

Association of Nicaragua Christian Academy



Child Protection Policy

(For Administration)

Revised - December 2020

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PURPOSE OF THE POLICY:

NCA is an advocate for children and adolescents, helping them to be free from spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty in Jesus' name, and enabling them to become mature, responsible Christians who are able to live the abundant life that God intended for them. We recognize the unique value of each child and adolescent as being created in the image and likeness of God. They are God's creation and should be protected from all forms of physical and psychological violence, neglect, abuse or exploitation.

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy.*
Proverbs 31:8-9

It is NCA's policy that all reasonable action will be taken to ensure that each educational center is a safe place for children and adolescents. Additionally, any report or suspicion of possible abuse or neglect will be investigated and given the appropriate follow up, to ensure the well-being of any victim and also to prevent any possibility of future incidents.

This policy covers situations that go beyond the scope of student discipline that is contemplated in the Parent-Student Handbook.

CHAPTER 1. ABUSE: CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS

The entire school community should be familiar with the signs and behaviors that may be indicative of child abuse. Child abuse can be categorized into four different types: neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse. A child or adolescent may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time by anyone in their environment.

1.1 NEGLECT

Is when a child or adolescent suffers significant harm or impairment of development because he or she is deprived of food, clothing, hygiene, supervision, education, safety, affection, or medical care.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For example, a child or adolescent who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having his or her needs met in terms of supervision and safety. A child or adolescent whose height or weight is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child or adolescent who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her wellbeing and/or development are severely affected.

1.2 PHYSICAL ABUSE

Is that which results in actual or potential physical harm caused by another person. This can be a single event or series of events, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Severe physical punishment resulting in injury
- Beating
- Slapping
- Kicking
- Pushing/pulling
- Shaking
- Biting
- Suffocation/choking
- Burning

- Deliberate poisoning
- Exposure to substantial risk of significant harm

Signs and symptoms of physical abuse include bruises, fractures, swollen joints, abrasions, coma, or death. It should be noted that often “accidental bruises,” those not the result of physical abuse, usually occur on the part of the body that is close to the bone, commonly found on the chin, forehead, shins, knees, and elbows. Bruises that are the result of abuse are commonly found on the soft tissues, like the cheeks, buttocks, thighs, calves, neck and mouth.

1.3 EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Is when a child or adolescent’s developmental needs for affection, approval, stability , and security is not met. This includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Imposition of negative attributes on a child or adolescent expressed in persistent criticism
- Conditional parenting in which the level of care shown is based on the child’s behavior and action
- Imbalance or emotional unavailability of the child or adolescent’s parent or caregiver
- Premature imposition of responsibility on a child or adolescent
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations
- Exposure to violence (domestic or other)
- Use of overly harsh disciplinary measures
- Manipulation or inappropriate use of authority (including spiritual) to coerce a child to act in an unhealthy manner
- Threatening a child with physical harm

Emotional abuse can be manifested in the child's behavioral, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, psychosomatic behaviors manifested physiologically, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational underachievement, and oppositional behavior. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the relationship between the child or adolescent and the adult is typified by acts of abuse.

1.4 SEXUAL ABUSE

Is any sexual act, real or threatened, or when a child or adolescent is used by another person for his/her sexual arousal. This can include (but is not limited to) the following:

- Exposure of sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child or adolescent
- Intentional touching or molesting a child or adolescent’s body whether directly or with an object
- Sexual intercourse with a minor (with or without consent)
- Inciting, encouraging, or hiring a child or adolescent into prostitution
- Exposing a child or adolescent to pornography

It should be noted that in the case of sexual activity between students, the school must make a distinction between sexual abuse and sexual “experimentation.” Both need to be addressed appropriately by the school, especially in a Christian context, but “experimentation” does not have elements of domination, control, coercion, or bribery and usually involves two children of the same age, intellect, and mutual agreement . “Experimentation” needs to be discussed with students if discovered or disclosed, but it is not equal to “sexual abuse” and should involve different consequences.

The signs and symptoms of sexual abuse are similar to many of the signs of physical abuse, with the addition of bleeding or bruising around genitalia. Other indicators include hinting about sexual activity, age-inappropriate understanding of sex, uncharacteristic sexual play with toys or peers, unusual reluctance to participate in activities that involve undressing (like changing for swimming or gym class), and acting withdrawn.

CHAPTER 2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF NCA SCHOOLS

2.1 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Association of NCA schools recognizes the unique value of each child and adolescent as being created in the image and likeness of God. They are God’s creation and should be protected from all forms of physical and psychological violence, neglect, abuse or exploitation. Therefore, we are committed to protecting and defending them so that they can grow in a healthy manner and live the abundant life God has for them.

2.2 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BOARD

The Association Board for NCA schools is responsible for establishing and periodically revising the child protection policies.

2.3 RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT TO THE BOARD

The Administrative team shall inform the Board, in general terms, about any cases that present themselves.

2.4 DESIGNATED COORDINATOR (DC) AND INVESTIGATIVE TEAM (IT)

Each school will name a Designated Coordinator (**DC**), who will be the contact for receiving initial reports of suspected abuse from students, teachers, or parents. The Investigative Team (**IT**) should be composed of three members of the administration (normally the director, principal, and psychologist), and their role is to investigate the cases of suspected abuse that have been presented to the **DC**. In case of an absence or the implication of one of the three members of the team, another member of the personnel, who is also qualified in matters of child protection, can be included in the **IT**. The actions to be taken by the **DC** and **IT** are described in chapters 5-7.

2.5 HIRING PROCESS

Before hiring personnel, NCA will review and verify their criminal background checks as well as pastoral and professional references. Additionally, interviews will be conducted in a manner that not only evaluates the candidate’s technical capacities, but also evaluates their moral, ethical, and spiritual character. All candidates must sign the *Statement of Commitment to the Child Protection Policy* (located in Appendix C) before being hired and annually thereafter.

2.6 TRAINING FOR PERSONNEL

The school’s administrative team is responsible for training all members of the personnel and volunteers in recognizing possible abuse and negligence, the process to document and submit reports, as well as the precautions and pertinent guidelines for both teaching and non-teaching staff. New staff members must receive a complete training and the rest of the staff must participate in an annual review . Each year, all personnel must sign the *Statement of Commitment to the Child Protection Policy*, which is located in Appendix C.

2.7 TRAINING FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Upon initial enrollment and periodically (every 5-6 years) thereafter, all parents and guardians must attend a workshop led by the administrative team of the school regarding the Child Protection Policy. This workshop must address the Biblical basis, the school’s commitment to complying with the legal requirements, the responsibility to protect all the educational community, the definition and recognition of abuse and negligence, as well as the process for reporting cases to the school, using the form in Appendix F. After the workshop, the parents and guardians must sign the *Statement of Commitment to the Child Protection Policy*, which is located in Appendix D.

2.8 TRAINING FOR STUDENTS

NCA is responsible for using Biblical principles and age-appropriate materials to educate students about positive interpersonal relationships, which are opposed to abuse and neglect. Each student will participate in one training per year.

2.9 IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

NCA will receive abuse claims the moment they are presented and will initiate the investigative processes within two business days. If necessary, the claims will be reported to the corresponding authorities immediately in accordance with the laws of Nicaragua.

2.10 DOCUMENTATION

NCA will keep documentation regarding all cases of suspected abuse or negligence. All documentation will be kept confidentially for the amount of time deemed necessary.

2.11 SECURITY FOR VISITORS

All visitors (parents, temporary workers, subcontractors, providers, substitutes, etc.) must identify themselves with the security personnel in order to receive authorization to enter the installations. The security personnel are responsible to ensure that visitors remain in authorized areas and that they respect the school's conduct policies. If compliance is not maintained, the visitor's access to the installations will be restricted or denied.

2.12 BUILDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN

Building and infrastructure should be designed in a manner that provides visibility, avoiding the creation of places that facilitate situations of abuse. Access to vulnerable or low visibility areas should be restricted. Offices and classrooms should have windows that permit sufficient visibility for the protection of all occupants. There should be separate bathrooms for students and adults.

2.13 COMMUNICATION WITH MEDIA

In each school, the Director (or their designate) is the only person authorized to communicate with the media in regards to cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. The director shall maintain confidentiality regarding the details of the case, while informing the media of the policies and procedures that guide the school's investigation.

CHAPTER 3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF NCA STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

3.1 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Teachers and Educational Assistants must encourage an environment of trust and safety, where each student is recognized and valued as being created in God’s image and likeness. As such, they must be respectful, prepared to listen to their students, and give just treatment to all. They must maintain their authority as teachers and establish healthy limits in their relationships with students. The teaching staff must be trained to identify signs and comments that might indicate abuse, as well as report and act in accordance with school policies.

3.2 INCIDENT REPORTS

In situations where the school staff suspects that a child or adolescent has been, is, or runs the risk of being abused or neglected, they should ensure that these suspicions are reported to the **DC** in accordance with the procedures established in Appendix E.

3.3 PRECAUTION AND SUPERVISION PRACTICES FOR TEACHERS

A. Balance Between Authority and Familiarity

- Teachers should develop a relationship of authority and professionalism with their students. By not establishing clear and healthy limits, they will put in jeopardy their opportunity to gain the respect of students, colleagues and parents.
- Teachers can be friendly (nice, respectful, funny) with the students, without forgetting their role as teachers and not trying to become “buddies” with students. The teacher will gain more respect and acceptance from the students by meeting the expectations of the teacher role, than by being permissive.
- Teachers should use professional language and tone in their communication, in accordance with the age of the students.
- Teachers have the responsibility to lead their classes in a professional manner, avoiding the sharing of very personal experiences that are not relevant to the subject or topic being studied, nor edifying to the student.
- Teachers must treat each student in a just and individualized manner, without showing favoritism, but rather investing in positive relationships with each one.

B. Physical Proximity

- Students should always remain under direct or shared supervision of staff.
- Staff may participate in healthy physical contact with students (side hug, pat on the shoulder, handshake, or any other physical gesture that is professional).
- In situations where one-on-one attention with a student is required, the following guidelines must be followed:
 - Converse in an open area where other people are circulating;
 - If in classrooms and offices, the doors and windows must permit visibility at all times;
 - If possible, there should be a prudent distance between the student and the staff member.
- Adults should not use the student bathrooms, and students should use the bathrooms designated for their age group unless otherwise authorized and supervised by staff.

C. Electronic Communication

- The best way to communicate with students electronically is through the group email system.
- Use professional language.
- In general, group communication is preferable to individual communication.
- Academic communication (homework, class clarifications, etc.) is always permitted.
- Avoid very personal conversations, sharing of photos/videos, and late night conversations.
- Do not send friendship requests on social media to any current students.

D. Activities Outside of School

- Teachers must understand that their behavior inside and outside of the school will be associated with the institution.
- In regards to activities with students outside of the school, even if they are non-official activities, the teacher must notify their supervisors. Exception: social events with their own child's class.
- Teachers should not transport any student in their personal vehicle without written authorization of the student's parents.

3.4 INTERACTION BETWEEN STUDENTS AND NON-TEACHING STAFF

- Interactions between students and members of the non-teaching staff should be characterized by mutual respect and healthy communication.
- Non-teaching staff can be friendly (nice, respectful, funny) with the students, without forgetting their role.
- Non-teaching staff should use professional language and tone in their communication, in accordance with the age of the students.
- Only when students initiate it may the non-teaching staff participate in healthy physical contact with students (side hug, pat on the shoulder, handshake, or any other physical gesture that is professional).
- Under no circumstance is the non-teaching staff to be alone with a student.
- In regard to school transportation, two adults (driver and chaperon) must be present at all times.
- Under no circumstances should the non-teaching staff have any type of contact with students (including electronic communication) outside of the school facilities.

3.5 STUDENT SHADOWS, PARENTS, AND VOLUNTEERS

- Student shadows, parents, and volunteers that help at the school must treat all students fairly, without showing favoritism to their child or assigned student, and use the appropriate channels to communicate any concerns.
- The previous points that apply to non-teaching staff also apply to student shadows, parents, and volunteers in regards to their interactions with students.

3.6 SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENT CARE

Research suggests that children with special needs are more vulnerable to significant harm from physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect than children who do not have special needs. Particular care must be taken for these children, and particular attention paid to warning signs of abuse.

- If there is suspicion of abuse, a written report must be filled out immediately.
- If communication is difficult, a teacher must know how to access suitable interpreters or facilitators, since the child's perception of events and his or her wishes are critical to the investigation.
- Teachers working with special needs students must follow guidelines and receive training for dealing with their physical needs.

CHAPTER 4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

4.1 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents and guardians hold the utmost responsibility for their child’s moral, physical, and spiritual development. They should be the most aware of changes in a child’s behavior and development and should work to build the trust of their children.

4.2 TRAINING

Upon entering NCA and periodically thereafter, parents and guardians must participate in the child protection policy workshop led by the school counselor regarding child protection. Parents must sign the *Parent Statement of Commitment to Child Protection Guidelines*.

4.3 INCIDENT REPORTS

Parents must report to the school any case of suspected abuse or neglect, if in any way it involves another student or other member of the school community. A family is not in obligation to involve the school if the family prefers to deal with the issue within the family and it does not involve another member of the school community. However, if the school becomes aware of the situation, the school is required to ensure the necessary follow up.

Incidents must be reported to the Designated Coordinator (**DC**), maintaining confidentiality and integrity throughout the process.

Making false and/or malicious claims could result in temporary or permanent suspension of a student.

For your information, according to Nicaraguan Law for the Family (Ley 870, Artículo 51), all individuals who have knowledge of a situation of domestic or intrafamily violence are required to report it to the corresponding authorities.

CHAPTER 5. ACCUSATIONS AGAINST SCHOOL EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidelines to the schools in the event that an accusation is reported and implicates an employee of the institution in any type of abuse or neglect towards a student. In this case, the term employee also includes volunteers.

5.1 RECEIVING INITIAL REPORT

Teachers, parents, and students can present an initial report, using the form in Appendix F. Once the initial report has been written, the person making the accusation will meet with the **DC** and school **psychologist** to explain the situation and turn in the written report. If at the moment of receiving the report, the student has evidence of physical abuse, they should be taken immediately to the school nurse so that the physical evidence can be documented. The case must be kept under strict confidentiality.

5.2 INITIAL MEASURES

First the **IT** will meet to review the accusation and decide if there is sufficient evidence or credibility to proceed to further investigation. One or more of the members will inform the employee of the accusation, explaining the procedures established in this policy. If the case requires, the employee will be suspended from their duties until the investigation is concluded. The **DC** will inform the person that filed the claim that an investigation has begun. If the student does not attend class during the investigative process, the school will excuse the absences.

5.3 INVESTIGATION

Once the accusation has been received, the investigation must start within a period of two business days and finish as soon as possible. The **IT** will interview all the implicated parties separately, collecting information and evidence.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Once the evidence is collected and verified, the **IT** will proceed to make a decision, considering the following possible conclusions. The decision will then be communicated to those involved.

A. REFERRAL OF CASE

In the case that the accusation is confirmed and the victim wants to pursue further legal action, or the school considers that the case merits further legal action, the case will be referred to the corresponding authorities.

B. CONFIRMED ACCUSATION (MANAGED INTERNALLY)

In the case that the accusation is confirmed but the victim does not desire to pursue further legal action, and the school considers it appropriate to handle the follow-up internally, the school will draft a document in which the victim agrees not to hold the school liable. Depending on the case, the action plan could include counselling and/or follow-up with all parties involved, temporary suspension of the employee, and/or termination of employment. In case no satisfactory resolution is reached, the school reserves the right to refer the case to the corresponding authorities.

C. UNSUBSTANTIATED ACCUSATION (FALSE ACCUSATION)

If the **IT** does not find enough evidence to justify the accusation, the conclusions will be communicated to all parties and will establish a plan for reconciliation. The school will develop an action plan that includes counselling and follow-up with both parties. If it is determined that the report was malicious in nature, additional consequences will be applied, including but not limited to suspension of the student, and allowing the accused to follow any legal recourse they feel is appropriate.

5.5 REPORTS TO THE BOARD AND MINED

All cases must be reported to the Board and the corresponding Municipal Delegate of MINED with a copy to the Superintendent of Private School for MINED.

CHAPTER 6. ACCUSATIONS AGAINST INDIVIDUALS IN THE FAMILY SETTING

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidelines to the schools in the event that an accusation is reported and implicates an individual in the family setting of a student in any type of abuse or neglect towards a student.

6.1 RECEIVING INITIAL REPORT

Teachers, parents, and students can present an initial report, using the form in Appendix F. Once the initial report has been written, the person making the accusation will meet with the **DC** and school **psychologist** to explain the situation and turn in the written report. If at the moment of receiving the report, the student has evidence of physical abuse, they should be taken immediately to the school nurse so that the physical evidence can be documented. The case must be kept under strict confidentiality.

6.2 INITIAL MEASURES

First the **IT** will meet to review the accusation and decide if there is sufficient evidence or credibility to proceed to further investigation. The **DC** will inform the accuser that an investigation has begun. If the student does not attend class during the investigative process, the school will excuse the absences.

The **IT** will decide whether or not to communicate with the parents about the case. If the communication with the parents will help in protecting the victim, the parents will be notified of the case. If the communication with parents will put the student in danger, the parents will not be notified unless the governmental authorities decide otherwise.

6.3 INVESTIGATION

Once the accusation has been received, the investigation must start within a period of two business days, and finish as soon as possible. The **IT** will interview all the implicated parties separately, collecting information and evidence.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Once the evidence is collected and verified, the **IT** will proceed to make a decision, considering the following possible conclusions. The decision will then be communicated to those involved.

A. REFERRAL OF CASE

In the case that the accusation is confirmed and the victim wants to pursue further legal action, or the school considers that the case merits further legal action, the case will be referred to the corresponding authorities.

B. CONFIRMED ACCUSATION (MANAGED INTERNALLY)

In the case that the accusation is confirmed but the victim does not desire to pursue further legal action, and the school considers it appropriate to handle the follow-up internally, the school will draft a document in which the victim agrees not to hold the school liable. Depending on the case, the action plan could include counselling and/or follow-up with all parties involved. The school must give periodic follow-up to ensure the student does not continue in a dangerous situation. In case no satisfactory resolution is reached, the school reserves the right to refer the case to the corresponding authorities.

C. UNSUBSTANTIATED ACCUSATION (FALSE ACCUSATION)

If the **IT** does not find enough evidence to justify the accusation, the conclusions will be communicated to all parties and will establish a plan for reconciliation. The school will develop an action plan that includes counselling and follow-up with both parties.

6.5 REPORTS TO THE BOARD AND MINED

All cases must be reported to the Board and the corresponding Municipal Delegate of MINED with a copy to the Superintendent of Private School for MINED.

CHAPTER 7. ACCUSATIONS AGAINST STUDENTS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidelines to the schools in the event that an accusation is reported of a student committing any type of abuse towards another student.

7.1 RECEIVING INITIAL REPORT

Teachers, parents, and students can present an initial report, using the form in Appendix F. Once the initial report has been written, the person making the accusation will meet with the **DC** and school **psychologist** to explain the situation and turn in the written report. If at the moment of receiving the report, the student has evidence of physical abuse, they should be taken immediately to the school nurse so that the physical evidence can be documented. The case must be kept under strict confidentiality.

7.2 INITIAL MEASURES

First the **IT** will meet to review the accusation and decide if there is sufficient evidence or credibility to proceed to further investigation. The DC will inform the accuser and their parents (if the accuser is a minor) that an investigation has begun, explaining that case is being managed by the school and that the parents and student should not confront the accused directly. In the case that the student does not attend classes during the investigation, or that the school determines it necessary to separate those involved, the school will transfer the student or excuse the absences.

7.3 INVESTIGATION

Once the accusation has been received, the investigation must start within a period of two business days, and finish as soon as possible. The **IT** will interview all the implicated parties separately, collecting information and evidence. One or more of the members will inform the accused, in the presence of their parents, about the case, explaining the procedures established in this policy. The accused nor their parents should confront the accuser directly.

7.4 CONCLUSION

Once the evidence is collected and verified, the **IT** will proceed to make a decision, considering the following possible conclusions. The decision will then be communicated to those involved.

A. REFERRAL OF CASE

In the case that the accusation is confirmed and the victim wants to pursue further legal action, or the school considers that the case merits further legal action, the case will be referred to the corresponding authorities. The offending student will be suspended from school until further notice.

B. CONFIRMED ACCUSATION (MANAGED INTERNALLY)

In the case that the accusation is confirmed but the victim does not desire to pursue further legal action, and the school considers it appropriate to handle the follow up internally, the school will draft a document in which the victim agrees not to hold the school liable. The case will be handled according to the norms of discipline established in the Student Handbook of the school, including counselling and/or follow-up with all the parties involved.

C. UNSUBSTANTIATED ACCUSATION (FALSE ACCUSATION)

If the **IT** does not find enough evidence to justify the accusation, the conclusions will be communicated to all parties and will establish a plan for reconciliation. The school will develop an action plan that includes counselling and follow-up with both parties. If it is determined that the report was malicious in nature, additional consequences will be applied.

7.5 REPORTS TO THE BOARD AND MINED

All cases must be reported to the Board and the corresponding Municipal Delegate of MINED with a copy to the Superintendent of Private School for MINED.

APPENDIX A: RELEVANT LAWS AND ENTITIES

The three legal documents in Nicaragua that govern the school policies and procedures regarding situations of neglect or abuse are the *Código de la Niñez y la Adolescencia (Ley No. 287)*, *Código de Familia (Ley No. 870)*, and the *Acuerdo Ministerial No. 217-2006*. The most relevant portions are included below.

CÓDIGO DE LA NIÑEZ Y LA ADOLESCENCIA (LEY NO. 287)

ARTICLE 48 - Education center directors have the obligation, upon first incident, to report to the mother, father, or guardian cases of abuse, rape or sexual abuse, repeated unjustified absences, avoiding school, use, abuse, consumption and dependency of psychotropic substances, elevated levels of class failure and other cases that require additional support for the student. In cases of repeated or severe offense, they are obligated to inform or report to the corresponding organization or authority.

ARTICLE 85 - Persons who through action or omission commit physical, psychological or sexual mistreatment, violence or abuse, will be subject to the legal sanctions established by the law. The corresponding administrative authority will take the necessary measures to protect and rescue children when their physical, psychological or moral integrity is in danger. They can count on the support of the police, who should respond without the need of a court order.

ARTICLE 220 - All doctors, teachers, and persons responsible for an institution of health, primary education, pre-school, child development center, who do not communicate with the corresponding authority in regards to cases that are brought to their attention or in which they suspect abuse has been committed towards a child, will be sanctioned with a fine equivalent to one month's salary and will be considered accessories to the crime.

CÓDIGO DE FAMILIA (LEY NO. 870)

ARTICLE 51 OBLIGATION TO REPORT DOMESTIC OR INTRAFAMILY VIOLENCE - All persons who have knowledge of an act constituting domestic or intrafamily violence, must report it or notify the National Police. The report can be written, verbal, or via sign language. When the report is verbal or via sign language, this will be documented by the police agent.

ACUERDO MINISTERIAL NO. 217-2006 (MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN)

NORM I-3 - If the Director of a school does not report, with or without the authorization of the family responsible for the child, they will be held responsible in accordance with Article 85 and 220 of the Código de la Niñez y Adolescencia, proceeding to administrative sanction by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, for omitting their responsibility to report, without regard to the corresponding legal action.

MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION)

All abuse cases handled by the school must be reported to the corresponding Municipal Delegate and MINED Private School Superintendent.

POLICIA NACIONAL (NATIONAL POLICE)

This is the primary authority in Nicaragua to handle legal matters related to abuse. Reporting is required for serious first-time incidents and all repeat incidents.

MINISTERIO DE LA FAMILIA (MI FAMILIA / MINISTRY OF THE FAMILY)

This is the primary authority in Nicaragua that provides child protection services. Reporting is required in cases where a student would be in danger at home.

APPENDIX B: STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION POLICY: NCA ASSOCIATION

NCA is an advocate for children and adolescents, helping them to be free from spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty in Jesus' name, and enabling them to become mature, responsible Christians who are able to live the abundant life that God intended for them. We recognize the unique value of each child and adolescent as being created in the image and likeness of God. They are God's creation and should be protected from all forms of physical and psychological violence, neglect, abuse or exploitation.

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy.*
Proverbs 31:8-9

It is NCA's policy that all reasonable action will be taken to ensure that each educational center is a safe place for children and adolescents. Additionally, any report or suspicion of possible abuse or neglect will be investigated and given the appropriate follow up, to ensure the well-being of any victim and also to prevent any possibility of future incidents.

WE COMMIT TO:

1. Based on the Biblical mandate and with responsibility, provide an environment of love, care, and protection to all students, supporting them in prayer.
2. Maintain policies, standards, and guidelines to prevent, mitigate, and protect against all forms of abuse and violence that might occur.
3. Respect national legislation and international standards regarding the protection and rights of children and adolescents.
4. Follow the guidelines of this policy regarding the management of suspected or reported abuse, maintaining appropriate discretion and confidentiality in order to protect the dignity of everyone involved.
5. Maintain a careful selection process for personnel and volunteers, ensuring that they do not have a confirmed record of abuse.
6. Impart workshops and seminars that create awareness of this policy among all students, parents, and staff.
7. Examine and update our policy as needed.

APPENDIX C: STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION POLICY: TEACHERS, STAFF, AND VOLUNTEERS

NCA is an advocate for children and adolescents, helping them to be free from spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty in Jesus' name, and enabling them to become mature, responsible Christians who are able to live the abundant life that God intended for them. We recognize the unique value of each child and adolescent as being created in the image and likeness of God. They are God's creation and should be protected from all forms of physical and psychological violence, neglect, abuse or exploitation.

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy.*
Proverbs 31:8-9

It is NCA's policy that all reasonable action will be taken to ensure that each educational center is a safe place for children and adolescents. Additionally, any report or suspicion of possible abuse or neglect will be investigated and given the appropriate follow up, to ensure the well-being of any victim and also to prevent any possibility of future incidents.

AS A MEMBER OF THE STAFF OF NCA, I COMMIT TO:

1. Based on the Biblical mandate and with responsibility, provide an environment of love, care, and protection to all students, supporting them in prayer.
2. Create an environment of trust and empathy in the classrooms and work areas.
3. Participate in the annual workshops, renewing my commitment to comply with these policies and procedures.
4. Manage with tact, sensitivity, confidentiality, and responsibility all cases of suspected or reported abuse, whether shared with me or observed, and report the situation to the Designated Coordinator immediately, in accordance with the guidelines of this policy.
5. Address any doubts or questions regarding this Child Protection Policy to the administration.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX D: STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION POLICY: PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

NCA is an advocate for children and adolescents, helping them to be free from spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty in Jesus' name, and enabling them to become mature, responsible Christians who are able to live the abundant life that God intended for them. We recognize the unique value of each child and adolescent as being created in the image and likeness of God. They are God's creation and should be protected from all forms of physical and psychological violence, neglect, abuse or exploitation.

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy.*
Proverbs 31:8-9

It is NCA's policy that all reasonable action will be taken to ensure that each educational center is a safe place for children and adolescents. Additionally, any report or suspicion of possible abuse or neglect will be investigated and given the appropriate follow up, to ensure the well-being of any victim and also to prevent any possibility of future incidents.

AS PARENT/GUARDIAN, I COMMIT TO:

1. Provide an environment of love, care, and protection for all children and adolescents under my supervision, commending them in prayer.
2. Pay attention to the children and adolescents in my care, attending to their spiritual, physical and emotional well-being.
3. Attend the orientation for parents related to the Child Protection Policy and confirm my commitment annually (included in the Family Covenant)
4. Comply with all the guidelines in this policy.
5. Address any doubts or questions regarding this Child Protection Policy to the administration.

Name:

Names of children:

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX E: PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING DISCLOSURES FROM STUDENTS REGARDING ABUSE

An abused child, or a child who is witness to abuse, is likely to be under severe emotional stress. It is often possible that a member of the school staff, most specifically the student's teacher, is the only adult with whom the child will have the courage to speak. Great care must be taken to maintain that trust. Tact, sensitivity, and empathy are critical. It is important that the child understands that he/she is heard and that everything will be done on his/her behalf to protect and support him/her. However, the teacher or staff member **must not** make any promises to keep the information secret.

It should also be extremely clear that **failure to report abuse is a crime**.

These procedures, while specific to student disclosures, also apply to disclosure from parents and staff members.

Disclosing a situation of abuse is difficult for both the student and the person receiving the report. Much care must be taken in the process. The following are guidelines for staff members to whom a child has the confidence to make a disclosure of abuse:

1. Maintain calm and do not demonstrate any extreme emotional response to the information shared by the student.
2. Ensure that you are in a private place where you will not be interrupted nor heard by others.
3. Ensure that the student knows that they are being taken seriously.
4. Remember that the conversation needs to maintain the student's sense of trust so that they feel comfortable and continue talking with the appropriate people during the investigative process.
5. The student must understand that the information shared will not be maintained in secret but will be kept confidential. The difference must be explained to the student or the person informing about the abuse. "Secret" means that nothing will be said to anyone else. "Confidential" means that information will be shared with only the people that are necessary in order to carry out the investigation.
6. If it is possible, fill out the reporting form as the informant shares information. Before writing, ask for permission to write while they share what happened, in order to guarantee precision. If this is not possible, you must document the conversation immediately after the conversation is over, trying to use the exact words of the student.
7. Do not interrupt, but listen carefully. After the student has shared their experience, if something is not clear, you can ask questions in an objective manner, for example: "Can you explain to me what you mean by ____?" The questions should not be leading or manipulative. You must be careful to gather the most clear and explicit information possible, with the objective of not creating confusion. Use formal language, using the correct name for body parts, avoiding as much as possible the use of slang terminology.
8. Do not make judgements nor derogatory statements about the accused. You must discover and document only the facts, without depreciating or minimizing the emotional responses of the victim. If the victim asks questions like: "Did I do something bad for this to happen?" or "Was what happened to me bad?", you should not make a judgement. Instead, you should explain that you do not have enough information to make a judgement and that the first step in answering those questions is to collect the victim's version of what happened.
9. Explain to the student what comes next in the process: sharing of the case with the **DC**, investigation, etc., assuring them that the case will be managed confidentially and responsibly.
10. When the initial report is completed, it should be given to the **DC** immediately.

APPENDIX F: REPORT OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

For Internal Use. Normally this document is filled out by the Designated Coordinator.

A. Person Completing this Form:

B. Date of Report:

C. Details of Child:

Name		Gender	
Age		Date of Birth	
Address		School	
Telephone		Grade/Teacher	

D. Details of Person Reporting Concern, *if they are a third party*:

Name		Telephone	
Relationship to Child		Address or Email	
Reporter discussed report with parents?		Reporter wishes to remain anonymous?	
Person Reporting is:	<input type="checkbox"/> Victim <input type="checkbox"/> Firsthand Witness <input type="checkbox"/> Secondhand Witness <input type="checkbox"/> Other		

E. Details of the Report - *Details of concerns, allegations, incident details, place, dates and times, who was present, description of any injuries, parent's views and/or child's views.*

F. Household Composition of Victim (*family and others in the family setting*):

Name	Relationship to Child	Living with Child?	Other pertinent information: occupation, school

G. Details of Person(s) Under Suspicion:

Name	Contact Information	Relationship to Child	Gender, Age

By signing below, I certify that the information on this form is an accurate reflection of the information I received.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW REPORT

A. Interview Details

Date of interview		Name of Victim	
Time of interview		Location of interview	
IT member(s) present			

B. People Interviewed

Name	Relationship to Incident

C. Details of the Report - *Details of concerns, allegations, incident details, place, dates and times, who was present, description of any injuries, parent's views and-or child's views.*

C. Details of the Report (*continued*)

D. Agreements and Commitments

E. IT member Signature(s):

F. Interviewee Signature(s):