



Child Protection Policy

Introduction:

The school's Child Protection Policy is intended to be consistent with the standards and procedures of the **National Child Protection policy in educational institutions in the UAE.**

The Child Protection Policy:

- Refers to the activity and responsibility undertaken for the welfare, safety, and happiness of all students.
- Defines the procedures, good practices and responsibilities of the Child Protection Team.

Definitions:

- Child:** Each and every child below the age of 18. (Federal Law 3, 2016 - Wadeema Law).
- Child Abuse:** Each and every act and omission that may harm the child in a manner that prevents his/her upbringing and growth in a proper, safe and healthy manner. (Federal Law 3, 2016 – Wadeema Law).
- Child Neglect:** Failure of parents or custodians to take the measures necessary for preserving the child's life and physical, psychological, mental and moral wellness from danger and protecting his/her various rights. (Federal Law 3, 2016 – Wadeema Law).
- Neglect:** The persistent or severe neglect of a child which results in impairment of his/her health or development.
- Physical Abuse:** Actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.
- Sexual Abuse:** Actual or likely exploitation of a child by involvement in sexual activities without informed consent or understanding, or that which violates social taboos or family roles.
- Emotional Abuse:** Actual or likely severe adverse effects on the emotional and behavioral development of a child by persistent or severe emotional ill- treatment, subject to inappropriate behavior or rejection.
- Potential Abuse:** Situations where children may not have been abused but where social and medical assessments indicate a high degree of risk that they might be abused in the future, including situations where another child in the household was abused, or where there is a known abuser.
- Responding to Possible Abuse:** A guide for considering information that gives rise to doubts about a child's safety or welfare.

- **Law:** Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Protection Law (Wadeema)
- **Educational Authorities:** The relevant Federal Government or local educational authorities such as the Ministry, the educational councils, educational agencies and the institutions entrusted to supervise the educational institutions and the early childhood centers and licensing them, each within the limits of their competence.
- **Child Protection Specialist:** The person licensed and entrusted by the Competent Authority or the Relevant Bodies to maintain and protect the child's rights within the limits of their competence pursuant to the Law and its Implementing Regulation.
- **Child Caregiver:** Person duly responsible for the child or entrusted to take care of the child.
- **Child Protection Unit:** The Child Protection Unit adjunct to the Academic and Vocational Counseling Department, which was formed under Ministerial Resolution No. (1044) of 2018.
- **Approved Form:** An evaluation form for the student's case, approved by the Ministry in coordination with the relevant bodies.
- **Moral Obligation:** A set of values and moral principles that are in line with Islam, morality, identity and prevalent culture in the Emirati society, which reveres other religions.
- **Ethical and Professional Code of Conduct:** The code of conduct that determines the responsibility of the personnel in the school, which is approved by the management of the educational institution, its board of .s or the Ministry.

Policy Scope of Application:

- The provisions of this Policy is applied by way of synchronous face-to-face instruction or by remote instruction. It serves as a guide for the Child Protection Unit as well as the teaching and non- teaching staff.

Types of Child Abuse

1. Physical Abuse
2. Sexual Abuse
3. Psychological Abuse
4. Neglect

Roles and Responsibilities:

Role of the School:

- Maintain a conducive environment where students feel safe, secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure that students know there are adults within the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- Include activities and opportunities in the curriculum, for Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE), which equip students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse.
- Integrate the curriculum with the development of skills which will help students develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.
- Ensure that wherever possible, every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents and external agencies.
- Provide special support for vulnerable students (Students of Determination).
- Enable the child to exercise his/her rights, particularly educational rights and the right for protection pursuant to the provisions set out in the applicable legislations and the provisions of Federal Law No. (3) of 2016, its implementing regulation and the international conventions ratified by the country.
- Promote the principle of tolerance among all members of the school community.
- Improve the competency of the Child Protection Unit and its members.
- Foster child protection partnerships.
- Coordinate with relevant bodies to safeguard the rights of all children.
- Prioritize child protection and the best interests of the child in all decisions made, and all procedures carried out with respect to the child.

Role of staff:

Sr no.	Designation	Responsibilities
1.	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appoints a member of administrative / educational staff to be responsible for child protection.• Verifies and screens qualifications and backgrounds of employees and caregivers before appointing them.• Launches safe and secure channels for students, staff and parents to share confidential information.• Ensures that all confidential information of students is protected including their names and details of family members that could harm their reputation.• Shares medical records and personal information with the relevant members only in the below mentioned cases:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>1. Temporary referral or transfer for providing specific treatment in case of an emergency.</u><u>2. Behaviour that poses a public health threat or is self-injurious.</u>• Supervises implementation of vocational development plans, awareness raising, training and qualification programs for all personnel with respect to child rights and protection.
2.	Class Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collate detailed/accurate/secure written records of concerns.• Liaise with the designated Child Protection Staff.
3.	School Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify, report suspected abuse and ensure the safety of the students.• Provide a safe and caring environment in which students can develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings and opinions.• Treat students with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behaviour.• Be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse.• Report concerns to the Child Protection Staff, as appropriate.• Keep clear, dated, factual and confidential records of child protection concerns.• Be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect.• Be alert to the risks which individual abusers or potential abusers may pose to children.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the child's needs and circumstances. • Contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. • Take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans. • Work cooperatively with parents unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety.
4.	The school Nurse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that relevant information obtained in the course of duties is communicated to the Child Protection Officer. • Records types of injuries, attendance and frequency.
5.	Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide care and guidance through responsible upbringing to enhance the growth of the child as per the country's law and legislations. • Co-operate with the school for creating a safe environment for the child. • Notify the school in case of an occurrence that may threaten the child's safety, physical or mental health.

Staff should be concerned if a student:

- Frequently has injuries which are not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's activities.
- Offers confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
- Indulges in sexual behavior which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age.
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.

Dealing with a Disclosure:

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

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the student to talk freely.

- Reassure the student that the incident will be kept discreet, but not promise confidentiality, as it is necessary to refer the case to the Child Protection Officer.
- Reassure the student that what has happened is not his/her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to do.
- Ask open questions rather than leading questions.
- Not criticise the perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who will be told.

Recording Disclosure:

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

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation.
- Preserve the original notes in case they are needed by a court.
- Record the date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the student.
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injuries.
- Record statements and observations, rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Support for Students and Staff:

- The Principal provides directives to protect and support students who have disclosed information about possible child abuse incidents.
- Dealing with a disclosure from a student is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff concerned can seek support for himself/herself and discuss this with the Principal.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

Students' Rights:

- The student has the right to privacy and confidentiality.

Expectations from Staff:

Members of the staff have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. Therefore, the staff is expected to:

- Treat information they receive about students in a discreet and confidential manner.
- Seek advice from the Principal if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which is requested of them.
- Be cautious when passing information to others about a student.

Records and Monitoring:

- Well-maintained records are essential to good child protection practice.
- Concerns and disclosures must be recorded in writing by the member of staff receiving them and passed on to the Child Protection Officer without delay.
- The Child Protection Officer in consultation with the Principal will then decide on further action and any appropriate monitoring programme for the student.
- Records are stored in a dedicated filing system maintained by the Child Protection Team.

Staff Contact with Students:

In order to minimise the risk of accusations being made against staff as a result of their daily contact with students, staff should ensure that they consider the following points:

- Staff is responsible for their actions and behaviour and must avoid any conduct which would lead to any reasonable person questioning their motivation and intentions.
- Staff must work in an open and transparent manner (especially when working with individual students). Staff must not allow students to visit their place of residence.
- Staff must discuss and/or take advice promptly from another Supervisor/SLT over any incident, which may give rise for concern.
- Staff must be aware that a breach of law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action against them.

Rules and Reporting Procedures:

- The school notifies the Ministry or the Competent Authority of any suspected critical abuse to which the student is exposed.
- In addition, the Child Protection Unit maintains registers for all cases of reported abuse in the school.
- The school health system carries out its role in prevention of abuse, treatment and health counseling.

Child Protection Unit and Child Protection Professionals

Child protection professionals, each within the limits of their duties and responsibilities, take the necessary protection measures if there is anything that threatens the child's safety, physical, mental, psychological or moral health, without contradicting the Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Rights Law (Wadeema) and Cabinet Resolution No. (52) of 2018 on the Implementing Regulation of Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 regarding child's rights. The protection measures are taken as follows:

- The Child Protection Unit moves the child from the abusive situation or location and places him/her in a secure place to ensure the child's protection, at the discretion of the Child Protection Officers who assess the risk level surrounding the child.

- The officers conduct a comprehensive social investigation for the cases that threaten the child’s safety at school, in which the circumstances surrounding the child are explained.
- The school submits a report to the administrative authority accompanied by the recommendations based on which the necessary measures are taken for the protection of the child.
- The school coordinates with the relevant bodies with regard to the psychological and physical rehabilitation of the child.
- Within a period that does not exceed twenty-four (24) hours after receiving the complaint, the Child Protection Officers take preventive measures after obtaining approval.
- The Child Protection Unit encourages the child to partake in programs and activities that support him/her against any problem or challenge encountered.
- The officers guide and inform the child of potential dangers and risks related to certain activities that are undertaken by him/her.

For details visit:

<https://www.cda.gov.ae/en/socialcare/childrenandvouth/Pages/ChildProtectionCentre.aspx>

The Ministerial Development Council has adopted March 15 of every year to be celebrated as the Emirati Children’s Day, which coincides with the approval of the Child Protection Law 3, popularly called Wadeema Law on March 15, 2016.

For details visit:

<https://gulfnews.com/uae/ministry-plans-series-of-activities-for-emirati-childrens-day-1.62637255>

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Annexure: Declaration Statement by the staff member

CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Declaration statement by the staff member

(to be recorded in the employee personnel file)

I, Mr/Ms. _____ in my capacity as _____, have read and understood the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy guidelines of my school. I recognize that I am in a professional position and hereby abide to strictly follow the policy guidelines.

I am aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including the staff code of conduct policy, the behavior policy and the role of the designated child protection & safeguarding team.
- What to do if I identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells me they are being abused or neglected, including statutory duties such as reporting to safeguarding team and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals.
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues.

I will undertake safeguarding and child protection training, including on whistleblowing procedures, to ensure that I understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect.

Name of the Employee:

Signature:

Date:

Name of the Child Protection Officer: Signature:

Date: