

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

2020-2021



HABITAT SCHOOL
AL JURF, AJMAN

Creation Date: 8/9/2016

Last Amendment date: 13/4/2020

Next review date: April 2022

School Child Protection Officer [CPO: Mr. Bala Reddy Ambati (Principal)]

Child protection team members

- Mr. Hamza Kollath (Administrative Officer)
- Ms. Leena Jomon (School Nurse)
- Ms. Arathy Arun (School Nurse)
- Ms. Sasneem Sanoop (Head of the Counselling Department)
- Ms. Ligi K A (School Counsellor)

OUR VISION

The school envisages learning as a communitarian process of imbibing education from the natural, academic, social and technological ecosystems created around the institution of school. ·

OUR MISSION

We strive to provide a new model of education for the expatriate children in the UAE in a culturally inclusive, technologically effective and ecologically sensitive way in a cosmopolitan environment.

OUR MISSION

- Inclusivism
- Justice
- Dignity
- Transparency
- Accessibility
- Pursuit of Excellence

INTRODUCTION

The President of UAE His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan issued a UAE Federal Law No-3 of 2016 on Children's Right also referred to as Wudeema's Law. The law details the scope of the responsibility of the competent authorities and institutions, including the state to ensure care and protection of children, among others too,

Protecting the child's right to life, staying alive and developing, having all necessary opportunities and to enjoy a free, secured and developed life, protecting the child from any form of negligence, exploitation and maltreatment and from any physical and psychological violence, protecting the child best interest, educating the child of his rights and duties and commitments. [2]

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The health, safety and well-being of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school. Protecting children is everyone's responsibility at our school and this includes reporting any act committed by a parent, guardian or any other person, to a child enrolled in the school which results in neglect, physical or emotional injury or sexual harm.

All staff have a duty and will report any suspected or disclosed issues of child protection to the Child Protection Officer (CPO)/Child Protection Team.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the school established and ensures student protection measures in place to:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children are and feel safe, can learn, and are encouraged to talk and are listened to without any apprehension of safety and security concerns.
- Protect them while in the school's care from all acts and omissions constituting physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect, and bullying.
- Identify and support those students who may have suffered such abuse or neglect, as strongly enforced by the UAE Federal Law No.3 of 2016 on Child Rights, and other relevant UAE laws.
- Emphasize that all school staff are mandated reporters of cases of abuse whether inside or outside the school.
- Define duties and responsibilities of school Principals and school staff for responding to suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect.

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions will be understood as;

★ Child

Every human being born alive and below eighteen years old as per the Gregorian calendar.

★ Violence against children

An intentional use of force which may lead to the harm of the child's health, growth or being alive by any individual or a group.

★ Child's Best Interest

Putting the child's interest above all other considerations and giving it the highest priority at any circumstances regardless of the interests of other parties.

★ Custodian of the Child

The person who is legally responsible for the child or who is legally assigned to take care of the child.

★ Protection Officer /Specialist

A person who is commissioned and authorized by a competent authority or the concerned entity, as the circumstances may require, for maintaining the child's rights and providing protection.

★ Child Maltreatment

Any act or restraint which may lead to the harm of the child and precludes his/her upbringing and growth in a right, secured and healthy manner.

★ Child Negligence

Failure to take necessary arrangements by parents or a custodian assigned to take care of the child in relation to the child's life protection and the child's physical, psychological, mental and ethical safety from danger as well as protection of his/her various rights.

PROMOTING STUDENT'S HEALTH, WELFARE AND WELL-BEING IN SCHOOL

As student health, safety, welfare and wellbeing are top priority, the school has a responsibility to provide child protection by:

- Maintaining a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
- Practicing safe staff recruitment.
- Using an effective curriculum to clearly define what is and is not acceptable behavior, how to speak up regarding concerns and how to become (as an adult) a safe and respectful citizen.
- Recognizing and reporting incidents of harm and possible offences against children
- Supporting children who have been abused
- Appointing a designated member of staff to take primary responsibility for child protection.

CARE OF STUDENTS

The school adheres to all ministry guidelines in regards to student conduct expectations and discipline.

- Corporal punishment /violence against children of any kind must never be used with student.
- Staff working with young children should avoid holding children, picking children up unless they are distressed.
- Physical intervention / restraint must only be used by staff members as a last resort. All measures of restraint must use the minimum force necessary, in order to prevent harm or injury to the child.
- Staff must be mindful of the nature in which they use verbal or non-verbal communication.

- Disciplinary measures should always be handled in a manner that protects the child's dignity and self - esteem and are considering the best interest of the child.

SECURITY OF SCHOOL ICT SYSTEMS

The school has an ICT usage policy that all teachers and staff members are required to review. A student and parent version of the policy is also distributed to parents and students for review. All reported infractions to this policy are taken seriously, properly investigated and appropriate sanctions are instituted when warranted.

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS AND AFTER SCHOOL

During School Hours: All teachers, school leaders and support staff are responsible for the safe care of the students. Teachers are responsible for maintaining a safe and secure classroom environment. They are expected to be carefully monitoring students during all scheduled contact time. In addition to teaching time, teachers are assigned designated supervision responsibilities.

After School: All children involved in after school extra-curricular activities are closely monitored by supervising adults. The adult must accompany all children to the designated area for pick-up after the completion of activities. The supervising adult may not leave until the last student is picked up by his /her parent or authorized adult.

School Building Safety, Transportation and Field Trips

The school takes multiple measures to ensure students safety at all times .The school building is well maintained and equipped with security surveillance cameras and with security personnel who manage entry and exit to the campus.

Bus transportation for field trips and other events is provided by the school. Students are properly supervised by the staff members. Bus nannies provide supervision to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and visitors to the school including school teaching, administration staff, transport staff, cleaning staff and classroom assistants.

RESPONSIBILITY

It is a moral, ethical and legal responsibility for any teaching professional or other staff member to report suspected cases of child abuse, neglect or safety concerns to designated child protection officer. The staff school has a responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of our students. All staff must report any suspected incidents of child abuse to the Child Protection Officer (CPO) or any other member of the school Child Protection Team [CPT].

As per UAE law, *‘where a child’s safety or physical, psychological, moral or mental health is endangered’, a ‘notification is mandatory for nurses, doctors, social specialists or whoever is entrusted with the protection, care or education of children.’*

[2]

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CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER [CPO]

There is a CPO in the school. This is normally the Principal. But he/she may delegate this responsibility in some circumstances.

He /she must,

- Act on concerns raised before him by school staff or students in accordance with provision of this policy and relevant legal provisions
- Keep clear, dated, factual and confidential records of child protection concerns.

All teachers and administrative staff members must:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Inform CPO and a senior leader if any form of child abuse is suspected.
- Raise awareness about child protection by integrating with relevant teaching and learning lessons.
- Communicate all concerns of potential abuse to senior leaders.
- Ensure confidentiality.
- Respect children as individuals and engage them in conversations.
- Cooperate as required with inquiries from the school and relevant agencies regarding child protection matters.
- Attend regular and relevant professional development sessions.
- Provide a safe and caring environment in which children can develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings and opinions. Children should be treated with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behavior.

All staff are expected to:

- Be aware of symptoms of abuse.
- Know what to do in case of disclosure.
- Report concerns to CPO or CP team members.

Specific responsibilities of the School Doctor/Nurse and Counselor

- The school Counselor and Doctor/ Nurse may be requested to provide physical treatment and emotional support after a child if and when required.
- The Counselor and Doctor/ Nurse may be required to conduct an examination if there are physical injuries and write an initial report about the child's physical and emotional condition as the case maybe.
- The Counselor and Doctor/ Nurse can provide positive encouragement to the child, liaise with family members to determine how best to promote the child's safety both at school and at home.

- Child abuse can leave deep emotional scars and the school Counselor and Doctor/ Nurse and should recognize these and help develop a rehabilitation plan in liaison with the CPO and other appropriate staff in the case team.
- In some cases, the child may have to take medication as a result of the abuse. The School Doctor or Nurse should ensure that all standards and procedures for administering medications in the school setting are met.

How to react when a child wants to talk about abuse

Staff should

- Accept what the child says.
- Reassure the child he has the right to tell you and that you believe the story.
- Keep calm and listen.
- Let the child know you will need to tell someone - do not promise confidentiality.
- Let the child know that even when s/he has broken a rule, s/he is not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let him / her know what happens.
- Immediately refer to CPO or delegate senior school leader.
- Make accurate, factual, signed, and dated written notes as soon as possible of what was said, observed and done and handover to CPO or delegate senior school leader.

Staff must not

- Question children.
- Suggest alternatives to what a child has said.
- Get the child to write about, or depict their experience in some other way.
- Question potential witnesses.
- Conduct medical examinations.
- Delay referral.

REPORTING OF INCIDENTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL, AND TO PARENTS

The school has reporting mechanisms in place that provides for clear and efficient communication within the school and to parents.

Related Document(s) (as required)

- ❖ Child Protection procedures and flow chart
- ❖ Child Protection Forms
- ❖ ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- ❖ Field Trip Policy
- ❖ Use of School Buses Policy
- ❖ Health and Safety Policy

CHILD ABUSE SIGNS

Child abuse and neglect ‘ are generic terms that encompass all ill treatment of children including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standards of care does not adequately support the child’s health or development. Children may be abused or neglected through the infliction of harm or through the failure to act to protect from harm.

There are five categories of abuse which are generally recognized

Neglect: Persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and / or emotional needs.

Signs and Symptoms: failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, failure to protect a child or failure to provide. Adequate medical care. It may also involve neglect or failure to give adequate response to a child’s emotional needs.

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor peer relationships

Physical abuse: Causing injury, harm or suffering to a child through means such as: hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, drowning, and suffocating. It is actual or attempted physical injury to a child where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Unexplained injuries or burns (particularly if they are recurrent)
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression towards others
- Self-destructive tendencies

Sexual abuse: Involvement of a child in sexual activity, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening

Signs and Symptoms:

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, language, behaviors
- Loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressive behaviors such as thumb sucking, needing previously discarded cuddly toys
- Becoming withdrawn, isolated
- Inability to focus
- Reluctance to go home
- Overreacting to criticism
- Outbursts of anger/irritability

- **Emotional abuse:** Persistent emotional ill treatment of a child. For example: conveying to a child that he / she is worthless , unloved, inadequate , imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations , causing feelings of fright or danger. Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs has a severe effect on the behavior and development of the child. This includes conveying to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Physical/mental/emotional developmental lags
- Over reaction to mistakes
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations
- Neurotic behavior (e.g., rocking, thumb sucking etc.)
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

Self-harm or self-abuse

These categories overlap and an abused child does frequently suffer more than one type of abuse.

Note: The signs and symptoms of abuse given are indicative and not exhaustive.

ANNEXURES

DISCLOSURE - PROCESS FLOW

Stay calm

(Don't over-react, however shocked you may be)

Listen, hear and believe

(Listen carefully, take it seriously)

Give time for the person to say what they want

(Don't make assumptions and don't offer alternative explanations, ask questions beginning with Tell me about...Explain...Describe... Avoid 'who, what, when, where' questions)

Reassure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling.

(Do not promise confidentiality; explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed)

Record in writing as near verbatim as possible and as soon as possible on a Disclosure Form

(Use the child's own words, make your record as soon as possible after the event, so that you don't forget anything, and include information about what action was taken afterwards)

Report to the CPO

DISCLOSURE FORM
Child Safeguarding and Protection

Child's Name:

Class /Section:

Date of Birth:

Please fill and submit to the school Child Protection Officer [CPO].

- Staff should not make any undertakings to absolute confidentiality.
- Staff should not investigate a situation.

Details of Concern (Please give full factual details including dates and time)

Date / Time of Observation:

Description given by child / adult:

Date:

Person Reporting :

Signed:

To whom reported:

Action Taken (to be completed by the Child Protection Officer):

By Whom	Date	Signed
Author	Date	Signed

This policy is linked with all the other policies of the School