

# American International School of Freetown

## Child Protection Policy

Child abuse and neglect are concerns throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to the child's education as well as to their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. The American International School of Freetown endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, The Republic of Sierra Leone, is a signatory.

Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of children. Schools need to ensure that all children in their care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop, both at school and away. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection. As such, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect. As well, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children in need of protection within the school staff and student body. Educators must be vigilant in raising awareness of possible abuse by staff and recognition of student on student abuse.

All staff employed at the American International School of Freetown must report incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering abuse or neglect. (Possible examples of abuse and neglect may be marks on a student's body, dirty and unkempt appearance, lack of dental care, unusual exhaustion, onset of unusually withdrawn or aggressive behaviors, obvious anxiety.) Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with the administrative regulations respective to this policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate in Freetown, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities.

The American International School of Freetown seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. As such, the American International School of Freetown *will distribute this policy annually to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy to students, will provide training for all staff, and will make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children.* In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, the American International School of Freetown will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process, keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority. For detailed information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child see the following link: [http://www.unicef.org/crc/index\\_30160.html](http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30160.html).