



# ***Faith International Academy***

## **SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS:**

From the Old Testament to the New, the Bible clearly states the responsibilities parents have for the training and care of their children. Similarly, penalties are harsh for those who would injure or rob a child of their childhood.

*Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

*Matthew 18:5,6 Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.*

Within the Christian School we recognize a taking on of these responsibilities and our safeguarding policies seek to provide a mechanism by which we can properly do this.

*1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The welfare and safety of children are paramount in Faith International Academy's policies and procedures. FIA's intent is to provide a safe and loving environment where children are nurtured and cared for in a way that allows them to become all they are capable of being. This includes valuing them, regarding them positively, and treating them with respect and care.

Having a common set of expectations helps protect children, but can also protect the adults interacting with children. By putting these guidelines into place, an adult's interaction with a child is less likely to be interpreted incorrectly. Adults (faculty, employees and volunteers) assume the full burden of setting and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all interactions with children.

FIA also works very closely with other Christian mission agencies in both prevention and response, agreeing to use similar child harm definitions and codes of conduct. FIA has made a commitment to abide by local law. With regard to the treatment of children, where local law is more prescriptive or strict than the guidelines here, then local law must be followed.

Our intent is not to be overly prescriptive in how parents raise their children. However, these guidelines need to be succinct, clear and consistent with other networks and external bodies that are also seeking the best for children.

Being vigilant is the most effective way to prevent harm from happening to children. By vigilantly following these standards for interactions with children, we hope to protect children from harm.

This Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following expectations of staff, and we assume that each person will use good judgment in applying them.

## **WITHIN THE WORK SITUATION**

In any situation with children we should use as many of the following safeguards as possible with a minimum of at least one. This will demonstrate professionalism and wisdom resulting in healthy interactions with children and reduce risk. All interactions with children should be planned in a way that minimizes risks as far as possible.

### **1. Visibility**

Being visible to others when working with children is wise. This can be accomplished by planning activities in areas where others are present and at a time when other activities are occurring. It can also be accomplished by installing windows in rooms occupied by children or by keeping doors open.

### **2. Overcoming Isolation**

An adequate number of adults should supervise student events, especially overnight activities. Isolation can also be overcome by avoiding being alone with one child. For example, take two or more children to the bathroom together, rather than only one; drop off siblings last in a carpool or take your own child along when providing rides, etc.

### **3. Accountability**

All staff are expected to interact with children in a safe, caring, and responsible manner, with a high level of accountability. All staff are responsible for giving and accepting feedback from others in order to maintain a high level of professionalism and integrity in interactions with children. When interacting one-on-one with a child, the following procedures should be followed, as applicable:

- Always be accountable to other adults regarding your interactions with children.
- Parents and/or supervisors are to be notified beforehand about any activities with children, for example, before transporting a child, keeping a child after school, a youth activity, or when tutoring a child.
- Counseling or other necessarily confidential meetings with children should be done in a place where the adult and child are visible to others such as in an office with a window in the door and only when another adult is in close vicinity, aware that the meeting is occurring, and willing to stay in the vicinity until it is completed.
- In an emergency situation, such as needing to transport a child alone or supervise a child alone, find an additional person to be involved if at all possible, or notify whoever is available.

#### **4. Balancing Power and Control**

When interacting with children, balance the age, development, power, responsibility, trust, awareness, and/or understanding between staff and children to help to lower risk. This can be done by such things as sending two children to the nurse or a secretary, sitting down for conversations with a child so your head levels are similar, or inviting two or more students to your classroom to work on a project, etc.

#### **5. Supervision**

Supervision also reduces risk. FIA administration and leaders should periodically and randomly inspect classrooms, offices, work areas and other areas where children and adults are together.

#### **6. Differential Treatment**

Adults should avoid favoring or showing differential treatment to particular children to the exclusion of and in the presence of others, or excluding children in a derogatory or embarrassing way in the presence of others.

### **WITHIN THE WORK SITUATION, THE FAMILY OR OTHER SETTINGS WHERE CHILDREN ARE PRESENT:**

#### **1. Discipline**

The purpose of discipline should be to correct and teach, not to punish. The following actions may involve harm and are to be avoided: derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation or shaming, publically singling out a child for negative treatment or exclusion, yelling at (loud speech that harms by bringing emotional degradation) or belittling a child or other forms of hostile or rejecting treatment. Other behaviors to be avoided include: hitting, pushing, or any behavior that assaults a child. Also avoid holding a child against his/her will outside the goals of protecting him/her from danger, providing him/her medical care or keeping him/her from harming himself/herself or others. Physical discipline by a parent of their own children, such as spanking, is not considered harm as long as it is reasonable, not done in anger, and causes no bodily injury to the child.

#### **2. Touch**

Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children but unhealthy touch is harmful, the following guidelines apply:

- Touch should be in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult.
- Touch should be open rather than secretive.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult. Resistance from the child should be respected.
- Touch should always communicate respect for the child.
- Adults should avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they are able to do for themselves, including dressing, bathing, etc.

The following signs of affection are generally appropriate: verbal praise, side hugs, high fives or handshakes. For younger children, touching their hands, shoulders and arms, hugs, or holding them when others are present.

The following behaviors are inappropriate, or may be perceived as inappropriate, and should not be engaged in: touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs except to keep young children clean or healthy; showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child; sleeping or lying on a bed with a child that is not your own; flirtatious or seductive looks; any form of affection that is unwanted by the child; sexually-suggestive or explicit language, showing sexually-suggestive pictures or videos or playing sexually-suggestive games with a child; and any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature. Adults should monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

### **3. Communication**

Communication should always be wholesome, whether it is online, written, verbal, video, or pictures. Adults should use words to support and encourage a child such as praise, positive reinforcement, and appropriate jokes. Inappropriate communication includes the following: shaming, belittling, name calling, using harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate the child, cursing, or making derogatory remarks about the child, their family, and/or their place of origin. Inappropriate communication also includes improper comments that relate to physique or body development, telling derogatory or sexual jokes, making sexually suggestive comments, telling inappropriate secrets, or discussing sexual encounters or desires with children.

## **FINAL COMMENTS:**

### **1. Parent Involvement**

Parents are responsible for knowing where their children are at all times. Therefore, parents should be informed of planned school activities (e.g. trips included in the schedule) and be expected to sign a consent form. Parents should be encouraged to make unannounced visits to program activities, when appropriate.

### **2. Monitoring Child-to-Child Behavior**

The following actions may involve harm or inappropriate behavior of one child to another and are not to be tolerated: bullying, hazing, derogatory name-calling, ridicule or humiliation, publically singling out another child for negative treatment or exclusion, inappropriate sexual touch, inappropriate sexually explicit language, showing of sexually explicit images, hitting, slapping, pushing, holding against their will, or otherwise assaulting another child.

Please sign on the **SIGNATURE PAGE** that you have read and understand these rules and agree to abide by them.