

The Multiple Intelligence Centre: Child Safe Policies

Under the school's guidelines for Duty of Care, Child Protection, and Behaviour Management the following applies: policies are covered in more detail in the following sections.

Duty of Care

The Multiple Intelligence Centre and all staff, personnel and associates have a legal and moral obligation to provide care and safety to the students of the school and protection from abuse or exploitation by persons affiliated with the centre and in the reasonable course of running the Centres education and programs.

For the purposes of this document Parents, guardians, carers and other legally responsibly persons will be classified as parents.

It is each persons responsibility to monitor their own behaviour to ensure appropriate language, actions and boundaries are maintained and also to be aware of risk or inappropriate behaviour from others:

- ❖ Teachers
- ❖ Staff
- ❖ Volunteers
- ❖ Students
- ❖ Parents
- ❖ Families
- ❖ Community

Duty of care for students of the school extends to several areas (as mentioned in the School Handbook and relevant policies:

- ❖ Supervision: Staff are aware of responsibility to reasonable and adequate supervision of students when on the school grounds and when participating in off campus school events. This may entail rostered duty (mornings and afternoons), keeping a roll of attendance and sign in/out, ensuring you are not left alone in the school or a house with a child, considering safety and privacy of toilets at school and in swimming/excursion areas.
- ❖ Visitors: Visitors to the school should be properly supervised and identified at arrival and for the duration of their stay.
- ❖ Bullying: Observing and managing students relationships/ interactions to avoid bullying behaviours or opportunities for one individual or group (inside school grounds or on school activities) to victimise another student. Teachers should discuss with students what bullying is/why it is inappropriate, who students can talk to if they feel scared and encouraging students to stand up to bullying or violent behaviours as a group can help protect from ongoing bullying.
- ❖ Violent or Inappropriate Behaviours: An assumed expectation of students and staff is an appropriate level of care and protection for human and animal life. Under MIC's environmental curriculum outcomes, all members of the Centre are to show respect for the feelings, needs and life of others and to consciously and consistently consider the impact

of their actions on the ecosystems and habitats in their local environment. These expectations need to be modeled and discussed as an intrinsic part of the ethics and philosophy of the Centre, not only taught in isolation of Curriculum areas (for strategies see section on Behaviour Management).

- ❖ Behaviour Management: The Centre has guidelines around corporal punishment (no physical punishment or discipline). Being familiar with the behaviour management policy, strategies and encouraging / assisting new/other staff in areas of difficulty protects both students and staff from undesired physical aggression by staff or students.
- ❖ Consent /Permission: The Centre will actively engage parents in giving written consent for instances involving risk to students privacy or safety. Staff will obtain approval for out of school activities from the school administration/principal to ensure areas of risk are considered. All parent will be notified of activities or events that may take students outside the school grounds and sign a permission note relevant to the specific activity or give written permission by other means (an email from the Parents approved address including the students full name and the date and activity would be equivalent to a signed note). The centre will respect parents' decisions regarding consent for photographs, excursions and other out of school activities.
- ❖ Transport: Contact details of approved pick up persons or full details of approved taxi companies should be obtained and the taxi divers name and registration recorded before unsupervised students travel by new transport. Parents/guardians should notify of changes to pick up times or persons before students leave the premises
- ❖ Excursions and school trips: Times of transition to and from school and at excursions can be of greater exposure to strangers and risk to harm. A roll of student names and parent contacts ensures all students are accounted for. A Centre staff member should accompany students both to and from the event when catching a taxi or bus for school excursions.
- ❖ Hiring practices & Teacher/staff induction: The Centre will follow hiring practices that keep in mind child safe precautions and the schools philosophy and curriculum goals. Staff considered for a position at the school will be interviewed and have suitable reference checks performed before an offer of a placement is made. Any applicant who is chosen will have to read the Centres policies on child protection, behaviour management etc and sign the Code of Conduct. Final approval relies upon clearance via a police criminal record check and no person convicted for child (or related) offences will be employed in any capacity.
- ❖ Code of Conduct: All staff will read both the Centre handbook, policies and code of conduct and agree to follow the guidelines there in.
- ❖ Attendance: Monitoring of students leave and sick days can come under the Centres duty of care requirements. Students who take excessive sick days or appear to have days off regularly for injuries or unexplained reasons may benefit from staff consideration or support. Families with low income, children with disabilities, or living in large extended families may encounter difficulties with nutritional requirements or child labour,

supervision.

- ❖ One-to-one teaching / tutoring: As covered in the supervision section, teachers and staff need to ensure adequate supervision if tutoring students after school hours and have permission by the Centre and parents for any off campus face to face activities.
- ❖ Curriculum/ Training / Professional development: Teachers are expected to display the personal dedication to the outcomes of the curriculum and safety and welfare of students. Staff will be provided with ongoing professional development via Centre Workshops and weekly meetings to share ideas and problem solve.
- ❖ Confidentiality: Students may become at risk due to misuse or mismanagement of their personal information. Staff and teachers will treat students' personal information, both written, visual and oral in a respectful and careful manner. Student files should be kept in a secure place and not shared with any unapproved person. Photographs and videos of students should be taken and stored with discretion and with parental consent. Discussions of students need to be professional and confined topics appropriate to the education context. Any concerns or suspicions of abuse or neglect need to be handled with confidentiality, consideration and through the designated child protection lines, and not to be discussed with outside persons (except in cases of formal reporting and then by the Child protection officer).
- ❖ Reporting suspected abuse: Any concerns relating to abuse from inside personnel or from family or community members needs to be considered seriously and confidentially. Staff need to read the child protection policy and training package, and be aware of the risk factors for abuse, signs and symptoms of abuse and also of limitations to personal and professional work and accountability for appropriateness of behaviour.

Behaviour Management

Teachers to further define the schools definition of corporal punishment and clarify how this relates to our philosophy and behaviour towards children.

One definition of corporal punishment may be: ***the striking of a person's body as punishment.***

The Centre and Teachers suggest that hitting or striking a child with the open hand or an object be considered inappropriate, but that instances may arise when child may be tapped with a finger on the arm or hand (for instance) to gain attention or redirect. No force would be used to cause bruising or marking at any time.

Children may be carefully and calmly restrained (i.e. a firm arm around the waist or on arms) if they are in danger of physically hurting themselves or other children.

Consequences need to be consistent, immediate and appropriate to the behaviour for best outcomes to be achieved.

Discussing the problem or behaviour with child should always be conducted. This discussion may be held in private and not in front of a large group to avoid shaming or acting out.

Behaviour Management Strategies:

What we might do.

- ❖ We try and reason with them (calm verbal redirection, direct command i.e. “stop”, or discussion of implications of behaviour). Use of non-judging language, avoidance of putdowns or name calling and respect for the child’s feelings would be considered.
- ❖ We may try and distract them (separate them from an escalating situation/student or activity). Particularly with younger children guiding them to a new activity that is less “stimulating” (i.e. from running to sitting, from discussion to reading, from shared blocks to drawing individually, can help calm emotions and give new focus).
- ❖ For minor misbehaviours (i.e. disruptions, chatting in class, leaving seat, not putting up hand) use of positive language and encouragers directed at others appropriate behaviours and specific students behaving in a desired manner (to model to other students the ‘right’ kind of behaviour and show them the rewards for appropriate actions).
- ❖ Consistent classroom strategies such as: writing lines, writing a PROS/CONS or Strengths and Weaknesses list of their actions (for older classes). Sending lines home to parents or a letter to parent may be used as ongoing reinforcers and reminders of appropriate class behaviour and means of getting students to think about their own behaviour and the consequences rather than simply responding emotionally.
- ❖ We may ask them for a time out (sitting on a chair/reading quietly in a solitary place/time in another classroom or in office/writing lines etc). Time out can be very effective technique. Essentially time out is removal from class participation or from chance to earn positive reinforcement, Time out says to the children.” If you misbehave that you not part of the group” To use time out effectively, follow the procedures described below.
 1. Time out must immediately follow the undesired behaviour so that children understand the link between their inappropriate behaviour and the consequence of time out.
 2. Amount of time spent on time out should be age appropriate and long enough to reinforce correct behaviour but not so long that the purpose of the time out is forgotten or boredom creates more misbehaviour. (young students perhaps no more than 3-5 mins)
 3. Time out may be consistent and structured, i.e ‘the time out chair’ is not used for other activities but is in a set position or used in a consistent way.
 4. Time out is not used to replace discussion of inappropriate behaviour but to calm emotions so that the problem can be talked about. Student should be informed at time of incident that the reason for time out is directly related to their action/s.
- ❖ If behaviour is continuous or is ongoing, parents are to be contacted to a) assist in writing strategies to manage behaviour, b) to decide on limits of teacher action (i.e. techniques to be used or suggestions of things that work with this child), c) to agree to circumstances when a teacher will call parents to have child removed from the school grounds.

- ❖ The Centre will have an Incident log, to write down any use of 'hands on' behaviour management, and accidents, injuries or any other incidents that parents need to be informed of.

Communication Strategies

As teachers and staff of the school we are role models for the students, they will mimic and adopt our style of language and communication, even when we are not explicitly teaching that skill. Part of our commitment to a equitable child friendly school includes dedication to appropriate and positive communication. However, when conflicts arise it is also important to model appropriate ways of communicating negative emotion and/or disagreement.

While it may sometimes appear best to never utter a negative phrase, open communication can help to prevent build up of frustrations and to solve problems while they are small and manageable. Some strategies for guiding students in their conflict situations may be:

- ❖ Agreements: Make rules or agreed behaviours together with the students, discuss what things they think are important for safety and respect in the classroom. Phrase the agreements in a positive way, what is it you want children TO DO, rather than NOT do (please walk in the classroom). Have posters around the room and draw attention to these, try and highlight agreements at times when students are achieving them i.e. "The class is really following rule no1 today, that's great!" Have students agree to the rules and remind them of that agreement when necessary.
- ❖ Consequences: Include in discussions what the consequence (result) for not following the agreements will be. Include the consequences on a poster or in a personal book. Perhaps children will pick up 10 pieces of rubbish from the yard to show the teacher at lunch if they talk too much. Perhaps write a list of pro's and con's for their behaviour, or a list of 5 ways they could improve their behaviour. For violent or aggressive behaviour have clear and consistent outcomes that follow the behaviour quickly. Decide at what point parents may be called.
- ❖ Be a good example: In our own interactions with students we can model expressions that may raise a matter of importance but put it in a non-judgemental light. Instead of telling children what not to do, or commenting on bad behaviour try highlighting positive and desired behaviours e.g.
 - "I'm really impressed with how quietly your sitting Jacob" (Suzan may be talking but we show attention to Jacob's positive example),
 - "I feel really happy when the room is cleaned up before lunch, look how much help Azriel is being, but it's important that we all help too" (be specific so children know what the "good" behaviour looks like)

- Try to share the good comments around, if one child displays negative behaviour frequently be on the look out for occasions when they do the right thing. Commenting on this behaviour, even if it's small, will give guidance on how to receive encouragement and positive feedback in the future. Also, try not to always use the same student as an example of positive behaviour, make sure each child has the opportunity to see its good behaviour.
- ❖ Be a facilitator: Don't be afraid of negative emotions, feeling anger or frustration is normal. Children may need help in expressing these emotions in an acceptable way. Emphasise the negative behaviour, so as not to be judging the child or their feelings. E.g.
 - "I can see your really frustrated Elma, maybe you'd like to talk about what happened?"
 - "Hitting our friends is never ok Jioni, what could you say next time with your words instead of using your hands".
- ❖ Be a partner: Don't take sides or make rash decisions, encourage both/all parties to share their feelings and retell the event, it will give you a clearer perspective and help sooth everyone's emotions. Children may be more willing to reach a compromise or to accept a consequence if they have been heard, and have had opportunity to hear the feelings of the other student. This also helps to build empathy for the future and maintain relationships.
- ❖ Encourage a win/win outcome: You may not be able to make everyone happy, but engaging children in discussing ways that they might both get what they want can lead to very creative solutions. Listen to students and encourage them to try and work out their own problems. The more communication skills students have in facing their own conflict the less you will be required to judge or mediate.

Child Protection Policy

This child protection policy is guided by the following principles:

- ❖ It recognises the right of all children to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, the Juveniles act of 1978 and the Penal code stating certain behaviour as criminal offences
- ❖ It affirms The Multiple Intelligence Centres (MIC) commitment to safeguard the well-being of children in the delivery of its educational programs and administration, including all on and off campus school activities, and interactions between teachers/staff and students
- ❖ Child protection is a shared responsibility that applies to both the individual and the organisation. Every person who shares in the work of The Multiple Intelligence Centre, including teachers, staff, volunteers, contractors, and supporters agree to take all appropriate measures to keep children safe
- ❖ The safety and welfare of child(ren) is an overriding consideration in this policy and its implementation, MIC and its staff recognise their position of responsibility in responding in an appropriate and timely manner to allegations or reports of conduct both inside and outside school hours involving students of the Centre in actions that put that child/ren at

risk of harm, abuse, neglect or maltreatment

Information and training

MIC staff and teachers will receive relevant training on child protection issues and on their obligations under the policy. Further information of definitions, signs of possible abuse and staff processes can be found in Child Protection Training Package.

Child Protection Code of Conduct

All MIC staff, teachers, consultants and volunteers will read, agree to and sign the attached Child Protection Code of Conduct, which will form part of the employment agreement.

Recruitment and selection

MIC will follow child safe recruitment and selection processes. This includes verbal referee checks and criminal record checks to be completed on all successful applicants, including national police checks wherever feasible. All applicants will be asked to provide a declaration to verify any prior criminal history, and agree to the Child Protection Code of Conduct.

Risk Assessment

MIC will include consideration of risk assessment into its programs. Teachers' duty of care extends to consideration of activities or behaviours that might place students at high risk of harm or abuse.

- ❖ The risks of exploitation are particularly heightened during emergency and disaster situations and some children are particularly vulnerable such as children who are orphaned, displaced, homeless or abandoned, as are those with disabilities.
- ❖ Educational activities engaged in outside the school grounds, or with non-school staff may be of higher risk to children's safety
- ❖ Arrival and pick up times, sports events, excursions and incursions may present additional risks for consideration and higher supervision requirements

MIC takes an active role in encouraging students to have positive protective behaviours and awareness of their own safety and responsibility to themselves, their peers, family and community. Issues of Behaviour Management, Supervision and Bullying are considered in the relevant policies or School Handbook.

Appropriate use of child images and personal information

The Multiple Intelligence Centre seeks to maintain respect and dignity in the portrayal of children, families and communities. Pictures, images, or other likenesses of children and/or information related to children must not compromise their care and protection. As stated in the Code of Conduct MIC staff will be aware:

- ❖ when photographing or filming a child, endeavour to comply with local traditions for reproducing personal images
- ❖ before photographing or filming a child, obtain consent from the child or a parent or guardian of the child and provide an explanation of how the photograph or film will be

used

- ❖ ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive
- ❖ ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts
- ❖ ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically
- ❖ treat children's information with confidentiality in MIC programs and never provide a child's personal details to unauthorised person(s)

Appropriate use of internal communication systems

Staff must never use internal systems such as computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras inappropriately and never to exploit or harass children, or to access child pornography through any medium.

Reporting Concerns of child abuse/ Child Protection Officer

If in the course of MIC educational programs any staff member encounters behaviours by other staff, students, family or community members that raise concerns that any child may be at risk of harm or abuse a report is to be made to the Child Protection Officer.

All MIC staff and teachers have a responsibility, both ethical and legal, to protect the rights and safety of children. In the normal workings of the Centre staff may be in a position to hear or be the recipient of a disclosure regarding conduct towards a child that places them in a position of harm. Such instances require sensitivity and concern for the child's immediate and long-term well being.

What to do:

- ❖ Listen calmly to the child
- ❖ Take notes (verbatim if possible)
- ❖ Do not interrupt or offer suggestions
- ❖ Do not ask leading questions
- ❖ Offer support/reassurance in a non-judgmental way but not promises
- ❖ Explain that further help may need to be sought and seek informed consent
- ❖ Inform the designated Child Protection Officer
- ❖ Maintain discretion and confidentiality with other staff and non-centre persons

What happens next:

- ❖ Any concerns, reports or disclosures are to be handled quickly and confidentially by the Child Protection Officer. Information should be recorded and dated.

- ❖ Disciplinary actions will be followed for any Staff involved in allegations of inappropriate behaviours.
- ❖ Such concerns or allegations may be taken outside the Centres administration as is legally and ethically required to protect the child/ren involved and where family support is required.

External Contacts:

Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation:	Fiji Police Force
Social Welfare PO Box 2127, Government Buildings, Suva, Fiji. Phone: +(679) 3315754 Fax: +(679) 330511	Vinod Patel Building, P.O.Box 239, Government Buildings, Suva, Fiji. Phone: +(679) 334 3777

Definitions of Child and Child Abuse

Child	For the purpose of this policy, a child is any person eighteen years and under, as defined by Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Child Rights	Children have the “right to life, survival and development” where development encompasses physical, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development.
Exploitation /Abuse of Power	The abuse of a position of vulnerability or differential power. The abuse or misuse of position of influence, or failure to use proper discretion for personal benefit or to benefit another person.
Child Abuse	Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do directly or indirectly which harms children or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development into adulthood. Child abuse can be physical, emotional, neglect or sexual.
Physical Abuse	Physical abuse is commonly characterised by a physical injury resulting from practices such as punching, beating, shaking, biting, burning or otherwise physically harming a child.
Sexual Abuse	When a child is used by another child, adolescent or adult, for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual abuse involves contact and non contact activities.
Emotional Abuse	Emotional abuse tends to be a chronic behavioural pattern directed at the child/ young person where by their self-esteem and social competence is undermined or eroded over time.
Neglect	The failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life, such as food clothing, shelter and supervision, medical, developmental and or/emotional needs, to the extent that the child’s health and development are placed at risk.