



# ISB EXEMPLARS SAFETY IN EDUCATION

## How to Balance Reality and Risk-Mitigation in Educational Settings

International School Bangkok (ISB), winner of the 2019 Duty of Care Awards for Education, introduced school-wide systems to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its students, staff and community.

Founded in 1951, ISB was the first international school in the Kingdom of Thailand. Around 1700 students, from more than 60 countries, are currently enrolled in its Elementary, Middle, and High schools.

As well as this large number of students, there are close to 600 staff and faculty; many events are held on campus, and more than 200 off-campus trips taken each year. This potentially presents a variety of safety and safeguarding challenges. One major challenge is trying to create hands-on, experiential, real-world learning experiences while protecting students' safety. Another challenge is that divisions and departments within schools often operate in silos - they might have similar goals in mind, yet they try to accomplish them in different ways. The lack of school-wide consistent processes opens up the potential for important steps to be missed.

### Mark Hevland, Director of Risk Management sets out ISB's approach:

"ISB is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment in which our students can grow and develop to their full potential. We want our students to receive exceptional, engaging and meaningful learning experiences in situations of managed risk. Whether planning for student trips, or campus events, it is key to have everyone working together and following school-wide action plans and processes."

Over the last three years ISB has undergone an extensive review and upgrade of its security policies, procedures and systems. One of the key changes ISB made to enhance its focus on Duty of Care was to create a Director of Risk Management position.<sup>1</sup>

### Director of Risk Management

This position is key to bringing the disparate silos into a common platform. The Director of Risk Management is responsible for reviewing and identifying school-wide risks and making recommendations to support the learning process and mitigate those risks. This involves working closely both with the school leadership and external organisations. The Director reports directly to the Head of School and regularly reports back to the School Board on all developments.

As a result of these efforts, the last three years have seen key enhancements in the areas of policies, systems and trips:

### Policies

ISB reviewed and introduced detailed safety and safeguarding policies. These include a Heat, Air Quality and overall Student Safeguarding policies.

### Systems

Various systems have been put in place to ensure overall student safeguarding:

- Mass Communications System to inform the community promptly about issues that arise, such as pollution days in Bangkok.
- New Memorandum of Understanding between ISB and a nearby private hospital to streamline patient care for anyone from ISB attending the hospital.
- Travel tracking system that can be used to locate students if there is an issue while they are travelling.
- A facility management service that consolidates all work orders and facility requests. This in-depth preventative maintenance module keeps the systems and the school operating.
- Online emergency response and event log system used by security patrols at three different locations.
- Bus monitoring system that allows access to bus locations, speeds and travel times. The system also tracks when students board and disembark.



### Trips

With so many trips each year, an exceptionally strong trip planning process is needed. This now includes these essential steps:

- A clearly defined trip planning checklist that all trip organisers must follow.
- Teachers and staff work together to document all aspects of the trip, along with completing a risk assessment.
- All planning and assessment forms are reviewed by the Director of Risk Management and the Vice-Principals.
- Working with external experts to ensure all staff have immediate access, before, during and after the trips, to medical emergency doctors, consultation specialists and risk experts.
- Working with the ISB Health Clinic to review the medical needs of each student.

Careful consideration is put on the individual student, and the trip objectives. The goals must align with the school's mission and vision. Putting a strong travel planning process in place allows calculated risks to be taken, with systems in place to mitigate negative outcomes. Having teachers and risk professionals work together helps provide a balance in supporting these goals.

### Mark Hevland concludes:

"Last year we safely welcomed 5000 guests onto campus, and sent students safely on over 200 trips, with minimal injuries or security risks. These are good indicators of a sound system of safeguarding, ensuring we uphold our Duty of Care to our students, staff and community members."

### Key Elements

Appoint a Director of Risk Management to develop a school-wide approach.<sup>2</sup>

Establish policies to address key health and safety issues.

Introduce communications, monitoring and other systems to deliver support where needed.

Develop specific processes for off-campus trips.

- 1 ISB manages their own in-house security team comprising 58 guards and managers, a nursing team comprised of 7, and 5 highly trained lifeguards. All teaching staff are First Aid/CPR/AED certified and they have 6 First Aid/CPR/AED Instructors on staff. They are certified by *Keeping Children Safe* and partner with International SOS for medical emergency support 24/7, on and off campus.
- 2 Ongoing commitment to safety and student safeguarding.