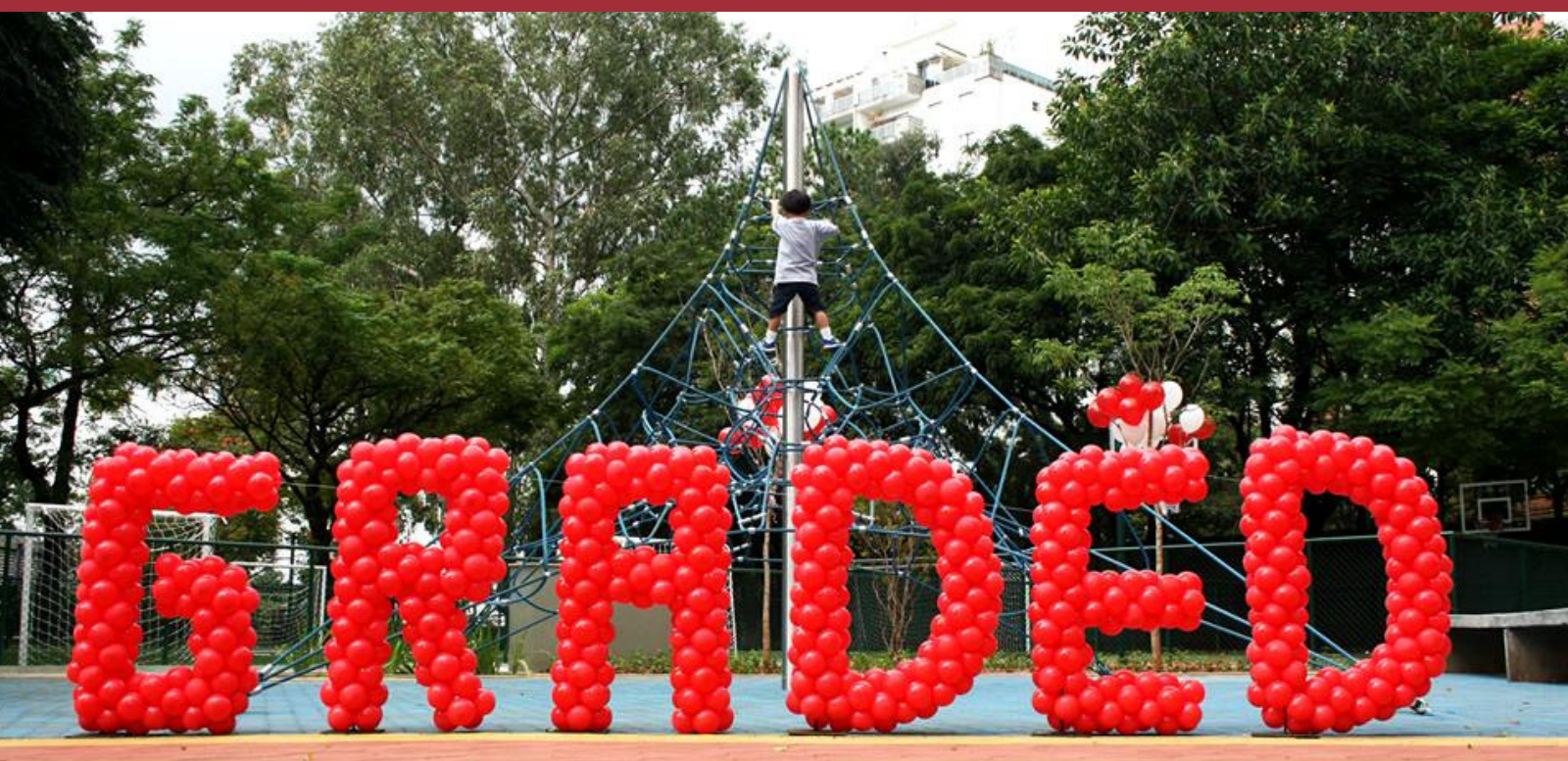




# CHILD PROTECTION GRADED

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF SAO PAULO





# CHILD PROTECTION AT GRADED SCHOOL

Graded has adopted a Child Protection Policy to guide our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety and care of children in attendance at our school. The Graded Child Protection Policy is based on international law and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of which Brazil is a signatory. The two key articles we wish to draw your attention to are:

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.

By enrolling your child at Graded, you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by our policies. All of us at Graded want you to 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, we will

- 1). Provide age appropriate lessons for all grade levels to help students understand personal safety, needs and rights.
- 2). Provide parent materials and information sessions to help you better understand our programs and policy.
- 3). Annually train faculty to recognize and report issues of abuse and neglect.

We will work together with you at home to ensure that our children are safe and are knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities to themselves and to each other so that they can grow and learn free of fear in a safe and supportive environment. We thank you for your support of our efforts and invite you to contact your school counselors or principals regarding any specific questions you may have in this regard.



# CHILD ABUSE

According to the World Health Organization, child abuse constitutes "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." A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional (e.g. school) or community setting; children may be abused by individuals known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. Often children may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, further complicating the problem. Most child abuse is inflicted by someone the child knows, respects or trusts. International school communities have unique characteristics of which school personnel must be aware in terms of the individuals who are around our children. School personnel should be knowledgeable of the potential reasons why children may not be able to talk about any victimization they might have experienced. To increase the Graded community's awareness, this Handbook focuses on four main categories of abuse and provides basic information about the physical and behavioral signs associated with each type.

## ABUSE IS:

- 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; and/or
- Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning; and/or
- 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; and/or
- Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the criminal code or school policy; and/or
- 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; and/or
- Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above.

## POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE:

- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colors)
- Injuries reflecting shape of article used (stick, rod, 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), laceration, abrasions, or fractures
- Burns with a distinct boundary line or pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child

# NEGLECT

- Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs within their own environment.



## NEGLECT MAY BE:

### Physical

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/guardian 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 Guardian Forms are available from Graded. These are expected to be completed prior to parents/guardians leaving the country; and/or

### Medical

Failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment; and/or

### Emotional

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 presence of 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 guardian are absent from Sao Paulo and have not designated a primary caregiver
- Parents can not be reached in the case of emergency

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Behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse or neglect. Together with other indicators, such as family dynamics, they may warrant a referral.

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# SEXUAL 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.

## CHARACTERISTICS:

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. Working with the sexual offender cannot be done by school counselors.

## 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 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

### **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.

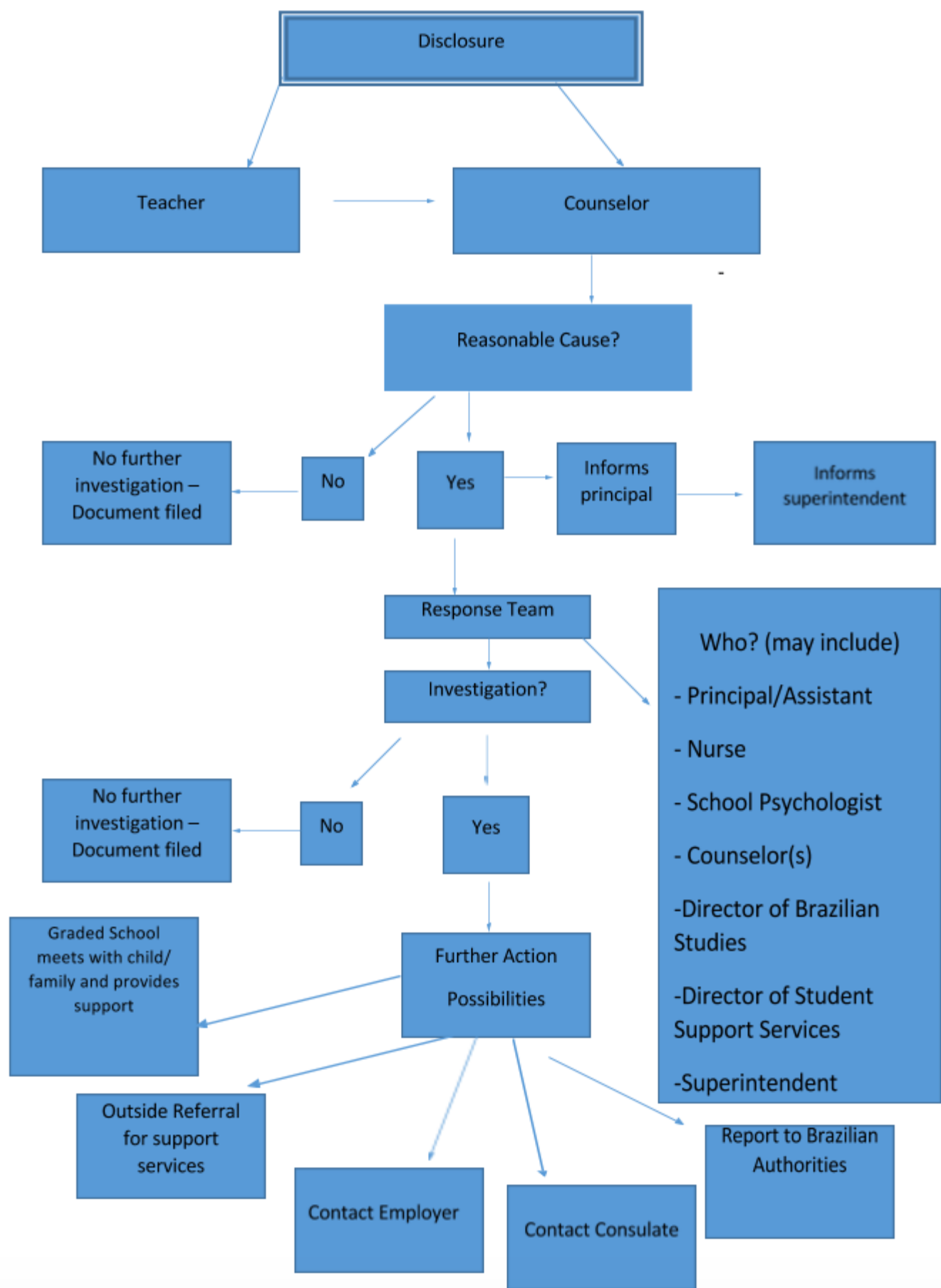
# What happens after suspected abuse or neglect is reported?

Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report their suspicions to the counselor. In all cases, the principal will be notified. It is the responsibility of the principal to inform the superintendent of the suspected case of child abuse or neglect.

All staff, faculty and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect. All Graded employees are also required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect must be made to the counselor within 48 hours for immediate response.



# Steps Followed After Disclosure





# Procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect

## Step 1:

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the teacher will seek advice from the grade level counselor within 48 hours. The counselor will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident and will form a school-based response team if needed to address the report. The response team will include the school nurse, counselor, psychologist, principal, and other relevant individuals.

In all cases, follow up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained. The following procedure will be used:

- 1). Interview staff members as necessary and document information relative to the case.
- 2). Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school.
- 3). Report status of case to superintendent and Director of Brazilian Studies.
- 4). Determine the course of follow-up actions.

## Step 2:

Based on acquired information, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions that may take place are:

- Discussions between the child and counselor in order to gain more information. Depending upon the age of the child, these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with dolls to elicit more information as to what may have occurred.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counselor, or administrator.
- Meetings with the family to present the School's concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling.
- Notification of the concern to the sponsoring employer, or to the welfare office at the home-of-record.
- Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.
- Consultation with the school or another attorney.
- Informal consultation with local authorities.

## Step 3:

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

- The counselor will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The counselor will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.
- The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
- The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists to update the progress of the child in school.

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the child's school confidential records file. Records sent to schools to which the student may transfer may be flagged to let the receiving school know there is a confidential file for the child. Graded's intent is to protect the child.



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
- Mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, grieving.

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

- Mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, dissociation, suicide 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 concern remain about the safety of the child, reports could be made to:

- Local authorities
- The consulate
- The employer
- The home-of-record welfare office.

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves a staff or faculty member of Graded, the divisional principal will follow board policy pursuant to ethical professional behavior.



**The Graded Child Protection Policy works for the child, the family and the community. Research indicates that international communities are as prone to child abuse as communities in their home country. Child abuse is a multi-faceted issue that involves dynamics of the child, the family, and the community. The Graded Child Protection Policy works to respond at all three levels.**

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

**THE FAMILY** - at-risk characteristics include parents under stress, families with perceived less support and access to resources, socially isolated, unusually high expectations placed on their children, parental history of inappropriate discipline as children

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

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

**GRADED** - works with parents to understand appropriate discipline, networks with community and health services, teaches parents child protection practices

**GRADED** - strictly implements the Child Protection Policy, trains teachers to recognize abuse, trains counselors in supporting families, trains and supports parents in protective behaviors, networks with community and health services for holistic referrals, networks with local authorities

What does a Child Protection Policy mean for the Graded community?  
Graded is defining a standard for the treatment of all children and youth - that they be treated with respect and dignity at all times.  
Children and youth 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. Child protection standards defined by Graded encompass all cultures and international law. When given reasonable cause to believe that these rights are violated, Graded will seek all available resources to restore those rights.