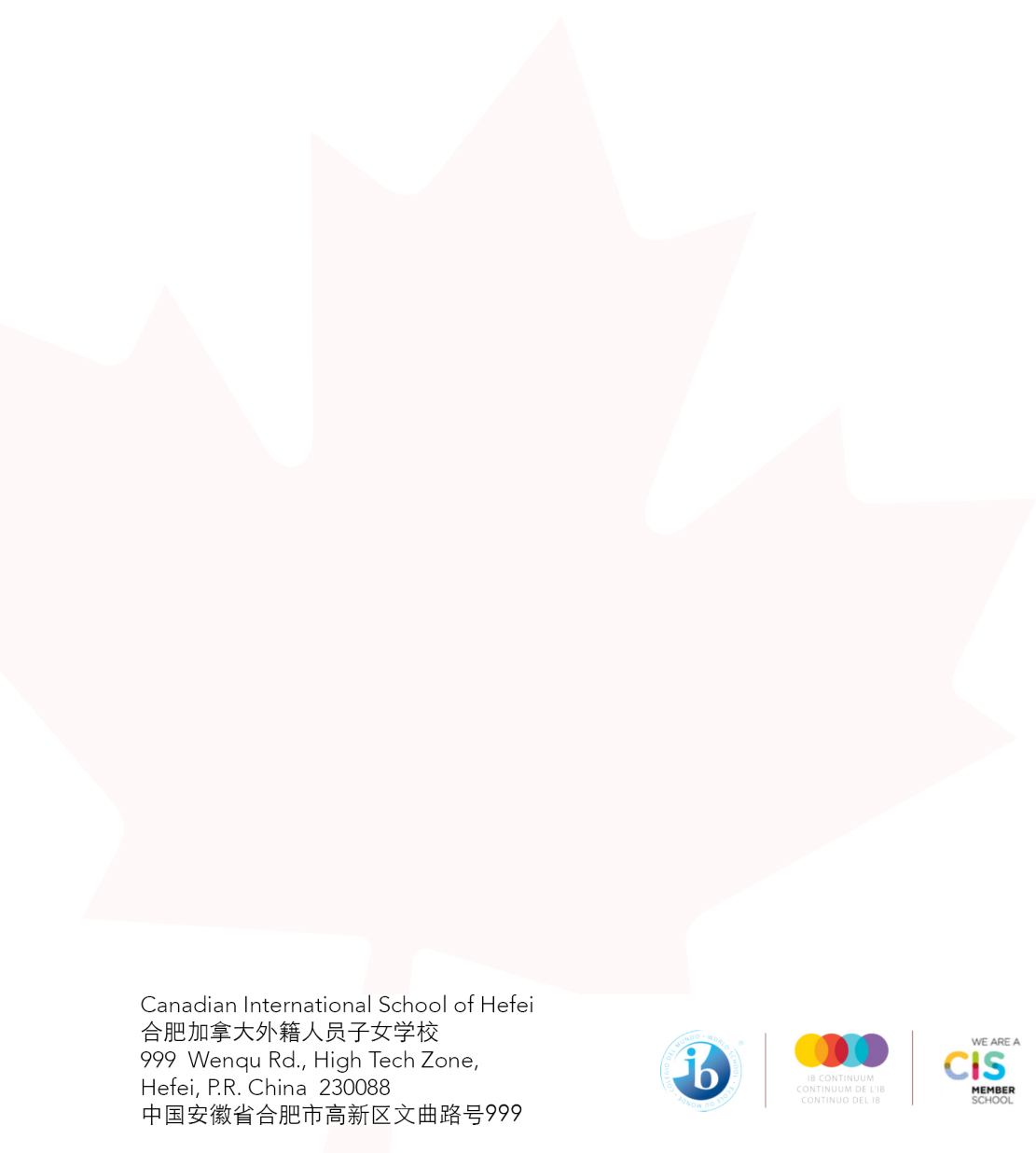


Child Protection Policy

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LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

To Our Esteemed CISH Parents and Community Members,

The Child Protection Policy at the Canadian International School of Hefei (CISH) serves as a testament to our unwavering commitment to fostering a safe and nurturing learning environment. This policy has the full endorsement of the CISH Board of Directors and aims to prevent child abuse and neglect, grievous offenses against children's rights that hinder their multi-faceted development.

Grounded in the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors (2012 Amendment), international law, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child—a treaty to which China is a signatory—our policy draws particular attention to:

Article 19 – Safeguarding Against Abuse and Neglect: "Ensure children are protected from maltreatment by caregivers and establish supportive social programs for abuse prevention and victim assistance."

Article 34 – Counteracting Sexual Exploitation: "Guard children against sexual exploitation and abuse, encompassing prostitution and involvement in pornography."

Our policy is delineated in a transparent manner to educate and guide our school community. It elucidates definitions, actions, procedures, and offers additional resources for further exploration.

On behalf of the Chairman, Board of Directors, and entire staff, we appreciate your ongoing support and dedication to the CISH community. For any inquiries, kindly reach out to the school principal or counselor.

Sincerely,
Peggy Gorman-Mitchell
Head of School



DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS

Child abuse encompasses a range of non-accidental behaviors that result in harmful and lasting consequences. Below are various types of child abuse, along with their corresponding symptoms:

Physical Abuse: Deliberate actions such as hitting, shaking, burning, biting, or strangulation.

- **Indicators:** Unexplained injuries or discrepancies between injuries and the explanations provided, heightened anxiety in specific settings.

Emotional Abuse: Persistent negative behaviors like disapproval, belittlement, or ridicule.

- **Indicators:** Reports of humiliation, intimidation, or peculiar punishments; additionally, signs may include low self-esteem, social withdrawal, frequent psychosomatic symptoms (e.g., headaches, nausea, abdominal pains), developmental delays, or attention-seeking behavior.

Neglect: Failure to provide essential needs like food, shelter, sleep, clothing, hygiene, medical care, and emotional or physical security.

- **Indicators:** Pronounced lack of hygiene or medical attention, extreme fatigue, or persistent hunger.

Sexual Abuse: Acts including fondling, exposure of private areas by an adult, sexual intercourse, oral and/or anal sex, coercing the child to witness sexual activities, incest, or involvement in pornography.

- **Indicators:** Inappropriate focus on the child's private body parts, unexplained physical trauma, or bleeding in oral, genital, or anal areas.

GUARDIANSHIP

It is a prerequisite for enrollment at the Canadian International School of Hefei (CISH) that all school-aged students maintain a sustained and stable relationship with at least one legally recognized parent or guardian. This relationship should actively support the student's educational journey at CISH.

The school mandates that any temporary guardians must be fully equipped to fulfill the responsibilities inherent in the home-school partnership. It is requisite that parents or guardians are legal residents of China and maintain a domicile in Hefei.

Should parents be temporarily unable to meet the guardianship criteria set by CISH, the school will assist in formulating appropriate alternative arrangements for the concerned student.

Failure to secure such arrangements within an acceptable timeframe may subject the student's continued enrollment at CISH to review.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES OF ABUSE

1. Initial Identification and Reporting

- Staff members who identify indicators of abuse or receive disclosure should consult an administrator to assess the necessity of immediate medical intervention.



- The staff member must then promptly consult the counselor of the appropriate school level.

2. Assessment and Reporting

- The counselor relays the case details to the principal, and together they assess the urgency of the situation. The principal then informs the Head of School.

3. Information Gathering

- The counselor initiates immediate data collection, adhering to factual and confidential documentation.
- The counselor reviews the child's academic and personal history by accessing school records.
- Legal and ethical implications are evaluated by the counselor and/or principal.

4. Response Plan

- If credible concerns exist, a multi-disciplinary response team is assembled. The team drafts an actionable plan with a defined timeline.
- The core response team includes the counselor, school nurse, and principal. Additional staff may join upon the principal's discretion.

5. Follow-Up and Monitoring

- The child undergoes age-appropriate counseling sessions.
- The situation is closely monitored for child protection and additional evidence.

6. Parental Involvement

- Upon verification of the concerns, parental discussions are initiated.
- Referrals for external counseling or therapy may be recommended.

7. Legal and External Measures

- Legal counsel is consulted regarding reporting to employers or local authorities.
- In extreme cases, reports may be submitted to the offending party's employer, consulate, or local authorities.

8. Ongoing Support

- Continued family and student engagement is maintained by the counselor, who also provides additional resources and strategies.

DUTY OF CARE

1. General Expectations

- CISH acknowledges its Duty of Care towards students and staff. All employees are expected to contribute to this responsibility by taking reasonable steps to safeguard students from harm. All concerns and actions will be documented.

2. Employee Roles

- Employees are crucial to fostering a secure and positive school environment. Concerns that compromise this goal should be promptly reported to one's direct supervisor or the relevant school principal.

3. Student Supervision

- Employees must adhere to school-prescribed student supervision arrangements. Supervision aims to enhance educational outcomes, build self-esteem, and ensure safety. Employees are expected to be vigilant, mobile, and alert to signs of abuse or neglect.

4. Confidentiality

- To honor the Duty of Care, the school will protect the anonymity of all parties involved. All members of the school community should adhere to the expectations outlined in the CISH Staff Code of Conduct.

5. Background Checks

- CISH mandates criminal record clearance and background checks for all adults interacting with students, regardless of their employment status.

6. Facilities

- Adult-only washrooms are distinct from student washrooms, as indicated by signage and outlined in handbooks. Adults should enter student washrooms only when necessary for assistance or maintenance.

WHAT DOES THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY MEAN FOR THE CISH COMMUNITY?

1. Universal Application

- The Child Protection Policy at CISH is grounded in international law and is inclusive of all cultural backgrounds. If there's credible evidence to suggest that a student's rights have been infringed upon, CISH will mobilize all available resources to uphold those rights.

2. Community Responsibility

- Schools and their communities bear a critical role in child protection. They must create a nurturing environment that is secure and conducive for holistic growth—be it intellectual, physical, emotional, social, or psychological.

3. Obligations of Staff and Community Members

- Both school employees and community members are professionally and ethically obliged to identify and support children at risk. They must report such cases to the principal or counselor and act in accordance with the procedures outlined in this Child Protection Policy to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY REVIEW

CISH is committed to regularly updating its Child Protection Policy to reflect best practices and current legal requirements. Reviews will take place annually, and amendments will be made as necessary.



Note: The latest review of this policy was carried out in September 2023.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Amnesty International

- [Amnesty USA](#)
- [Amnesty UK](#)

British Council Child Protection Policy

- [View Policy](#)

Chinese Law on the Protection of Minors (2012 Amendment)

- [View Law](#)

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

- [View Convention](#)

UNICEF

- [Official Website](#)

New Brunswick Policy for the Protection of Pupils

- [View Policy](#)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Duty of Care: The ethical and legal responsibility that lies with individuals or organizations, such as teachers, staff, volunteers, and others involved in the school context, to take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety and well-being of young people in their care during any school-related activity.



International Law: The body of laws governing relations between countries, covering areas such as trade, human rights, environmental regulations, and diplomatic relations. These laws are established through treaties, agreements, and customary practices.

Maltreatment: The act of treating someone, particularly minors, in a cruel or inhumane manner. This includes but is not limited to physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and exploitation. School staff should be vigilant for signs of such treatment.

Reportable Conduct: Any form of assault, ill-treatment, neglect, or behavior that causes psychological harm to a child, regardless of whether the child has consented. The definition also includes examples of what doesn't count as reportable conduct to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Transparency: The principle of clear, open communication and accountability, especially crucial in procedures related to reporting, investigating, and handling cases of child abuse or neglect within the school environment.

