



Star International School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The health, well-being and safety of our students are of paramount importance to us at Star International School. Our pupils have the right to safety and protection in our school regardless of their age, gender, culture, race or ability.

This policy has been developed in coherence with the UAE local laws 'Federal Law No3', which came into effect on June 15th 2016, formerly known as Wadeema's Law. Federal Law No. 3 makes it mandatory for all members of the community to report abuse/negligence with the ultimate goal of transforming families and society and not dividing them. The law ensures that every child in the UAE, whether a resident or tourist, has the right to live and be safe, be educated, and be protected from neglect and all forms of abuse, whether physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or psychological.

Purpose

It is our highest priority at Star International School to protect and safeguard our pupils from harm. All children and young people have a right to feel safe and protected from harm while inside and outside of school. This policy is designed to inform all staff of the signs of child abuse and to prepare them with a procedure to follow if they have any concerns for a child's welfare. This policy clearly defines abuse and explains the procedure for reporting and investigating any concerns for a child's wellbeing.

Definition of child abuse

The definition of the term 'Child abuse' refers to any act committed by a parent, guardian or any other person that causes significant harm to a child or person under the age of 18 years. This can include physical, emotional and sexual harm and neglect.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all children in our care are safe and protected from harm. It will ensure that all staff are fully aware of the signs of child abuse and the procedure for recording and reporting child protection concerns within the school. This policy aims to raise awareness of child protection and safeguarding issues and identify the responsibility for reporting any such concerns, ensuring effective communication between staff when dealing with child protection issues and ensuring confidentiality is upheld. Furthermore, this policy will highlight the correct procedures to follow in case of a child protection or safeguarding issue.

This policy applies to all staff including teachers, teaching assistants, management team, specialist teachers, administrators and LSA's, as well as children, volunteers and parents.

We aim to:

- Ensure children are never placed at risk while in the care of staff at Star International School.
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to share information and seek support for a child with whom they have concerns.
- Ensure staff are trained to understand the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedure, are alert to identify the signs of abuse and are aware of their role in reporting concerns to the DSL.
- Ensure parents are fully aware of the child protection policies and procedures within the school.
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do.
- Make any referrals to outside agencies in a timely manner, sharing information as necessary and in line with school procedures.
- Regularly review and update this policy, incident reporting form and staff training when appropriate, ensuring it complies with the most recent guidelines as outlined within the UAE.

At Star International School we recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or identity have the right to freedom from abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting students' welfare.
- All staff will be carefully selected and trained, and accept responsibilities for safeguarding children in the school.

We endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection guidelines and statutory requirements through detailed procedures.
- Ensuring all staff, parents and visitors are aware of children's rights in the UAE and their responsibility to safeguard children in the school.
- Ensuring all children are aware of their rights and who they can speak to if they are in a vulnerable situation or they are concerned for the welfare of another student.
- Having a fully trained child protection coordinator.

- Responding quickly and appropriately to all suspicions and allegations of abuse.
- Working in partnership with parents, carers, families and children, providing them with opportunities to voice their concerns and opinions and upholding their right to confidentiality.
- Sharing information regarding child protection on a need-to-know basis, involving outside agencies when appropriate.
- Ensuring parents and children are kept fully involved and informed throughout the child protection procedure when it is appropriate to do so.
- Ensuring confidential information is stored and managed in accordance with UAE official guidance.
- Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions at all times.

Our prime responsibility is to ensure the safety and welfare of all students in our care. We recognize our duty to the students, parents and staff to act quickly and appropriately in any child-related concern. This includes sharing information with relevant agencies such as local authorities, previous schools, health professionals and police.

Identifying concerns

It is vital that all teachers and staff build up a good relationship with the children in their care. When children feel safe and valued, they are more likely to disclose their worries and concerns. Having a good relationship with the children can also help teachers identify unusual behaviors in their students which could indicate a child protection concern.

Staff should be concerned if a student;

- Has an injury which is not typical of the bumps and bruises expected of a child their age.
- Has frequent injuries, even when these injuries have been explained by a parent or guardian.
- Offers confused or conflicting explanations of how the injuries occurred or when injuries are unexplained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behavior, performance, attitude or appearance.
- Displays sexualized behaviours which appear abnormal or inappropriate for a child of their age and development.
- Appears depressed, withdrawn, and uninterested in studies friendships etc.
- Displays signs of self-harming, bullying, anorexia, depression or any other mental health issue.
- If a child discloses an experience where they have been harmed in any way.

Recording Incidents

A written record of any concerns regarding the safety and welfare of a child must be kept. All records must be handwritten onto the concern report form and passed to Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) in their absence immediately for investigation. It is important to reassure the child and record exactly what they say, try not to question the child too much or use any leading language. The form must be signed and dated and all

relevant information recorded. The DSL will conduct an investigation based on the information received. All staff must ensure to uphold professionalism and confidentiality at all times. All records will be stored in the safeguarding and child protection folder in a locked filing cabinet in the SLT office.

Dealing with disclosure

If a student discloses an incident where they have been harmed, or where the staff member is concerned for the welfare of the child, the staff member should;

- Allow the child to talk freely about the incident, without being questioned and influenced.
- Listen carefully to what is being said without acting shocked and accept what the child or young person is saying.
- Do not promise confidentiality to the child or young person, discussing gently that if they disclose something concerning that you may have to discuss this with another staff member or authority.
- Reassure the child that they are safe and that they have done the right thing by disclosing the information.
- Ensure that the child feels that they have been listened to, do not try to play down any event that they have disclosed.
- Try to have another person present when speaking to a vulnerable or at-risk child, or if you think the child is going to disclose something.
- Ask open questions about the event or issue they have disclosed, be careful not to influence them or lead them to say something.
- Do not criticise the perpetrator.
- Gently explain what will happen next, who will be told and what the next step will be for them, reassuring them that you will support them through the process.
- Pass the information on to the designated child protection coordinator for investigation.
- **Do not conduct your own investigations as they can cause more distress to the child and may even harm any legal investigations.**

Safeguarding and Child protection procedure

When a child protection or safeguarding concern has been identified by a member of staff it must immediately be taken to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) in their absence.

The DSL will decide whether the situation is to be monitored by the member of staff or if they will start initial steps to gather information and investigate the concerns.

If the DSL feels the situation needs to be investigated, they will interview staff members and record information appropriately. The DSL will discuss concerns with the school nurse and gather information about the child's medical history in school.

The DSL will then decide on a team of staff, a core group, who will aid with the investigations and support the child appropriately. This team may include the school nurse, counsellor, child's class teacher, SLT team and anyone else whom DSL sees fit.

The parents will be informed of the safeguarding and child protection concerns at this point unless there are concerns that telling the parents could result in more harm towards the child.

A risk assessment action plan will be devised at this point, based on the information that has been gathered, in order to support the child and their family.

This will include:

- Discussions between the child and the DSL in order to gain more information.
- Detailed look into the child's history.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, DSL or counsellor.
- Meetings with the family to discuss concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional services.
- Consultation with local authorities if necessary.

In serious cases, KHDA and the police will be informed. DSL will take advice from the relevant people as to how to proceed further with the concerns.

Roles and responsibilities

This policy applies to all staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, cleaner, bus drivers, administration staff and visitors to the school.

All staff at Star International School have a duty of care towards the pupils and a responsibility to promote the health, safety and well-being of all students, regardless of their race, religion or cultural beliefs. All staff have a duty to report any incidents of concern to the DSL.

Designated people for child protection include:

- Senior Management (Principal and SLT team)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
- School Nurse/ School Counsellor.

All staff will be able to access the child protection and safeguarding policy on the staff drive and school website they will be required to sign a document to state they have read and understand their role and responsibilities regarding child protection.

Responsibility of the whole school staff

Protecting children is the responsibility of everyone who works at Star International School. This means that all staff must report any act committed by a teacher, parent or any other person, that

could result in physical, emotional or sexual harm or neglect of a child. All staff have a duty to report any concerning incidents, committed by an adult or a child, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school. Any incident that is regarded as an immediate or ongoing threat will be reported to the appropriate safeguarding authorities in the UAE.

At Star International School we have established a child welfare team who are responsible for investigating and reporting concerns and following up on this. See appendix E.

All members of the school staff have a responsibility to identify and report suspected abuse and to ensure the safety and well-being of the students in the school. Any child protection concerns should be recorded accurately on the concern form and passed directly to DSL for investigation. No member of staff should carry out any form of investigation into these concerns, this is the job of the DSL.

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 behaviour.

All staff are expected to:

- be aware of symptoms of abuse.
- report concerns to DSL as appropriate
- keep clear, dated, factual and confidential records of child protection concerns.

Responsibilities of the school nurse.

- The school nurse may be required to provide a physical exam or treatment to a child who has been physically harmed and provide medication if required.
- The school nurse will be required to write a report of the child's physical and emotional condition, documenting any physical injuries on the body map.
- The school nurse will liaise with the school counsellor and the DSL before contacting the parents to discuss the issue.
- The school nurse, together with the school counsellor and DSL will develop a risk assessment.

Responsibilities of HR department and security.

When recruiting any new members of teaching or support staff, who will have access to the children, steps must be taken to ensure compliance with the following:

- An up-to-date police 'good conduct' certificate or criminal records check must be provided.
- Two up-to-date references from previous employers, which should include questions on the prospective employee's compliance with any safeguarding and child protection procedures.

- A signed declaration from the prospective employee to state they have not been convicted of or undergoing any court or disciplinary proceedings involving child abuse or breach in their duty of care towards a child.

Security staff to remain vigilant at all times, adhere to current procedures regarding visitor access and ensure detailed record keeping of any visitors. Security staff must also ensure any visitors have a visitor pass so they can be clearly identified by members of staff.

Framework

Child protection is the responsibility of all staff at Star International School. The Designated Safeguarding Leads at Star International School are Primary DSL Agata Hartley and Primary Deputy DSL Laura Dobbs. The Secondary DSL is Sean Lewis and the Secondary DSL is Emma O'Brien. The Principal, Ma'am Dolly, will oversee all child protection concerns and any final decisions will be discussed.

1. All staff should report any child protection or safeguarding concerns to the designated safeguarding leads, Miss. Agata or Mr. Sean.
2. The DSL will investigate the concern and report to the Principal. A core group meeting will be held to discuss concerns and a decision will be made on appropriate steps to be taken.
3. A meeting will be convened with the parents and they will be informed of the school's concerns and next steps.
4. A risk assessment action plan will be devised, putting steps in place to safeguard the child.
5. The principal will make any final decisions and is responsible for reporting any serious issues to the police, KHDA and to the school board if deemed necessary. Along with ISP Safeguarding Team.

Allegations against staff

Teachers who have a concern about another staff member or who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the Principal. If the Principal is absent, or if the allegation is against the Principal, then the person should report their concern to the DSL and concerns can also be raised to the Regional Managing Director.

Staff behaviour

All staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct at all times.

All staff must uphold public trust in their professional position and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- Treating children with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a professional position.

- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit children's vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- All staff must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they work and teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- All staff must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.
- All staff should avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside of school and responsibilities within the school.
- Staff are expected to act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures at all times.
- All staff must ensure confidentiality at all times by not sharing information about a child, their family or their circumstances with anyone inside or outside the school unless it is deemed appropriate to do so.
- Any photographs taken on school devices should not be shared without written permission from the child and their parents, and should not be shared on personal social media for any reason.
- Contact with pupils should be through the school's authorised mechanisms, school email, dojo/ISAMS. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication via all social media platforms must not be used and staff must not share their home address with pupils. If contacted via an inappropriate route staff must inform the Principal immediately.
- School staff must not follow or become friends with any pupil or parent of a pupil on any social media platform.

Physical contact with children

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

- When physical contact is made with children it must be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- Staff must never touch a child in a way which may be considered inappropriate.
- Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with pupils.
- Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact. Staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child by helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.
- Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or abuse a position of trust. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to their line manager, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.
- There may be occasions when a pupil is in distress and in need of reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order to avoid misinterpretation of their actions. Such incidents should always be recorded

and shared with their line manager. If staff have a particular concern about the need to provide this

- type of care and reassurance they should seek further advice from their line manager.
- Physical punishment is never appropriate at Star International School, regardless of the child's behaviour. This includes grabbing, hitting, pulling or inflicting any kind of physical force on a child.
- All staff must ensure to uphold professionalism at all times when dealing with difficult behaviour. No child should ever feel threatened, intimidated or humiliated by any member of staff regardless of their behaviour.
- When dealing with student behaviour all staff must adhere to Star International School's behaviour management policy.

Appendix A

Categories of abuse

What is child abuse?

According to NSPCC guidelines, child abuse is defined as the intentional harm of a child by an adult or another child. There are four main categories of abuse;

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Physical abuse

Physical abuse happens when a child is deliberately hurt, causing injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and broken bones. It can involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or suffocating. It's also physical abuse if a parent or carer makes up or causes the symptoms of illness in children. For example, they may give them medicine they don't need, making them unwell. This is known as fabricated or induced illness (FII).

Signs of physical abuse include but are not defined to;

- Unexplained injuries or burns (particularly if they are recurrent)
- Improbable excuses are given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression towards others
- Self-destructive tendencies

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent and, over time, it severely damages a child's emotional

health and development, according to NSPCC guidelines.

It involves:

- humiliating, putting down or constantly criticising a child
- shouting at or threatening a child or calling them names
- mocking a child or making them perform degrading acts
- constantly blaming or scapegoating a child for things which are not their fault
- trying to control a child's life and not recognising their individuality
- not allowing them to have friends or develop socially
- pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations
manipulating a child
- exposing a child to distressing events or interactions such as drug taking, heavy drinking or domestic abuse
- persistently ignoring them
- being cold and emotionally unavailable during interactions with a child
- never saying anything kind, positive or encouraging to a child and failing to praise their achievements and successes.

According to NSPCC guidelines there are not usually any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse but you may spot signs in a child's actions or emotions.

It's important to remember that some children are naturally quiet and self-contained whilst others are more open and affectionate.

Mood swings and challenging behaviour are also a normal part of growing up for teenagers and children going through puberty.

Be alert to behaviours which appear to be out of character for the individual child or are particularly unusual for their stage of development.

Signs of emotional abuse include, but are not defined to:

- Physical/mental/emotional developmental lags
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour (e.g., rocking, thumb sucking etc.)
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-mutilation
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It doesn't necessarily involve violence and the child may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

Child sexual abuse can involve contact abuse and/or non-contact abuse. Contact abuse happens when the abuser makes physical contact with the child.

Signs and Symptoms of sexual abuse include but are not defined:

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, language, behaviours
- Loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressive behaviours such as thumb sucking, needing previously discarded cuddly toys
- Becoming withdrawn, isolated
- Inability to focus
- Reluctance to go home
- Bed-wetting
- Drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'extra good'
- Over-reacting to criticism
- Have outbursts of anger/irritability

Neglect

According to NSPCC guidelines, neglect is persistently failing to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs usually resulting in serious damage to their health and development. Neglect is the most common type of child abuse. It often happens at the same time as other types of abuse.

Neglect may involve a parent's or carer's failure to:

- provide adequate food, clothing or shelter
- supervise a child (including leaving them with unsuitable carers) or keep them safe from harm or danger
- make sure the child receives appropriate health and/or dental care
- make sure the child receives a suitable education
- meet the child's basic emotional needs - parents may ignore their children when they are distressed or even when they are happy or excited. This is known as emotional neglect.

Signs of neglect include but are not defined;

- 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

Neglect can be difficult to identify. Isolated signs may not mean that a child is

suffering neglect, but multiple and persistent signs over time could indicate a serious problem.

Some of these signs include:

- children who appear hungry - they may come to school without lunch money or even try to steal food
- children who appear dirty or smelly and whose clothes are unwashed or inadequate for the weather conditions
- children who are left alone or unsupervised
- children who fail to thrive or who have untreated injuries, health or dental Problems
- Children who present with constant tiredness.
- Frequent lateness or unexplained non-attendance
- children with poor language, communication or social skills for their stage of development
- children who live in an unsuitable home environment, for example, the house is very dirty and unsafe, perhaps with evidence of substance misuse or violence
- children who have taken on the role of carer for another family member

Appendix B

What to do on disclosure

Stay calm

(Do not overreact or act shocked. If possible, ask another member of staff to be present)

Listen, hear and believe

(Listen carefully to what is being said and take it seriously)

Allow the person time to say what they need to say

(Don't make assumptions or offer alternative explanations)

Ask open questions beginning with tell me, or explain

(Try not to ask closed questions or direct the conversation)

Reassure the person and explain they have done the right thing in telling someone

(Do not promise confidentiality, but explain how only professionals who need to know will be informed)

Record in writing as soon as possible, using factual information as close to what the person said as possible

(Use the person/child's own words and make sure to record a date, time and what action will be taken after. All reports to be handwritten)

Report to Designated Safeguarding Lead

(Do not conduct your own investigation)

Appendix c

Involvement of outside agencies

Dubai Foundation for Women and Children

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:

- A safe shelter
- 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

 <p>Major Shahein Dubai Police Human Rights Department</p> <p>04 6082608 Work +971 506355377 Mobile almazmi@dubaipolice.gov.ae</p>	 <p>Miss Fatma Albloshi Dubai Police (Child & Women... Head of Awareness & Educati...</p> <p>+971 46082602 Work +971 508400058 Mobile f.murad@dubaipolice.gov.ae http://www.dubaipolice.gov.ae</p>
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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 developments in Dubai and on issues that concern them.

800 4888.

www.alameen.ae/e/

Other services

- Ministry of social affairs.
- Ministry of interior, child protection center.
- Child protection center Al Barsha, Human rights department.

Appendix D

Procedure for Reporting Concerns

I have a concern about a child

(Discreetly speak to other teachers who have regular contact with the child and their siblings. Make a note of these concerns and document any concerns expressed by other professionals)

Report your concerns to Designated Safeguard Lead (Agata or Sean)

(DSL will discuss these concerns and document them as appropriate)

DSL will liaise with the principal, discussing concerns raised.

(DSL will carry out an investigation if deemed necessary, and document as appropriate. School nurses will be requested to carry out a physical exam if necessary and provide medical treatment. The school counsellor will be updated as necessary)

Parents will be contacted and informed of concerns if it is deemed appropriate to do so.

Major concerns will be reported to the relevant authorities, KHDA and the school board.

(All information will be shared on a need-to-know basis)

A support plan will be devised to support the child if an investigation indicates that the child is vulnerable or at risk of harm.

(This will be devised by a team of staff responsible for the wellbeing and safety of pupils including the senior management team, DSL, school counsellor, the school nurse and any teachers working directly with the child. Reporting teacher will be informed of the outcome)

Appendix E

Safeguarding Team

Principal

Ma'am Dolly

SLT Team

Sean Lewis and Agata Hartley

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

Sean Lewis and Agata Hartley

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)

Emma O'Brien and Laura Dobbs

School Nurses

Jeyanthi Mani and Lina Albin

School Counsellor

Hima Mammen