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# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

***(See also Health, Safety and Welfare)***

|                      |          |
|----------------------|----------|
| Policy Reviewed (JP) | Jan 2019 |
| Next Review          | Jan 2020 |

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1** Abuse takes a variety of forms:

- Physical abuse involves the hitting, shaking or other treatment of a child that can cause actual bodily harm.
- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware about what is happening. This includes non-contact situations, such as showing children pornography.
- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of children, such as frightening them, or putting them in positions of danger. It is also an abuse to convey to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved.
- Children are abused also if they are neglected. This could involve failure to provide proper food and warmth, but it might also be failure to see to the emotional well-being of the child.

**1.2** 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.

**1.3** In our school we respect our children. The atmosphere within our school is one that encourages all children to do their best. We provide opportunities that enable our children to take and make decisions for themselves.

**1.4** We recognise that abuse and neglect can result in underachievement. We strive to ensure that all our children make good educational progress.

**1.5** Our teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship, as part of the curriculum, helps to develop appropriate attitudes in our children, 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.

## **2 Aims**

**2.1** The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all our staff are clear about the actions necessary with regard to a child protection issue. Our aims are:

- To raise the awareness of all staff, and to identify responsibility for reporting possible cases of abuse;
- To ensure effective communication between all staff on child protection issues;
- To set down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection.
- National laws in the UAE govern any legal action taken in cases of child abuse.
- However, staff should know that upon allegation they may also be prosecuted in their country of origin or residency (as in the case of the UK under the Sexual Offences Act 2003).

## **3 Procedures**

**3.1** The Headteachers are the designated Child Protection Coordinators. The coordinator is guided by two principles:

- the welfare of the child is always paramount.
- confidentiality should be respected as far as possible.

A key role of the coordinator is to be fully conversant with the procedures and to ensure that the school takes action to support any child who may be at risk. The coordinator must also make sure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection.

They hold responsibility for co-coordinating action within the school and liaising with outside agencies/professionals as appropriate. This includes:

- following the agreed procedures when receiving reports of any concerns
- knowing how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse
- providing advice and support to staff in matters of Child Protection
- maintaining relevant records of incident reports and follow-up
- ensuring all records are kept confidentially on paper, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations
- knowing when and how to make a referral to outside agencies/professionals
- contributing to and monitoring a child protection plan

Staff training related to Child Protection must be conducted for all new staff and existing staff should have a refresher training session at least every three years.

**3.2** If teachers suspect that a child in their class may be a victim of abuse, they should immediately inform the named person (see 3.1) about their concerns. This requires a meeting and minutes will be recorded (handwritten). In the event of actual bodily harm to a child then a diagram of the body is used to indicate the location of the area of concern. Abuse can be of a physical, sexual or emotional nature. It can also be the result of neglect. Staff must not keep to themselves any information about abuse which a child gives them; they are required to pass this information on.

**DO: For Child disclosure:**

- Arrange a place and time where you can talk as soon as possible, preferably with another adult present e.g. nurse.
- Stay calm and reassuring and tell the pupil that she/he is right to tell someone.
- Let the pupil know that she/he is not to blame
- Allow the pupil to speak and keep questions to a minimum
- Let him/her know that you understand how difficult it is to talk about such experiences
- Explain that you will need to involve other people and why
- Report bruises or physical harm to the nurse so that this can be logged.
- Be supportive and give realistic encouragement
- Talk to someone about your feelings and seek support for yourself

**DO NOT:**

- Promise confidentiality. Even if the young person is not at risk there may be other younger children who are and therefore staff cannot promise confidentiality. In this respect the UK Data Protection Act 1998 allows for disclosure of personal data where this is necessary to protect the vital interests of a child.
- Make promises or reassurances you cannot keep
- Press for details or ask leading questions as this can affect subsequent investigation
- Ask the pupil to repeat the details unnecessarily
- React emotionally
- Interrupt or stop a pupil during a disclosure
- Underestimate your role as a trusted adult
- Forget to make time and seek support for yourself

**Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves**, but should report them immediately. This report should be made as soon as possible after the disclosure and should include:

- The date and time of the report
- The name of the person reporting the incident and, where different, the name of the student who has allegedly been abused
- Where, when and how disclosure took place and the names of anyone present and/or asked to attend
- The date, time and place where the alleged abuse happened
- The names of those present when the abuse occurred
- The account that was given of the allegations with nature of abuse and outcome, if known
- In the first instance, communication about such incidents should be directed only to the designated **person** in order to protect all concerned

**3.3** Any action that the named person takes when dealing with an issue of child protection must be in accordance with the procedures outlined by the consulate for the country of origin of the child.

**3.4** The Child Protection Coordinator may work closely with the consulate. All parties involved handle such investigations in a sensitive manner, but remembering that the interest of the child is of paramount importance.

**3.5** If a child alleges abuse, the school usually makes a referral to the consulate without communicating with parents first. In some circumstances the parents are informed first.

**3.6** If a child protection referral is made, a case conference may be held. The case conference offers the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action. Staff are expected to attend and participate in all case conferences and meetings.

**3.7** All information relating to individual child protection issues are confidential, and will be treated accordingly.

**3.8** All adults seeking employment at this school have their application vetted by the Dubai/UK/ or relevant police. BSME also advise of any concerns they may have regarding the employment of staff that have had concerns raised or highlighted by another school.

Safe recruitment procedures will be upheld e.g. appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers who will work with children. Staff are asked to provide clearance from the country they come from and if that is not possible they need a Dubai Police Clearance Certificate.

**3.9** There may be times when adults in school, in the course of their duty, use physical intervention to restrain children. The headteacher requires the adult involved in any such incident reports this to him/her immediately, and to record.

**3.10** All the adults in school share responsibility for keeping children safe. On occasion reported concerns which require investigation, may prove unfounded; whilst parents, may be upset by an investigation, the school is acting in the child's best interests.

#### **4. Special Educational Needs (SEND) and Children with Additional Vulnerabilities**

- 4.1 People of Determination and children with SEND needs can be more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and should have enhanced access to support systems. They may be more isolated from their peers and may find it difficult to express concern.
- 4.2 No concern should be overlooked or passed off as a symptom of SEN or disability; including (not an exhaustive list)
- Communication
  - Toileting
  - Understanding right and wrong
  - Physical Build
  - Unusual or over-physical attachments to staff members or peers
- 4.3 Staff must be hyper-vigilant to the needs and concerns of these children who are among the most vulnerable. Additional barriers can exist in identifying neglect and harm for some groups of students.

## 5 **Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff (Whistle blowing)**

The procedures apply to all staff as well as volunteers. Children within school may not wish to report any child protection issues. Staff who have concerns should report them to the designated child protection lead. If there is concern with regard to the behaviour of the leadership team this should be reported to the Principal. If there is concern over the Principal this should be reported to the chairman of the Board ([governorchair@jebelalischool.org](mailto:governorchair@jebelalischool.org))

The designated staff member will make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting others as necessary. Where the allegation is considered to be either a potential criminal act or indicates that the child has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the matter will be reported immediately to the Principal. The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and gives rise to a decision whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation and legal authorities contacted.

## 6 **Monitoring and Review**

- 6.1 The Principal informs the nominated governor of any incidents. The Board will regularly monitor and review any incidents.

## APPENDIX 1

### **SIGNS OF POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE**

It is important to remember that lists such as the one below are neither completely definitive nor exhaustive. The information in such lists has to be used in the context of the child's whole situation and in combination with a range of other information related to the child and his/her circumstances. There can be an overlap between all the different forms of child abuse and all or several can co-exist.

**Emotional Abuse** - Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse. Persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection can cause serious effects on behaviour and emotional development and usually leads to a sense of low self-worth. It may involve inappropriate expectations (e.g. by age or ability), repeated criticisms that convey to a child that he or she is worthless or unloved. It may involve causing children frequently to feel unhappy, frightened or in danger.

#### 1 **Signs of possible emotional abuse**

- Low self-esteem
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorder

- Significant decline in concentration
- Socio-emotional immaturity
- 'Neurotic' behaviour (e.g. rocking, head banging)
- Self-mutilation
- Compulsive stealing
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Running away
- Indiscriminate friendliness

**Neglect** – This refers to persistent or deliberate failure to meet a child's physical or psychological needs e.g. a 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.

## 2 Signs of possible physical neglect

- 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
- Stealing

**Physical Injury** – This involves physical harm to a child e.g. hitting, shaking, scalding and may be deliberate or a result of failure to take adequate precautions. It can also include the deliberate withholding of physical needs e.g. food. It can involve the abuse of dangerous substances and alcohol.

## 3 Signs of possible physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent.
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.
- Refusal to discuss injuries.
- Untreated injuries, or delay in reporting them.
- Excessive physical punishment.
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home.
- Aggression towards others.
- Running away

When considering the possibility of non-accidental injury it is important to remember that the injuries may have occurred for other reasons, e.g. genuine accidents or medical disorders.

**Sexual Abuse** – This involves the child being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity. The apparent consent of the child is irrelevant. The acts may involve physical contact, penetrative or non-penetrative. They may involve non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or in the production of pornographic material, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. This includes under-age sex.

Not all children are able to tell parents/adults that they have been assaulted and changes in behaviour may be a signal that something has happened. It is important to remember that in sexual assault there may well be no physical or behavioural signs.

#### **4 Signs of possible sexual abuse**

- Lack of trust in adults or over-familiarity with adults
- Fear of a particular individual
- Social isolation – withdrawal or introversion
- Sleep disturbance (nightmares, irrational fears)
- Running away from home
- Girls taking over the mothering role
- Reluctance or refusal to participate in physical activity or to change clothes for physical activities
- Low self-esteem
- Display of sexual knowledge beyond the child's years e.g. 'French kissing'
- Unusual interest in the genitals of adults or children or animals
- Fear of bathrooms, showers, closed doors
- Abnormal sexualised drawing
- Fear of medical examinations
- Developmental regression
- Poor peer relations
- Over-sexualised behaviour
- Compulsive masturbation
- Stealing
- Psychosomatic factors, e.g. recurrent abdominal pain or headache
- Sexual promiscuity
- Bruises, scratches, bite marks on top of the thighs or genital areas
- Itch, soreness, discharge, unexplained bleeding from the rectum, vagina or penis
- Pain on passing urine or recurrent urinary infection
- Stained underwear
- Unusual genital odour
- Anxiety/depression
- Eating disorder, e.g. anorexia nervosa or bulimia
- Discomfort/difficulty in walking or sitting
- Pregnancy – particularly when reluctant to name father
- Venereal disease, sexually transmitted diseases
- Soiling or wetting in children who have been trained
- Self-mutilation/suicide attempts

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **What to do on suspicion or disclosure**

Becoming aware of abuse can cause a multitude of emotional reactions, which are personal to the individual. Whatever the reaction, it must be responded to in the correct manner, outlined below.



#### **Stay calm**

(Don't over-react. It is extremely unlikely that the child is in immediate danger)



**Listen, hear and believe**

(Don't probe for more information. Questioning the disclosure may affect how it is received at a later date)



**Give time for the person to say what they want**

(Don't make assumptions, don't paraphrase and don't offer alternative explanations.)



**Reassure & explain that they have done the right thing in telling. Explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed**

(Don't promise confidentiality to keep secrets or that everything will be OK – it might not be.)



**Act immediately in accordance with the procedure in this document**

(Don't try to deal with it yourself)



**Record in writing as near verbatim as possible and as soon as possible on a disclosure form (Appendix 4)**

(Don't make negative comments about the alleged abuser)



**Report to the person designated for Child Protection (Head of School) who will inform the Board as required - according to the procedure.**

(Don't gossip with colleagues about what has been said to you.)



**Record your report**

(Don't make a child repeat an allegation unnecessarily)

**APPENDIX 3**

### **What happens after the initial report has been recorded?**

- The Child Protection Coordinator will liaise with Health Office for advice
- A family conference should be arranged where possible
- The Regulatory Affairs Coordinator will liaise with the KHDA
- The school will not interfere with a family in cases of parental bullying or violence.
- If the child is at risk (e.g. self-harming, suicidal thoughts) the school must inform parents

### **Monitoring**

The Child Protection Coordinator will set a timescale for monitoring a child about whom a concern has been expressed (nominally 6 – 8 weeks but on a case by case basis). If no indicators are found or appear to develop, the monitoring will cease. If indicators and concerns continue, appropriate action will be taken and recorded.

As part of good practice, parents should be advised that their child is to be monitored and involved in the process as much as possible.

A paper file including all information including the details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved together with a note of any action taken and decisions reached should be kept by the CP Coordinator.

### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

All confidential issues relating to children and young people should be dealt with on a need to know basis. Therefore only information relevant for a particular purpose should be passed on to the recipient, who in turn may not pass this information onto another individual, without consulting the informant.

Only relevant members of staff need to know the details of concerns relating to a child in need i.e. the Child Protection Coordinator, LS, Health Office staff and anyone involved in monitoring particular aspects of a child's behaviour.

Remember that instead of disclosing information unnecessarily, it is appropriate to say that 'a concern has been raised and it is being dealt with following the School's procedures'.

A paper file should be kept. Any note-taking needs to be cognisant of the context.

The Child Protection Coordinator will make contact and maintain open communication with parents.

When a student or staff member leaves Jebel Ali School any Child Protection issues should be passed on to the new school in the form of a phone call and relevant form to the new Headteacher.

**APPENDIX 4 a**

**Protection: Initial Action**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name of the person raising the concern/disclosure:   |  |
| Time and date:   |  |
| Parents name:  |  |
| Parents contact details:   |  |
| Nature of the disclosure:<br>(continue on a separate sheet if required recording as close to verbatim as possible) |  |
| Signed:  |  |

**APPENDIX 4b**

**INVESTIGATION: Initial Action**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name of the person raising the concern/disclosure:   |  |
| Time and date:   |  |
| Parents name:  |  |
| Parents contact details:   |  |
| Nature of the disclosure:<br>(continue on a separate sheet if required recording as close to verbatim as possible) |  |
| Signed:  |  |

**APPENDIX 4c**

**Reporting Form: Outcome**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Full Name of Child:  | Date of Birth:                                   |
| Address:   |  |
| Parents Names:<br>Father:<br>Mother:   | Parents Contact Numbers:                         |
| School Name:   | School Contact no:                               |
| Full name of Person Raising Concern:   | Relationship to child:                           |
| Full name of (suspect) who may be responsible for the abuse:   | Name of person at school who received complaint: |
| Next Steps:<br>(continue on a separate sheet if required recording as close to verbatim as possible) |  |
| Signed:  |  |

Parent talks to you about an issue whilst in the school building/environment

Parent speaks to you about an issue whilst at a social occasion outside school

**Do not promise confidentiality to children or parents**

You are concerned and think it might be a safeguarding issue but you are unsure  
**Do not discuss or seek opinion from other staff**

**Go to the Safeguarding Officer - HT**

Safeguarding Officer decides any action to be taken.  
You may not receive feedback  
**Do not assume concerns will be discussed with PLT**