

Child Protection Policy (this serves as a reference to the safeguarding policy)

04.02.2022

Rationale

Deira Private School recognises that every child has the right to protection from abuse and exploitation and the right to have enquiries made to safeguard his or her welfare. The school places great importance on students' health, safety and welfare and aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment in which all our students can learn and develop to their full potential.

The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, safety and welfare of the child: the welfare of each child is our most important consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school.

There is the requirement to report when an employee reasonably suspects harm or risk of harm to students. The school expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Policy Aims

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
- Safeguard our students by ensuring that all employees have clear guidance on the required action where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected.
- To raise the awareness of all staff and volunteers and identify the responsibility in reporting possible cases of student protection.
- Integrate student protection issues into the curriculum and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Ensure effective communication between all staff members on child protection issues.
- To promote good practice into the daily learning experience of our students.

Purpose

The Child Protection Policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, culture, language, racial origin, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

It is important to us that our students have a positive and a safe experience at Deira Private School where they will be protected from abuse from an adult or another student (physical injury, emotional, sexual, neglect, bullying, corporal punishment).

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Deira Private School. All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously, handled sensitively, supports the needs of the child, and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Staff Ethics of Practice

As part of the Deira Private School ethics of practice, staff is expected to adhere to:

- Trust: Teachers must demonstrate trust and fair-mindedness in regards to all their students
- Respect: Teachers must show respect to all spiritual and cultural values that their students might have
- Care: Teachers must show compassion, acceptance, and interest in their students
- Integrity: Teachers must behave in a professional manner in the position of trust that has been given to them
- Corporal punishment is strictly forbidden by law. Failure by staff, governors, or volunteers to comply with the Child Protection Policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the school as per the regulations of KHDA and the UAE. In such cases, all incidents will be reported to KHDA and where required to the Police and other legal entities.

The Child Protection Policy is supported by the Staff Hand Book.

Guidance for good practice

All staff are expected to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made.

- Maintain a safe and appropriate physical distance from the children.
- Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met when staff is working one-to-one with students. It is advisable to avoid remote or secluded areas of the school and to ensure that the door of the room is left open and/or visual/auditory contact with others is maintained.
- Staff should not allow students to visit their place of residence.
- Staff should not do things of a personal nature which the child can do for him/herself.
- Treat all children equally.
- Treat children with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behaviour.
- Visitors / event speakers should not be left alone with children.
- Request parental consent if a child will be transported in a teacher's car.
- Never invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.
- Ensure the personal safety of all children with special educational needs.
- Staff are in a position of trust and are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and are to avoid any conduct which could lead to any reasonable person to question motivation and intention.

A teacher is never to take any action that compromises students' safety, health, and mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. Some examples, but not limited to are:

- Teasing, ridiculing, or humiliating a student
- Shouting at a student
- Hitting or slapping a student with bare hands or an object
- Using a stick or cane or hitting with the same
- Banning students from going to the washroom as a form of punishment
- Denying students a drink as a form of punishment
- Threats, intimidation, sarcasm, verbal abuse, in any form, towards a student
- Prohibiting students from having their meals during mealtime, breaking for recess, or going on trips, unless duly justified
- Exclusion from class during a school day as a form of punishment

- Physical punishment of any kind
- Sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or sexually provocative games.
- Assigning extra homework as punishment.
- Provoking, ridiculing, or taunting the student.
- Prohibiting the student from using the toilet as a form of punishment.
- Deducting marks in the courses or threatening to do so.
- Expulsion from school during the school day on an individual decision.
- Use of corporal punishment prohibited

Staff will be made aware that breaches of the law could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

Duties of employees, governors, and volunteers

Every employee and governor of the school as well as every volunteer who assists the school are under a general legal duty to:

- Protect children from all types of abuse.
- Be aware of the school's child protection procedures and to follow them.
- Keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation, or event.
- Any adult who is told of any incident or suspects that a child in his/her class may be a victim of abuse, whether occurring in school, at home or otherwise outside the school, must immediately inform the Vice Principal or Principal about their concerns.
- If the Assistant Principal or Principal are concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child at risk, they will take further advice from the relevant professional body before making a decision to disclose duties of confidentiality.

Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

All staff, volunteers and governors must be vigilant and share concerns and report incidents. Any adult with concerns about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put students at risk of abuse or significant harm must report their concerns to the vice Principal or Principal.

Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. The following "Red Flag Behaviours" give indications of the kinds of situations which should be shared with the Assistant Principal or Principal.

An adult who:

- Allows a pupil/young person to be treated badly; pretends not to know it is happening
- Gossips/shares information inappropriately
- Demonstrates inappropriate discriminatory behaviour and/or uses inappropriate language
- Dresses in a way which is inappropriate for the job role
- Does not treat pupils fairly - demonstrates favouritism
- Demonstrates a lack of understanding about personal and professional boundaries
- Uses his/her position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine
- Appears to have an inappropriate social relationship with a pupil or pupils
- Seems to seek out unnecessary opportunities to be alone with a pupil

All matters are to be dealt with in the strictest of confidence

School Responsibilities

- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognize, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people.
- Ensure students are constantly supervised when on school premises and when using school transportation.
- Staff must have had the appropriate training before administering first aid or medication except in an emergency.
- Raise the awareness of staff, parents, and caregivers about student abuse.
- Educate students on their own personal safety and Child Protection Policy.
- Operate robust and sensible health and safety procedures.
- Ensure there is parent written consent for any images used of their child for the school website, productions, or other purposes.
- Explain to students how to report abuse eg. to the classroom teacher, or school counsellor, or Vice Principal, or Principal.
- Teach students how to practise safety procedures and recognize different risks in different situations.
- Publish the Child Protection Policy on the school's website
- Investigate and respond, in a timely manner, to any suspicion of student abuse or neglect
- Ensure collection of students is by authorised parents/caregivers. If there is anyone else to pick up the child it must be provided in writing to the school from the authorised parent.
- Staff are not to give students their personal e-mail address or communicate to students through social networking eg, Facebook, SMS, Twitter, etc.
- The school nurse is to inform staff of students where there are medical concerns. Teachers are to ensure there is appropriate provision when off the school site on approved educational field trips.
- Each class teacher should take with them a medical first aid emergency kit and the school's phone number.
- Attendance / Unexcused absences – daily attendance must be taken by the teacher as the register of student attendance is a legal document. If a child is away, without an excused absence, the office is to be notified and the parent will be contacted.
- Pictures of students are to be used only for school related purposes and there must be written authorisation from parents for such use.
- In school publications, students must be appropriately clothed in images that are in line with the UAE values.
- Staff recruitment and checks using appropriate enhanced procedures, qualifications, and references are checked before employment. This also applies to outside providers who work with students.
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Where there was a recorded incident involving abuse, and a child moves schools, we will alert the receiving school, if we know the name of the school.

School Nurse

The role of the nurse is to ensure that relevant information obtained in the course of their duties is communicated to the Principal. All injuries and frequency are recorded. The School Nurse is responsible for overseeing all health and safety issues relating to medical matters.

School Bus Transport

There is a school employed adult on each school bus. The monitor's duties shall include ensuring all safety procedures pertaining to the transporting and arrival of students, including boarding and disembarking the school vehicle are in place. The monitor shall ensure that no student is left on the bus after his/her drop off point.

Child Protection and the Curriculum

The school curriculum helps to develop appropriate attitudes in our students and makes them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations and how to behave in response to them. We aim to ensure that curriculum development meets the following objectives (these are often met through the PSHE and Citizenship Curriculum) and assemblies.

- Developing students' self esteem
- Developing communication skills
- Information about all aspects of risk
- Developing strategies for self-protection
- Developing a sense of boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in adults
- Developing non-abusive behaviour between students.

Initial Complaint of a Student Protection Concern

Teachers who suspect that a child is a victim of abuse should not try to investigate as it is not their responsibility, but gather information and inform the School Counsellor, Assistant Principal, or Principal about their concerns. The member of staff suspecting or hearing of a complaint of abuse must:

- Listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not abuse has taken place.
- Handle all reports in a confidential and sensitive manner
- Reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting to an adult.
- Not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.
- Reassure the child, but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The staff member is to explain that they need to pass the information to the School Counselor, Assistant Principal or Principal who will ensure the correct follow up is taken.
- Keep a sufficient actual written record of the 'exact' words said by the child. The record is to include the date, time, statements and observations, place of conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely.
- Keep all evidence (example – scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers) which must be safeguarded and preserved. These notes may be needed by the Police or Court.
- Reassure the student they should not feel guilty.
- The health and safety of the child is paramount. If the child requires medical attention, escort him or her to the School Clinic where the School Nurse will provide treatment and file a medical report.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.

Dealing with a disclosure

If a student discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief;
- accept what is being said;
- allow the child to talk freely;
- reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep;
- not promise confidentiality, as it might be necessary to refer the case to the Safeguarding Lead at Deira Private School
- reassure the pupil that what has happened is not her/his fault;
- stress that it was the right thing to speak about it.
- listen, rather than ask direct questions;
- ask open questions rather than leading questions;
- not criticise the perpetrator;
- explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.

Recording disclosure

When a student has made a disclosure, the member of staff should:

- make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation.
(enclosed please find the format) this will be kept strictly confidential and will be handed over to the Head of Section.
- not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court;
- record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child;
- draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury;
- record statements and observations, rather than interpretations or assumptions

Informing parents

- If a child alleges abuse, the school may take appropriate action without communicating with parents first. In most circumstances parents are informed first if the school is sure that such communication will not place the child at further risk. The safety of the child is paramount.
- In any investigation, parents will be asked to fully cooperate with the school and any agencies.
- Parents will be required to provide evidence that they have thoroughly investigated the suspicions raised, and where appropriate, sought out assistance from professional health care providers (including professional counsellors or mental health care providers) or social service agencies.

Confidentiality

- Reports of suspected child abuse cannot be “held in confidence”. This information may have to be shared with other professionals. However, in the interest of the student’s privacy, only staff members directly involved in the matter will be informed and are not to share the information with others.
- Staff have a duty of obligation to report to the Assistant Principal or Principal any concerns or allegations about the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided that it is done in ‘good faith’.
- Any staff member who has access to sensitive information about a student or a student’s family must take all reasonable steps to ensure that such information is only disclosed to those people who need to know.

- Student personal data of a sensitive nature. The school will keep all child protection records confidential allowing disclosure only to those who require the information in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of the student.

Unfounded or Malicious Allegations

The school takes false allegations seriously that are made against staff and volunteers who work with children. We aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. As far as possible, the school will ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations.

Where an allegation by a pupil is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious the Principal will consider whether to take disciplinary action.

Where a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation the Principal will consider whether to require the parent to withdraw their child or children from the school on the basis that they have treated the school or a member of the staff unreasonably.

Whether the person making the allegation is a pupil, parent, or a member of the public the school reserves the right to contact the police to determine whether any action might be appropriate.

Staff Appointments

- Ensuring documentation sent to potential candidates makes it clear that student protection is a high priority of the school and that rigorous checks will be made before appointments are confirmed in line with our safer recruitment policy.
- Ensure that a reference as to the suitability of a candidate to work with children will be obtained from the last employer

Staff Dismissal/Resignation

Failure by staff, governors, or volunteers to comply with the Child Protection Policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the school as per the regulations of KHDA and the UAE.

If a staff member, governor, or volunteer tender their resignation or cease to provide their services any child protection allegations will still be followed up by the school and the relevant authorities notified.

Training

Every employee is required to undertake appropriate training which will be organised through the school so that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognize, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children.

School Premises

The School FACility and EHS Manager is responsible for the safety and security of the school premises, facilities and resources

Security Surveillance

The school has surveillance cameras to ensure the safety and well-being of students, staff, visitors and contractors while protecting individual privacy at all times.

Surveillance cameras are located in the hallways and outside. The cameras are not permitted inside classrooms, washrooms, or any other area where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Visitors to the School

The school has a security guard at the front main gate. All visitors must sign the guest book and take a numbered badge and wear it while on school premises.

Use of photographic materials

- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVD's present children in a dignified and respectful manner.
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and facts.
- Aim to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming any student.

Monitoring

The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed yearly or sooner where there is a change in legislation and/or government guidance or as a result of any other significant change or event.

Child Protection - Responsibility

The Principal is in overall charge of Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Lead in the school. The Assistant Principal of the Year group are the safeguarding deputies.

This Child Protection Policy forms part of the school Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy for further information.

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