



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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Prevention, Protection, Support.

Rationale

At Emirates International School Meadows (EISM), we are fully committed to promoting children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation, and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them. EISM is committed to developing children's understanding of their rights and responsibilities as global citizens, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the UAE is a signatory.

The principle that the welfare of the child is paramount is reflected in the UK Children Act 1989 and informs safeguarding practice.

A key principle of the UAE Rights of the Child Law (Wadeema's Law) is that all have a duty to report concerns that a child might be at risk of being harmed.

All members of EISM are aware of and fully accept our duty of care to all children in our learning community.

This policy defines the responsibilities, processes and procedures relating to the protection of students at Emirates International School – Meadows. The overall intention and purpose of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is underpinned by the fundamental principles of the Children Act 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and the National Child Protection Policy in Educational Institutions in the United Arab Emirates.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct and the Health and Safety Policy.

This policy applies to all students, staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors and adults working on behalf of the school, including during school trips, extracurricular activities, online learning and school-related activities off site.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) for Child Protection Issues:

At EISM, the DSLs for child protection concerns are Ms Kim Venske (PS Head of Pastoral) – venskek@eischools.ae and Mr Richard Armstrong (HS Head of Pastoral) – armstrongr@eischools.ae. They are responsible for coordinating safeguarding action within the school and liaising with external agencies and professionals, as appropriate.

At least one appropriately trained DSL should be available during the school day. Where a DSL is unavailable, staff must report urgent concerns to the Principal or another designated senior leader without delay.

The DSLs:

- Follow the agreed procedures.
- Ensure that systems are in place to support all staff in fulfilling their duty of care.
- Know how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse.
- Provide advice and support to staff on matters of child protection.
- Report allegations and concerns to Mr Ian Ward (Principal), when necessary, as soon as practicable.
- Maintain relevant records of incident reports and follow-up actions.
- Ensure that all safeguarding records are kept confidentially and separately from the main student file, with access restricted to authorised personnel.
- Know when and how to make a referral to external agencies or professionals.
- Contribute to and monitor child protection plans, where applicable.
- Hold monthly case conferences (Child Protection Meetings) with key senior staff, the School Counsellor and other relevant professionals to review the status of current and new concerns.
- Ensure that safeguarding records are available when a student moves to another school, where this is necessary to protect the child and in accordance with applicable requirements.

Prevention

Duty of Care:

Above all other considerations, all staff are required to maintain and honour their duty of care towards all students in the school community.

School Environment:

All staff are expected to contribute to an environment that offers children maximum protection, for example by creating a positive atmosphere in which students are respected and know that they can seek assistance when necessary. Children should know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they have a worry or a problem.

EISM has one full-time School Counsellor: Ms Sumatee Sahni – sahnis@eischools.ae.

Supervision:

The school maintains appropriate levels of staff supervision throughout the school day to ensure that students' safety and wellbeing are monitored and that a member of staff is available if a student wishes to report a concern.

Security:

It is a safeguarding priority that access to the school site is monitored closely to ensure the safety of all students and staff. All staff, parents and visitors are required to follow the school's procedures. In addition to 24-hour CCTV, the following arrangements are in place:

Meetings:

Parents who have arranged to meet with a member of staff should sign in at security and wait for the member of staff to collect them, or be escorted to the meeting room. Parents do not have unescorted access within the school building.

Events:

During any event or outdoor lesson taking place on the school campus (e.g. Sports Day or performances), all entrance and exit gates must remain closed unless manned by security personnel, who are also responsible for checking that the correct visitor lanyard or identification is being worn before access to the campus is permitted.

Visitors' Code of Conduct:

All visitors are expected to review and acknowledge the Visitors' Code of Conduct at the security desk.

Signing in – All visitors must sign in at security and present identification. Parents/guardians and nominated persons, such as drivers or nannies, have a school lanyard/ID which must be worn at all times in the school building. Other visitors must present an approved form of photo identification to security staff and will be asked to wear a visitor lanyard or sticker.

- Staff – black lanyards
- Parents/nominated persons – green lanyards
- Visitors – purple lanyards or visitor sticker
- External LSAs, ASA staff and cleaners – blue lanyards.

Child Protection in the Curriculum

The planned curriculum includes material and activities designed to help children develop the knowledge, confidence and skills to keep themselves and others safe, without in any way implying that responsibility for child protection rests with children. This includes emotional health and wellbeing, age-appropriate relationships and health education, anti-bullying, safety, drug education and learning that develops self-esteem and interpersonal skills.

Online Safety

Safeguarding includes risks arising from the use of technology and online spaces. Staff must remain alert to concerns including cyberbullying, inappropriate or harmful content, online grooming, exploitation, coercion, image-sharing and unsafe contact. Online safeguarding concerns must be reported through the same

safeguarding procedures as concerns arising offline.

Child-on-Child Abuse

All staff must recognise that children can abuse other children. This may include bullying (including cyberbullying), physical abuse, sexual violence or harassment, coercive or controlling behaviour, discriminatory abuse, initiation-type behaviour and the consensual or non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Such behaviour must never be dismissed as “banter”, “part of growing up” or an inevitable part of school life. Concerns must be recorded on CPOMS and referred to a DSL.

Recording Children and their Learning

At times, staff may record students during learning activities. These recordings may be shared with parents or guardians through Toddle or used for approved school communications and social media, in accordance with the school’s media consent arrangements. Due to the spontaneous nature of some learning experiences, recordings may occasionally be made using personal devices. In such cases, any student image or video captured on a personal device must be transferred to an approved school platform, where required, and deleted from the personal device as soon as practicable and no later than 48 hours after capture. Under no circumstances may student photographs or videos be posted on personal social media accounts or retained for personal use.

Wherever practicable, school-owned or school-authorised devices should be used for recording students. Staff must follow the school’s data protection, media consent and acceptable-use requirements when capturing, storing, sharing or deleting images and recordings.

Monitoring of Attendance

Staff must notify the relevant DSL if there is an unexplained absence of more than one day involving a student who is on the EISM Child Protection Register.

Employment

Safer Recruitment procedures will be upheld; for example, appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers who will work with children (refer to the Safer Recruitment Policy).

Medical

Emergency procedures will be made known to all staff to ensure that children who require medical assistance receive it promptly. To protect children, relevant staff will receive appropriate training in the use of adrenaline auto-injectors (e.g. EpiPens), and information regarding the support of children with epilepsy will be available to staff who require it.

The School Clinic

The School Clinic team must ensure that relevant information obtained in the course of their duties is communicated to the Child Protection Team when appropriate. Types of injuries, clinic attendance and frequency are recorded. The medical team is responsible for informing the Child Protection Team of any concerns arising from the information they record. The School Doctor also attends Child Protection Meetings.

Parents

Parents should be aware that the school will take any reasonable action necessary to ensure the safety of its students. Where the school has reason to be concerned that a child may be subject to ill-treatment, neglect or another form of abuse, staff must follow the school’s child protection procedures.

Parents will not always be fully informed of concerns where doing so could prejudice the safety of the child or the integrity of safeguarding action.

Protection

What is ‘Child Abuse’?

Child abuse occurs when a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of someone inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may occur within the child’s family, community or an institutional setting.

Categories of Abuse:

- **Physical abuse** 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.
- **Emotional abuse is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic emotional needs to an extent that may have a severe effect on the child's emotional development or behaviour. This includes conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved.**
- **Sexual abuse** is where a child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) – including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated the behaviour.
- **Neglect refers to the persistent or deliberate failure to meet a child's physical or psychological needs, for example a failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter; a failure to protect a child; or a failure to provide adequate medical care. It may also involve a failure to respond adequately to a child's emotional needs.**
- **Affluent neglect refers to neglect experienced by children in wealthy families. It can be more difficult to identify because the neglect experienced by children and young people in these circumstances is often emotional. It may include emotional disconnection, a lack of meaningful family relationships, emotional distance or inadequate supervision.**

All staff have a responsibility to protect and safeguard children. Child abuse may come to **staff** attention in a number of ways:

- A child or young person may make a direct disclosure to staff.
- Staff may observe bruises, burns or other injuries for which there is no plausible explanation.
- Another child, young person or parent/carer may tell staff something which causes concern.
- Staff may observe changes in behaviour that are a cause of concern.
- There may be indicators of neglect.
- Staff should also remain alert to safeguarding concerns that may occur beyond the family home, including risks within peer groups, the community and online environments. Any pattern of concern, even where individual incidents appear minor, should be recorded and shared with a DSL.

Child Protection/Welfare Concerns – CPOMS Reporting

If a member of staff has a concern about a student's safety, welfare or wellbeing, including concerns that a student may be at risk of abuse or harm, the concern must be recorded promptly on CPOMS and submitted to the DSL/Safeguarding Team.

If a child is in immediate danger, requires urgent medical attention or there is an immediate risk of significant harm, staff must seek urgent assistance and inform a DSL or senior leader immediately. Recording on CPOMS must not delay action needed to keep a child safe.

Staff should record concerns factually, clearly and accurately, including the student's own words wherever a disclosure has been made. Staff should not investigate or ask leading questions.

If a member of staff is unsure whether something constitutes a safeguarding concern, they should seek advice from a DSL. However, if in doubt, the concern should still be recorded on CPOMS so that appropriate follow-up and monitoring can take place.

Where ongoing monitoring is required, staff may be asked by the DSL to continue recording relevant observations or concerns on CPOMS, providing a clear chronology to support safeguarding decisions, next steps and the ongoing monitoring of the student's needs.

Safeguarding information must be shared on a need-to-know basis. Staff must not discuss safeguarding concerns with colleagues, parents or others unless authorised to do so as part of the safeguarding response.

Guidance on common sites of accidental and non-accidental injury (Appendix A) and responding appropriately to disclosures (Appendix B) should continue to be used alongside CPOMS reporting.

Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Any disclosure or concern regarding possible abuse must be recorded on CPOMS and is shared directly with the DSL. The DSL will review the information, make appropriate safeguarding enquiries and determine the next course of action. Staff must not conduct their own investigation. While some concerns can be managed within the school, others will require escalation to the Principal, Head Office and/or an appropriate external agency.

Support

Guidance for Staff

- All staff will receive safeguarding training on the procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Safeguarding induction will be provided to new staff and volunteers, with regular updates and refresher training provided to all staff so that responsibilities, procedures and emerging safeguarding risks remain understood.
- All staff will be given clear guidance on how to record and report a disclosure or safeguarding concern, including the use of CPOMS.
- Counselling support will be available to staff involved in reporting cases of child abuse.
- The Counsellor and DSL will advise on the appropriate external support services available to children and their families.

Low-Level Concerns and Professional Conduct

Any concern about an adult's conduct that may be inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including concerns that do not appear to meet the threshold of an allegation, must still be reported promptly to the Principal or appropriate senior leader. Concerns must be recorded and reviewed so that patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed.

Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff

These procedures apply to all staff, volunteers and adults working on behalf of the school. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that appropriate action is not delayed. The relevant Head of School will make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting the Principal and others as necessary. Where an allegation may constitute a criminal act or indicates that a child has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the matter must be reported immediately to the Principal.

Where an allegation or concern relates to the Principal, it must not be managed by the Principal. It should be reported immediately through the school's governing/ownership safeguarding route or other appropriate authority so that an independent decision can be made about next steps.

It is important that the Heads of School do not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be based on the information received and should determine whether further action is required and, if so, by whom.

National laws in the UAE govern any legal action taken in cases of child abuse. Staff should also be aware that, depending on the circumstances and applicable law, an allegation may have legal implications in another jurisdiction.

Staff who believe that a safeguarding concern has not been acted upon appropriately, or who are concerned about safeguarding practice within the school, must use the school's Whistleblowing Policy and escalate the matter without delay.

Links to other policies

Missing Child

Inclusion

Whistleblowing

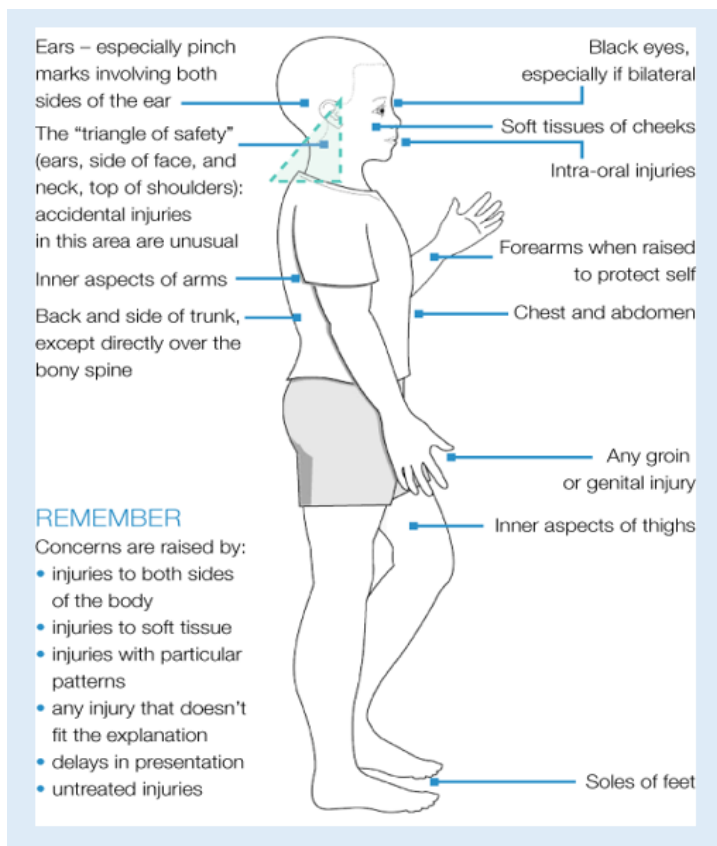
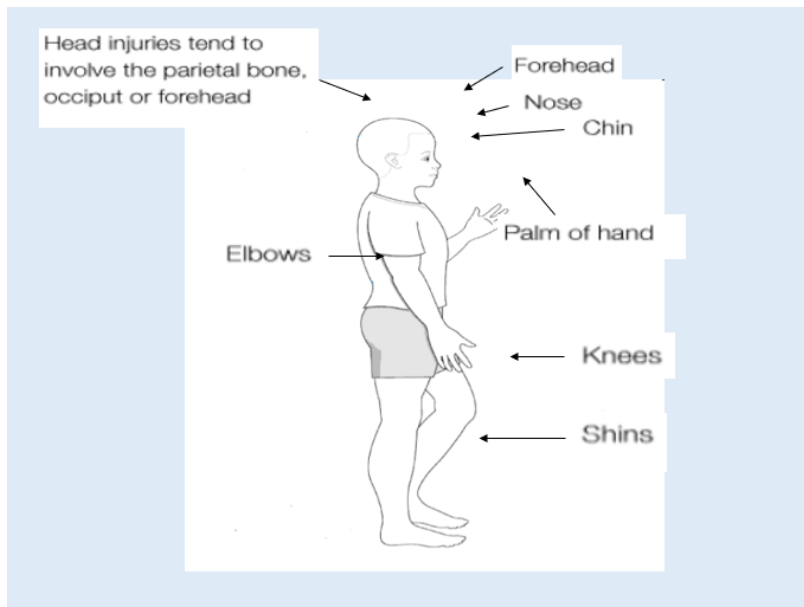
Health & Safety

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Appeals and Complaints

Safer Recruitment

Appendix A: Common sites of accidental and non-accidental injury



APPENDIX B: Disclosures

What to do if a student discloses

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

(Do not overreact. Remain alert to the possibility that the child may be in immediate danger and act urgently where necessary.)



Listen, hear and believe

(Do not 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

(Do not make assumptions, paraphrase or offer alternative explanations.)



Reassure and explain that they have done the right thing by telling you. Explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed.

(Do not promise confidentiality, agree to keep secrets or promise that everything will be OK.)



Act immediately in accordance with the procedure in this document

(Do not try to deal with it yourself.)



Record the disclosure factually, as close to verbatim as possible, and as soon as possible on CPOMS.

Report the concern to a DSL immediately. Do not confront the alleged perpetrator or inform parents/carers where doing so may place the child at greater risk; the DSL will determine how and when information should be shared.

Appendix C: External Safeguarding and Child Protection Agencies

Where there are concerns regarding the safety or welfare of a student, staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedures by reporting the concern immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and recording the concern on CPOMS.

The DSL will determine whether referral to an external safeguarding or child protection agency is required in accordance with UAE and Dubai child protection requirements.

Where a child is believed to be in immediate danger or requires urgent emergency assistance, Dubai Police should be contacted on 999.

Dubai Foundation for Women and Children (DFWAC)

DFWAC provides protection and support to women and children affected by domestic violence, child abuse and human trafficking. Its free helpline operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

24/7 Helpline: 800 111

Telephone: 04 606 0300

Dubai Foundation for Women and Children

Community Development Authority (CDA) – Child Protection

The CDA provides child protection services within Dubai and coordinates responses to reports concerning children who may be experiencing abuse, neglect or other violations of their rights. The child protection hotline operates 24/7.

Child Protection Hotline: 800 988

CDA Customer Service: 800 2121

Community Development Authority

Dubai Police – Child and Women Protection

Dubai Police provides protection and support in cases involving children exposed to physical or psychological abuse.

Child & Women Protection Department: 04 274 4666

Emergency: 999

Dubai Police Child Protection Services

Ministry of Interior – Child Protection Centre

The Ministry of Interior provides a federal reporting route for child protection concerns.

Child Protection Hotline: 116 111

Al Ameen Service

Al Ameen provides a confidential route for reporting security and safety concerns in Dubai.

Telephone: 800 4888

These contact details are provided for safeguarding and referral purposes. Staff should not contact external agencies independently unless there is an immediate emergency. Safeguarding concerns must be reported to a DSL and recorded on CPOMS in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The DSL will determine and coordinate appropriate external referrals.