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# **Protection concept German International School Riga**

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## Protection concept of the German International School Riga (DISR)

### Introduction

The German International School Riga (DISR) is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment for all pupils and staff. This safeguarding policy outlines our approach to protecting children from harm, abuse and neglect and ensures that their rights to protection, safety and well-being upheld. This document applies to all *staff, volunteers, parents and learners* and complies with local and international child protection legislation.

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### 1. Guiding principles

**1.1 Best interests of the child** All actions and decisions must on the best interests of the child and respect their dignity, individuality and privacy.

**1.2 Zero Tolerance of Abuse** The school has a zero tolerance policy towards all forms of abuse, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect.

**1.3 Confidentiality and Transparency**

All matters relating to child protection are handled with strict confidentiality, transparency and in accordance with the applicable legal framework.

**1.4 Shared responsibility**

Child protection is a shared responsibility. All members of the school community must be vigilant and report any concerns or incidents immediately.

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### 2. Objectives of the protection concept

- Create a safe and supportive learning environment for children.
- Promote awareness and prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- Establish clear guidelines for identifying, reporting and handling child protection concerns.
- Provide training and resources for staff to recognize and respond to signs of abuse.
- Promote open communication and cooperation with external child protection authorities.

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### 3. Legal Framework

This protection concept is based on international conventions such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and complies with Latvia's local laws on child protection as well as German standards and regulations for international schools.

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### 4. Risk assessment and Preventive measures

#### 4.1 Regular risk assessments

The school carries out regular risk assessments of its facilities, staff and procedures to identify and minimize potential risks to the safety of *pupils*.

#### 4.2 Secure recruitment and verification

All employees and volunteers must undergo a comprehensive recruitment process, including reference checks, before working in the school.

#### 4.3 Training and awareness

All receive regular training on child protection, including signs of abuse, understanding the reporting process and the importance of creating a safe environment.

#### 4.4 Clear boundaries for staff and pupils

Staff are trained to maintain professional boundaries with students. Any breach of these boundaries will be reported and dealt with in accordance with school policy.

#### 4.5 Confidants

Certain teachers will act as confidants for pupils. They will provide a safe and confidential space where children and young people can raise important issues, including abuse or emotional distress.

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### 5. Reporting procedure

#### 5.1 Obligation to report

All staff, parents and pupils have a duty to report suspected or known abuse. A culture of reporting is encouraged to ensure that individuals feel safe and supported when raising concerns.

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## 5.2 Reporting channels

The DISR provides clear and accessible channels for reporting concerns, including designated trusted persons, anonymous reporting options and the use of the reporting form.

## 5.3 Editing of reports

All reports of child protection concerns are dealt with quickly and confidentially by the responsible employees, who investigate the matter and involve the relevant authorities if necessary.

## 5.4 Cooperation with authorities

The school maintains close cooperation with the child protection services of Latvia and other relevant authorities (see Appendix B for contact information) to ensure legal and professional handling of child protection cases.

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# 6. Response to incidents

## 6.1 Immediate measures

In the event of immediate danger or harm, the school will take immediate action ensure the safety of the child. This may include calling in the police or child protection services.

## 6.2 Examination procedure

The school follows a defined procedure for investigating reports of abuse or neglect, ensuring impartiality and confidentiality.

## 6.3 Support for victims

The DISR offers affected students psychological, emotional and legal support, including the possibility of external counseling services.

## 6.4 Disciplinary measures

Any employee who the child protection guidelines will be to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal and legal consequences.

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# 7. Code of conduct for employees

All DISR employees are required to adhere to the school's Code of Conduct, which defines acceptable and unacceptable behavior when interacting with students. The detailed Code of Conduct can be found in Appendix A.

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## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation

### 8.1 Regular reviews

The safeguarding policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. The review includes feedback from staff, *learners* and external child protection agencies.

### 8.2 Documentation

The school keeps clear records of all incidents, reports and actions taken in relation to child protection concerns.

### 8.3 Feedback mechanism

The DISR implements a feedback mechanism that enables employees, learners and parents to make suggestions for improvements to the child protection guidelines.

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## **9. Guide against discrimination**

### **9.1 Objective**

The German International School Riga is committed to a school culture of diversity, openness to the world, tolerance and participation. This protection concept is intended to ensure the right to a non-discriminatory environment at school and a uniform approach by all school stakeholders in situations of discrimination and child endangerment. The protection concept is also intended to contribute to a discrimination-free workplace.

Our school has the mission and the claim to protect the children entrusted to it from discrimination to a special degree. Our school is a safe space that gives children freedom in their age-appropriate development and does not ignore abnormalities and their possible causes. All employees contribute to a culture of appreciation and observation.

The aim of the concept is prevention not only as a guideline, but as an active attitude that characterizes our school. With the transparent involvement and cooperation of all groups involved, the aim is to develop a culture of mindfulness in which discrimination is taken seriously and responded to actively and self-critically.

As in all institutions, our school may have to implement the protection mandate in the event of discrimination and endangerment of children's welfare. If there is a suspicion of discrimination or a risk to the child's welfare, teachers and school staff must be able to act.

In addition to preventive measures, the protection concept sets out what needs to be done in order to recognize discrimination and behavior that violates boundaries at an early stage or to uncover and intervene through competent perception and action.

### **9.2 Validity and Obligation**

All employees of our school take note of the protection concept with its rights and obligations when they take up their duties. They undertake to gain confidence in their actions and to commit themselves responsibly to the protection of children and young people.

All pupils are familiarized in an age-appropriate manner with the rights and obligations arising from this protection concept, in particular with the parts of the Code of Conduct relevant to them, and practice appropriate behavior in classroom and extracurricular events.

Parents and/or legal guardians are made aware of this concept upon signing the school contract and have access to the information and complaint channels it contains at all times. They also support the education of their daughters and sons in respectful and non-violent behavior.

### 9.3 Discrimination

Ideas about what is "normal" and what is "not normal" play a role in experiences of discrimination. These ideas of normality can lead to people who do not conform to this norm being devalued and marginalized. Children also develop prejudices that can lead to discriminatory actions, e.g. in kindergarten and school. Teachers have an outstanding role to play in this context: by naming discriminatory behavior as such, they actively contribute to teaching children and young people other ideas of normality, thereby promoting diversity and equal opportunities. However, this also requires teachers to be aware of and reflect on their own potentially discriminatory behavior.

In legal terms, discrimination or disadvantage occurs when a person is treated less favorably in a comparable situation on the basis of a certain characteristic than other persons who lack this characteristic and without there being an objective reason for this. It is irrelevant whether the respective characteristic is actually present or whether the unequal treatment is based on an ascribed characteristic.

In the context of our school, the following characteristics should be mentioned, on the basis of which no one should be treated less favorably:

- Ethnic origin
- Religion or world view
- the gender
- sexual identity
- the age
- a disability or chronic illness
- the social status
- the intellectual abilities
- the language
- the appearance or weight.

Discrimination occurs primarily on three levels: The individual level (e.g. pupils among themselves; pupils by teachers; teachers among themselves), the institutional level (e.g. discriminatory rules or procedures at the school as an organization) and the social level (e.g. majority relationships and hierarchies in school staff or student body). These levels cannot always be clearly separated from each other. Anti-discrimination measures in schools should therefore always keep all three levels in mind.



#### **9.4 Prevention services**

In addition to a general preventative educational approach in everyday school life, the German International School Riga has a broad program of special preventative measures that offer age-appropriate forms of awareness-raising for pupils in year-related events. Our aim is to offer children and young people support and guidance in their environment and to prepare them to deal with age-related and individual problems in a self-determined way. The prevention topics are varied and include, for example, the risks of the internet and new technologies, strengthening the classroom community, addiction and bullying prevention, etc. Some of the events are lectures by experts from external associations and foundations. As part of these events, our students are encouraged to contribute their own views, questions and experiences. The wide range of topics and events on offer is expanded on a class-by-class basis if necessary to ensure that a particular issue is dealt with in depth.

#### **9.5 Cooperation**

The German International School Riga cooperates with the counseling centers and support services of the city of Riga. The liaison teachers, the school psychological counseling center and the child welfare protection office play a special role here. They are familiar with the contact persons at the youth welfare office, the police, the public prosecutor's office and Latvian child protection institutions and consult them when necessary.

## **9.6 Intervention plan**

If there is a suspicion that discrimination has taken place, it is important to establish suitable guidelines for action. On the one hand, to offer support to those affected and, on the other, to give all employees of our school the necessary security in dealing with such suspected cases. It is important to us as a school that every suspicion and every report is investigated with the greatest possible care, caution and discretion. To ensure this, we have established guidelines and procedures for various cases in our school's intervention plan.

In general, all employees at the German International School must report any suspicion of potentially criminal behavior - even if it is a vague suspicion - directly to the school management. If an incident of discrimination occurs, the school management, together with the protection officer and those involved, will examine which support services are sensible and appropriate. The extent to which support is necessary for individuals and for certain groups will be examined.

If the report of an incident of discrimination proves to be unfounded, an appropriate rehabilitation plan will be drawn up. This concept is drawn up by the school management in cooperation with the child welfare protection officer.

# German International School Riga

## Code of conduct for employees

These regulations govern the conduct of employees of the German International School Riga (DISR) in the performance of their duties.

Name, department: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Clear and transparent rules should contribute to this,**

- to establish a culture of mindfulness that is based on appreciation, honesty and transparency.
- protect children and young people from boundary violations, assaults and abuse.
- to give employees security and orientation in sensitive situations and areas of their own field of work and to protect them from false suspicion.

The teaching staff, administrative and facility management staff of the German International School Riga as well as all employees of external providers (e.g. learning support, volunteers, cleaning and supervisory staff, etc.) undertake to behave as follows:

### **Shaping closeness and distance in sensitive situations**

- One-to-one meetings, individual lessons etc. only take place in the appropriate rooms provided for this purpose. These must be accessible from outside at all times.
- Individual pupils may not be particularly favored, disadvantaged or rewarded unless this is pedagogically justified and necessary and has been agreed in the relevant team.
- Relationships and private relationships with students and their families must be disclosed.
- If students' individual boundaries are violated by others, staff members intervene to protect them.

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## **Appropriateness of physical contact**

- Physical contact should not be avoided. The decisive factor is that it is age-appropriate and appropriate to the respective context.
- Unwanted touching or physical advances are not permitted.
- Games, methods, exercises etc. are designed in such a way that children and young people have the real opportunity to avoid being touched if they wish.
- Kindergarten children are allowed to explore each other's bodies, subject to the express consent of all children involved. As soon as the children show an interest in nudity, the rules for interacting with each other are discussed more intensively. Adults do not actively participate in these activities under any circumstances. They merely ensure that no boundaries are crossed between the children.
- Physical proximity is also okay if measures have to be taken to protect yourself or others.

## **Language and choice of words**

- Verbal and non-verbal interactions correspond to the respective role and are adapted to the respective target group.
- Employees do not use offensive language in any form of communication (e.g. sexually tinged nicknames or terms of endearment). Common abbreviations are permitted.
- Nor do they make derogatory remarks, insults or expose themselves.
- They also do not tolerate this among the children and young people at our school.

## **Dealing with media and social networks**

- Employees do not maintain any private Internet contacts with pupils (e.g. social networks); only pedagogically justified contacts via the Edupage platform are permitted.
- Films, computer games or printed material with pornographic, violent or racist content are prohibited in all school contexts. The only exceptions are teaching situations in which it makes educational sense to critically examine this content.
- When creating and publishing image and sound material, the general right of personality, in particular the right to one's own image, must be observed in addition to the relevant data protection regulations.
- Even if this right has been observed, i.e. if, for example, the necessary consent has been given, pupils may not be photographed or filmed in a partially clothed or unclothed state (e.g. changing clothes, showering, etc.).

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## Respect for privacy

- The toilet situation in the kindergarten is open. Going to the toilet together is part of the children's natural development. Nevertheless, all children still have the opportunity to go to the toilet in a private atmosphere.
- Individual boundaries and the privacy of the children and young people must be respected when providing initial medical assistance and care, such as changing nappies, helping them to go to the toilet, applying sunscreen, etc: It is explained in an age-appropriate manner which care action is necessary. The children's individual wishes regarding the caregivers providing assistance are taken into account as far as possible.
- Employees do not change in front of pupils.
- In kindergarten, phases of resting or sleeping are always accompanied by two caregivers if possible. No caregiver actively seeks physical closeness if this need does not emanate from the children.

## Events with overnight stay

- On excursions and school trips, pupils and accompanying adults stay overnight in separate rooms or tents. Exceptions due to spatial circumstances or for pedagogical reasons require the consent of the parents/guardians and the school management.
- Girls and boys spend the night in different rooms or tents.
- Knock before entering bedrooms or tents.

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## **Gifts and benefits**

- Gifts from employees to individual pupils or private financial transactions with entrusted children and young people (e.g. selling something) are not permitted.
- Nor is it permitted for employees to accept gifts that could lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.
- Joint gifts from parents should not exceed a value of 50 euros.
- If at any time staff have concerns that an interaction may be misinterpreted, they should report this to the Headteacher without delay.

I hereby declare that I have received a copy of this Code of Conduct for DISR employees and that I have had the opportunity to read and discuss its contents before signing it.

I expressly the Code of Conduct.

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Place, date

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Signature of the employee

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**Appendix A: Contact information for child protection services**

- 1. Child Protection Department of Riga City Administration**
  - Telephone: +371 67105048
  - E-Mail [bpt@riga.lv](mailto:bpt@riga.lv)
  - Address: Baznīcas iela 19/23, Riga, LV-1010, Latvia
  - Website: [www.ld.riga.lv](http://www.ld.riga.lv)
- 2. Latvian Police (Child Protection Department)**
  - Emergency number: 112
  - Direct dial child protection department: +371 67075212
- 3. German Embassy in Riga (for German nationals)**
  - Phone: +371 67 08 51 00
  - E-Mail [info@riga.diplo.de](mailto:info@riga.diplo.de)
  - Address: Raiņa bulvāris 13, LV-1050 Riga, Latvia
  - Website: [www.riga.diplo.de](http://www.riga.diplo.de)

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**Assistance and support services**

The school offers support within the scope of its resources and expertise and refers pupils, parents and guardians to external support services if necessary:

- Social service Riga
  - Center "Dardedze"
    - E-Mail [info@centrsdardedze.lv](mailto:info@centrsdardedze.lv)
  - Youth Counseling Center
    - E-Mail [info@pusaudzucentrs.lv](mailto:info@pusaudzucentrs.lv)
  - Department of Education, Culture and Sport of the City of Riga
    - E-Mail [iksd@riga.lv](mailto:iksd@riga.lv)
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## **Appendix B: Safe Internet Use, Anti-Bullying and Anti-Bullying Program Safe Internet Use**

### **for Students**

1. Protect personal data
2. Think before you click
3. Use strong passwords
4. Respecting others on the Internet
5. Know who you are talking to
6. Report unusual behavior
7. Limit screen time
8. Using parental control

### **Anti-bullying and anti-bullying program**

- Recognize signs
  - Reporting bullying and harassment
  - Strengthening spectators
  - Fostering a supportive environment
  - Offer advice and support
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## Appendix C: Procedure for suspected violence against a child

If violence against a child is suspected, whether at home or in other settings, the following steps are followed:

1. **Confidential message**

Any suspicion of violence must be reported to a person of trust or the child protection officer while maintaining confidentiality.

2. **Immediate safety measures**

The school will ensure the immediate safety of the child, which may include the involvement child protection services or the police in the event of acute danger.

3. **Investigation and support**

The school investigates the situation in accordance with legal and professional requirements. The child is offered emotional support and, if necessary, psychological counseling is organized.

4. **Cooperation with the authorities**

The school works closely with child protection services and the police to ensure that appropriate action is taken to protect the child from further harm.

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## **Appendix D: Measures in the event of prolonged absence from school**

If a child is absent from school for a longer period of time (e.g. due illness, family problems or other reasons), the following measures will be taken:

- 1. Regular communication**

The school will remain in regular contact with the child's family to monitor the situation and offer support.

- 2. Academic support**

The school will provide appropriate learning materials, assignments and distance learning options to ensure that the child can continue to participate in class during the absence.

- 3. Reintegration plan**

Upon the child's return, the school will create an individualized reintegration plan that may include additional tutoring, counseling, or adapted assessments to support the child academically and socially.

- 4. External support**

If necessary, the school will coordinate with external institutions (doctors, psychologists or social services) to ensure the child's well-being during the absence.

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## Appendix E: Prevention of self-harming behavior in the school

At school, pupils are taught and shown methods for dealing constructively with stress and for self-acceptance and self-esteem. Staff receive regular training on the above-mentioned topics in order to support and promote self-esteem and self-acceptance among children and young people and to recognize the signs of NSSD.

If NSSD is suspected, the following steps are followed:

1. **Confidential message**  
Every case of NSSD must be reported to a person of trust or the child protection officer while maintaining confidentiality.
2. **Immediate safety measures**  
The school will ensure the immediate safety of the child, which may include the involvement of medical services, child protection services or the police in the event of acute danger.
3. **Investigation and support**  
The school investigates the situation in accordance with legal and professional requirements. The child is offered emotional support and, if necessary, psychological counseling is organized.
4. **Cooperation with parents and authorities**  
The school works closely with parents and child protection services to ensure that appropriate action is taken to protect the child from further harm.

### Assistance and support services

The school offers support within the scope of its resources and expertise and refers , parents and guardians to external support services if necessary:

- **Clinic for Psychiatry**
    - Website: [www.rpnc.lv](http://www.rpnc.lv), phone: +371 67080112
  - **Skalbes" crisis center**
    - Website: [www.skalbes.lv](http://www.skalbes.lv), crisis hotline 24/7: +371 67222922
  - **State Center for Disease Prevention and Control**
    - Website: [www.spkc.gov.lv](http://www.spkc.gov.lv), crisis hotline: 67222922 (Lattelecom), 27722292 (Bite), 113 - emergencies in general
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## Appendix F: Contacts for Latvian organizations offering workshops

1. **Drossinternets.lv (Latvian Safer Internet Center)**
    - Website: [www.drossinternets.lv](http://www.drossinternets.lv)
    - Contact [info@drossinternets.lv](mailto:info@drossinternets.lv)
  2. **Center Dardedze**
    - Website: [www.centrsdardedze.lv](http://www.centrsdardedze.lv)
    - Contact [dardedze@centrsdardedze.lv](mailto:dardedze@centrsdardedze.lv)
  3. **Papardes Zieds**
    - Website: [www.papardeszieds.lv](http://www.papardeszieds.lv)
    - Contact [papardeszieds@papardeszieds.lv](mailto:papardeszieds@papardeszieds.lv)
  4. **Latvian children's and youth organization "Marta"**
    - Website: [www.marta.lv](http://www.marta.lv)
    - Contact [marta@marta.lv](mailto:marta@marta.lv)
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## **Appendix G: Drug prevention in the school**

Drug prevention at the school is based on a combination of education, preventative measures and concrete support. A clearly defined protection concept and the close cooperation of all those involved create a safe framework for the pupils.

The aim of drug prevention is to educate children and young people about the dangers of drug use, prevent risky behavior and promote the development of healthy lifestyles.

### **Education and awareness-raising**

The school offers age-appropriate workshops and information events on the topics of addiction, drugs and their consequences. Teachers and external experts impart knowledge about the health and social effects of drug use.

### **Integration into the classroom**

The topics of addiction prevention and healthy lifestyles are integrated into lessons across all subjects (e.g. biology, ethics, sport). This brings pupils into contact with the risks of drugs at an early stage and informs them about alternatives to a healthy lifestyle.

### **School rules and sanctions**

The school has clear rules on dealing with drugs (alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs). These rules are anchored in the school regulations and are communicated openly. If rules are broken, a graduated system of sanctions applies, ranging from educational measures to disciplinary consequences.

### **Early detection and intervention**

Teachers and school social workers are trained to recognize signs of drug use at an early stage. If drug use is suspected, confidential discussions are held with the pupils concerned. If necessary, cooperation with parents and external counseling centers takes place.

## Support and advice

The school offers counseling services for students and parents. School social workers and external specialists are available as contact persons for questions, support and referral to specialized institutions.

## Cooperation with external partners

If necessary, the school cooperates with prevention experts, local addiction counseling centers and the police to strengthen prevention measures and provide professional help when needed.

## Promoting positive lifestyles

In addition to pure drug prevention, the school focuses on promoting healthy lifestyles. Sports, leisure activities and programs to strengthen social skills help to offer positive alternatives to risky behavior.

## Contact points

### Psychiatric Care/Evaluation

<b>Mental Hospital</b> (Rigas Psihiatrijas un Neurologijas Centrs), Tvaika iela 2, Riga	Evaluation, treatment <a href="http://www.rpnc.lv">www.rpnc.lv</a>	Medical documents/statement provided to the patient only, on exigent circumstances provided to law enforcement, including the orphan courts
<b>Mental Health Center</b> "Pardaugava", Lermantova iela 1, Riga	Evaluation, day-care, treatment <a href="http://www.rpnc.lv">www.rpnc.lv</a>	
<b>Mental Health Center</b> "Veldre", Veldres iela 1a, Riga	Evaluation, day-care, treatment <a href="http://www.rpnc.lv">www.rpnc.lv</a>	

### Alcoholics Anonymous

Latvijas Anonimo Alkoholiku Sadraudzība (AA), Anglikanu iela 2, St. Savoir's Church, Riga  
Ph: Stephan +37126533374, Norvel +37129848832  
<http://aa.org.lv/en/>