



Child Safety and Protection Policy

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STATEMENT FROM THE RIS BOARD

The Rapale International School Board realizes that no organization is immune to the horrors of child abuse. This Child Safety and Protection policy is a proactive measure taken by the Board of RIS to protect the children and teenagers within the organization from possible harm and abuse. The Bible is very clear on how we are to respond to children as it was modelled by Christ's love and concern for them. As leaders, we are called to follow in Christ's example and show concern and care for those that we interact with and especially for those who are in our care.

The RIS Child Safety and Protection Policy provides a structure from which volunteers and paid employees of RIS shall work. It is intended to ensure reasonable safety and security for the children and teenagers in our care while at the same time maintaining an open and creative working relationship. In addition, it is hoped that this policy provides parents with a sense of security knowing how serious the board of RIS is pertaining to the care and safety of the children within this organization.

The Board of RIS is also concerned for the welfare of its volunteers and staff. This policy is intended to provide a structure that enables volunteers and employees to guard their personal integrity against any accusations. It is also intended to provide clear and specific expectations and standards that are expected of them in their respective roles.

All volunteers and staff are required to carefully read and prayerfully consider the procedures and commitments detailed in this policy.

The RIS Board of Directors
September 2020

INTRODUCTION

Rapale International School (RIS) is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of every child entrusted to the school. RIS's Child Safety Policy and Procedure has been developed with the purpose of creating a safe environment where students are protected and treated with respect and dignity. When there is a concern or report of harm to a child, RIS will make every effort to respond according to the policies and procedures outlined in this document.

RIS is committed to abiding by local law and embracing the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

1. PREVENTION AND SAFETY MEASURES

1.1 CHILD SAFETY TEAM

- RIS has a named Child Safety Team whose role is to oversee the policies and procedures that will result in a safe school environment.
- This team will consist of at least four members of staff appointed by the School Director and deemed to be trustworthy, objective, caring and committed to confidentiality.
- The team includes up to 2 members who have received Response Team Training from an internationally accredited institution.
- RIS's child safety program will be regularly evaluated to ensure compliance with and improve upon issues of governance, definitions, training, child care, response processes and member care.
- The team is accountable to the RIS School Director, who is accountable to the RIS Board.
- Child Safety Team contact: **cpteam@rapaleinternationalschool.org**

1.2 STAFF/VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

- RIS staff and volunteers will be adequately screened prior to beginning their service at RIS. This will include a criminal background check, reference checks, interviews and any other screening processes deemed necessary. Individuals who are convicted of, or are under suspicion of crimes against children, or who have been convicted of violent crimes or other relevant crimes, will not be permitted to serve at RIS.
- The School Administration will ensure that all staff, volunteers and contracted workers with regular recurring responsibilities at school will receive annual training regarding recognition, prevention, reporting, and responding to abuse and harm.
- The School Administration will ensure that all staff, volunteers and contracted workers with regular recurring responsibilities at school will annually review RIS's Child Safety Policy and Procedures Handbook and agree to and sign both the aforementioned document and the Staff Handbook.
- RIS administrators will periodically and randomly supervise school personnel, classrooms, offices and other areas.
- The School Administration will ensure that before commencing service at Rapale International School and every year thereafter, each staff member, volunteer, and contracted worker with regular, recurring responsibilities at school must read and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Child Safety (Section 1.3), as well as sign the Acknowledgment Form at the end of this document.

1.3 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILD SAFETY

- Staff members, volunteers and all those working with children through RIS's programs assume full responsibility of setting and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all interactions with children. The following safeguards establish a safe environment for students.
- In settings where children are present, staff must employ at least one, or as many as possible, of the following safeguards:

Visibility

"Is it possible for others to see me?" When working with children, adults must position themselves in places visible to other unrelated adults. This can be accomplished by remaining in view of a window or keeping doors open, and by planning activities in areas where other adults are present and at a time when other activities are occurring.

Accountability

"Do others know where I am or what I am doing?" One-on-one interactions with a child must occur with accountability to another unrelated adult and with unrelated adults within the vicinity.

Balance of power

Adults, by virtue of their age, size, strength and authority exert control over children. Balancing control enhances child safety. This can be accomplished by not inviting a young person to your home alone. Avoid giving lifts to lone children other than for short journeys. If they are alone, ask them to sit in the back seat. Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled him/herself and needs to be thoroughly washed.

Discipline

The following actions can cause harm to children and must be avoided:

- Hitting, slapping or any behaviour that assaults a child.
- Pushing or holding a child against his/her will outside the goal of protecting them from danger, providing medical care, or keeping the child from harming himself/herself or others.
- Publicly calling a child out for the purpose of ridicule or exclusion.

Touch

Touch must be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult. Touch must be suitable or proper in the circumstance and generally initiated by the child. It must be done with the child's permission and in view of others. The following signs of affection are generally appropriate within specific contexts: verbal praise, side hugs, pats on the shoulder, back or head, and touching a young child's hands, face, shoulders, and arms or holding him/her when others are present. The following behaviour can cause harm to children and should be avoided:

- Touching of buttocks, chest, genital area, or thighs except to keep young children clean or healthy
- Any touching not conducted in a public space
- Any form of affection that is resisted or unwanted by the child
- Any behaviour that could be interpreted as sexual in nature

Communication

The following interactions, whether verbal, written, or digital, must be avoided:

- Any sexually suggestive comments, photos, images or videos
- Cursing or making derogatory comments about the child or their family

1.4 STUDENT EDUCATION

- All students applying to and attending the school will be directed to read the school's RIS Child Safety and Protection Handbook alongside the RIS Discipline Code.
- All students will receive annual age-appropriate instruction concerning personal safety.

1.5 PARENT EDUCATION

- Upon enrolment at RIS, a student's parents and guardians are expected to read and review the RIS Child Safety and Protection Handbook alongside the RIS Parent Handbook.
- Parents of students in elementary school may receive take-home letters and information about the child safety curriculum taught to the class their child is enrolled in when deemed necessary. Parents may be asked to sign documentation indicating that they have reviewed the personal safety training materials with their children.

2. DEFINITIONS

The school categorizes misconduct related to child safety according to the following three areas: inappropriate behaviour, serious misconduct and abuse. These terms are used by the Child Safety Team in their investigation of and response to reports.

2.1 INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Inappropriate behaviour encompasses unwanted attention or actions between peers that cause physical or emotional harm. Inappropriate physical contact may include unwanted or extended hugging or touching, holding or blocking, engaging in reckless behaviour or causing physical harm. Inappropriate emotional dynamics include, but are not limited to, disrespectful behaviour to classmates and teachers that is hurtful or disruptive. Although inappropriate actions may be non-intentional, they will be judged according to the perception of the other person.

This behaviour is corrected and disciplined by classroom teachers/volunteers and contracted workers with regular responsibilities in the school.

Reports or concerns can be raised with the School Director in the event that staff/ volunteers/ contracted workers with regularly occurring responsibilities engage in non-intentional inappropriate behaviour.

2.2 SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

Serious misconduct is non-accidental, immoral, and/or unethical behaviour between peers that results in the dishonour or mistreatment of another person or creates a hostile environment. It may include verbal or written, visual, physical or sexual behaviours.

- Verbal/Written: making sexual comments, provocative comments verbally and in letters, notes, invitations; hostile or degrading words; inappropriate written material whether in print, digital form, or on social media.
- Visual: displaying sexually suggestive or obscene objects or pictures; posting visually inappropriate material.
- Physical: leering, threatening gestures or acts of intimidation; physical violence; assault.
- Discrimination: hostile acts that relate to race, colour, religion, national origin, age or gender.
- Sexual: deliberate and unwanted sexual gestures or advances, requests.

-These behaviours are considered serious and will be addressed by school administrators.

-Child to child situations will be responded to on a case-by-case basis. The following factors will be considered in the response: difference in age, responsibility, trust, power, development, awareness or understanding.

2.3 ABUSE

The following definitions will be applied to reports involving adults and children. It is recognized that local and/or national definitions of inappropriate behaviour and abuse may vary and that there are cultural, religious and ethical differences in parenting and education. These definitions have been written with an awareness of these differences within RIS and thus will be applied regardless of individual culture.

2.3.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse is an act that results in non-accidental physical injury and may be the result of a single or repeated incident. Such acts may include but are not limited to: slapping, punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, burning, throwing, suffocating, or extreme unnecessary restraint.

2.3.2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may include a pattern of threatening, isolating or degrading behaviours. It can occur verbally, written or online.

2.3.3 Neglect

Neglect includes but is not limited to the persistent or severe neglect of a child or failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger.

2.3.4 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is the involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities. This includes but is not limited to acts such as touching a child's genitals, making/forcing or allowing children to watch or take part in pornography, or coercing the child to have sex. Sexual activity between an adult and a child/adolescent is considered sexual abuse regardless of any 'mutual consent'.

3. CHILD PROTECTION RESPONSE PROCEDURES

3.1 REPORTING GUIDLINES: Examples of what and where to report

LEVEL 1 BEHAVIOURS	LEVEL 2 BEHAVIOURS	LEVEL 3 BEHAVIOURS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lying • Cheating • Personal misuse of technology • Inappropriate language • Disrespect • Gossip/slander • Mocking/teasing • Disobedience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious or repeated behaviour that violates school behavioural expectations. • Bullying between peers • Discrimination • Violent behaviour that is not defined as physically abusive behaviour • Possession of weapons • Possession or use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs • Possession or pattern of viewing pornography • Depression, self-harm and suicidal expressions or indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse (physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, spiritual abuse) whether adult- to-student, student-to-adult student-to-student, contact or non-contact and including digital behaviour • Inappropriate behaviour/relationships between adults and students • Serious misconduct: aggressive pressure and intimidation including sexual harassment • Threatening or bullying younger/weaker students or a pattern of bullying behaviour • Non-consensual, exploitative or concerning sexual activity • Possession or distribution of child pornography • Abusive or inappropriate social media or online communication between students including nudes and sexting
Behaviour corrected and disciplined by the teacher or activity co-ordinator.	Repeated and/or serious misconduct that warrants discipline and/or follow up support.	This type of behaviour initiates a response and the involvement of the Child Safety Team and School Director.
Repeated patterns reported to School Director.	Reported to and resolved by School Director.	Reported to and resolved by Child Safety Coordinator and School Director.

3.2 CHILD PROTECTION RESPONSE

- The Response Team is expected to fully respond to all reports of possible harm in a timely manner with objectivity and fairness.
- Upon receipt of a report, the Child Safety Coordinator will delegate a response team of at least two people.
- The Response Team will review all reports and determine an appropriate response according to school policy and procedure. (Child Safety Response Flow Chart)
- A response will include the following: planning, gathering information, analysing information and determining outcome decisions.
- During interviews, a response team member of the same gender of the interviewee will be present when possible, and every effort will be made to provide a translator if needed. Two response team members will always be present during an interview, one acting as an interviewer and the other acting as a scribe.
- A child safety professional from outside may be called in at any stage of the procedure if deemed necessary.
- Care will be exercised to protect both the student(s) harmed and the individual(s) who is/are alleged to have caused harm by restricting information access to those who need to know.
- The nature of a report may necessitate that a staff member be temporarily relieved of duties or a student be temporarily be removed from the school premises.
- Staff, volunteers, students, and family members are expected to fully cooperate in any response. Anyone who conceals information or knowingly provides false or misleading information will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal or termination of enrolment.

3.3 CLOSING THE RESPONSE

After the Response Team completes their investigation, a Statement of Findings will be submitted to the School Director. The Statement of Findings will also include a recommended Action Plan.

The School Director will

- Make any administrative discipline decisions
- Communicate final decisions to any relevant parties
- Communicate with parents as necessary
- Keep all files in secure storage

The Child Safety Coordinator will

- Monitor all Child Safety Plans
- Monitor any Action Plans
- Assist the School Director with Final Communications
- Debrief the Response Team and review and improve any process
- Submit any recommended improvement plans to the School Director and assist with implementation if needed.

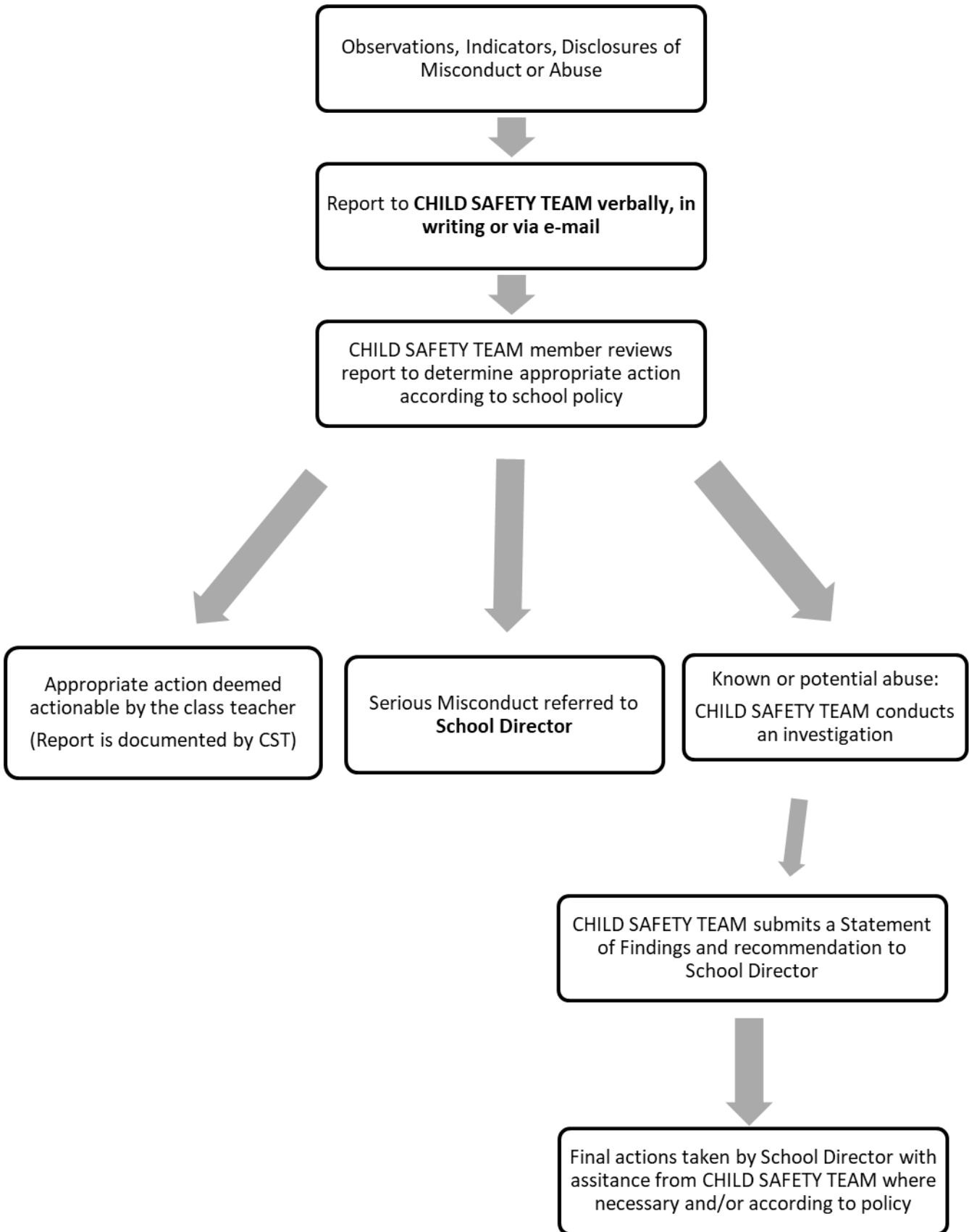
3.4 REPORT OUTCOMES

- Recommendations made to the School Director by the Child Safety Team may include suspension or termination of employment.
- Professional counselling may be a prerequisite for re-enrolment, continued enrolment, or employment. Pastoral support may be offered to those involved in the case, including the persons who reported the case and community members who are directly affected by the situation.
- According to the resources available, the school will aim to provide appropriate follow up care and support for those involved and affected by misconduct and abuse. Options can include but are not limited to the provision of or referral to counselling facilities, mentoring, and spiritual care.

3.5 INACCURATE REPORTS

- It is sometimes difficult to know whether a particular behaviour or conduct is misconduct or abuse. Students having questions about whether they have observed or experienced serious misconduct or abuse, whether they should submit a report, or about any part of the Child Protection and Safety Policy, are encouraged to speak with a member of the Child Safety Team.
- If a report of harassment or abuse is mistaken or inaccurate, but was made in good faith, the person making the report will not be subject to any form of disciplinary action for having made the report.
- Accusations with intent to defame will result in disciplinary action appropriate to the situation.

CHILD SAFETY RESPONSE FLOW CHART



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- I have read the *RIS Child Protection and Safety Policy* and agree to fully abide with all the child protection measures that are set in place for my field of work.
- I agree to abide by the Code of Conduct (Section 1.3) in RIS's *Child Protection and Safety Policy*.
- If I have been the subject of an allegation of any form of child abuse, regardless of the outcome of the allegation, I have notified the RIS School Director who may share this information with the Child Protection Coordinator.
- I understand that RIS takes allegations of child abuse seriously and that any abuse in any form will not be tolerated.
- I will ensure that at all times I will be alert, not to place myself in vulnerable situations with children, which will leave me open to accusation.
- I undertake to report any suspicion, concern, or disclosure of any child being at risk of harm in school.
- I know who the appointed Child Safety Response Team is and I am aware of how to make a report should the need arise.
- I have read this acknowledgement form, understand its contents, and voluntarily sign it.
(Please sign as directed by School Director)