



THE INDIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, DSO

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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1. RATIONALE

The Indian High Group of Schools is committed to protect and safeguard the rights of all students and promote their welfare. The school creates safe environments for all stakeholders through robust safeguarding practices. Protecting and enhancing the welfare of the students is a collective responsibility of every person who deals with the children, and the family also has a crucial role.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all stakeholders of the school community. All stakeholders are made aware and trained to respond to concerns and keep up to date with the policies and practices.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Students should be treated with respect, consideration, and dignity. Every student has the right to privacy and confidentiality. All learners should be allowed to participate in decisions involving their healthcare when such participation is not contraindicated.

4. TYPES OF ABUSES

Abuse of students can cause serious behavioral problems. Abuse can be classified under physical, psychological, sexual, potential and cyber abuse.

4.1 Physical Abuse:

An action that causes actual/likely physical injury to a student or failure to prevent physical injury/ suffering is called physical abuse which includes, but not limited to :

- Beating (with hands or objects).
- Pulling students' hair
- Twisting student's hand.
- Slapping/punching/kicking.
- Hurling objects at a person.
- Being made to stand for hours inside the class / outside the class / in the sun.
- Making a student run in the playground for an extended period proves injurious to health.
- Bullying which may cause physical injury to the child.

4.2 Psychological Abuse:

An action/statement, which may cause severe or permanent damage to the psychological growth and development of the child, is called psychological abuse.

- Any action that causes mental trauma for a student by severe or persistent emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in behavioral problems.
- Humiliating a student by calling him/her names (especially in the presence of their peers, teachers, and parents).
- Hurling verbal abuses at a student.
- Startling a student by banging or striking the desk with an object.
- Misrepresenting a student's learning disability as a discipline problem.
- Denying a student adequate time for Recess/Games.
- Abusing a student's parents in the class.
- Making negative comparisons to other students/siblings.
- Turning a blind eye to bullying.
- Neglecting a child or not providing the support the child deserves.
- Cyber/Verbal bullying which may cause an emotional impact on the child.
- Repeated threats of physical harm or intimidation that instill fear, even if not carried out.

- Wrongful confinement of students.
- Overloading students with unrealistic academic expectations without support, leading to constant stress or failure.
- Displaying favoritism or bias in a way that causes psychological harm to other students.
- Isolating a student socially by forcing them to sit separately, excluding them from group work or activities as punishment. (need to refer behavioural policy for the scenarios where detention/exclusion from group activities is recommended)

4.3 Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse is the physical exploitation of a student that violates social taboos or family roles, resulting in severe emotional damage

4.4 Potential Abuse:

Situations where medical and social assessments indicate a high degree of risk that a student may be abused in the future, including the situation of another student in the same household having been abused or where there is a known abuser, are classified as potential abuse.

4.5 Cyber Abuse:

Cyber abuse is to harm or harass a student in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner through the use of the internet and social media. Cyber abuse includes posting rumors or gossip about a student on the internet, bringing about hatred in other's minds, or it may go to the extent of personally identifying the student and publishing materials severely defaming and humiliating him/her.

Cyber abuse refers to intentional and repeated harm, harassment, or intimidation of a student through digital platforms such as social media, messaging apps, emails, and websites. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Spreading rumors, false information, or defamatory content about a student.
- Sharing personal or sensitive information without consent.
- Cyberbullying, stalking, or threatening messages.
- Use of fake profiles or anonymous messaging to harass or impersonate.
- Exclusion of a student from digital groups with the intent to cause harm.
- Unauthorized Recording or Photography is strictly prohibited, including through personal devices during school hours, trips or events.

4.6 Bullying:

It is an act of intentionally and deliberately intimidating another student through physical, psychological, or cyber means.

4.7 Neglect:

Neglect means the failure of the parents or caregivers to take care of the basic needs of the child and the failure to provide the child with psychological, physical, mental, and moral safety.

5. PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN CASE OF ABUSE OF A STUDENT

Any child, in any family and in any school, could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of "it could happen here."

5.1 Key points for staff to remember when taking action are:

- In an emergency, take the necessary action to help or support the child.
- Report your concerns to the DCPO (Designated Child Protection Officer) as quickly as possible, immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse, and certainly before the end of the day.
- Do not start your own investigation
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only; do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends, or

family.

- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief.

5.2 How to act if a student makes a disclosure:

If a student discloses directly to a member of staff or volunteer, he/she must:

- Listen carefully to what is said and keep an open mind. You should not make a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place.
- Ask only open ended questions such as 'How did that happen'? What was happening at the time? Anything else you want to tell me?
- Do not ask leading questions that may be considered as suggesting what might have happened or who has perpetrated the abuse, as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind. Depending on the situation, suggest that, it would be helpful to continue the discussion with the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) present but do not force the child to repeat what he/she said in front of another person.
- Never give undertakings of absolute confidentiality to a student: breaking a child's confidence would be inappropriate, it is better to say that you might have to tell someone who will ensure the correct action is taken, make notes of the details of the disclosure using the child's words where possible.
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing and tell them they are not to blame.
- Offer continued support.

All evidence, for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, and computers, must be safeguarded and preserved and passed to the DCPO. Conduct regular risk assessments to check on the potential risks in case of students who may be experiencing abuse at home. Frequent meetings or telephonic conversations with parents to understand the current conditions and conduct a risk assessment in case of risk to the student's overall well-being at home.

All suspicions or complaints of abuse must be reported immediately to the DCPO except in the case of an allegation which itself involves a Designated Child Protection Officer; in which case the matter should be reported directly to the principal.

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded in writing and securely stored by the DCPO.

5.3 Records related to disclosure must :

- Be handwritten or through email.
- Be accurate and descriptive, including the date, time, and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence.
- Should not include assumptions or any opinions.
- Indicate sources of information clearly and concisely.
- Be signed by the person making it, and use names, not initials.
- Be kept securely and handed to the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) as soon as possible.

5.4 Staff should be concerned if a pupil:

- Has any injury that is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's activities.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Frequently has injuries, even when reasonable explanations are given; offers confused or conflicting explanations on how injuries were sustained; exhibits significant changes in behavior, performance, or attitude.
- Indulges in sexual behavior unusually explicit and/or inappropriate for their age.
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.

5.5 Children missing education:

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs may be entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognizes that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorized absence and for children missing education. Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency.

6. DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING

6.1 Network Security

- Updates on the school cyber network are carried out periodically and/or as required.
- Firewall installation and maintenance are mandatory to protect the school's cyber eco system.
- Appropriate network strategies are applied to restrict unauthorized access and to protect the cyber network against threats from devices connected to it.
- Periodic cyber network maintenance and performance audits are held to optimize school cyber infrastructure.

6.2 Data Security

- School leaders and ICT follow best practices of data governance, data management, data confidentiality and other data security measures for adequate protection of all kinds of school data.
- ICT ensures data backups and protection mechanisms are in place per their policy and procedures, which are reviewed as appropriate occasionally.
- Routine data cleaning activities are carried out by ICT to enable accurate data-driven decision-making in academics and operations.
- Data access criteria are well planned and implemented.
- Students are required to register their device with the School's ICT department.

6.3 Cyber hygiene practices to enhance security.

All users and school system administrators will follow practices listed below to maintain digital hygiene.

- Ensure software updates are carried out in the devices and other hardware.
- All students and staff must adhere to the school's Use of Device : BYOD Policy.
- Use strong passwords; do not use the same password for multiple sites/applications.
- Employ two-factor authentications, Mobile Application Management and device encryptions.
- Download apps only from reliable sites and sources.
- Do not share account details with others.
- Have a backup of files and data, preferably on the cloud using OneDrive.
- Organize data well and clean in devices and systems.
- Avoid using USB flash/pen drives to transfer data for protection against transmitting malware through infected USBs.
- Apply proper privacy settings.

6.4 Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying is strictly prohibited, and disciplinary actions will be taken against students/staff who report and verify inappropriate online activity. (Refer to Behaviour Improvement Pathway).
- Student online safety is paramount, and all necessary measures will be undertaken to protect students online.

6.5 Social Media Guidelines

The school has a presence on the following social grounds, and only authorized representatives can manage and use these official handles to share approved information in the designated format.

- Twitter
- Instagram
- Facebook
- Access to social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or any similar social media apps is restricted for users of school networks except for top management, the principal, and the media department.
- Prior permission is required if a user needs access for any valid reasons.
- Members of the school community will not post wrongful information or derogatory comments about the school on any social media to malice the reputation of the school. Any such unruly activity will not be tolerated and are punishable.
- If any student is found using defamatory content against the school, teachers or other students, it should be brought to the attention of the Class Teacher and Supervisor immediately.
- Students will have the following action taken against them for their misconduct:
 - First-time violation will result in the student receiving an official written warning from the school.
 - The student's parents will be informed by the Supervisor. The student is expected to apologize to the person affected by this act.
 - The student will be counselled.

The school may use photos, videos, or recordings of students and staff on its official website, newsletters, and social media platforms to showcase school activities and achievements. Unless a parent/guardian or staff member opts out in writing at the start of the academic year, it will be assumed that consent is given for such use.

6.6 Misuse of Social-Media

In case of Slander/Libel:

Misusing social media tools to defame or slander anyone would bear severe consequences. If any student is found using slanderous and libellous content against the school, teachers or students, it should be brought to the attention of the class teacher and supervisor immediately. Students will have the following action taken against them for their misconduct:

- First-time violation will result in the student receiving an official written warning from the school.
- The student's parents will be informed by the Supervisor. The student is expected to apologize to the person affected by this act.
- The student will be counselled.

In the case of fellow bullying students on online platforms:

The Ministry of Education (MoE) and Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) have strong regulations proposed for cyberbullying. If students are found bullying their peers or juniors, action would be taken against them based on their severity level, as mentioned below:

- If the student is found to indulge in cyberbullying, he/ she would be reported to the Supervisor and Headmaster/Vice principal/Principal for the misconduct.
- The parents of the students will be duly informed.
- In case of repeat offence, the matter may be reported to KHDA, and the concerned student must perform community service work within the school or as deemed fit by KHDA under their regulation.
- Derogatory and unruly comments:

All stakeholders can communicate via social media; however, students, parents and teachers must note that no derogatory or inflammatory remarks will be tolerated on the social media platforms. Any derogatory remark, if it comes under the category of slander, libel or defamation, would mean that the stakeholder is trying to harm the reputation or defame the other party due to any pre-set views or hidden malicious motives.

6.7 Preventive Proactive Measures for Online Safety

- The provision of school systems for a safe and secure cyber infrastructure is reviewed periodically and/or as per needs, and corrective actions are performed to keep them up to date.
- Awareness programs on the school's policy & procedures to stakeholders and training workshops for leaders, IT staff & educators are planned as per requirements and delivered periodically.
- New staff are introduced to system provision and expectations during the induction program.
- Posters informing the guidelines and acceptable behaviours are placed strategically around the campus to educate staff, students and parents on the related information and procedure to be followed regarding the use of school cyberspace and social ground.
- Need-based news bulletins are shared with stakeholders to disseminate the required information.
- Cyber security education is incorporated into the curriculum as digital citizenship lessons to teach students topics such as copyrights, digital footprint, plagiarism, digital wellbeing, 'netiquette' etc.

6.8 Incident Response Plan

- An emergency response team will activate the quick response plan stipulated in ICT policy in accordance with Federal Decree-Law on combatting rumours & cybercrimes, UAE Information Assurance Regulation and Dubai Data Law.
- When an incident is reported, it is verified, and the course of action stipulated in ICT policy is revoked for support and quick resolution to avoid full-blown escalation.
- In case of severe security breaches, threats, and attacks, the aeCERT (UAE computer emergency response team) and/or concerned regulatory authorities are informed as appropriate, and subsequent steps are taken to combat the situation.

7. CARE AND PROTECTION OF STUDENTS OF DETERMINATION

Based on Law No. (2) of 2014 Concerning Protection of the Rights of Students of Determination in the Emirate of Dubai, the school prohibits exploiting or demeaning students of determination or abusing them in any way. Basic care and necessary protection are provided for students of determination.

Keeping in line with Federal Law No. (29) of 2006 concerning the Rights of People of Determination, the school guarantees students of determination equal opportunities in education in regular classes. School provides transport service to its students without prejudice to its responsibility for student safety and for transporting them from and to the school. Student affairs are administered professionally and impartially, and the school provides equality among students and prevents discrimination based on race, gender, nationality, religion, or social class.

- **Individual Risk Assessments** shall be conducted for all students identified with special needs to determine specific safety and support requirements.
- **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)** shall be developed and documented for students requiring individualized emergency protocols. Staff Training shall be provided on a needs basis to personnel responsible for supporting students with special needs, ensuring they are equipped to manage both routine and emergency situations effectively.
- **Buddy System Implementation:** To foster a safe and supportive learning environment, students with special needs shall be paired with a designated peer buddy in the classroom to provide immediate assistance during emergencies or emotional distress.

- **Annual Orientation** shall be conducted for all staff to enhance awareness and understanding of inclusive practices and protocols for handling students with special needs.
- **Specialized Training Sessions** shall be organized annually, including but not limited to first-aid procedures for students with medical conditions, implementation of PEEPs, and other relevant interventions, delivered by the school medical team and qualified professionals.

8. SUPPORT FOR PUPILS AND STAFF

The principal will make all reasonable attempts to protect and otherwise support pupils who have disclosed information about possible child abuse incidents. Dealing with disclosure from a child is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff concerned should consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the DCPO. Ongoing emotional support will be provided through trusted staff members or peer support programs. Regular check-ins will be scheduled by counselling team to monitor the individual's well-being and ensure continued support. Wellness sessions are conducted for students to support their social emotional growth and to overcome their personal challenges.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

Members of staff have access to confidential information about pupils to undertake their everyday responsibilities. Staff and volunteers are expected:

- to treat information, they receive about pupils in a discreet and confidential manner.
- to seek advice from the principal if they are in any doubt sharing information they hold, or which has been requested of them.
- to be cautious when passing information to others about a pupil.

Never guarantee confidentiality about a safeguarding concern (including parents / care givers or pupils) or promise to keep a secret. In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities

10. RECORDS AND MONITORING

Well-kept records are essential to good safeguarding practice. Concerns and disclosures should be recorded in writing by the staff member who receives them and passed to the DCPO without delay. Students and parents can also directly raise their concerns and request support through the student/parent portal, where relevant documents can be uploaded.

The DCPO, in consultation with the principal, will then decide on further action and any appropriate monitoring program for the pupil.

Records are stored in a dedicated filing system maintained by the DCPO in their office. When pupils with records in this filing system pass on to their next school, the principal is responsible for transferring information judged to be relevant to the child's next school

11. STAFF TRAINING

All staff, including the teaching and non-teaching should receive safeguarding training as part of the CPD program after they are hired through a robust recruitment policy. Induction programs are conducted every year for all staff and term-wise for the new joiners on child protection, safeguarding, and the expected teachers' code of conduct. Staff are informed of any changes subsequently made. Separate training is given to the staff members who are handling the special need students in the school on needful basis.

12. INVESTIGATION, REFERRAL AND REPORTING

The DCPO will ensure that members of staff, students and other members of the school community, including governors and volunteers are aware that it is their responsibility to:

- Protect children from abuse.
- Be aware of the school's child protection procedures in this policy.
- Know how to access and implement the procedures independently, if necessary, keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation, or event, and report any matters of concern to the DCPO.
- Undertake appropriate training, including refresher training, which will be updated regularly in accordance with KHDA requirements.

It is not the responsibility of school staff to investigate suspected abuse. The school is not an investigation or intervention agency for child protection, but it plays an important role at the recognition and referral stages.

On being notified of a complaint or suspicion of abuse, the DCPO will:

- Operate safeguarding procedures in line with the local procedures.
- Take into account the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offense will always be referred to the police.
- Take into account the wishes or feelings of the student. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions that override a pupil's wishes may need to be taken after all appropriate consultation.
- Take into account confidentiality and ethical practice.

If there is doubt over whether a referral should be made, the DCPO will consult with the relevant authorities on a no-name basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a child may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made without delay (and in any event within 24 hours). The DCPO, should follow up on the referral.

The DCPO will keep the principal informed of the case(s) unless the complaint involves the principal.

Staff must not investigate suspected abuse or any allegations against other staff but should refer the matter to the DCPO immediately.

If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DCPO or the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration to ensure concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

If a child abuse allegation involves the DCPO, the integrity of the safeguarding process must be preserved through a clear, impartial, and accountable procedure. The allegation must be reported directly to the Principal or the Head of Health & Safety, who will lead the investigation of such cases. If required, an interim DCPO must be appointed from senior staff or an external safeguarding consultant to ensure continuity of child protection responsibilities.

13. NOTIFYING PARENTS

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DCPO will contact parents in the event of concern, suspicion or disclosure.

In case of risk to students at home, the DCPO will guide the parents on the safety measures available for support. However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problems, advice will be sought first from relevant UAE agencies

14. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL STAFF

There is a named person(s) in our school who is the DCPO (Designated Child Protection Officer). The DCPO, from the circle of happiness, inclusion and wellbeing works closely with the school principal.

All school staff members have a responsibility to identify, and report suspected abuse and ensure the safety and well-being of the students in the school. In doing so, they should seek advice and support from the DCPO as necessary.

All staff are expected to attend regular and relevant professional development sessions.

All staff are expected to provide a safe and caring environment in which children can develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings, and opinions. Children should be treated with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behavior.

All staff are expected to be aware of symptoms of abuse, report concerns to DCPO as appropriate, and keep clear, dated, factual, and confidential records of child protection concerns.

14.1 SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL DOCTOR/NURSE AND COUNSELLOR:

- The school Doctor/Nurse or Counsellor may be requested to provide physical treatment and emotional support after a child has faced abuse.
- The doctor or nurse may be required to conduct an examination if there are physical injuries and write an initial report about the child's physical and emotional condition
- The doctor/ nurse and/ or counsellor can provide positive encouragement to the child and liaise with family members to determine best to promote the child's safety both at school and at home.
- Child abuse can leave deep emotional scars, and the School Doctor or Nurse should recognize these and help develop arehabilitation plan in liaison with the DCPO and other appropriate staff in the case team.

In some cases, the child may have to take medication due to abuse. The school doctor or nurse should ensure that all standards and procedures for administering medications in the school setting are met.

14.2 SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECTION SUPERVISORS:

- In case staff or a student reports any behavioral incident of a student causing harm to self/others/school properties, the section supervisor will keep a record of the incident in a behavioral log will take necessary actions with reference to the school's behavioral policy. Looking at the severity of the misbehavior / repeated action of the same level of misbehavior, the supervisor will make a behavioral incident report and refer the student to DCPO with a written request for a special counseling session.

14.3 SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER:

- The HSO is responsible for making sure that all the staff are aware of all policies related to Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- To conduct various awareness programs for students to boost their confidence in them, encourage them to identify and share their feelings, be an upstander against bullying etc.
- To keep the record of incidents related to students' safety and security in campus.
- To ensure a safe school environment where the student feels motivated, secure, and supported by staff and peer groups.

15. RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR AUTHORITIES

The Policy is underpinned by the fundamental principle of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 of which the United Arab Emirates (UAE) ratified on the 3rd of January, 1997 along with the UAE local laws (the Emirates Human Rights Association have launched a Federal Law, the Child Rights Law, which was to be established December, 2014).

16. INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Dubai Foundation for Women and Children (DFWAC)

The first licensed non-profit shelter in the UAE for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, child abuse and human trafficking. It was established in July 2007 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to offer victims immediate protection and support services

In accordance with international human rights obligations, the Foundation provides a helpline, emergency shelter, and support services to women and children victims. DFWAC aims to protect physically, sexually and emotionally abused women and children, prevent ongoing abuse and the escalation of violence and promote social awareness through education and outreach.

DFWAC provides:

- Case management medical care
- Psychological support counselling
- Legal, consular and immigration assistance
- Helpline 800 111 or email help@dfwac.ae
- Website – www.dfwac.ae

Dubai Police Human Rights Department 24/7 Duty Officer 056 6862121

Latifa Hospital Child Welfare Unit Tel:

04 2193000 Fax: 04 3241717

PO Box 4115 Dubai, UAE Working Hours: 24 Hours

Community Development Authority (Centre)

Any child in Dubai who needs help, protection from abuse, or advice can pick up the phone and dial 800-988 any time. Four social workers and psychologists at the Child Protection Centre in Al Barsha are on standby to

assist residents under 18 years of age to ensure their rights are protected and upheld. The recently opened centre under the Community Development Authority (CDA) is part of CDA's comprehensive strategy to make Dubai the most secure and ideal environment for children to live. It is tasked with rehabilitating, providing counselling, visiting and assisting children in need

Al Ameen Reporting (Dubai & Federal Police)

The Al Ameen Service officially launched in September 2003. Using this service, the people of Dubai can communicate confidentially with the authorities to keep abreast of development .in Dubai and on issues that concern them www.alameen.ae/en/

17. EFFECTIVENESS, REVIEW AND REVISION

This policy has been in effect since 2017. The policy is reviewed annually and/or whenever the regulatory and licensing bodies make changes in the regulations. It was last revised in November 2021, April 2022, September 2023, September 2024 and September 2025.

