

Nibras International School

Safeguarding Policy



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A. PURPOSE

Nibras International School (NIS) expects that all staff and volunteers in our schools and any contractors or partner agency staff used by the school, recognize where a student is at risk of, or is actually being harmed and do all they can to reduce further risk or harm.

We recognize that NIS plays a particularly important role in protecting our students; we are in a good position to identify concerns early and provide or identify help for students as well as helping to prevent these concerns from escalating. NIS adhere to these basic principles:

- A child's welfare is paramount and each student has the right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded irrespective of race, religion, ability, gender or culture.
- All students need to be safe and feel safe in school.
- Every student is entitled to a rich and broad curriculum that helps to equip them to keep themselves safe.
- Every adult in school must have a demonstrable commitment to protecting the students with/for whom we work.
- We work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of students.
- Our guiding principle throughout is 'the best interests of the students'.
- All students have the same equal rights to protection, but we recognize that we need to do more for some students because of their special educational needs, disability, gender, religion or sexual orientation.

1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At NIS we aim to:

- Provide a safe and happy environment to enable students to thrive and learn.
- Outline the systems and processes we all take to ensure that students remain safe at our school.
- Raise awareness to all staff of safeguarding/child protection issues and define their roles and responsibilities in reporting possible cases of abuse.
- Identify students who are suffering, or likely to suffer harm.
- Ensure effective communication between all staff on child protection/safeguarding issues.
- Set effective procedures for staff/volunteers or third-party individuals who encounter any issues in relation to child protection/safeguarding to follow.
- Be clear with all parties, including students and their parents/carers, regarding our approach to safeguarding and child protection, through the provision of clear policies

B. DEFINITIONS

1. Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the processes of protecting students from harm, preventing the impairment of their health and development, ensuring that we seek to improve the general health and well-being of all students in our care and enabling every student to have the optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

2. Child Protection

Child Protection is the core element of safeguarding and is defined as the responsibility to protect children who are suffering or likely to suffer from harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

Note:

If the preventative work around safeguarding issues is not appropriate or extensive enough, students identified as being a concern may move to being identified as at risk of significant harm. Although other factors outside of the schools' control may also influence this, the purpose of the policy is to ensure that NIS takes whatever measures are possible to avoid this from happening.

C. PRINCIPLES

Given our international context NIS recognizes and accepts its responsibility to safeguard all students under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The UAE recognized and signed up to the UN convention on the Rights of the Child in 1997. NIS recognizes the obligation to protect our students from harm and in particular, the obligation on us under the following Articles of the UN convention:

- Article 3: which states that the best interests of children must be the primary concern in decision making about them.
- Article 13: which states that children have the right to get and share information as long as it is not damaging to them or another child.
- Article 14: which states that children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practice their religion.
- Article 19: which states children have the right to be protected from hurt and mistreatment, physically and mentally.
- Article 34: which states that Governments should protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Article 35: which states that Governments should take all measures to ensure that children are not abducted, sold or trafficked.
- Article 36: which states that children should be protected from any activity that takes advantage of them or could harm their welfare and development.
- Article 37: which states that no one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way

Under UAE law it is mandated that anyone who is aware of child abuse and fails to report it is liable to prosecution. The Child Protection Hotline for Dubai is 800 988.

Article 274 of the UAE Law No. 3 (1987) Federal Penal Code stipulates that a person who fails to report a criminal offense is liable to prosecution.

Article 42 and 43 of the UAE Law No. 3 (2016) (Wadeema Law) stipulates that teachers, physicians or anyone assigned to protect and care for children and any adult to which child abuse has been disclosed to, are obliged to report any child abuse.

Law Article (61) stipulates a person shall be punished to pay a fine of not less than Dh5,000 and not more than Dh50,000 in case of not reporting suspicion of child abuse and falsely reporting or conveying false information or intending to mislead the investigation authority about a case involving a child.

Other agencies that are available to NIS to seek advice and support from are:

- Community Development Authority- CDA on hotline: 800988
- EWAA Shelter for Women and Children on hotline: 8007283
- Dubai Foundation for Women and Children on 800111

D. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Senior Management

The Senior Management Team of ISP recognise their ultimate responsibility to ensure that the organization and all ISP schools understand and follow the guidance provided by this and all other safeguarding related documents.

2. Principal and Senior Leadership Team

The Principal and senior management team at NIS:

- Ensure that the application notes are implemented across their school and followed by all staff and volunteers.
- Allocate sufficient time and resources to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and any deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that the culture of the school facilitates concerns being raised and handled sensitively.
- Ensure that safeguarding is addressed through the curriculum.
- Ensure the school site is secure.
- Only deploy staff who will have unsupervised contact with children, where safe recruitment procedures have been followed.
- Maintain a record of all training undertaken by staff in relation to safeguarding and child protection.
- This training record should be made available for inspection during any audit and should reflect the timescales for renewal identified in this policy.

3. Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy)

The designated staff role is guided by two principles:

1. The welfare of the child is always paramount.
2. Confidentiality should be respected as far as is reasonably possible.

Being guided by these principles the Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Play a key role in ensuring that the school takes action to support any student who may be at risk.
- With the Principal, make sure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection.
- Have appropriate training in addition to the basic training that all other staff receive.
- Collate and keep accurate and confidential records of any concerns about children.
- Have a clear understanding of UAE expectations around safeguarding, who to contact, what agencies exist and how to contact them.
- Ensure that the entire school community knows who the DSLs are.

- Be familiar with UAE regulations, procedures and agencies who can offer support for safeguarding matters.

All staff have the responsibility to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any concern they have about the safety of any child in their care. The Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibility is to make decisions about what to do next and then to take appropriate action.

At NIS the Designated Safeguarding Leads are:

- ❖ Erik Lee Rivera (Dean of Student): e.rivera@nisdubai.ae
- ❖ Jason Sanservino (Secondary Principal): j.sanservino@nisdubai.ae

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead is Dr. Jay B. Teston (School Superintendent) j.teston@nisdubai.ae

4. All staff (including partner organizations and contractors having unsupervised contact with children)

All staff will:

- Ensure they are familiar with and follow this Safeguarding Policy and all other safeguarding related documents.
- Be subject to safe recruitment processes and checks prior to starting at the school (unless an action plan/risk assessment is in place to ensure the staff member is supervised until all checks are completed).
- Be alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse.
- Listen to and take seriously the views and concerns of children.
- Record any concerns and report these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Follow the procedures outlined in this document when/if concerned about any child.
- Support students, staff or other adults who have concerns, or who are the subject of concerns, to act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent process of investigation.
- Undertake appropriate child protection/safeguarding and safe recruitment training (and refresher training as required by the school).

All staff and volunteers need to recognize that if their behavior inside or outside the workplace breaches the ISP code of conduct and/or the guidance for safe working practice, this may be considered a disciplinary or even criminal matter.

All staff who have occasional or supervised contact with children (including staff from partner and contracted organizations, such as ECA providers) will:

- Undergo a safeguarding briefing/induction in relation to their role, understand what is required of them if they have concerns and to whom they should report.
- Provide written confirmation to demonstrate that where appropriate, all partner agency staff/contractors have been safely recruited with appropriate checks undertaken and that a safeguarding briefing has been provided to these staff, (appropriate to the role and contact they will have with children), before they commence their role at NIS. Where these staff or volunteers are constantly supervised, the recruitment checks may not need to be as rigorous, but it is for the Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead to assess this risk, not individual members of staff or partner organizations themselves.

- Where partners/contractors do not have their own safeguarding or child protection policy, this policy will be used and partners/contractors asked to read and follow this. These requirements will be part of any contractual arrangement.
- Follow the guidance laid down in this document at all times.
- Be provided with guidance on appropriate safe working practice.

Contractors whose responsibility does not include contact with children (someone doing maintenance) must never have contact with children and must be supervised if their job takes them into areas where there may be children.

E. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

NIS will ensure that:

- All staff and volunteers in schools are provided with appropriate general safeguarding training on joining the school and then at least every year. This training will be available through EduCare, as well as face-to-face in house training events.
- Relevant documents are made available.
- Staff and volunteers are supported and have the necessary skills to recognize and take appropriate action regarding students who are at risk, or potentially at risk.
- Those who have the Designated Safeguarding Lead responsibility in the school have appropriate, up to date knowledge and that they access appropriate additional and specialist training (approved by the Group HR Director). This will be refreshed every two years.
- All staff and volunteers are subject to a full induction, which includes an overview of what to do and who to contact if concerned about a student.
- All staff involved in the recruitment of new staff are trained in safe recruitment. This safe recruitment training must be renewed every five years.
- Training for new starters must be complete before any new starter can have unsupervised contact with students.
- Any student who has or is suffering from any form of harm will receive support. Once agreed with any investigating agency (if involved), students can be offered direct support through school counselors or external agency input.
- We hold information in relation to local, regional or national bodies that may be able to offer direct support in these circumstances.

NIS recognizes our duty of care to our employees and where staff have been involved in reporting and responding to abuse, we recognize that this can be very difficult to deal with in isolation. NIS will therefore be in a position to offer or broker appropriate external support or counseling for any staff member affected by a safeguarding issue. NIS will keep a list of organizations (such as law firms, hospitals and counselors, which can be made available to staff on request).

Please remember unless you are specifically asked to do so, never carry out an investigation about any suspected abuse. This can be highly specialist work and could interfere with a criminal investigation if this were required and appropriate under UAE law.

F. FORMS OF ABUSE

There are a significant number of ways that students may be exposed to risk and danger. All require a response. Abuse is defined as any form of maltreatment of a child. This can manifest itself as direct harm to a child, or by a failure to take action to protect a child who is at risk of, or already suffering harm.

The more commonly referred to types of abuse are:

- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding or otherwise causing harm to a child.
- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. This may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- **Sexual Abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This form of abuse can involve direct contact activities but also non-contact activities over social media or the internet.
- **Neglect:** This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

While the above are the broad four main areas of potential abuse, abuse itself can take many forms involving one or more of these areas.

School staff need to be aware of what to look for and what actions to take when concerned about any of these issues (or any other concerns).

1. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls, and therefore should be dealt with through the procedures set out in this document where possible. FGM is potentially damaging to children both emotionally and in terms of health issues and is in breach of a number of articles under the UN convention on the rights of the child. It is illegal in 26 countries across Africa and the Middle East, as well as in 33 other countries including the United States of America and the UK.

We recognize that this is cultural practice in some countries and not always seen as abusive. While not condoning the practice, we need to be aware of the sensitivities surrounding it and always act in the student's best interests.

2. Forced marriages (FM)

A Forced marriage (FM) is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is when someone faces physical pressure to marry (e.g. threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g. if someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). This is very different to an arranged marriage where both parties give consent.

In 2013, the first United Nations Human Rights Council also adopted a resolution against child and forced marriages. This resolution recognizes child, early, and forced marriage as involving violations of human rights which "prevents individuals from living their lives free from all forms of violence and has adverse consequences on the enjoyment of human rights, such as the right to education."

As with FGM and some other cultural practices, we need to be aware of the cultural sensitivities but always act in the students' best interests. However, the school procedures must be followed in the same way as for any other safeguarding or child protection matter.

3. Self-Harm

Self-harm can take a number of physical and/or emotional forms. There are many reasons why children and young people try to hurt themselves. Once they start, it can become a compulsion. This is why it is so important for schools to spot it as soon as possible and do everything possible to help. Self-harm is not usually a suicide attempt or a cry for attention. Instead, it is often a way for young people to release overwhelming emotions and a way of coping. So, whatever the reason, it should be taken seriously.

The exact reasons why children and young people decide to hurt themselves are not always easy to work out. In fact, they might not even know exactly why they do it, but there are links between depression and self-harm. Quite often a child or young person who is self-harming is being bullied, under too much pressure, being emotionally abused, and grieving or having relationship problems with family or friends. The feelings that these issues bring up can include: low self-esteem, low confidence, loneliness, sadness, anger, numbness and lack of control in their lives. Young people will sometimes go to great lengths to cover self-harm scars or injuries and/or they will explain any indications of self-harm as accidents.

There are some common themes that may help staff identify concerns including:

- Physical indicators such as cuts, bruises, burns, bald patches (where hair has been pulled out).
- Emotional indicators such as depression, sudden weight loss, drinking or drug-taking, or unusual eating habits and isolation or withdrawal.

If staff suspect that a student is self-harming this must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will consider the next steps. It is likely that this will require discussion with the student involved and their Parents/Carers to agree a course of action or referral to an organization that may be able to support the student.

4. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 can involve exploitative relationships where young people receive something in return for performing sexual acts. Exploitation of any student can occur on a face-to-face level or through the use of technology, such as mobile phones or computers. In these situations, a student could be encouraged to send or post indecent images of themselves.

In all cases the person exploiting students does so by misusing the power they have over them. This power may come through virtue of age, physical strength and/or economic resources. Violence, intimidation and coercion are common in exploitative relationships.

5. Sexting

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages. Sexting may also be referred to by students as trading nudes, dirties or pic for pic.

There are many reasons why a student may want to send a naked or semi-naked picture, video or message to someone else:

- Joining in because they think that 'everyone is doing it'.
- Boosting their self-esteem.
- Flirting with others and testing their sexual identity.
- Exploring their sexual feelings.

- To get attention and connect with new people on social media.
- They may find it difficult to say no if somebody asks them for an explicit image, especially if the person asking is persistent.

Students often do not realize that in creating and sending these images they are potentially committing a criminal act. Ideally, we would not want to deal with these issues as criminal acts. Learning and support can be a more beneficial way of tackling sexting.

6. Children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeated occasions

All employees should be aware that children who are absent for seven consecutive academic days and/or repeated occasions, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honor'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Employees should be aware of their school's attendance policy and unauthorized absence and children missing from education procedures. After seven consecutive academic days of unexcused absences, the safeguarding team will contact the family and raise the issue as a safeguarding concern.

7. Domestic Abuse

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of peer on peer abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'.

8. Modern Slavery

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labor. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

9. Fabricated and Induced illness

In fabricated illness the perpetrator (usually a parent or carer) does not directly harm the child but reports to doctors a clinical story which is eventually established to be fabricated. Whereas with induced illness the perpetrator inflicts direct (hands on) harm to the child. This can range from trivial injuries such as pricking the child to add blood to urine, through to suffocation. As a result, NIS attendance policy is to aid the monitoring of child illnesses. When a parent reports that a child has an illness which requires a health plan the school must work in collaboration with the medical practitioner treating the child.

Note:

The above is not an exhaustive list of all the potential forms of abuse which staff may have to deal with on occasions. For information please see “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2016. This is a UK publication but the types of abuse discussed are valid and can apply to any country around the world.

G. SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

1. E-Safety

The growth in electronic media in everyday life and an ever-developing variety of devices create additional risks for children. Risks and dangers of being online include:

- Inappropriate content.
- Ignoring age restrictions and communicating with unknown adults or other children (which make children vulnerable to bullying and grooming).
- Grooming and sexual abuse.
- Sharing personal information.
- Gambling or running up debts.
- Cyber Bullying.

Cyber bullying is an increasingly common form of bullying behavior and is most often related to social networks and mobile phones.

NIS believes the best way to protect our students is to teach awareness and understanding of risk, particularly through personal, social, health and moral education, or wellness programs. Our school curriculum includes appropriate and frequent opportunities to teach children how to recognize when they and others are at risk and equips them with the skills, strategies and language they need to take appropriate action.

The school uses Smoothwall to monitor student activity on school devices and when logged into school accounts on designated browsers. Smoothwall provides real-time alerts to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if a student attempts to access, search for, or type content that may put their safety at risk or that contains inappropriate material.

In response to such alerts:

- The DSL (or a member of the safeguarding team) will review the incident.
- The student will be spoken to regarding the concern.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted where necessary, depending on the severity of the concern and/or the frequency of alerts.

This system is in place to help protect students online, to identify potential safeguarding risks at an early stage, and to provide timely intervention and support.

2. Mobile phone and Camera Images

It is our policy that should staff and teachers use their personal equipment to capture child images, these images should be uploaded to the schools’ system as soon as possible and immediately deleted from personal equipment. Permission to capture images, videos or audio recordings should be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Principal for the school.

Staff personal phones should not be used in classrooms and learning areas when students are present except where required as a response to emergency planning, reporting a safety issue or following up on school communication. Checks on an individual's mobile device should however, be made, where possible during a teacher's non-contact time and/or break times.

Photographs for School Publications:

- Photographs of students being used by staff for learning or marketing are only taken on school cameras/devices.
- Images should be saved on a secure server/database and printed copies only used within the school for purposes such as displays, records and learning journals. Images to be used for marketing need to be agreed with parents/carers before use.
- Visitors and parents/carers should be asked not to use mobile devices within the school and/or early years setting, except where permission has been granted to capture images of their own child or children. All parents/carers must give permission for photographs to be used for publicity purposes and to sign a disclaimer if they do not wish their child's image to be used externally.

3. Allegations against staff and volunteers

An allegation can be made against a staff member or volunteer at any point. It is important that any such allegations are treated seriously and appropriate procedures followed.

An allegation is different to a complaint and can be defined as follows:

- Where someone has behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child.
- Where someone has possibly committed a criminal offense against a child.
- Where someone has behaved in a way towards a child or children that would pose a risk to children.

In the event of an allegation being made against a member of the school staff (or a volunteer helper), it will always be investigated by the Principal unless a criminal act has been committed, in which case the matter should be referred to the local authorities where appropriate. In all cases (criminal or not) the Principal and Group HR Director must be informed as soon as possible and certainly within 48 hours. In the case of the allegation being made against the Principal, the Regional Director of Schools and the Group HR Director should be informed.

No action to investigate the concern should be taken before consultation with the Group HR Director, and agreement reached about how best to approach and investigate the concern. If it is felt, after these initial consultations, that further enquiries are needed, then the member of staff may be suspended. Suspension is a neutral act, and in no way implies that the person is guilty of any wrongdoing. It is acknowledged that this would be distressing for the person concerned, and the school will do all it can to balance the interests of any individual with that of the need to keep children safe. The school will seek advice from the Group HR Director before acting and will comply with national and locally agreed guidance on these matters.

Staff will reduce the possibility of an allegation being made by ensuring that they are aware of the expectations within the code of conduct for staff and volunteers and the guidance for safe working practice.

4. Whistleblowing

NIS recognizes that we cannot expect children to raise concerns in an environment where adults fail to do so.

All staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the actions or attitude of colleagues. Appropriate concerns raised for the right reasons are considered to be a protected disclosure and, even if proven to be unfounded, no action will be taken against the whistle-blower.

Malicious whistleblowing however, will be seen as a potential disciplinary matter.

5. Anti-Bullying

Bullying is a safeguarding matter and if left unresolved can become a more serious child protection issue. Staff at every level will take seriously any concerns raised in relation to the bullying of any student. Action will always be taken to investigate the concerns and to prevent repeat incidents or behaviors. Bullying may involve either face-to-face or the misuse of social media or technology. The school's response to bullying and cyberbullying will follow the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying procedure outlined in the Elementary and Secondary Student and Family Handbooks.

6. Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities

All staff should recognize that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities can mean additional safeguarding challenges. Depending on the nature of a child's special need or disability, additional barriers can exist which make it more difficult to identify and recognize signs of abuse. For example, it is easy to assume that a child's mood, behavior or any injury relates to their disability rather than the fact they may be suffering abuse.

It should also be recognized that children with disabilities may be disproportionately impacted on by behaviors such as bullying but they may not show any outward signs. Communication difficulties, in particular, can make it very difficult for a child to indicate what's happening and, therefore, may make it very difficult to overcome any such barrier. Staff should be extra vigilant and report any and all concerns, avoiding making assumptions about the causes of any injury or behavior.

7. Allegations made by a child about another child (Peer on peer abuse)

NIS recognizes that children are capable of abusing their peers. Where an allegation is made that one child may have abused another, this will always be taken seriously and dealt with as a safeguarding matter.

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms, and gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with this type of abuse. Examples can include girls being touched/assaulted inappropriately by boys, or boys themselves being subject to initiation violence. This type of peer on peer behavior will not be tolerated. Under no circumstances should an allegation that one child has possibly abused another be treated "as just children being children" or "experimentation".

If the alleged actions are unwanted or involve minors who may not be able to give consent by virtue of their age or any disability, then this is potentially abusive and the school procedures should be followed in the same way as for any other safeguarding or child protection matter.

8. Safeguarding students who are vulnerable to extremism

NIS values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both students and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or leads to violence and harm of others, goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion. Any freedom of speech which promotes violence against anyone or anything else will not be tolerated.

9. Physical Intervention/restraint

There may be times when adults in schools, in the course of their school duties, have to intervene physically in order to restrain students and prevent them from coming to harm. Such intervention should always be both reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances and be the minimum necessary to resolve the situation.

The Principal requires any adult involved in any such incident to report the matter to him/her as soon as possible. The staff member is required to document the incident in full giving a description and full account of the incident. Witnesses to the incident should be identified where possible.

Where intervention has been required a senior member of staff should be asked to debrief the student and allow them to describe the incident from their point of view. Written notes of this conversation should be kept and the student checked for any injuries.

Parents/carers should always be informed when an intervention has been necessary.

10. Safe Recruitment and Selection

NIS will do all they can to ensure that all those working with children in our schools and across the whole are suitable people. In order to do this, all staff who will work in an unsupervised capacity with children or young people will be recruited using safe recruitment procedures.

Safe Recruitment involves scrutinizing applicants through the interview process and application forms, verifying identity, qualifications and obtaining appropriate references, undertaking criminal background checks from all countries where the applicant has lived or worked in the last 10 years, as well as some additional recruitment checks.

At least one member of every interview panel who is interviewing for a post or posts that may have unsupervised contact with children, will have undertaken safe recruitment training.

NIS will keep a central record of all the recruitment checks undertaken on all staff. This record will include details relating to the Criminal Background Check (CBC) i.e. date completed and number, other countries criminal records checks or certificates of good conduct, qualifications, prohibition order checks etc.

Where information is disclosed as part of the criminal records checking process, whether this is information about cautions, convictions or soft information, any disclosure will lead to a risk assessment being completed prior to appointment. This risk assessment will be signed off by the Principal, Regional HR Manager and Regional Director for Schools.

H. PROCEDURES

1. Adults concerned about a Student

If staff suspect that any student in their care may be a victim of abuse, or is at risk of abuse or other form of harm, they should not try to investigate, but inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) about their concerns as soon as possible by completing the schools Record of Concern form. Staff must disclose any concerns they have about the possibility of a student being abused or placing themselves at risk. It is better to share these concerns, which may later prove to be unfounded, than to hold onto information that may have helped protect a student from actual harm.

In many cases a student will not make a direct disclosure, but staff will be concerned because of a physical or emotional indicator. In these circumstances staff should still use the record of concern form and the body map (if appropriate) this should be given directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where any student makes any form of direct disclosure, the guidelines under the heading 'Dealing with Disclosure' below should be followed.

2. Disclosure, Reporting and Further Action

General Principles:

Note: Be aware that if a child asks to speak to someone in confidence about a problem, no one should ever promise confidentiality if what the child discloses or is likely to disclose relates to abuse being suffered by them or another child. Staff should always give this as a health warning before meeting with the child.

The following guidance is based on five key practices for all staff:

Receive

Where possible, always stop and listen to a child who wishes to speak in confidence. We know that children will often find the most inconvenient time to do this, but it is important that you make time for the child, even if this is to say "I can't stop now but come and see me in my office at..." Where possible during any disclosure try to listen, allow silences and try not to show shock or disbelief.

Reassure

Try to stay calm, make no judgments and empathize with the child. Never make a promise you can't keep. Give as much reassurance as you can and tell the child what your actions are going to be. Reassure the child that they are doing the right thing by telling you.

React

React to what the child is saying only as far as you need to for further information. Don't ask leading questions. Keep questions open such as... "Is there anything else you need to tell me?" Try not to criticize the alleged perpetrator as this may be a family member for whom the child may still have feelings.

Record

Make brief notes about what the child says during the conversation, but if this is not possible, make notes as soon after as you can and certainly within 24 hours. Make sure to record exactly what the child says and not your interpretation of what is said. Record the time, date and place as well (see the record of concern form). Recording will then take place on the online platform: MyConcern.

Report

Where a child makes any disclosure, or where you have concerns for any reason, it is very important that the procedures outlined in this document are followed. A full written account of the concern on the Record of Concern form should be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and should include, where relevant, a completed body map. No safeguarding issues should ever be placed on Engage.

Where a child has made a disclosure and alleges abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy DSL in the absence of the DSL), should be informed as soon as possible. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will collate any available evidence by ensuring the notes taken from any witnesses are made available to any investigating body. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then consider and where necessary, consult on the information available.

It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make decisions about what action to take next and to make the decision whether to take the matter further within the local legal framework.

It is important that a full record of all the information and decisions made are recorded and stored confidentially in a secure cabinet.

At NIS we:

- Recognize there may be limitations in the support on offer for child protection matters externally.
- Need to assess the quality and skills of counselors and other support staff in dealing with children who have suffered harm or self-harm, in order to determine the boundaries of their work.
- Need to act in accordance with local legislation as well as the principles and practices outlined in this policy.

3. Local Safeguarding Agencies/Advice

The local legal requirements:

The school may decide to make a referral to the MOI Child Protection Centre without communicating with parents first if staff have concerns or find out any indications of child abuse. In some circumstances the school informs parents first.

The contact details for the center are phone: 0097123333999, or Hotline: 800988

Email: childprotection@moi-cpc.gov.ae

4. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Record Keeping

All records of child protection concerns, disclosures or allegations should be treated as sensitive information and should be kept together securely and separately from the child's general school records. The information should be shared with all those who need to have it, whether to enable them to take appropriate steps to safeguard the child, or to enable them to carry out their own duties, but it should not be shared more widely than that.

Our child protection records are stored in a secure lockable, accessible through the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputy). After the 2022-2023 school year, all subsequent safeguarding records are stored in the MyConcerns platform.

Records of any child disclosure should be clearly dated and filed without future amendment.

All staff who may need to consult a child's school file should be made aware of what the symbol means and who to consult if they see this symbol.

A child protection file should be started for an individual child as soon as the school is aware of any child protection concerns about that child. This may arise in a number of ways e.g.:

- If a member of staff raises a concern about the welfare or well-being of a child – this should be recorded in writing (see below for guidance).
- If information is forwarded to the school by a previous school attended by the child.
- If the school is alerted by another agency of child protection concerns about that child.

Members of staff should make a written account of any concern they have regarding the welfare or well-being of a child, using the record of concern form. This record should be passed as soon as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Concerns, which initially seem trivial, may turn out to be vital pieces of information later. So, it is important to give as much detail as possible. A concern raised may not progress further than a conversation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, but could also potentially lead to matters being dealt with through a legal system. If there hasn't been a specific incident that causes concern, try to be specific about what it is that is making you feel worried.

- Appendix A shows an example of the MyConcerns online reporting form.
- Appendix B shows an example of the hardcopy record of concern form.
- Appendix C shows an example body map form.

In the case of disclosure, remember the record you make should include:

- As full an account as possible of what the child said (in their own words).
- An account of the questions put to the child.
- Time and place of disclosure.
- Who was present at the time of the disclosure.
- The demeanor of the child, where the child was taken and where returned to at the end of the disclosure.

5. Confidentiality

NIS regard all information relating to individual Safeguarding/child protection issues as confidential and treat it accordingly. Information should be passed on to appropriate persons only at the discretion of the Principal/Designated Safeguarding Lead and this should always be based on the need to know.

All records relating to child protection are secured in a lockable cabinet.

6. Auditing, Reporting, Review and Sign Off

Elements of safeguarding practice in schools are included in the ISP annual safety audit and will also be reviewed during the Head of Safeguarding audit visit and also when visited by Group HR.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and at least every 2 years by the Head of Safeguarding, Group HR Director, Regional Director of Schools, the Principal and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

This policy should be made available to students, parents/carers alike in hard copy when requested. A copy will also be available on our school website.

Appendices


Appendix A: MyConcern Online Form

Report a Concern

Name(s) of Pupil(s)

Please enter at least 3 characters to search



 Please add the Pupil(s) who are the subject of this concern and add any other Pupil(s) you want associated to it.

Concern Summary

e.g. Injury – Megan arrived at School this morning with a badly bruised right eye.

Concern Date/Time

DD/MM/YYYY HH:MM

Origin of Concern

Please Select an Origin of Concern



Details of Concern

There is no need to repeat the Concern Summary.

Location of Incident

Not Applicable



Action Taken

Appendix B: Record of Concern Form

Record of Concern Form

Pupil's Name:			
Is the Pupil aware this form is being completed	Yes	No	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If not, why not?			
If yes, pupil reaction			
Your Name:			
Date:			
Time:			
Signature:			
Concern:	Date:		
Signed:	Date:		

Appendix C: Body Map Guidance for Schools

Body Maps should be used to document and illustrate visible signs of harm and physical injuries. These should be drawn up and sent to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the same time as completing the record of concern form. Even if the injury to the child has a plausible explanation, a completed body map helps track a history or pattern of repeated injuries. A copy of the body map should be kept on the child's concern/confidential file.

Always use a pen (never a pencil), do not use correction fluid or any other eraser.

Do not remove clothing for the purpose of the examination unless the injury site is freely available because of treatment. At no time should staff seek to record injuries on photographic equipment. Body maps such as those shown below should be used. If you notice an injury to a child, try to record as much of the following as possible in respect of all the injuries you can see:

Exact site of injury on the body, e.g. upper outer arm/left cheek.

- Size of injury - in appropriate centimeters or inches.
- Approximate shape of injury, e.g. round/square or straight line.
- Color of injury - if more than one color, say so.
- Is the skin broken?
- Is there any swelling at the site of the injury, or elsewhere?
- Is there a scab/any blistering/any bleeding?
- Is the injury clean or is there grit/fluff etc.?
- Is mobility restricted as a result of the injury?
- Does the site of the injury feel hot?
- Does the child feel hot?
- Does the child feel pain?
- Has the child's body shape changed/are they holding themselves differently?

Importantly the date of the recording must be noted as well as the name and designation of the person making the record. Add any further comments as required.

Where any child has any form of injury that requires attention please ensure that first aid is applied where necessary.

