

# Enko Riverside International School



## Child Protection Policy

*Version 2019.06.01*

### **Preamble**

*Enko Riverside International School is committed to safeguarding all students in our care, as well as all other members of the school community. We believe that every child has the right to be protected from harm and all sorts of abuse, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse as well as domestic violence and neglect. If a child is harmed, he/she has a right to treatment and support.*

## 1 Policy Statement

Enko Riverside International School is committed to safeguarding all students in our care, as well as all other members of the school community. We believe that every child has the right to be protected from harm and all sorts of abuse, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse as well as domestic violence and neglect. If a child is harmed, he/she has a right to treatment and support.

All ERIS staff have the responsibility to protect students and be alert to the signs of neglect or abuse and inform the Head of School or School Counsellor of suspected abuse and neglect. Procedures are initiated as directed by school policy and regulations in accordance with local authorities.

## 2 Role of School and Enko Riverside Staff

Every member of Enko Riverside International School staff has the responsibility to safeguard and promote the physical and social-emotional well-being of all children.

All staff has an equal responsibility to report a child to the HoS or the School counsellor if there is any suspicion that a child is at risk of harm or may harm others in accordance with the protection procedures of ERIS.

All students and staff involved in child protection issues will receive support from the child protection team, consisting of the HoS, the counsellor and a female staff member, who are charged with applying this policy.

All ERIS staff members have the obligation to be aware of Mozambican law and Global law pertaining to crimes against minors and have the duty to report such crimes.

All school staff has the responsibility of providing a safe environment in which children can learn.

## 3 Support for Families and Parental Information

### 3.1 Support for Families

ERIS will take every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families, staff and volunteers in the school.

Confidential records kept on a child will be shared with the child's parents with the provision that the care and safety of the child must always be paramount. ERIS will do all in its power to support and work with the child's family and continue to welcome the child and family while investigations progress.

### 3.2 Parental Information

ERIS staff and administration are committed to creating and maintaining a culture of transparency and trust and work in partnership with parents and families. We believe that this is in the best interests of children and their families.

Parents and guardians will be given access to our child protection policy and a copy of it will be included in the literature given to those whose children are new to the school. We believe it is important that parents and guardians are aware of our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that we will where necessary share concerns about children with local authorities.

Wherever possible we will aim to discuss concerns about children with their parents or guardians and inform them if we intend to make a referral to the local authorities. There may be rare instances, however, when we judge that it is not appropriate to speak to a parent or guardian before contacting the respective authorities if the child might be at risk by doing so.

## 4 Staff Recruitment/Hiring Process

ERIS follows a rigorous professional staff recruitment/hiring process for teachers and non-teachers which include the following:

- a) Obtaining references from the last three schools an applicant worked at and an oral reference check;
- b) Obtaining confirmation from the referees that they have no reason to suspect why the applicant should not have substantial, unsupervised access to children and/or young people;
- c) Obtaining criminal background/police clearance checks no older than 6 months;
- d) Clarification of gaps in CV;
- e) Keeping records of the hiring process in the personnel file.

## 5 Staff Training/Responsibilities

ERIS is dedicated to ensuring that all staff members receive thorough training on child protection and educator sexual misconduct. All new staff members are required to complete child protection training during orientation or as soon as possible after employment begins. Additionally, all returning staff members will be required to review and sign the ERIS Child Protection Policy on an annual basis. The school counsellor and school director will review and update the Child Protection Policy at least once per year and will notify all staff members to the changes.

ERIS staff training on child protection includes, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- a) The prevalence of sexual misconduct amongst educators and children
- b) Professional boundaries, including electronic communication
- c) Warning signs in children

## 6 Professional Boundaries

The following are some examples of where professional boundaries may be exceeded

- a) Personal relationships between a member of staff (paid or unpaid) and a student is prohibited. This includes relationships through social networking sites such as Facebook as well as personal communication via email which does not take place via school email accounts (both teacher and student).
- b) Use of abusive language is prohibited.
- c) Use of corporal punishment or chastisement is prohibited.
- d) Passing on personal contact details to students or obtaining personal contact details from students is prohibited.
- e) Any electronic communication other than through official school email is prohibited.

- f) Taking students to a member of staff's home is prohibited.
- g) Selling to or buying items from a student is prohibited.
- h) Accepting money or any type of gift above the monetary value of 600.- MZN per individual family is prohibited.
- i) Borrowing money from or lending money to a student is prohibited.
- j) Staff members may not initiate any physical contact other than formal greetings or for health and safety purposes or, with the student's consent, contact that is necessary for educational purposes.
- k) Staff members need to be aware of and respect personal spaces of fellow staff members and students.
- l) Students should be aware of and accept physical boundaries.
- m) Staff members, if alone in a room with a student, are required to keep the door ajar to be visible from the outside.
- n) Counsellors are required to act in compliance with professional standards.

Please refer to the school/s ICT policy for further details regarding electronic relations.

## 7 Reporting

If a staff member notices signs of potential abuse in a student, witnesses instances of abuse by fellow students or a staff member, or if a student approaches the staff member and confides in him/her about the situation of abuse outside or within the school, the staff member has an obligation to take necessary action.

The responsible teacher will monitor and record changes in children's behavior/ appearance such as bruises, sudden aggression or withdrawal in writing and report to the school counsellor and the director for investigation. The teacher will not proceed to investigate by him or herself.

The school administration (director and school counsellor) will proceed to investigate without delay. In the case of instances of abuse within school this will entail interviews with involved students or staff and may lead to potential suspension if applicable. In serious cases this may lead to expulsion and to the reporting to local authorities.

After internal clarification, in so far as the child's safety can be ensured, parents will be contacted by the school counsellor or director to express the school's concerns.

All such suspicions and investigations will be kept strictly confidential, shared only with those who need to know. The people involved will be the child's form tutor, school counsellor and the school director. In cases of different gender, a staff member of the same gender as the student will be included.

## 8 Keeping Records

Whenever notable changes are observed in a child's behaviour, physical condition or appearance, a specific and confidential record will be set up by the school counsellor, separate from the usual on-going records of progress and development.

The record will include the following information: child's name, address, and age; timed and dated documentation of objective descriptions of the child's behaviour/appearance and the exact words spoken by the child; and the dated name and signature of the recorder.

Such records will be kept in a separate file and will not be accessible to staff in the school other than the school counsellor and the director.

## 9 Student Training/Education

ERIS is committed to ensuring all students understand how they can stay safe in school, at home, and online. Student training on child protection includes:

- a) How to establish personal boundaries.
- b) How to recognize inappropriate behaviour and take appropriate steps to report the incident or concern.
- c) How to seek help, should a student feel that their personal boundaries have been violated.
- d) Strategies to combat issues such as bullying, online safety, and other types of abuse.

In addition to student training, ERIS brings child protection awareness into the school in a variety of ways, including:

- a) Inviting outside speakers, such as 'Save the Children', to facilitate reflection and discussion about real-life issues.
- b) Organizing events linked to international awareness days, such as 'Safer Internet Day'.

## 10 Trip, Excursions and other Off-Campus Activities

This policy applies to any trip, excursions and other off-campus activities. For such activities, risk assessments are carried out by the teacher in charge ahead of the trip and approved by the Head of School.

## 11 Contact with other Organizations

ERIS operates in accordance with Mozambican law and best practice both locally and within the international school community.

Confidential records kept on children about whom the school has well documented concerns will be shared with the appropriate authorities, such as the Office of Attendance to Woman and Child victims of violence (Gabinete de atendimento a mulheres e crianas vitimas de violencia domestica), which is subordinated to the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Action (ministerio de genero, crianca e accao social), if the school feels that adequate explanations for changes in the child's condition have not been provided and the condition cannot be solved within the school.

In most cases if a report on a child is to be made to the authorities, the child's parents will be informed before the report is made. In rare cases the school may seek advice from the authorities before informing the parents. The school will keep updated contact information for social workers to ensure ease of communication should an emergency arise. Records will be kept of local children's support agencies or other contacts as appropriate.



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