



**PROVIDENCE ENGLISH PRIVATE SCHOOL**

**SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**2024 - 2025**

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## Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Safeguarding students and staff from any external or internal threat like pandemic or road crossing during beginning and end of the school.

### Child protection

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activities that are undertaken to protect children. This policy sets out the measures that Providence English Private School (PEPS) will take to ensure the safety and well-being of students under its care.

These guidelines give direction and guidance to school management authorities and all school personnel in dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse. It provides basic information to school personnel to enable them to be alert to and to be aware of what to do in situations where child abuse may be a concern or suspicions. However, where abuse is suspected, it is essential that collaboration with external authorities is sought for the best advice.

We aim to support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence, and to raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children. In our schools every member of staff will exercise a duty of care in all parts of the school at all times.

In consort with relevant authorities, we will provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and undertake to ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability and moral fitness.

## HH Sheikh Muhammad's vision regarding Physical and Verbal Abuse of Students

Every child has the right to a secure life, permanent care and emotional and psychological stability. We will be uncompromising with whoever infringes upon the rights of children, for the protection of our children is a protection of our future.” HH Sheikh Muhammad.

### Confidentiality

All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse should only be shared on a need to know basis with the interest of the child placed first. We recognize that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential and designated staff will disclose information about a pupil to other member of staff only if it is necessary to do so.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets.

### Responsibilities of all school personnel

All school personnel are especially well placed to observe changes in behavior, delayed development or outward signs of abuse in children. In situation where school personnel suspect abuse, they should ensure that such concerns are reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy. Under no circumstances should they take unilateral action and all actions and interventions must be documented in detail.

The main role of the designated teacher/person is to refer suspected abuse or allegations to the authorized personnel. To be effective they will have:

- Received training on how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case
- Make themselves known to all members of school staff
- Ensure those members of staff have training in child protection relevant to their needs and are able to identify and report any concern they have to the designated teacher/person immediately they arise
- Ensure that all members of the staff have access to and understand the school's Child Protection Policy
  
- Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of referrals or concerns
- Provide parents with a copy of the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy

which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made by the school.

- Ensure they are kept apprised of changes in UAE law and MOE regulations regarding child protection.

### Types of Abuse:

*“Kindergarten and school staff spend many hours with children and can spot indications of abuse, Studies have shown the majority of abused children are below the age of five. They are unable to express themselves and are also unaware of what happens to them. But there are signs to spot and the role of school staff is important.*

**Physical:** Physical hurt or injury usually caused by hitting, shaking, kicking, pushing, pinching, burning or biting. In sport, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregards the capacity of the child’s immature and growing body.

**Emotional:** Bullying in any form: name-calling, threats, denial of rights normally accorded to others, cyber-bullying, teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, exclusion, or extortion.

Physical and verbal attacks either in private and must not be ignored. Bullying may be a single incident or repeated actions, and may be initiated by an individual or a group.

**Note:** Overt sarcasm by adults is a form of bullying because it affects the emotions of the person it is directed towards.

It also involves persistent emotional ill treatment of a child, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects of the child’s emotional development. It may involve telling a child they are useless, worthless, unloved, and inadequate.

**Neglect:** The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Sexual:** Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in a sexually inappropriate way.

### **Possible Indicators of Abuse**

A child may be exhibiting signs of abuse if:

- They provide specific information that they are the victims of abuse;
- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns particularly if situate on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- An injury for which the explanations seems inconsistent
- Unexplained changes in a child's behavior e.g. becoming upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper; difficulty in making friends;
- Being prevented from socializing with others;
- Behavioral changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, depressed, tearful, emotional instability, reluctance to go to training or competitions;
- Consistent evidence, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

### **Other Inappropriate Behavior (by staff)**

Staff and others must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children;
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;
  
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Have a child / child with whom they are working stay overnight at their home unsupervised (even with the permission of parents);

- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working;
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in behavior with children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favor particular children to the ~~exclusion~~ exclusion of others.

### Roles and responsibilities:

- All staff working with children has a responsibility to protect them.
- All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns and the procedures that they should follow
- All staff has a duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues and if necessary, they should speak to a member of the management. If the concern is about a member of the management, they should speak to the Principal
- A designated Child Protection Officer is appointed
- It is the role of the Child Protection Officer to ensure that all of the Child Protection procedures are followed throughout the school
- The Child Protection Officer must ensure that all staff members and volunteers are aware of the school procedures regarding Child Protection
- The School Leadership Team must follow a safe recruitment process, ensuring that references and checks are carried out prior to employment.
- Staff members are kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction.
- The Child Protection Officer must report any case of abuse in accordance with the ~~procedures~~ procedures set out in this policy.
- Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse, an allegation or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the Child Protection Officer.
- All staff members must fully comply with the school's policies.

### Third Party

An account of person who saw a child being abused must be treated seriously whether this comes from an adult or another child. Abuse rarely happens in public and hardly ever permits corroborating statements. This does not discount the veracity of the account.

## Handling Disclosures from Children

A victim is likely to be under severe emotional stress and a staff member may be the only adult whom the child is prepared to trust. Great care should be taken not to break that trust, within the Confines of the law.

When information is offered in confidence, the member of the staff will need to reassure the child and retain their trust, whilst explaining the need for action and the possible consequences should action not be taken. This will necessitate other adults being informed. The child must be told that everything possible will be done to protect and support them.

Each school's designated Child Protection Officer must carry out any investigation into abuse. This will ensure the matter is dealt with by trained personnel who are fully appraised of best practice in carrying out investigations, and able to seek external advice where necessary.

In cases of sexual abuse or serious assault, the school must seek advice from Ministry of Education and the police as to the limits of the school's role in investigating, as this may jeopardize subsequent court action.

A basis for concern must be established as comprehensively as possible. However, any school personnel to whom a child makes a disclosure of abuse must:

- Listen to the child;
- Offer reassurance but not make promises;
- Allow the child to recall significant events;
- Explain that further help may have to be sought;
- Record the discussion accurately (*see next section*) and pass this to the designated Child Protection Officer (no tapes or conversations may be made as this contravenes the law).
- Ensure any records they keep are secure and confidential.

## Records and Monitoring

When child abuse is suspected, it is essential to note carefully:

- What has been observed - signs of physical injury should be described in detail and if appropriate, sketched. Under no circumstances should clothing be removed.
- When they observed it.

- Any comment by the child concerned, or by any person about how an injury occurred should be noted, preferably quoting words exactly used, as soon as possible after the comment has been made. The written record should be checked for accuracy, signed and dated by both the recorder and the person making the allegation. All records created should be regarded as highly confidential and retained in a secure location.

## Private Tuition

Private tuition is banned in the emirate of Sharjah and across the UAE and authorities have made repeated statements regarding this fact. The staffs at Providence English Private School are not permitted to carry out private tuition as the management believes all students are entitled to full and equal access to good teaching and that this is best carried out during the school day. Parents will be sent a letter at the beginning of each year reminding them that they must not solicit the staff of PEPS to conduct such tuition either in their homes or in the homes of staff.

School staff has been warned of the dangers of conducting private tuition including:

- Malicious allegations
- Pressure to act corruptly
- Tiredness
- Removal of 'Professional Distance'

Parents and staff who disregard school directives regarding private tuition therefore understand that they accept full responsibility for any actions that may arise. PEPS accept no responsibility in such instances.

## Private Communications between Staff and Students

All communications between staff, students and their parents must be conducted through the auspices of the school and be documented.

Member of staff is permitted to initiate or maintain private communications with students in coordination with the school management.

As members of staff will be communicating via their school portal login, the teachers will:

- send the emails to the students or their parents from their portal ID
- issue their mobile or landline telephone numbers to students (or their parents)
- contact a student outside school hours for personal reasons (unless related to the student)
- solicit or engage in with current students on social networking sites, such as Facebook or Twitter

- staff are advised to be extremely careful in posting personal details on such sites and should take steps to limit public access to their details

## Personal Space

All staff must be aware of their proximity to students so as to avoid potential allegations of inappropriate contact. They must always consider the age and gender of the child, the situation they are in and the location of their interaction.

Where meetings take place between staff and students, doors should remain open and/or a third party be present.

## Intervention

There will be circumstances where staff must intervene to stop a child injuring themselves or others, or damaging school property. *Reasonable* restraint at the lowest possible level may be used. However, it is preferable to seek advice or ask for a senior member of staff to attend.

## Remedial measures

If a staff member is suspected of inappropriate behavior towards a child:

- The matter must be reported to senior staff, however minor;
- Senior staff will inform Child Protection Officer of the allegation and ensure a full investigation is carried out;
- The staff member who is alleged to have engaged in inappropriate behavior towards a child will be asked to write a statement, which they must sign and date. A copy will be given to them.
- Depending on the severity of the allegation, and on the advice of Child Protection Officer/Principal, the member of staff may be suspended from duty. This means they will not be permitted on school premises until notified they may return. During the period of suspension, the staff member may not, under any circumstances, contact the victim or their parents, or any witnesses.
- In the event the allegation is proven, and on the advice of Principal, the member of staff may be terminated. In this instance the termination will be effective immediately.
- In very serious cases involving the police, the school will cooperate with such authorities.

## Procedures

- All action must be taken in line with the following guidance;
  - The policy as outlined above
  - School Guidelines & Policies
- Local Safeguarding Guidelines and Local Child Protection Procedures

The school will always undertake to share an intention to refer a child with the parents unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm

- Impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions, further guidance and advice must be sought out.
- Professional confidentiality must be kept at all times. Information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis and any information shared must be held confidentially to themselves
- Confidentiality must never be guaranteed to a pupil, as where there is a concern, it must be reported to the Child Protection Officer and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities
- Well-kept records are essential for good child protection practice and must be stored in a safe, confidential location
- Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate recording as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records must be passed onto the Child Protection Officer and signed and dated with details of action taken
- This policy must be followed alongside all other school policies
- This policy will be reviewed annually, unless circumstances arise which need the policy to be reviewed earlier

## Anti-Bullying

An anti-bullying policy is intact to prevent students from bullying besides regular students' wellbeing surveys to monitor the frequency of each type of bullying.

Kindly refer to our anti-bullying policy for further details.

## Safeguarding

It is the basic right of a child to live in peace, free of abuse and neglect. It involves people and organizations working together to prevent and end both the risk and experience of abuse or neglect, while also ensuring that the children's wellness is promoted, including, when appropriate, considering their views, wishes, feelings, and beliefs when making decisions. A child may have complex interpersonal interactions and may be ambivalent, imprecise, or unrealistic about their personal circumstances, therefore this must be considered.

Our children safeguarding policy is based on six **principles**:

**Empowerment:** Students at school are supported and motivated to make decisions relating to their wellbeing and have courage to share.

**Prevention:** It is better to do prevention rather than cure.

**Proportionality:** In case of a risk the least intrusive yet appropriate response be adopted.

**Protection:** Support for those in greatest need.

**Partnership:** Partnership with local communities and health authorities.

**Accountability:** Accountability and transparency in safeguarding our

students and staff. **Responsibilities**

School health and well-being staff besides the school faculty and the leaders have to ensure that relationships, values, and systems are in place to help and enable the students safe.

These include:

- Engagement with local health authorities and ensure all health regulations are strictly adhered to
- Up-to-date, functional policies and procedures.
- Information-sharing protocols for supply of information to the concerned officials in and outside the school.
- Integrated, cooperative working with other team members.
- Knowledge of when to report concerns, and who to report to

## Digital safeguarding

E-Safety policy is also intact for safeguarding the students from the misuse of digital, electronic, and internet information.

Kindly refer to e-safety policy for further information.

## School Science laboratories safety

### Rules and procedures

The Science department is responsible for the administration of the lab safety program which includes Science teachers and the Science subject leader. Standard safe laboratory practice at Providence English Private requires adoption of specific rules and procedures which are as follows:

- Eye protection is required at all times where chemicals are handled and stored. Contact lenses should not be worn. Safety goggles must be worn when the use of contact lenses cannot be avoided.
- Pranks and other mischief are strictly prohibited in all science laboratories and to be reported to SLT.
- The name of the contents and the appropriate hazard warning shall be prominently displayed in laboratories.
- The person using a chemical must know its hazards and how to effectively prevent and treat any overexposure.
- Eating, drinking, smoking, application of cosmetics, and storage of food or beverages is prohibited in any lab or chemical storage area.
- Unauthorized experiments are prohibited.
- Appropriate clothing must be worn, including a protective apron or lab coat.
- Mouth pipetting or suctioning is prohibited.
- Personnel are required to wash hands, face, and arms before leaving the laboratory.
- The conducting of experimentation alone in the laboratory is prohibited.
- No materials, equipment, or chemicals may be removed from the laboratory or lab storage without specific permission and supervision of the teacher/subject leader.
- Personnel must know the location of, and adhere to, all requirements of the Lab.
- Students using the laboratory must be given clear instructions/minimal training about the lab safety.
- Periodic formal safety self-evaluation to be done by the school to ensure adherence to laboratories safety policy and practice.
- Laboratories should be well ventilated and all machines and equipment, including personal protective equipment and ventilation equipment, should be included in routine maintenance schedules.
- Electrical machines and equipment must be properly grounded to prevent potential shock hazards.

## Responsibilities of teachers

- Setting a good example by: observing rules, procedures and recommendations; using required personal protective equipment; and by promoting safety.
- Continually watching for unsafe conditions.
- Conducting frequent and comprehensive self-inspections.
- Performing corrective follow-up action promptly and effectively.
- Enforcement of rules and procedures and discipline.
- Review of all lab experiments for safety prior to implementation.
- Maintaining and updating the Lab Safety-Chemical Hygiene plan including; inventory, material safety data sheets, labeling, and training,
- Maintaining precautions, emergency procedures, and postings in conspicuous locations.

## Safety practices and special facilities

- Safety practices and special facilities to be considered at laboratories and lab storage facilities should include:
  - A suitable first aid kit or cabinet,
  - Appropriate fire suppression equipment,
  - Protective clothing,
  - Approved storage cabinets or rooms,
  - Wash sinks/areas,
  - Appropriate waste disposal facilities and systems,
  - A standard labeling system and storage plan, and
  - Ground-fault circuit interruption of electrical circuits at or near wet and damp locations and an electrical equipment grounding program.

## Related to other policies Link

This policy links to

1. Wellbeing Policy,
2. Anti-Bullying and Behavior Policy.
3. Health & Safety policy.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Safeguarding & Child Protection lead is responsible to monitor & evaluate regularly.  
This policy will be reviewed annually by Senior Leadership Team & Wellness Team.

<b>Policy Reviewed By</b>	Social Worker & Wellness Team
<b>Policy Reviewed Date</b>	September 2024
<b>Next Review Date</b>	August 2025
<b>Policy Approved By</b>	Board of governors