



# SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION AT MARYMOUNT SCHOOL



**BE THE LEADERS  
EDUCATING LEADERS**

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## INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of this Safeguarding & Child Protection Handbook is to provide information and support for the Marymount community to embrace Child Protection as an essential responsibility of the school and to ensure systems and programs are in place to support students, staff members and families in need.

In order to ensure safeguarding & child protection Marymount has adopted policies and procedures and content that include:

- A clear policy statement which applies to all members of Marymount community.
- Shared definitions and understanding of abuse exploitation and neglect.
- Reporting procedures and clear steps to follow after disclosure.
- Training and education related to safeguarding & child protection for students, family and staff.
- Policies and procedures outlining explicit expectations for healthy interactions between adults and children and between peers.





# SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

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Marymount Barranquilla has a moral and legal duty to safeguard the welfare of students. Child abuse and neglect are major concerns in the modern world. They are serious violations of children's rights and are obstacles to educational goals in regards to the physical, emotional, and spiritual development. **Our goal is to build and maintain a proactive environment that protects children by either preventing child abuse before it occurs or by ensuring its earliest possible detection, reporting and intervention.** Marymount Barranquilla endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and complies with local and international legal requirements in regard to child abuse and neglect. Our child protection statement is based on two premises:

- **Marymount has a preventive and intervention approach to ensure a safe place for students and offers support to those who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives.**
- **The school/parent partnership is essential for providing the highest level of safety and care for our children.**

Marymount Barranquilla abides by the World Health Organization definition of child abuse: "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. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, physiological and or psychological needs, likely to result in

serious impairment of the child's health and/or development."<sup>1</sup>

All staff employed at Marymount Barranquilla have the professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection and to take the necessary steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect. Marymount informs parents of key information related to child protection, train students on topics related to child abuse and neglect, provides annual training for all staff on their key responsibilities, and make every effort to implement strict hiring practices to ensure the safety of our children. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, Marymount will conduct a full investigation following a carefully determined course of due process. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative and legal regulations respective to this policy.

By enrolling their child at Marymount Barranquilla, parents agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted by the Marymount Board of Trustees.

Approved by the Marymount Board of Directors  
Policy Adopted on August 1, 2019.

1. World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa- [www.afro.who.int](http://www.afro.who.int)



## LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

Dear Marymount Community,

Nothing is more important than the safety of our children. When they are safe and happy, they learn and thrive.

Marymount School Barranquilla, aligned with our core values and vision statement, has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy that guides our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety and care of children in attendance at our school. By enrolling your child at Marymount, you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted by the Board.

Marymount's Safeguarding and Child Protection Handbook is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>2</sup> and Colombian Law<sup>3</sup>. The two key articles of the Convention, which guide our work related to protecting our children, are as follows:

- **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.

Please know that we genuinely value our partnership with you in providing for the safety and care of your children. As part of our overall educational programs and specific to our shared responsibility to educate children, to protect them, and to learn and grow in a safe environment, Marymount follows the following protocols:

- Provide age-appropriate lessons through our curriculum for all grade levels to help students understand personal safety, needs, and rights.
- Provide materials and information sessions for staff and parents to help you better understand our programs and policy.
- Annually review policy and protocols with staff about abuse and neglect and reporting issues.

We know that we can work together to ensure that our children are safe and knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities. I thank you for your support of our efforts and invite you to contact a school counselor or principal regarding any questions you may have.

Sincerely,  
Anabella Martinez  
Head of the School

<sup>1</sup>  
1. Ley Colombiana 1098:  
[http://www.secretariassenado.gov.co/senado/basedoc/ley\\_1098\\_2006.html](http://www.secretariassenado.gov.co/senado/basedoc/ley_1098_2006.html) Law 1620 of 2013, which creates the National System for Social Harmony in Educational Environments, and Education for the Exercise of Human Rights, Sexual Education and Prevention and Mitigation of School Violence; Decree 1965 of 2013, which develops Law 1620 of 2013; and Law 1146 of 2007, which regulates the prevention and comprehensive assistance of children and adolescents victims of sexual violence.



## SUPPORTING THE CHILD, THE FAMILY AND THE COMMUNITY

Child abuse is a multifaceted issue that involves dynamics of the child, the family, and the community.

**THE CHILD** – children at risk include those with difficult temperament, defiance, health issues, social or academic difficulties, and those unaware of their rights to protection.

**Marymount** - promotes respect, study and social skills, teaches rights to protection, healthy relationships, assertiveness, using support system

**THE FAMILY** – at-risk characteristics include parents under stress, families in need of support and access to resources, socially isolated, unusually high expectations placed on their children, parental history of inappropriate discipline when they were children

**Marymount** – works with parents to understand appropriate discipline, comprehension and healthy child protection practices

**THE COMMUNITY** – at-risk characteristics include limited laws on child protection, unusually high work stress placed on parents, acceptance of inappropriate behavior toward children (excessive corporal punishment), unusually high expectations placed on children to achieve their goals

**Marymount** – implements the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, trains teachers to recognize abuse, trains counselors to support families in need, trains and supports parents in protective behaviors, networks with community, health services, and local authorities for referrals.

# A PREVENTIVE APPROACH

## EDUCATION & TRAINING

Teaching Students: Curriculum for Student Education



At Marymount we use a preventive approach to promote a healthy environment for students' socio-emotional development within the School community by addressing a variety of topics (from four thematic axes biological/sexuality, psychoaffective, ethical/values , and prevention) for our students from Nursery to 12th grade.

Sex abuse prevention education is “preventive” in nature. It is not intended nor does it claim to educate children about sex, sexuality, the sexual functions of private parts, or human love relationships. It is intended

to teach children about their rights to assert limits over what happens to their bodies and to give them the tools necessary to communicate effectively if someone violates those boundaries. In sum, sex abuse prevention education teaches children how to prevent themselves from being victims of criminal behaviour.

We address a comprehensive part of the child's education by repeating it many times during the school year and including developmentally sequenced materials, systematic and specific skills training and components such as classroom training combined with parental involvement, use of interactive instructional techniques.

One of the main aspects of the Guidance curriculum is conscious sexual education, where children learn about “safe” and “unsafe” touches in a secure-based setting.

In order to provide them with adequate tools to resist the overtures of potential offenders, children must have the following information:

- The accurate names of private body parts
- Rules-based instructions regarding what to do if someone touches them in a way that is harmful. (Say “No”, get away, tell a grown up)
- Assurances that they (children) get to say whether a touch is “unwanted” or not.
- Assistance in identifying the safe adults in their lives
- Reminders that they can always talk to parents or another trusted adult about anything
- Children should continue to talk about harmful, unwanted, unsafe, or bad touches.
- That abuse is never their fault





## STAFF TRAINING

The Head of the School, General Manager, Section Principals, Support Services Head, Maintenance Head, General Services Head and Counselors have received training in Safeguarding and Child protection. Teachers and other staff members receive yearly training in regards to policies, procedures and specific curriculum components.

All staff members are informed and required to sign a code of conduct in order to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of our students and other members of our school community; Define

and clarify the parameters of professional behavioral expectations and practices with regard to our school; and assure our parent and community stakeholders, accreditation agencies, and others of the accountability of the educators/staff who work at our school.





## ANNUAL CALENDAR

Timeline	Activity	Responsible
June	Ensure all staff, volunteers and contracted service providers sign code of conduct	Talent Management
August	Inform Board, staff, students and parents about school Child Protection Policy / Manual	Head of the School
	Inform new families of school Child Protection Program	Safeguarding & child protection coordinator
	Child Protection Team initial meeting (Review data from previous school year- develop implementation plans for current year )	Safeguarding & Child Protection Team
	Train all staff on details of program, individual responsibilities and how to manage disclosure	Counselors
September	Inform Parents about year lessons (Coffee with Section Director)	Counselors
	Start lessons with curriculum plan	Counselor, principal
	Ensure lessons have been distributed to be taught through the school year	Safeguarding & child protection coordinator
October	Hold parent evening on a topic associated with Conscious sexual Ed.	Counselors
November	Review hiring practices to ensure: background screening, criminal history check, reference check includes discussion of child protection history; ensure code of conduct signed when hired	Talent Management and Safeguarding & Child Protection Team
February	Review/revise curriculum and recommend resources as needed	Counselors
	Hold parent evening on a topic associated with Conscious sexual Ed.	Counselors
March	Review/revise Safeguarding & child protection manual for next school year.	
April-May	Staff background screening, criminal history check, reference check	Talent Management
May	Staff Code of conduct Signature	Talent Management

## WHAT IS A SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY?

Child Protection is a broad term used to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In this document, the term “child protection” applies to the protection of children enrolled in the school. Please note that this definition also includes harm to self.

### Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:



A safeguarding and child protection policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to protecting students from harm (to self and from others) and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of students. It serves to create a safe and positive environment for children and to demonstrate that the school is committed to taking on its duty and responsibility seriously. This handbook considers that Marymount school will provide appropriate prevention and promotion of child safety to increase children’s ability to understand abuse prevention.



Child protection concerns include suspected, alleged, self-disclosed, or witnessed the abuse of a child by anyone associated within or outside the school which must be investigated and followed by appropriate action.

## HOW ARE ABUSE AND NEGLECT DEFINED?

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### Neglect

is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, physiological and or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health and/or development.

- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision this would include failure to provide proper adult guardianship such as leaving children unsupervised at home for any extended period of time. Should parents/guardians leave the country for any reason, then the responsibility for informing the school of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian. Temporary Change of Guardianship Should also be informed prior to parents/guardians leaving the country.)
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment.)
- Emotional (e.g., a pattern of actions, such as: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs. Specific examples may include verbal humiliation, refusing to acknowledge the presence of a child, invasion of privacy for no specific reason, violent threats, etc.)

### 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
- Both parents or legal guardians are absent for any period of 24 hours or greater, without appropriate provision made for child's care, and a temporary guardian named
- Parents can not be reached in the case of emergency

## Abuse

Definitions of abuse are complex and can differ across various cultures according to their child-rearing behaviors, gender and role responsibilities, and expectations. The primary determination of abuse is that it is dependent on some form of a relationship that is used to meet the need of the more powerful person, typically either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides much of the definitions that are based in understanding the impact of certain behaviors on the child.

- Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means, causing skin bruising, burns, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function, death
- Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning
- Committing acts that are cruel or inhumane regardless of observable injury. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain and/or mental suffering
- Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the criminal code or school policy
- Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury to, or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child
- Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above

### Possible indicators of abuse

- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body.
- Bruises of different ages (various colors).
- Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand).
- Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation.
- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks.
- Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette.
- 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.

## Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child. (These symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as cutting and suicide ideation). Signs of physical abuse:

## Sexual Abuse

Is committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in either the criminal code of the host country or school policy, or intentionally touching either directly or through clothing, the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child for other than hygiene or child care purposes.

### Possible indicators of physical abuse:

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains.
- Refusal to discuss injuries.
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather.
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted.
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults.
- Self-destructive tendencies.
- Being aggressive towards others.

### 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 in the oral, genital, or anal areas.
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Refusing to change into PE clothes, fear of bathrooms.
- Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint.
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual.
- Pregnancy, especially at a young age.
- Extremely protective parenting.

Sexual abuse has some different characteristics of child abuse that warrant special attention. While physical abuse is often the result of immediate stress and not usually planned, sexual abuse requires planning with results that are more insidious. The planning, referred to as “grooming,” often results in victims accepting the blame, responsibility, guilt and shame for the sexual behavior of the offender. Sexual abuse requires far more secrecy than other forms of child abuse, so is more difficult to report.

Many victims, through the process of grooming, are taught that the sex is a form of love, so tend to love their offender and often present as happy and well-adjusted children with no negative symptoms because of their perception of being loved.

## Emotional Abuse

Is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve: Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; that they are inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; age or

developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children; causing children frequently to feel frightened; or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

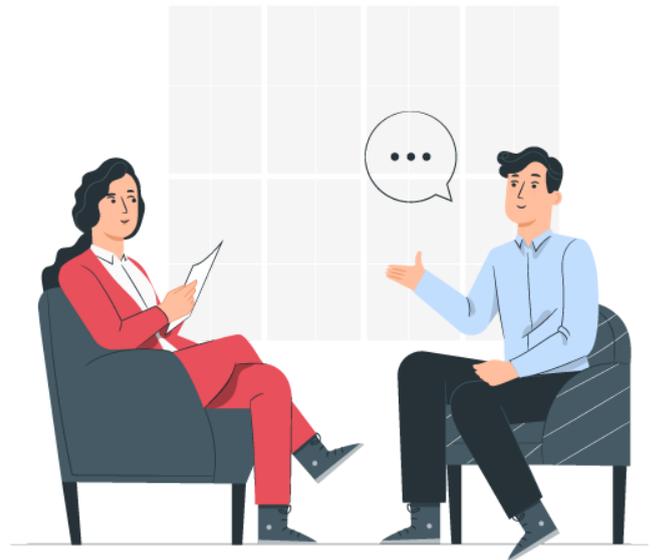


### Possible indicators of emotional abuse:

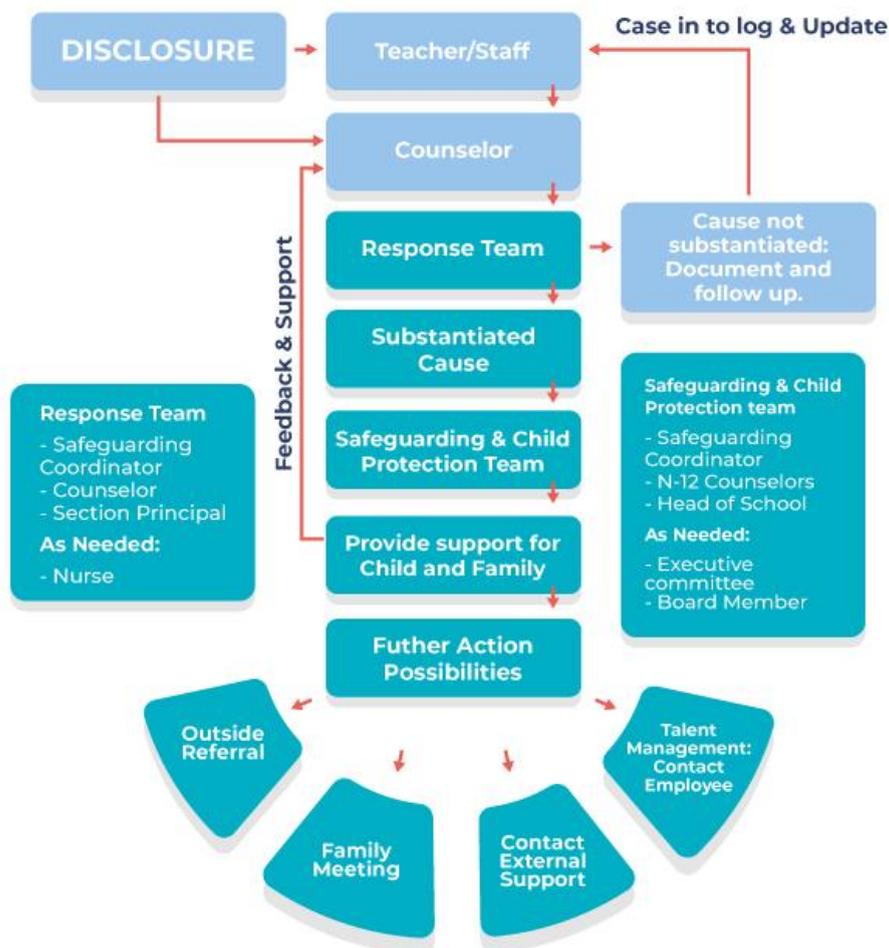
- Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed
- Highly anxious
- Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
- Fear of new situations
- Low self-esteem
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Attention-seeking behavior
- Persistent tiredness
- Lying

## What happens when a teacher has reasonable cause to believe?

These indicators of abuse and neglect will be used by the staff member as a guideline for reporting to the counselor, who will determine if the case needs further attention. A report must be made when a staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect. All reports are confidential.



## STEPS TO FOLLOW AFTER DISCLOSURE





# REPORTING PROCEDURES

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## Step 1: Information Gathering

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, It is obligatory for staff, family members or students to report the incident immediately or within the next school day as follows:

- 1.** Contacte grade level counselor within no more than 48 hours via email.
- 2.** Counselors will notify the school-based response team (Child protection coordinator, Section director and nurse if needed), and then take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident.
  - a.** Interview staff members as necessary and document information relative to the case.
  - b.** Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school.
- 3.** If the report is not substantiated, Counselor enters the case into Counselling Log and reports an update to the original reporter.
- 4.** If substantiated, Counselor reports to the Safeguarding & Child Protection Team (Child protection coordinator, Section director, Head of school, School counselors and executive committee members if needed) (Move to Step 2)

## Step 2: Family Consultation

- 1.** Based on acquired information, a plan of action will be developed by the Safeguarding & Child Protection Team to assist the child and family. Actions that shall take place are:
  - a.** Counselors, Child protection coordinator and Section director, (and others as deemed necessary) meet with family, present the School's concerns, review the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, and establish an action plan.

Possible follow-up actions include:

- a.** Ongoing observations of the child by the teacher and counselor
- b.** Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling with Release of Information to counselor
- c.** Consultation with the school's legal advisor
- d.** Report to local authorities (Policía de Infancia y Adolescencia, Bienestar Familiar).

If the offender is a school employee

- a.** Contact and Inform Talent Management Head
- b.** Proceed with suspension or termination of employment in accordance with the Internal Work Rules.

Most cases of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled by school counselors, such as those involving:

- Student relationships with peers
- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
- Student-parent relationships

Some cases will be referred to outside resources, for example:

- Mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, low self-esteem, grieving, dissociation, and suicidal ideation.

Cases reported for investigation and outside resources:

- Severe and ongoing physical abuse or neglect
- Sexual abuse and incest.

In extreme cases when families do not stop the abuse or concerns remain about the safety of the child, reports could be made to:

- Local law enforcement

### Step 3: Follow Up Procedures

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect:

- 1.** The counselor will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- 2.** The counselor will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.
- 3.** The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teachers.
- 4.** The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists to update the progress of the child in school.
- 5.** The Response Team will hold follow-up meetings to evaluate progress, debriefing on progress.
  - a.** All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the child's confidential file.
  - b.** Confidential records may only be released with parental consent, except when the School believes the child continues to be at risk.
  - c.** Marymount School has the responsibility to relay potential safety concerns to the child's new school if needed.



# SCHOOL PERSONNEL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Approve Child Protection Policy as part of Policy Manual for school
- Public statement of support of Child Protection Policy
- Adoption of the Code of Conduct on Child Protection that all teachers and everyone who works at the school (paid or unpaid) sign

## HEAD OF THE SCHOOL

- Create and support school-based Safeguarding and Child Protection Team
- Initiate the process of the adoption of a Child Protection Policy (CPP) and Child Protection Curriculum
- Submit Child Protection Program to School Lawyer for compliance with local laws and international conventions/obligations
- Gain Board cooperation and approval for Child Protection Program
- Provide resources in the budget on an annual basis for the Child Protection Team to ensure resources as needed
- Provide proactive leadership in connecting the school with local child service agencies and establishing a multi-disciplinary team
- Ensure external organizations, vendors, contracted service providers and other entities comply with the school's Child Protection Policy and that the school provides an annual in-service program for these personnel. Example: food service personnel, security personnel, school trips, coaches who are not part of school staff, after school activities personnel or other outsource agencies

## SUPPORT SERVICES HEAD

- Direct oversight of Child Protection Team for adoption of Child Protection Policies and Child Protection Curriculum
- Review the Child Protection Policies and conduct an overview of the curriculum with the Child Protection Team
- Develop a calendar of professional development, instituting the curriculum and annual review cycle for the success of the program
- Develop and ensure proper implementation of comprehensive Child Protection Curriculum
- Ensure adequate parent training
- Heads Child Protection Team



## SECTION PRINCIPALS

- Support Services Head in the oversight of Child Protection Team for adoption of Child Protection Policies and Child Protection Curriculum
- Review the Child Protection Policies and an overview of the curriculum with the Child Protection Team
- Ensure proper implementation of comprehensive Child Protection Curriculum
- Supervise adequate implementation of child protection policies and procedures with their direct reports

## COUNSELORS

- First line responders to whom suspected cases of child abuse are reported
- Regularly keeps Support Services Head and Section Directors informed of current cases.
- Works with with Support Services Head to develop a calendar of professional development, instituting the curriculum and annual review cycle
- Reviews available Child Protection Policies and curriculum with an understanding of overall child development and appropriateness
- Holds parent nights to assist parents in understanding the need for the program and to answer questions and provide support
- Counsellors / School Psychologists and Teachers who are part of the Child Protection Team work to train all teachers and staff within the school on this program and its importance
- Identifies resources in the community that are available to the school
- Organize professional development for teachers
- Develop lessons and units of study in the defined curriculum

## TEACHERS & OTHER STAFF MEMBERS

- Will serve on the Child Protection Team as needed
- Will support the developed lessons and units of study in the defined curriculum
- Attends training and teaches lessons of the Child Protection Policies and Curriculum.
- Will work to gain parent support by making sure all parents understand the purpose of the program
- Will sign the Code of conduct contract, and understand clearly the school's stand on child protection.



# POLICIES & PROCEDURES

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## Students - Community

- [Wellbeing Policy](#) - (Spanish Version)
- Anti-Bullying policy - ([Spanish Version](#))
- Bring your own device - ([Spanish Version](#))
- [Digital Safety and Online Policy](#) - (Spanish Version)
- [E-learning code of conduct](#) - (Spanish Version)
- [Inclusion Policy](#) - (Spanish Version)
- [Student in a risk situation](#) - ([Spanish Version](#))
- Pedagogical Outings Protocol, Preschool and Elementary School - ([Spanish Version](#) - [Matriz](#))
- [Infirmary Protocol for Students](#) - ([Spanish Version](#))
- [Infirmary Protocol for MACC](#) - ([Spanish Version](#))
- Curriculum (age appropriate) - (Spanish Version)

## Staff

- [Code of Conduct](#) - ([Spanish Version](#))
- [Statement of Acknowledgment of code of conduct for signature](#) - ([Spanish Version](#))
- Recruitment and Selection of Staff - ([Spanish Version](#))
- Confidentiality Guidelines - ([Spanish Version](#))
- False Allegation Policy - (Spanish Version)

## Security and facilities

- Training for adults
- Fire, Flooding, Hurricanes, ([Plan de Emergencia](#)) lockdown, [ingreso](#)
- [Evacuation protocol](#)
- Annual Auditing Process



## What does a Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy mean for the Marymount School community?

Marymount is defining a standard for the treatment of all children — that they be treated with respect and dignity at all times. Children have legal and moral rights to their individuality, that when protected, will develop into the ability to meet the needs of the family, community, and global society. Safeguarding & Child protection standards defined by Marymount School encompass all cultures, national and international laws. When given reasonable cause to believe that these rights are violated, Marymount will seek all available resources to restore those rights.

