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## **MIST Safeguarding Policy**

**Last Reviewed: June 2024**

**Due for Review: June 2025**

### **Definition**

Safeguarding in schools refers to the process of ensuring the welfare and protection of children and young people from harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. It encompasses practices, policies, and procedures designed and implemented to prevent maltreatment and harm by identifying and responding to potential concerns or risks.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the MIST Safeguarding Policy (referred to as SG Policy from hereon) is to inform the MIST community of students, parents, guardians and all adults of the school's responsibilities for safeguarding children in accordance with relevant laws and guidance from the Japanese law and international conventions.

MIST follows the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

**Our safeguarding policy applies to all adults visiting or working with MIST students. In the policy, everyone is referred to as staff and volunteers.**

### **Commitment**

MIST is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people within our care by providing a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment.

### **Guiding Principles**

**MIST aims to:**

- ensure that all our students are valued, listened to and respected;
  - provide an environment where all children and young people feel able to speak out;
  - include opportunities in the curriculum for students to develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe and healthy;
  - provide regular training to staff to ensure they are competent in their roles, empowered to fulfil their responsibilities and up to date with the latest guidance in safeguarding.
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## **Core Competencies**

MIST ensures that every staff member and volunteer meets the following competencies through regular training and dialogue:

- place the student at the centre of all work done and decisions taken;
- understand signs and indicators of abuse and neglect;
- know how to communicate with and respond to students during an incident or disclosure;
- follow through on safeguarding concerns;
- understand that some students may be more vulnerable and why;
- understand the MIST SG Policy and related policies

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Designated Safeguarding Lead - <b>DSL</b> (current Head of School)	Dr. Emerson Keung
Designated Safeguarding Trustee - <b>DST</b>	Heiichi Itakura
Designated Safeguarding Team - <b>DS Team</b>	1. Deepa Verma 2. Felicity Ryan
Japanese/English Liaison Person (current BA Manager)	Sachio Arai

## **Recognising and Responding to Abuse**

MIST recognises that it is our responsibility to be aware of the signs of different types of abuse or neglect and to respond quickly and appropriately when concerns arise or disclosures are made.

The different types of abuse and neglect that raise concern are:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Peer to Peer Abuse
5. Neglect

## **Disclosure**

Disclosure is the process by which children and young people start to share their experiences of abuse with others. Children may choose to disclose, either directly or indirectly, through their behaviour or even non-verbal cues.

It takes extraordinary courage for children to disclose, as they are strongly influenced by fear of consequences, not being believed, and shame.

It is important to know that not all disclosures will lead to a formal report of abuse, a case being made, or a case being taken to court, but all disclosures will be taken seriously.

▶ Responding to a Child's Disclosure of Abuse | NSPCC Learning

### **Physical Injuries**

When a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on the emergency line 110. MIST SG Policy and procedures must be followed when the danger is not immediate.

If necessary, a professional will be called to examine the child.

## **Reporting**

All staff, volunteers, students and parents/carers can raise concerns or make allegations against staff and volunteers through the following form:

[Safeguarding Allegation/Concern/Disclosure Form](#)

MIST encourages reporting low-level concerns and allegations against a staff where warranted through the reporting form mentioned above.

**Low-level concern** is a concern that, by itself, does not indicate abuse. It may require monitoring or some intervention. It needs to be reported as a concern.

**An allegation** against a staff member or volunteer is a report made regarding inappropriate, harmful or possibly harmful behaviour or criminal offense against a child or related to a child. Any behaviour that makes an adult unsuitable to work with children can be reported as an allegation.

- An allegation against a staff member is reported directly to the DSL.
- An allegation against the DSL/HoS is reported directly to the DST.

The HoS and DST will make a professional decision on the next steps, which may or may not involve dialogue with the DS Team.

MIST follows a policy of mandatory reporting for known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Failing to report known or suspected cases of child abuse could be considered a breach of school policy and possibly result in disciplinary action.

Reports made must be factual (free of personal opinions), detailed and include:

- date and time of the incident/disclosure/concern;
- names of all parties involved in the incident, including any witnesses;
- reporter's name and contact.

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**To ensure the report's accuracy, it should ideally be submitted within 48 hours.**

Where the allegation results in an outside agency being contacted, the reporter may be required to make further statements.

When a staff member or volunteer feels that they cannot report allegations or concerns through school or is concerned about how a case is being handled, they can contact the Suginami Child Guidance Center directly.

### **Suginami Child Guidance Center**

Phone: 03-5370-6001

FAX: 03-5370-6005

〒167-0052

Tokyo, Suginami ward, Nishi Ogikubo, 4-23-6

Website: [Suginami Child Guidance Center](#)

All reports must be kept confidential to maintain the privacy and dignity of all involved parties and uphold their rights.

## **Consent**

Consent from a child for information sharing is **sought**:

- when a child is mature enough and competent to make decisions;
- when a child cannot give consent, their parent or legal guardian must be asked unless doing so would put the child at risk;

Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Consent is **not** required when MIST refers a case to child protection services, relevant professionals or police. When MIST shares personal information without consent, a record will be made of:

- the necessity of sharing information without consent;
- steps taken to get consent, or why consent was not sought;
- if consent was denied, the person's reasons (if known).

## **Records Retention and Storage**

Child safeguarding and protection files are confidential and retained permanently. The active cases are monitored by the DSL/HoS and DS Team.

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### **Transferring files to other schools**

When a student with an active child protection file transfers schools, MIST has a moral duty to inform, or attempt to inform, the school about the safeguarding concerns for the child while following the confidentiality legislation.

### **Creating a Safe Learning Environment**

Service providers, contractors, or their personnel are not allowed unsupervised access to students. When necessary, they will receive safeguarding training relevant to their role.

### **Policy Review**

MIST is committed to reviewing the outcomes of safeguarding concerns and investigations to evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and procedures. This policy is a live document that MIST will update, as required, based on the safeguarding concerns raised over the course of the year and newly arising concerns.

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