



Woodford International School

P.O. Box R44, Honiara, Solomon Islands

Tel: (+677) 30186

www.wis.edu.sb | communication@wis.edu.sb

The Child Protection Framework at Woodford International School

1 - CHILD PROTECTION: THE PURPOSE

Woodford International School is committed to the protection of students against any physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and/or neglect. The protection of children is an important part of Woodford International School's role as an educational institution and is the responsibility of all adults working for and/or providing services for Woodford International School.

Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles not only to a child's education but also to their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. Furthermore, the protection of children is consistent with WIS' core values and mission statement. Educating community members on WIS' commitment to child protection can help prevent abuse and neglect as well as limit its scope through improved awareness and reporting.

WIS' Child Protection Policy is based on international best practices and is consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. WIS' child protection policy and handbook serve to prevent child abuse, neglect, exploitation and harassment, protect those who may be involved or at risk, and support those involved in situations in violation of that child's rights. WIS affirms its commitment to child protection and establishes zero tolerance in the community for violations of child protection. To promote clarity, WIS' child protection policy is published on the school website ensuring it is available to all stakeholders.

2 - WIS' CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The WIS Board of Trustees has approved the following Child Protection Policy:

Woodford International School is committed to the protection of students against any physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and/or neglect as defined in the WIS Child Protection Framework. To ensure the safety of students, the school shall require all employees to submit a criminal background check upon being hired. All employees must report any case of suspected abuse or neglect to their immediate supervisor or, if unavailable, to any member of the WIS administration immediately during the work week, or within 24 hours on a weekend. Supervisors in receipt of a report of potential abuse and/or neglect will immediately inform the Head of School who will open a formal inquiry and may convene the appropriate authorities.

3 - CHILD ABUSE: THE DEFINITIONS

Abuse: "All forms of physical, and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting 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." (Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention, 29–31 March 1999, WHO, Geneva. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1999 (document WHO/HSC/PVI/99.1).)

Abuse may involve two or more adults, including parents and/or WIS employees, adults and children, and/or two or more children.

Physical Abuse: any intentional, unwanted contact with one's body resulting in actual or potential harm

Emotional Abuse: non-physical behaviors such as; threats, insults, constant monitoring, humiliation, intimidation, isolation, or stalking that result in actual or potential harm to an individual's health, physical, mental, and/or social development. Such behaviors may include restricting a child's movements, denigration, ridicule, threats and intimidation, discrimination, rejection and other non-physical forms of hostile treatment (adapted from Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention, 29–31 March 1999, WHO, Geneva. Geneva, World Health

Organization, 1999 (document WHO/HSC/PVI/99.1).)

Sexual Abuse: any action that pressures or coerces an individual to do something sexually that they do not want to do or cannot consent to doing. This may involve physical contact (penetrative or non-penetrative) or non-contact activities (viewing sexually explicit material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways).

Sexual Exploitation: taking non-consensual, unjust, or abusive advantage of another in a sexual or intimate context

Sexual Harassment: physical, verbal, written, or electronic conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with a person's academic or extracurricular activities, professional obligations, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment

Neglect: refers to the failure to provide for the development of the child in one or more of the following areas: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions (WHO, adapted)

Digital/Electronic abuse: the use of technology for digital communication to bully, harass, stalk, or intimidate another. Digital abuse is a form of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated through online means of communication. The digital abuse may be student-on-student or involve students and adults.

Child Protection: the safeguarding of children from abuse and neglect; those systems, beliefs, structures in place to guard children's rights and prevent and respond to the actual or suspected harm of children

Child Protection Policy: the statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to protecting children from harm, and establishes pathways for education and training on child abuse and neglect as well as for reporting and investigating instances of abuse and neglect

Employee: for the purposes of this policy, the definition of "employee" includes all those at WIS who directly or indirectly work with students, all externally and internally hired coaches, volunteers, substitutes, and all outsourced employees.

4 - REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees at Woodford International School have both a legal and an ethical obligation to report incidents where they have reasonable suspicion to believe that child protection violations have occurred. If any employee at the Woodford International School has reasonable cause to suspect abuse, neglect, harassment or exploitation based on his/her knowledge of the victim, perpetrator and/or personal experience with children, that person must report their concern. All reports, whether the allegation is made regarding a student, parent or caregiver, or WIS employee, are to be made to the employee's immediate supervisor or, if unavailable, to any member of the WIS administration. Upon becoming aware of a child protection violation, employees must report their concern immediately during the work week or within 24 hours on a weekend. Supervisors in receipt of a report of potential abuse and/or neglect will immediately inform the Head of School, who will open a formal inquiry and may convene the appropriate authorities.

5 - REPORT FORM

For suspected cases of any form of abuse within the home, school, or community of a Woodford student should be submitted via the report form found on the staff portal of the website, as well as at the bottom of each weekly newsletter. All submissions are confidential and your name, contact information, details of your report, etc. will not be disclosed unless permitted or deemed absolutely necessary given the circumstances.

6 - SAFE HIRING PRACTICES

Woodford International School places child protection front and center of its priorities. To safeguard students, WIS recognizes the importance of recruiting and retaining employees who have been vetted through a child protection lens and are committed to upholding safe practices. To ensure the safety of students, the school shall require all employees to undergo a criminal background check. All employees hired by WIS undergo a thorough reference-checking process to confirm the candidate's readiness for an offer once the reference check process has been successfully completed.

7 - CONFIDENTIALITY

WIS respects the privacy of those involved in all aspects of child protection cases. The identities of those involved in both the reporting and the incident of suspected child protection violations will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible. However, those involved must understand that in order for an inquiry into the incident to proceed, certain information must be shared. Information will be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis and only with those directly involved in incident response. These individuals may include but are not limited to WIS administrators, the Board of Trustees, and/or Solomon Island child protection officials, the sponsor of the alleged perpetrator and/or his/her embassy. WIS will comply fully with governmental entities tasked with investigating incidents of child protection violations. The identities of both the victims of child protection violations and their reporters will be protected, however, the school cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Disclosing the identity of the victim to certain individuals or entities may be necessary for the purposes of both internal inquiry and mandatory reporting.

All WIS employees are required to maintain confidentiality and not discuss any student or family matter unless doing so in a professional situation and only with those individuals necessary to maintain the support and wellbeing of the student. No WIS employee found to have violated the WIS Child Protection Policy can be assured of confidentiality and the school will report incident information to the extent necessary to maintain the safety of this and other communities.

8 - EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS, VENDORS AND THIRD PARTY PROVIDERS

Woodford International School administration will ensure that all external organizations, vendors and third party providers using our campus and facilities commit to operating within our child protection policies and procedures at all times.

9 - WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Woodford International School maintains a Whistleblowing Policy to ensure that all employees understand their duty to raise concerns about the actions of their colleagues without fear of repercussions.

10 - WIS CHILD SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

All WIS employees are expected to read this annually and agree to it each school year.

I WILL

- Provide a physically safe learning environment for all students.
- Read, understand, and abide by the WIS Child Protection Policy.
- Treat everyone with respect, integrity, courtesy, and dignity.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children only when appropriate and necessary, in ways that are public and non-sexual.
- Comply with the WIS Reporting Requirements to report suspected child abuse.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of students.

I WILL NOT

- Be alone with students, outside of normal professional responsibilities, at school or during non-school activities on weekends or evenings without a leadership team member being notified, or parent consent.
- Hit, physically assault, or physically or psychologically abuse children.
- Use facilities such as toilets and changing rooms that are specifically designated for use by students.
- Have relations with a child, or act in a way, that can be considered sexual, exploitative, or abusive.
- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice that is abusive.
- Behave or speak in a manner that is sexually inappropriate or sexually provocative with students.
- Comment on the appearance of a child with any reference to sexuality or sexual attraction or repulsion.
- Sleep in the same room as students without parent consent, without another adult present, and without the advanced authorization of school leadership.
- Provide transport in my car to a student alone, outside of my professional role, without parental or administrative permission (except in the case of an emergency).
- Condone or participate in behavior by children that is abusive or endangers their safety.
- Act in ways that shame, humiliate, or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, drink, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of students while acting in a professional capacity or at a school-sponsored event.

- Engage in private communications with students using social media or other means in ways that are outside my professional relations with students.
- Accept student requests to follow/friend/join my personal social media profile(s) until after they graduate from high school.
- Use my position of power with wrongful intent to gain trust of a child.

11 - POLICY REVIEW

The WIS Child Protection policy and program will be reviewed on a regular basis.

12 - LOCAL RESOURCES

Anyone with an immediate need for emergency treatment of any student or employee should call an Ambulance or Police at 999.

13 - ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Council of International Schools

<https://www.cois.org/about-cis/child-protection>

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

<https://www.unicef.org/child-protection>