



Rationale

Every student has a right to a life free of abuse, neglect and violence. Everyone in the CISPG must be aware of signs of child abuse and/or neglect and know how to respond.

Policy

1. A family is the natural environment for the care and upbringing of children and the responsibility for the protection of children rests primarily with the parents.
2. Where parents are unwilling or unable to care for a child or protect the child from harm, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is authorized to intervene.
3. The Child, Family and Community Service Act requires anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been, or is likely to be at risk, to make a report to a child welfare worker, or directly to the police, if a child is in immediate danger.
4. The cultural identity of all children should be respected.
5. Decisions relating to children should be made and implemented in a timely manner.

Procedures

- A. At the beginning of each school year, the principal will review with all staff the following 3 documents:
 - a. [“BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect”](#) (revised 2017) (BC Ministry of Children and Family Development)
 - b. [“Responding to Child Welfare Concerns”](#) (BC Ministry of Children and Family Development)
 - c. [“Supporting our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse”](#) (Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools BC)

The principal is designated as the ‘Appointed School Official (ASO)’ and an ‘Alternate ASO’ (default Teacher in Charge- TIC) is appointed by the principal to act as a back-up in accordance with Supporting Our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse.

They are required to:

- investigate on behalf of the school authority
- ensure a safe school environment during investigations
- consult with the child welfare worker and/or police
- ensure that no school employee interferes with any investigations
- communicate with parents with respect to actions taken by the school authority

- report to the British Columbia Teacher Regulation Branch and/or the Inspector of Independent Schools when the School Authority dismisses, suspends or otherwise disciplines a certified teacher (Independent School Act Section 7; Inspector’s Order 1 1/92, Discipline Reporting Order) and
 - refer student(s) for counselling.
- B. Schools will protect personal information regarding child abuse, neglect or violence against improper or unauthorized disclosure and use.
- C. Staff will inform the principal (or in the event that the principal is the alleged offender, will inform the Superintendent) as soon as possible.
- D. Staff will co-operate with the resulting investigation.

Appendix A – Legislation

[Child, Family and Community Service Act](#)

The Child, Family and Community Service Act is the legislative authority for child welfare in British Columbia. Its fundamental guiding principle is that the safety and well-being of children are the paramount considerations.

[Part 3, Section 13](#) of the “Child, Family and Community Service Act- [RSBC 1996] CHAPTER 46” (May 4, 2022) quoted below clarifies when protection is needed and the duty to report child protection concerns.

[Section 13 \(1\)](#) When protection is needed

13 (1) A child needs protection in the following circumstances:

- (a) if the child has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed by the child's parent
- (b) if the child has been, or is likely to be, sexually abused or exploited by the child's parent
- (c) if the child has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed, sexually abused or sexually exploited by another person and if the child's parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child
- (d) if the child has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed because of neglect by the child's parent
- (e) if the child is emotionally harmed by
 - (i) the parent's conduct, or
 - (ii) living in a situation where there is domestic violence by or towards a person with whom the child resides;
- (f) if the child is deprived of necessary health care;
- (g) if the child's development is likely to be seriously impaired by a treatable condition and the child's parent refuses to provide or consent to treatment;

(h) if the child's parent is unable or unwilling to care for the child and has not made adequate provision for the child's care;

(i) if the child is or has been absent from home in circumstances that endanger the child's safety or well-being;

(j) if the child's parent is dead and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care;

(k) if the child has been abandoned and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care;

(l) if the child is in the care of a director or another person by agreement and the child's parent is unwilling or unable to resume care when the agreement is no longer in force.

(1.1) For the purpose of subsection (1) (b) and (c) but without limiting the meaning of "sexually abused" or "sexually exploited", a child has been or is likely to be sexually abused or sexually exploited if the child has been, or is likely to be,

(a) encouraged or helped to engage in prostitution, or

(b) coerced or inveigled into engaging in prostitution.

(1.2) For the purpose of subsection (1) (a) and (c) but without limiting the circumstances that may increase the likelihood of physical harm to a child, the likelihood of physical harm to a child increases when the child is living in a situation where there is domestic violence by or towards a person with whom the child resides.

(2) For the purpose of subsection (1) (e), a child is emotionally harmed if the child demonstrates severe

(a) anxiety,

(b) depression,

(c) withdrawal, or

(d) self-destructive or aggressive behaviour.

[Criminal Code of Canada](#)

The Criminal Code provides the justice system with the legal authority to enforce criminal law as it applies to the abuse and neglect of children. It establishes criminal offences, procedures for investigation, and prosecution and sanctions for offenders. The Criminal Code: [Forms and types of violence](#).

Family violence is not just physical violence. A person can be the victim of one or more forms of violence or abuse including:

- [Physical abuse](#)
- [Sexual abuse](#)
- [Emotional abuse](#)
- [Financial abuse](#)
- [Neglect](#)

Appendix B – Glossary/Definitions

A number of the terms used in this policy have specific meanings in the context of the British Columbia child welfare system. These are defined below to help ensure clarity and support a collaborative response to suspected child abuse and neglect.

Appointed School Official: the school principal; the second ASO is appointed by the principal as a backup

Aboriginal: includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples

Caregiver: a person who is legally responsible for a child's day-to-day care, for example, a foster parent
Child: anyone under the age of 19 in British Columbia (see Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA))

Child welfare worker: a person delegated under the CFCSA to provide child welfare services, including responses to suspected child abuse and neglect.

Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agency: an organization that provides culturally appropriate services to aboriginal children and families, and whose child welfare workers have delegated authority under CFCSA to provide child welfare services, including responses to suspected child abuse and neglect

Director: a person designated by the Minister of Children and Family Development under the CFCSA. The Director may delegate any or all of his/her powers, duties and responsibilities under the Act.

Emotional Abuse: the most difficult type of abuse to define and recognize. It may include ignoring or habitually humiliating the child or withholding life-sustaining nurturing. It involves acts or omissions likely to have serious negative emotional impacts. Emotional abuse may occur separately from or with other forms of abuse and neglect. It includes the emotional harm caused by witnessing domestic violence.

Emotional harm: when emotional abuse is chronic and persistent, it can result in emotional harm to the child. Under the CFCSA a child is defined as emotionally harmed if they demonstrate severe:

- anxiety
- depression
- withdrawal
- self-destructive or aggressive behaviour

Neglect: is failure to provide for a child's basic needs. It involves an act of omission by the parent or guardian, resulting in (or likely to result in) harm to the child. Neglect may include failure to provide food, shelter, basic health care, supervision or protection from risks, to the extent that the child's physical health, development or safety is, or is likely to be, harmed.

Parent or Guardian: the mother or father of a child; a person to whom custody of the child has been granted by a court order or agreement; a person with whom the child resides and who stands in place of the child's mother or father.

Physical Abuse: is a deliberate physical assault or action by a person that results in, or is likely to result in, physical harm to a child. It includes the use of unreasonable force to discipline a child or prevent a child from harming himself/herself or others.

Service provider: employees and volunteers of the CISPG Schools

Sexual Abuse: is when a child is used (or likely to be used) for the sexual gratification of another person.

Sexual Exploitation: is a form of sexual abuse that occurs when a child engages in a sexual activity, usually through manipulation or coercion, in exchange for money, drugs, food, shelter or other considerations.

References:

- [Abuse Sample Policy/FISA BC](#)
- [BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect;](#)
- [Child, Family and Community Service Act BC](#)
- [Ministry of Children and Family Development BC](#)
- [Personal Information Protection Act \(PIPA\) \[SBC 2003\] CHAPTER 63](#)
- [Responding to Child Welfare Concerns](#)
- [Student Records: Requirements and Best Practice Guidelines for Independent Schools \(Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools BC\)](#)
- [Supporting our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel](#)
- [Responding to Child Abuse \(Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools BC\)](#)
- [Youth Criminal Justice Act \(S.C. 2002, c. 1\)](#)

References:	Date: August 2023
	Revisions: