods, including but not limited to, business tool reports, internal and external audits, and feedback to the policy owner.

7.2 Non-Compliance

Any employee in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, in accordance with GESS Disciplinary Policy, up to and including termination and notifying the appropriate law enforcement authorities.