



CHILD PROTECTION MANUAL

The Domínico-Americano School (DAS) Child Protection Policy was elaborated by a template provided by the ICMEC (International Centre of Missing and Exploited Children) and the following resources:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Dominican Law 136-03 (Code for the Protection System and the Fundamental Rights of Children and Adolescents).
- The Dominican Ministry of Education's Protocol for Promotion of a Culture of Peace and Wellbeing in Educational Centers.
- The Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA).

OUR VISION

The Domínico-Americano School fosters competent students, with essential values and skills for productive citizenship, committed to contribute to positive change in the Dominican Republic and abroad.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Domínico-Americano School is to provide for the integral development of each student through a USA-based curriculum which promotes multiculturalism and proficiency in both English and Spanish, in preparing for a productive citizenship in the Dominican Republic and abroad.

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SECTION 1: Introduction and Purpose

Child Protection Policy

One of the core principles at the base of Dominican education is the principle of well-being, based on the fundamental right for children to develop in an environment where they feel safe, protected and accepted. The school must ensure that their students are provided with a warm, safe and welcoming environment in which children can grow and learn, in school and away.

This policy aims to educate the DAS community on different aspects of child abuse or neglect in order to be able to quickly identify any incidence in our school. It also provides a framework for reporting and intervening on any suspected case of abuse or neglect. As such, DAS will present this policy annually and provide pertinent training to students, parents and staff.

Letter to parents/Director's Address

At Domínico-Americano School and the Board of Directors, in line with the mission and vision of our school, has adopted a child protection policy to guide our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety and care of children attending our school. Domínico-Americano School fully recognizes its responsibilities for child protection. Our policy is based on Dominican Republic Law (136-03) and the United Convention on the rights of the child on which Dominican Republic is signatory.

In line with:

Article 19 – Protection from abuse and neglect. The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

Article 34 – Sexual exploitation. The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

Article 14 - RIGHT FOR SITUATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST THE CHILD TO BE DENOUNCED – Professionals, health professionals, educators, psychologists, social workers and public service agents, directors and civil servants, both public and private, and any other person, whether on the job or not, if aware or suspecting of a situation of abuse or violation of the rights of children and adolescents, are mandated to report to competent authorities, being exempt from penal and civil responsibility, with respect to the information that they may provide.

This child protection manual firmly places the child at the very heart of matters and insures that first and further most the need of the child are given the highest priority. By enrolling your child at Domínico-Americano School, you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted. All of us want you to care of your children and that is why we have endorsed a Child Protection Policy that defines the standards by which Domínico-Americano School students should be treated with respect and dignity at all times.

Objectives

- Contribute to the DAS community in the effective implementation of the preventive measures that guarantee the harmonious coexistence in coherence with the policies, programs and projects that seek to create a safe environment for students.
- Establish procedures to follow to identify and intervene in a timely manner in cases related to abuse, neglect and/or bullying.
- Favor the coordination between the different actors, instances in the educational system and public and private community institutions responsible for the protection of children's rights.
- Provide age appropriate lessons for all grade levels to help students understand personal safety, needs and rights.
- Provide parent materials and information sessions to help you better understand our programs and policy.
- Annually train faculty and staff to recognize and report issues of abuse and neglect.

SECTION 2: CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Definitions of terms and possible indicators of forms of child abuse

Child Abuse: According to the World Organization, child abuse contributes “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.”

Physical abuse: Any form of non-accidental physical injury of a child caused by another child, parent or guardian or any member of the DAS community, including the failure to take reasonable steps to prevent the injury. It involves but is not limited to: hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. These may also indicate harm to self, such as, cutting and suicide ideation.

Possible indicators of physical abuse

- Unexplained bruises or welts on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colors)
- Injuries reflecting the shape of the article used to cause them (belt, buckle, etc.)
- Injuries that regularly appear after weekends or vacation
- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back or buttocks
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
- Immersion burns with a distinct boundary line
- Unexplained laceration, abrasions or fractures
- Unexplained stomach pains.
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted
- Self-destructive tendencies, being aggressive towards others
- Being very passive and complaint
- Chronic running away

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child to be part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

- a) Any non-consensual sexual activity between students.
- b) Any sexual activity, insinuation or advancement, physical or verbal, to or with a child by any person 5 years their elder.

Possible indicators of sexual abuse:

- Sexual knowledge, behavior or use of language not appropriate to age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
- Venereal disease in a child of any age
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital or anus areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Refusing to change into physical education clothes, fear of bathrooms
- Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaints
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual
- Pregnancy, especially at a young age
- Extremely protective parenting
- Regressive behavior or stranger anxiety
- Mentioning receiving special attention from an adult friend or a new “secret” friendship with an adult or young person

Sexual Exploitation: is the sexual abuse of children and youth through the exchange of sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life, and/or money. Sexual exploitation includes involving children and youth in creating pornography and sexually explicit websites.

Possible indicators of sexual exploitation:

- The inducement, coercion or encouragement of a child to engage in any sexual activity.
- The use of children in prostitution or other sexual practices.
- The uses of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Emotional or psychological abuse: acts of commission or omission in a persistent manner by any person that significantly impair the emotional well-being of the affected child. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger. These acts could include but are not limited to restriction of movement, continuous disparagement, blame, threats, acts of terror, discrimination or ridicule and hostile treatment.

Possible indicators of emotional or psychological abuse:

- Shows fear or terror
- Anxious behavior
- Difficulty sleeping or eating
- Inattention
- Aggressive behavior
- Low self-esteem
- A tendency for isolation
- Depressed mood and negative attitude
- Conflictive or scarce interpersonal relationships
- A tendency to comply or give in
- Lying
- Compulsive stealing
- Sudden under achievement or lack of concentration

Neglect: failure to provide for a child's basic needs (physical or emotional) in any environment, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or caregiver failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. May also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Possible indicators of neglect:

- Child is unwashed or hungry
- Parents are uninterested in child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- Child does not want to go home
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of an emergency
- Medical needs unattended
- Lack of supervision
- Inappropriate dress
- Extreme loneliness
- Extreme need for attention
- Poor personal hygiene
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug or alcohol abuse

Roles and responsibilities

At Domínico-Americano School there are two important groups which directly supports our Child Protection Policy. These groups play a specific role in the development and implementation of our prevention and responsiveness stages.

The Child Protection Team (CPT), ensures that there is a comprehensive Child Protection Program (CPP), in place at the school and annually monitors the effectiveness of the program. Specific tasks include:

- Ensure a comprehensive CPP is in place for the school.
- Ensure and guide professional development for training for all faculty, staff, volunteers and contractors regarding the CPP.
- Oversee development.
- Ensure and guide parent education programs to support understanding of the objectives and goals of the CPP policy.
- Serve as a resource group in working with the cases requiring child protection; assist reporting and follow-up disclosures to the school leadership or where appropriate.
- Supports school credentialing.

The Child Protection Team (CPT) will consist of:

- School Director
- School Counselor and Psychologist

The Child Protection Response (Management) Team (CPRT) will consist of:

- Executive Director
- School Director
- School Principals
- School Counselor and Psychologist
- School Doctor
- Head of Security

The CPT and CPRT meet at least twice each year around August and June. Additional meetings may be held as necessary.

The school response team will meet based on need. This includes when a teacher brings a concern to the team or whenever a child discloses.

Principals and counselors:

- Organize activities for students and other members of the DAS community that incite reflection on school life on a periodic basis
- Along with teachers, create a harmonious and positive school environment
- Promote a climate of respect between members of the community
- Guarantee that necessary disciplinary measures are applied to students who violate the school's disciplinary code and this policy
- Support teachers and other members of the community in the development of strategies that promote a culture of peace
- Guarantee that all classrooms will have the presence of a teacher or responsible adult during class hours
- Maintain mechanisms of surveillance and supervision during entrance, recess and dismissal on school grounds
- Develop awareness strategies directed towards the community that promote a climate of peace and peaceful coexistence
- Identify cases that require special attention and coordinate the necessary help for their recovery
- Contact the pertinent local authorities and organizations to provide necessary counseling and psychological services
- Keep the local educational district apprised of any situation and ask for required assistance
- Establish the mechanisms of accompaniment and permanent supervision in school activities, as well as on school grounds
- Guarantee confidentiality of individuals who report possible abuse situations

Teachers:

- Establish class rules with their students that are in accordance with school codes.
- Promote respectful relationships between students and other community members
- Implement preventive actions against violence
- Model positive social skills
- Develop programs or projects that promote a culture of peace within the classroom and the school
- Guarantee that necessary disciplinary measures are applied to students who violate the school's disciplinary code and this policy
- When required, seek assistance from the counselor to deal with situations
- Keep the principal and counselor apprised of situations that arise in the classroom and actions taken
- Observe the environment in the classroom and school grounds, assuming the necessary responsibilities as an adult in charge of the care of children to supervise and take preventive actions to eliminate risk of injury to the student population
- Maintain a positive relationships with students so they may feel open to expressing any overwhelming feeling or situation of abuse or peer pressure they may be going through

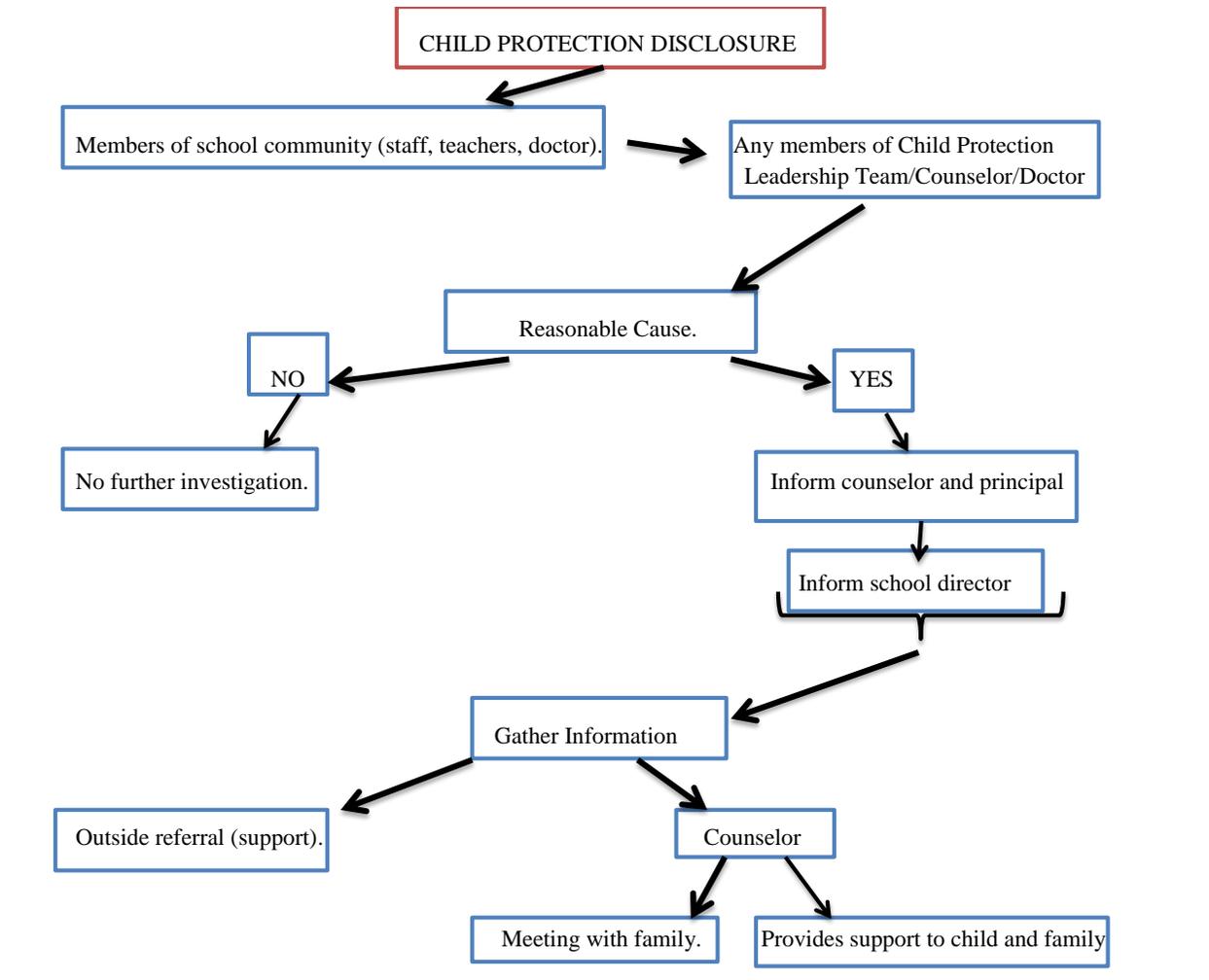
- Register and communicate to the principal and counselor any sudden changes in students' behavior to establish action plans in a timely manner
- Investigate about topics that are currently affecting their students in order to provide adequate responses that adjust to their developmental stage
- Develop learning situations in the classroom that allow students to discuss the topics that are affecting them, helping them develop the competencies and skills to face these

Parents:

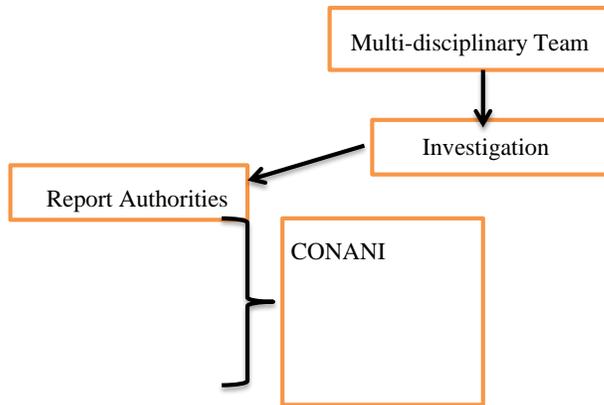
- The parents' association should be aware of the policy and help spread its message to the rest of the parents in the community
- Support the school in prevention activities that strengthen an environment of harmony and open dialogue
- Report any situations related to discipline management and negative relationships between students, teachers and administrative staff
- Promote trainings for parents related to universal, social and instrumental values that can help assertively prevent the fundamental problems that affect childhood, adolescence and youth in school age
- Support families in the search for solutions whenever their children are at fault

Head of School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create and support Children Protection Team -Initiate the process of the adoption of a Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Program -Gain Board cooperation and approval for Child Protection Policy -Provide resources in the budget on an annual basis for the Child Protection Team to ensure resources as needed. -Ensure external organizations, vendors, contracted service providers and other entities comply with the school's Child Protection Program and that the school provides an annual in-service program for their personnel
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Direct oversight of Child Protection Team for adoption of CPP and CP Curriculum -Review the CP Policies -Coordinate the development of and ensure proper implementation comprehensive Child Protection Program
Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Frist line responder to whom suspected cases of child abuse are reported. -Maintains communication with divisional principal during pre-eliminary inquiry process -Determines and implements steps to support student safety during inquiry process

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provides follow-up resources and support to students and families as appropriate, both during and after its completion -Consults with Head of School and principals to develop a calendar of professional development, instituting the program and annual review cycle for the success of the program -Leads informational sessions for parents and community members about the child protection policy and supporting student safety
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Understands role within CPT, most importantly as a mandated reporter when abuse is suspected, observed or disclosed. -Will serve on the CPT as needed. -Attends necessary training for the Child Protection Program
School Nurse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Applies professional and clinical knowledge in order to identify signs of child abuse and neglect -Documents and maintains accurate records, including the use of a body map to document and identify specific anatomical marks or injuries -Adheres to Domínico-Americano's Child Protection and refers to the appropriate person in accordance with this policy



*When needed:



Reporting procedures

All members of the community are required to familiarize themselves with these reporting procedures in the event that they witness or become aware of any form of student abuse or bullying. Updates are regularly provided to members of the community regarding changes in this policy and student protection practices through staff meetings and periodic electronic community communication. Expectations for reporting include acting with tact, confidentiality, and sympathy; avoiding “over-questioning” of the victim; and assembling complete and detailed notes (including date and time of any observations or conversations with the student) immediately. Formal written records should be kept on any reported cases documenting every step of the procedure and these should be stored securely and confidentially in a separate student file dedicated to child protection. .

STEP 1

Any member of the DAS community that experiences, observes, or receives a report of signs and/or behaviors that suggest that a student is being subjected to any form of abuse must **immediately** notify their corresponding school counselor.

STEP 2

Through dialogue (or pointing at the human silhouette), investigate the facts related to the case in order to determine if there is reasonable cause to proceed or if there are no grounds. Never check the student’s body as this would fall under the investigation procedures of official authorities and it may taint the process.

STEP3

If there is reasonable cause to proceed, the school counselor must inform the necessary members of the Child Protection Team and create a school-based response team with necessary members depending on the reported situation. If there are no grounds to move forward, document the steps taken and close the case.

STEP 4

Meet with the student’s family, except when it is judged that this could increase the possibility of harm to the student.

STEP 5

If after meeting with the family a report to the authorities is not deemed necessary, provide recommendations for continued support and/or counseling.

STEP 6

If a report to the authorities is deemed necessary, report to the following authorities for further investigation and actions, in order of priority:

- a. Unidad de Prevención y Persecución de Violencia de Género, Intrafamiliar y Delito Sexual del Distrito Nacional - Fiscalía del Distrito Nacional (809-533-6668)
- b. CONANI (809-567-2233)
- c. Línea de vida (809-200-1202)

STEP 7

Involve and commit families with the recommended measures and solutions.

STEP 8

Provide students and families with constant follow up, overseeing the effects of the recommended interventions on their social performance and adjusting as needed.

Recommendations for staff to handle disclosure

-Be welcoming, it may have taken a great deal of courage for them to approach you and they may not do so again.

-Stay calm and listen very carefully.

-Provide reassurance and support.

-Allow the child to tell you at their own pace.

-Report IMMEDIATELY.

SECTION 3: APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Domínico-Americano School statement of acknowledgment of code of conduct

I promise to strictly follow all of the rules and guidelines as contained in the school's Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth participating in the school's programs. The Code includes the following key areas of my responsibility. I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to children and youth under the auspices of Dominico-Americano School, I am subject to a criminal history background check.

I will:

- To the best of my ability, promote the good health, welfare, and safety of all members of our school community and uphold high ethical standards.
- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with children and/or youth in settings that are open and visible to others; as well as never be alone at school activities without another adult being notified or present.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth, while adhering to the school's policies on student discipline.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children – when necessary – only in ways that are appropriate, public, and non-sexual.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
- Avoid transactions with students, parents, or vendors that may be perceived as conflicts of interest.
- Comply fully with the school's policies on anti-harassment, representation and confidentiality standards, safeguarding of property and funds, and the honoring of contracts.
- Comply with the school's mandatory reporting requirements and the school's policy to report suspected child abuse and other violations of the Code or other school policies.

I will not:

- Touch or speak to a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Inflict any physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading children and/or youth.
- Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with children and/or youth.
- Accept or give gifts to children or youth without the knowledge of their parents.
- Communicate with children over unmonitored email.

- Use Twitter or similar forms of electronic or social media to communicate with students except for activities strictly involving school business.

Acknowledgement and agreement to comply with the Dominico-Americano School Code of Conduct

My electronic signature confirms that I have read this Code of Conduct and that I agree to follow these standards. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from Dominico-Americano School.

Full

Name:

Date:

APPENDIX B: Dominico-Americano anti-bullying policy, anti-bullying and anti-harassment

1. Policy Statement

1.1 The School is committed to a working and learning environment where people can achieve their full potential free of bullying and harassment. Appropriate action and procedures are needed to try to eliminate bullying and harassment, resolving complaints as swiftly and amicably as possible. School procedures, through the Discipline Committee, will also make provision for disciplinary action to be taken.

1.2 For the purposes of this Policy, references to 'the Interamericano community' includes all members of staff (including outsourced staff on campus), students, parents, visitors and lay governors (Board and Foundation members) of the School. The School expects other relevant parties to comply with the required standards of behavior in this Policy by way of contract.

2. Definition of Bullying and Harassment

2.1 For the purpose of this Policy: 2.1.1 "A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself." (Dan Olweus, UNESCO) Bullying includes three important components:

- It involves an imbalance of power or strength, resulting difficult for the target to defend.
- It involves repetitive actions over time, including patterns of relational aggression.
- It involves intentional actions with aggressive behavior that include unwanted, negative actions.

2.1.2 "Harassment is defined as any improper and unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person."
(www.un.org/womenwatch/antiharassment)

- Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate or embarrass another or which create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
- Harassment normally implies a series of incidents.
- Disagreement on work performance or on other work-related issues is normally not considered harassment.

2.1.3 Harassment also occurs when a person treats another person less favorably for any reason related to gender identity or sex or because that person has rejected or submitted to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, and has had the purpose or effect described in this section. In this scenario, the person who is treating someone less favorably might not be the person who engaged in the unwanted conduct.

3. Action Against Bullying and Harassment

3.1 In deciding whether a conduct constitutes bullying or harassment, the School Administration and Discipline Committee will take account of the following factors: • the circumstances of the case; 29 Colegio Interamericano Child and youth protection policy • the alleged victim's (or victims') perception of the conduct; • whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have had the effect of bullying or harassment, based on the definition above.

3.2 It should be noted that a member of the Interamericano community is personally liable for their actions, which in some instances could lead to legal actions.

3.3 The School may use their own separate procedures to investigate and take appropriate actions to resolve the same allegation of bullying or harassment.

3.4 The School will take appropriate steps to deal with behavior, intentional or unintentional, that results in a breach of this Policy. The School, with the Discipline Committee, will conduct confidential and impartial investigations into allegations of bullying and/or harassment.

3.5 Disciplinary action may be taken if allegations of bullying or harassment are found to be malicious or vexatious.

4. Scope of Policy

4.1 This Policy applies to the Interamericano community and relates to bullying or harassment perpetrated by a school community member. It also includes bullying and harassment by or against any other party who is contracted to abide by this Policy.

4.2 The School will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment within its community or against its members, which may go beyond the physical premises and normal business hours of the School, such as conduct outside of School, at events and trips abroad or on social media that is brought to the attention of the School.

4.3 Bullying and harassment can occur between any members of the community.

5. Responsibility of the Interamericano Community

5.1 All members of the Interamericano community should:

- prevent bullying and harassment by being sensitive to the reactions and needs of others, and ensuring that their conduct does not cause offence;
- discourage bullying and harassment by making it clear that such conduct is unacceptable, and supporting colleagues and peers who are taking steps to stop the harassment;

- understand bullying and harassment by attending training sessions and/or seeking advice from the School's counselors or other School representatives.

5.2 The School is committed to:

- taking steps to eliminate bullying and harassment and other unlawful discrimination, as well as to actively promote equality to provide a collegiate, lawful and harmonious working environment for all the members of the community;
- taking appropriate action when it is aware that bullying or harassment may be or is taking place;
- raising awareness to help members of the INTERAMERICANO Community identify and deal with bullying and harassment.

6. Monitoring of Bullying and Harassment Cases

6.1 The School can compile anonymous information about the number, nature and outcome of bullying and harassment cases each academic year

Appendix C: The Human Silhouette

