



## American International School of Freetown

### Child Protection Policy

*Inspiring knowledgeable caring thinkers*

The American International School of Freetown is committed to child protection and the safeguarding of AISF students. AISF expects all members of the AISF community to share this commitment and responsibility to protect children. AISF seeks to be a haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives.

Child abuse and neglect persist as global concerns, violating the fundamental rights of children and obstructing their educational, physical, emotional, and spiritual development. The American International School of Freetown aligns itself with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child principles, a commitment upheld by our host country, The Republic of Sierra Leone.

#### Recognizing Child Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** Non-accidental physical injury including but not limited to female genital mutilation (FGM), burns, human bites, bruises, lacerations, bone fractures, missing teeth, and any internal or head injuries, any of which have been intentionally inflicted.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Mental anguish and/or chronic emotional pain caused by such things as rejection, isolation, severe humiliation, excessive teasing and verbal assault.
- **Domestic Violence:** Allowing a child to witness violence within his/her immediate environment.
- **Neglect:** Neglect entails the continual abandonment of a child, characterized by the failure to provide essential elements like food, water, clothing, shelter, or medical care. Additionally, it involves neglecting a child's emotional and psychological needs and failing to shield them from potential dangers that could impact their health or developmental well-being.

#### Reporting

It is a requirement for all staff members at the American International School of Freetown to immediately report any instances of child abuse or neglect if they have a reasonable belief that a child has encountered or is at substantial risk of experiencing abuse or neglect. The reporting and subsequent actions regarding suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will adhere to the administrative regulations associated with this policy. Additionally, suspicions of child abuse or neglect may be communicated to the relevant employer, the respective consulate in Freetown, the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or local authorities.

#### Background Checks and Education

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. AISF requires appropriate background checks for all employees.

<https://www.icmec.org/aisa-child-protection-handbook/> <https://www.unicef.org/about-unicef>

**Approved by the Board of Directors on 27 March 2024**