



ATHENA EDUCATION
For Social Grace



مدرسة الوحدة الخاصة
AL WAHDA PRIVATE SCHOOL
An American Curriculum School

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD-PROTECTION POLICY

2022-23

Principal: Mr. Duraid Al Oubaidy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that our school has student protection measures in place to:

1. Protect them while in the school's care from all acts and omissions constituting physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect, and bullying.
2. Identify and support those students who may have suffered such abuse or neglect, as strongly enforced by the UAE Federal Law No.3 of 2016 on Child Rights, Federal Law No. 3 of 1987 on Penal Code, and other relevant UAE laws.
3. Emphasize that all SPEA employees and school staff are mandated reporters of cases of abuse and/or suspected abuse inside and outside the school.
4. Define duties and responsibilities of School Principals and school staff for responding to suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect.

POLICY STATEMENT

Al Wahda Private School will always create a safe and secure environment for all students. The welfare and safety of its students will always be a priority for our staff. Students must feel that they are safe to report any concerns and those concerns will be dealt with efficiently and in confidence.

This policy is written in compliance with the local requirements of SPEA and Ministry of Health & Prevention (MoHAP) along with the Community Police.

The designated first contact person will be the Vice Principal of Student Affairs.

PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

Child protection, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as all measures, steps and actions that must be taken to protect students from risks that may cause harm or injury while they are in the school's care, travelling to and from the school using school transport, and moving between, waiting for, and taking part in, all activities organized by the school inside or outside the school campus.

- All staff should make themselves aware of the signs of abuse and neglect both at home and at school. They should then follow the procedure of reporting those concerns or suspicions to the designated contact in school.
- The designated person in school will have a knowledge and understanding in both recognizing and acting upon child protection matters reported to them by staff or parents.
- Appropriate training (or prior training) must be given or have been given to the designated contact in school.
- All staff must be aware of the school policy regarding bullying which can be found in the Teachers Handbook.

AL WAHDA PRIVATE SCHOOL will only recruit safe members of staff including teachers, admin, volunteer and ancillary staff if they have the required CRB and/or local security checks. Outsourced bus drivers and catering staff will have to be checked by their company and evidence provided to the school.

Similar checks will be expected to be made on all visitors who may from time to time visit school e.g. authors, theatre groups, university representatives and sporting celebrities. These will have to provide SPEA authorization prior to visiting school.

Where upon inspection or the intervention of SPEA finding any areas of weakness with our policy then the document will be amended as soon as possible considering the advice that has been given.

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE CONCERN OR REPORTED INCIDENT

- Listen to what is being said without any emotion or promises but reassure them that some action and follow-up will be taken.
- Always accept what is being said in the first instance.
- Try not to interrupt the student.
- You will have to report this so do not promise confidentiality.
- Reassure the student that it is not their fault and state that they were correct in talking about the incident(s).
- Listen rather than question, let the student use their own way and words to describe the incident.
- Explain what must be done next and who must be told, again reassure the students that they are going to be safe.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

- Make notes as early as possible AFTER the conversation.
- Do not destroy any original notes or evidence that the student has given you as this may be needed in court, or by the Police.
- Record the date, time, place and any non-verbal behavior. Write the words used by the student and not your interpretations.
- Record on a body map the site of any injuries and their description.
- Record statements and observations, not interpretations and assumptions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

PRINCIPAL WILL:

- Comply with the provisions of this policy.
- Every private school shall publish a Child Protection policy to protect students from any abuse and neglect provided it meets the minimum requirements of what is included in this policy and does not contradict any of its provisions.
- Ensure that procedures to prevent situations that could lead to the abuse or neglect of students are in place and understood by all school staff and leaders.
- Ensure supervision of students while in school's care.
- Ensure that there is priority emphasis within the school on the protection of the students and for taking immediate action when there is suspicion of cases of student abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that students can safely report their concerns about abuse and/or neglect without fear of retribution or punishment.
- Ensure that staff and others can safely report their concerns about the potential exposure of any student to abuse and/or neglect without fear of retribution or punishment.
- Gain views from students and parents regarding security and protection within the school.
- Immediately report any case of potential abuse and/or neglect of students as stated by this policy.
- Ensure that all staff and administrators targeted for student protection are trained and participate in all training sessions.
- Conduct orientation sessions for parents/guardians upon student registration or enrollment and at the start of every school year to promote this policy and to inform them of their roles and responsibilities, and their rights and duties.
-

- Maintain students' records in compliance with Student Records policy and ensure confidentiality of open and closed cases.
- Immediately suspend any staff member who is suspected of an offence involving student abuse and/or neglect on a temporary basis until the suspicion is adjudicated.

DESIGNATED PERSON WILL:

- Ensure that the Principal is kept up to date.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of all procedures.
- Decides whether to take further action about your concerns.
- Ensure that accurate records are kept and maintained on individual cases, and these are kept in a secure place marked "strictly confidential" and your evidence and notes will be kept with them.
- Provide guidance for parents and staff about obtaining support.

PARENTS/ LEGAL GUARDIANS WILL

- Cooperate with the school administration and staff, answer all inquiries related to the student's behavior, academic performance and respond to their feedback and guidance.
- Attend all scheduled school parent meetings.
- Communicate any concerns, observations, or changes in their child's behavior to the school administration or to the concerned school staff.

ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING SCHOOL STAFF

- Allegations against any member of the school staff should be reported to Principal.
- Allegations against the Principal must be reported to the designated person.
- Any member of staff who has reason to suspect that a child may have been abused by another member of staff at school or elsewhere must report it immediately to the Principal.

- A record of the concern must be made along with any other witnesses. This must then be reported to SPEA and the member of staff may be suspended.
- After an internal investigation, the member of staff may be deemed unsuitable for the position that they hold, and this may result in the dismissal of the member of staff. In the case of a teacher, it may result in the SPEA approval to teach within the UAE being terminated.

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

This is issued with the protection of both staff and pupils based upon mutual trust.

- DO NOT let suspicion, disclosure or allegations of abuse go unreported.
- Do provide access for students to talk to you about concerns that they have.
- If it is necessary to talk or listen to a student with concerns, then inform another member of staff and have them nearby - do not close the door of the room.
- Recognized caution is needed on matters of abuse, bullying and bereavement.
- On residential trips, students and staff MUST have separate sleeping arrangements.
- Avoid situations that may compromise your relationship with students.
- During sport or other contact teaching recognize and be aware of the need for physical contact should only be used to develop skills or for safety.
- Staff are advised to avoid transporting a single student in a vehicle unless accompanied by a member of staff or in case of an emergency.
- Remember that someone else may misinterpret your intentions no matter how well intentioned.
- Do not jump to conclusions without checking the facts.
- Do not have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with students. Avoid suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun.

TRAINING

Given the critical importance of understanding and complying with all aspects of this policy to ensure the protection of students, the Ministry of Interior - Child Protection Center in coordination and collaboration with SPEA shall conduct child protection training for school leaders and other specified staff for which attendance is mandatory.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS POLICY

Failure to comply with this policy is subject to legal accountability and administrative penalties stipulated in accordance with SPEA's regulations, policies and requirements, in addition to the UAE Federal Law No.3 of 2016 on Child Rights, Federal Law No. 3 of 1987 on Penal Code, and any other local or Federal relevant laws effective at the time of the incident.

The Article 272 of the UAE Law No. 3 (1987) "Federal Penal Code" states that: "Any public official or person in charge of detecting crimes and arrested the accused, who fails or defers to denounce a crime within his knowledge shall be punished by detention or a fine. A fine shall be imposed upon any official who is not in charge of detecting or seizing crimes, and who neglects or delays notifying the concerned authorities of a crime which becomes known to him, in the course of or in respect of his job performance".

School Contacts

Safeguarding Lead: Ms. Ladias Ali, 0526212676.

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Mr. Mohammed Abdelathum, 0564959483.

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Ms. Asmaa Ismail, 0565582092.

Main school building: 06 516 0500

EXTERNAL CONTACT DETAILS

It is mandated to report using the telephone hotline (116111) and the electronic reporting link available on the SPEA website

<https://www.SPEA.ac.ae/ar/Pages/childabusereportingabu-dhabiedusector.aspx>.

SPEA Regional Office: 06 504 5400

Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre: 02 33339999 Ministry of Social

Affairs: 02 6429333

Sharjah Police Tel. 997

FORMS OF ABUSE

PHYSICAL ABUSE may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical abuse to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or care feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child in their care.

Corporal punishment, a physical punishment inflicted on a child by a teacher or any adult in authority, such as the guardian, as a form of discipline, and is considered as Physical abuse.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE is the persistent emotional ill - treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may mean conveying to a child that they are unloved, worthless, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature expectations which are age or developmentally inappropriate being imposed on a child. It may involve a child feeling frightened or in danger, or exploitation or corruption of a child or children. Special attention should be given towards excessive use of the internet as this is a source of emotional abuse.

SEXUAL ABUSE involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening or not. This may include penetrative or non - penetrative acts. This may include non-contact activities such as looking at or watching pornographic material. It may also involve the encouragement of children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

NEGLECT is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or physiological needs. The likely result is the serious impairment of the child's health and development. This may include the failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect the child from physical harm or danger, or failure to ensure access to proper medical care or treatment.

AL WAHDA PRIVATE SCHOOL LOST CHILD PROCEDURE

One of the most worrying aspects of a day in school is a 'lost child' both for the child and staff and this can be terrifying for parents. To minimize the possibility of losing a child ALL staff need to be vigilant in maintaining a check of children in their care. This means in addition to the statutory keeping of attendance registers, headcounts after break times and at the beginning of lessons should automatically take place. The practice will ensure that if a child should go missing then the loss will be quickly discovered, and action can be taken.

In the event of a missing child, the loss should be immediately reported to the Principal or to a senior member of staff who will then direct the course of action, which include all or some of the following:

- Alert other staff and deploy for a search keeping cover of remaining children.
- Question children and then conduct a search of buildings and outdoor areas.
- Parents should be informed if the child is not found within 15 minutes.
- Keep searching with as many adults as possible and update using mobile phones.
- As a last resort and with the consent of parents, call the police.

LATE COLLECTION PROCEDURE If a child is not collected at the end of the normal working day, they remain OUR responsibility until alternative arrangements have been made. Each situation will be different, and staff need to act with initiative but the following procedure is likely to be best practice. **SAFETY COMES FIRST!**

- Allow 20 min. leeway for traffic delays or other lateness.
- After 20 min. take the child to the designated waiting area where an adult will be on duty.
- Call the parents/ collecting person. Keep trying until contact is made.
- The child should not be left alone and should be reassured that a solution will be found.

- Under no circumstances must a child be allowed to go with another person/parent without the consent from the child's own parent or from the Principal

LATE COLLECTION FROM AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Those in charge of after school classes or team sport at different venues are responsible for the care and safety of each child until they are dropped at home or collected from school. Under no circumstances may a child be left on their own.

In the event of a child not being collected then the teacher/activity leader must stay with the child for 15 minutes to allow for normal traffic delays or lateness.

After this time, the child should be taken to designated waiting area or if offsite the teacher should wait with the child and then follow the late collection procedure from point 3 above.

CHILDREN BEING DROPPED BEFORE SCHOOL OPENING TIME

Although we will discourage parents from dropping their children early some will do this because of work commitments and other factors. We will place a teacher on duty for the safety of our students from 7.30 am (maybe amended when student numbers increase) and they will be supervised.

Students who arrive before this time will be kept in a designated safe area where they can be monitored by an adult, this may be a teacher or admin person. They will be told who is on duty and where to go in a case of emergency.

INTIMATE CARE FOR CHILDREN

Children do occasionally have accidents or injuries which necessitate some intimate care. It is important to consider two factors when dealing with these situations.

- Respect the privacy of the child.
- Be aware of the vulnerability of the member of staff assisting the child.

RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

WHAT IS PHYSICAL RESTRAINT?

Restraint occurs whenever a member of staff, using intentional force, physically restricts a child's movement against his or her will.

Physical restraint does not include gentle prompting or guidance where the child is happy to comply to enjoy an activity. Physical restraint may be appropriate in certain situations e.g., a gymnastic lesson, first aid, or offering comfort. Staff should still be aware of the child's perception of this action.

Physical restraint is a procedure for dealing with an unsafe situation or crisis.

It must not be used as a punishment nor when a lesser response would have been an effective response to the situation. Deliberate use of physical contact to punish a student, cause pain, injury, or humiliation is unlawful, regardless of the severity of the behavior or provocation leading up to this action.

THE USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Restraint should only be used in circumstances where there are good reasons for believing that the pupil is placing him/herself or other people in danger or where there may be significant damage to property.

If we are aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a way that he/she may need restraining, then it will be sensible to plan how we respond to that situation. This action should be shared with parents and all members of staff.

A plan of action should be made so everyone is aware of how to behave during the process, who to contact and how to resolve the situation in the best possible way without causing injury or humiliation.

TYPES OF RESTRAINT

Restraint occurs whenever a member of staff, using intentional force, physically restricts a pupil's movement against the pupil's will. This may mean restraining a pupil or moving him/her by physical means.

Restraint can be:

Partial, restricting and preventing a particular movement. This may be applied to different degrees, it may mean moving a student from imminent risk in order to prevent injury and after a reasonable verbal request has been made. It may mean holding a pupil to restrict movement e.g., arms. It could also mean restricting their movement in a confined space e.g., an office.

Total, as in the case of complete immobilization. This is where a pupil is held in such a way which prevents movement. This could mean a pupil being held on the floor. This is an extreme form of restraint and must only be used in exceptional circumstances where they or others were at risk.

Staff should be aware that for some pupils, the use of physical restraint may act as positive reinforcement for their behavior.

If staff use physical force to restrain a pupil, then the incident must be recorded in writing and the Principal informed so he can inform the parents before the end of the school day.

APPENDIX 1

Possible signs of physical abuse can include:

1. Unexplained bruises or injuries
2. Injuries which have not received medical attention
3. Repeated abdominal pain
4. Withdrawal from physical contact
5. Arms and legs covered in scalds
6. Fear of returning home
7. Fear of contacting caregivers/parents
8. Self-destructive tendencies
9. Displaying aggression towards others
10. Unusual passive behavior
11. Repeated running away from home
12. Cigarette burns
13. Human bite marks
13. Broken bones
14. Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge

APPENDIX 2

Possible signs of emotional abuse can include:

1. Regular tiredness
2. Fear of a new situation
3. Low self esteem
4. High levels of anxiety
5. Unusually passive or aggressive
6. Delayed speech
7. Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
8. Running away
9. Lying
10. Neurotic behavior e.g., sulking, hair twisting, rocking
11. Fear of making mistakes
12. Self-harm
13. Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

APPENDIX 3

Possible signs of sexual abuse can include:

1. Unusual behavior which could be general or sexual
2. Age-inappropriate sexual behavior
3. Sexually transmitted diseases
4. Physical indicators in the genital and anal areas
5. Pain or itching in the genital area
6. Bruising or bleeding near genital area
7. Vaginal discharge or infection
8. Discomfort when walking or sitting down
9. Pregnancy

APPENDIX 4

Possible signs of neglect can include:

1. Stealing
2. Poor social relationships
3. Failure to thrive
4. Poor personal hygiene
5. Frequent hunger
6. Untreated medical complaints
7. Frequent lateness or absence from school
8. Inappropriate clothing
9. Substance or alcohol misuse