



St. Joseph's School Abu Dhabi, UAE

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The Governors and staff of St Joseph's School fully recognize the contribution they make to safeguarding children. The health, safety, and well-being of all our children is 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, Staff or any other person, to a child enrolled in the school which results in neglect, physical, 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 Team. If the threat is immediate or ongoing it will be reported to the appropriate local safeguarding authorities as set in place by the UAE.

Aims of the policy

We aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school.

This is in compliance with:

- UAE Federal Law NO. 3 of 2016 on Child Rights.
- UAE Federal Law No. 3 of 1987 on Penal Code.
- To ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues.
- To inform all parties of the correct procedures to use in the case of a child protection issue.
- Wadeema's Law

There are three main elements to our safeguarding policy:

- **PREVENTION** Positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to students equipping them with the skills needed to keep them safe. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.

- **PROTECTION** By developing and following agreed procedures for identifying and reporting

Cases or suspected cases of abuse, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Safeguarding concerns.

- **SUPPORT** To Children and school staff who have been abused

PREVENTION: Our School Commitment

We recognize that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our students by providing them with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. The school community will therefore commit to:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where students feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to. For example, through their relationship with their Class Teacher; Small Group work; Class Time lessons; Activity Lessons.
- Ensure that all students know there is an adult in the School whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.
- Ensure that all staff and governors have access to regular training opportunities.

PROTECTION

All adults working with children have a responsibility to protect the students however some adults have specific responsibilities.

Designated Person for Safeguarding: Sr. Suranjana

Second Designated Person for Safeguarding: Sr. Shelja

Designated Governor for Safeguarding: Prinitha Raj

All members of staff, including supply or temporary staff, volunteers and governors should know who the Designated Person for Safeguarding is within school. They should also know and understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse. Any member of staff with

an issue or concern relating to Safeguarding should raise these immediately with the Designated Person. The Designated Person will liaise with the appropriate statutory authority, parents and other relevant agencies as appropriate.

The Role of the Designated Person

The Designated Person has a specific responsibility to:

- Ensure all staff knows who is responsible for safeguarding issues.
- Ensure all staff have read the Safeguarding Policy and procedures are being followed appropriately.
- Ensure parents understand the responsibility put on school staff with regard to Safeguarding
- Develop and review the whole-school policy for Safeguarding Children.
- Organise regular Safeguarding training for staff and governors
- Co-ordinate action where child abuse is suspected
- Liaise and discuss issues with parent.
- Attend all meetings as required.
- Keep Safeguarding information and children's records in a secure confidential file and share information on a "need to know basis"

Dealing with a Disclosure

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 Child Protection Team Lead & to the Principal

Recording disclosure:

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

- Make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation;
- 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

When to be concerned

Staff should be concerned if a student:

- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with the child's activities.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Frequently has injuries even when apparently reasonable explanations are given.
- Offers confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behavior, 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 harmed.

Categories of possible abuse

There are four main categories of potential abuse of which all members of staff should be aware. These are:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional abuse

Signs of **physical abuse** are the actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy. Signs of physical abuse may include:

- unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- refusal to discuss injuries
- untreated injuries
- admission of punishment which appears excessive
- bald patches
- withdrawal from physical contact
- fear of returning home
- fear of medical help
- Self-destructive tendencies
- aggression towards others
- running away

Sexual abuse is the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. Possible signs of sexual abuse may include:

- sudden changes in behaviour or school performance
- displays of affection in a sexual way inappropriate to age
- tendency to cling or need constant reassurance

- tendency to cry easily
- regression to younger behaviour, such as thumb-sucking, playing with discarded toys or acting like a baby
- complaints of genital itching or pain
- distrust of a familiar adult, or anxiety about being left with a relative, baby-sitter or lodger
- unexplained gifts or money
- depression and withdrawal

Neglect is the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger – resulting in significant impairment of the child’s health or development including non-organic failure to thrive. Signs of **neglect** may include:

- constant hunger
- poor personal hygiene
- constant tiredness
- poor state of clothing
- emaciation
- frequent lateness or non-attendance
- untreated medical problems
- destructive tendencies
- low self esteem
- neurotic behaviour
- no social relationships
- running away
- compulsive stealing or scavenging

Emotional abuse can be thought of as the actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This category should be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse. Signs of **emotional abuse** will include:

- physical, mental and emotional development lags
- admission of punishment which appears excessive
- over-reaction to mistakes
- continual self-depreciation
- sudden speech disorders
- fear of new situations
- inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- neurotic behaviour (for example, rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- fear of parents being contacted
- extremes of passivity or aggression
- drug/solvent abuse
- running away
- compulsive stealing or scavenging

It is important to note that these signs are not proof but can give rise to suspicion and these suspicions must be reported and logged.

SUPPORT

Supporting the Child

At Saint Joseph's School, we understand and recognise that a child student who is abused or has been witness to abuse may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and may not view the world in a positive way. School may be the student's only secure and stable environment. This may result in them communicating their feelings through challenging or defiant behaviour or they may become withdrawn from situations. They may feel worthless, humiliated, or helpless and have a sense of blame.

It is also recognised that some students who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considerate and sensitive approach in order that the student receives the support and appropriate help they require.

School staff can support all children through:

- Curriculum content
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment which gives all pupils a sense of being valued and respected
- The school behaviour policy. Ensuring the pupils know their behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not blamed for any abuse which has occurred
- A consistent approach from all staff
- Liaison with outside agencies to support the pupil and their families
- A commitment to develop productive and supportive relationships with parents in order to get the best outcomes for the student.
- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness whilst not condoning aggression or bullying
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children

Supporting School Staff

School staff must protect themselves especially when meeting on a one-to-one basis with students. Staff should bear in mind that even innocent actions can be misconstrued. It is advised that any discussions with a child take place in a room with a window or the door should be left open.

Physical contact with pupils should be careful and appropriate at all times. There are occasions where a child may need to be touched e.g. following an accident, needing to be changed etc. Wherever possible this should be with two adults present.

Concerns against members of staff

If a colleague's activities are causing concern, staff should discuss them confidentially with the Principal who will discuss this with the CPO.

- All staff will be subject to a rigorous recruitment and selection procedure designed to recruit the best people for the job and deter unsuitable applicants.

- Should a student accuse a member of staff of physically or sexually abusing them, the matter should be referred immediately to the Principal who will immediately seek advice from the Designated CPO. Should the allegation be made against the Principal, the Designated CPO, the Chair of Governors and the Managing Director of the Vicariate's schools should be immediately informed.
- The Principal should consider whether there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant an investigation. In any case, the Principal should seek advice from the Chair of Governors and the Managing Director.
- The Managing Director will advise the Principal of the procedure to follow dependent on the allegation or incident. The member of staff should be kept informed of the procedure. The member of staff should be told not to discuss the allegation or incident with any other member of staff or students.
- The Principal will follow the Managing Director's advice and keep detailed notes of discussions with relevant staff.

Visitors to the school

- All members of staff are responsible for asking visitors why they are on site, and ensuring they are not left alone with students.
- Care must be taken that visitors are not left unsupervised when students and young people are present. This includes visitors to school, parents, contractors etc.
- All parents/carers who volunteer in school should have attended an induction session.
- Visitors, who have no legitimate reason to be on site when students are present, must be asked to leave.
- A person should not be visiting regularly when students are present (other than to drop off or collect) as this could give them access to other students.

Staff Training

Training will take place every two years as part of the programme at the start of the academic year. It will be facilitated by the Designated Child Protection Officer. The purpose behind staff training is to ensure that everyone in the school is aware of procedures to be followed and the

signs of possible child abuse. All members of staff will develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse. All members of staff will know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse. All new members of staff will be given a copy of the Child Protection procedures as part of their induction into the school and be briefed by the Child Protection Officer.

Legal Requirements in the UAE:

- Crimes of abuse and penalties are defined in Federal Law (3); which was updated in June 2016 to include the Child's Rights Law. Updated article will be provided when available. Below are the specific articles pertaining to each type of abuse as listed in the previous Federal Law (3).
- Physical Abuse Crimes: Articles 336-343
- Sexual Abuse Crimes: Articles 354, 356, 358, 363, 364 *Article 362 pertains to the distribution of drawings, photos, films
- Emotional Abuse Crimes: Articles 351, 352, 372-374
- Neglect: Articles 348-350


Child Protection procedures: When a student is exposed to any form of severe abuse, the school Child Protection Officer, after collecting data and taking the necessary measures to protect the child, contacts the Child Protection Department and reports the case.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Principal together with the Senior Management Team will monitor and evaluate this policy by:

- reviewing practice against the procedures outlined
- reviewing this policy in line with current guidance and research , listening to children, staff and families and considering their views and comments

Next Review Date: 31st March 2024


Sr. Suranjana (Prestina Rocha)

Principal

