POLICY TITLE:	Student Protection Policy
DEPARTMENT:	Academics

Policy Contact: Counsellor	Issue Date: June 2024
School: Al Ain Juniors School	Next Revision Date: June 2027
Reference No: AJ-GCD-01	Version No: 10

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy sets out those actions Al Ain Juniors (AJ) Group of Schools will take to ensure the safety and well-being of students under its care. This policy will be used to give direction and guidance to school management authorities and all school personnel in dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse. It provides basic information to school personnel to enable them to be alert to and to be aware of what to do in situations where child abuse may be a concern or suspicions. However, where abuse is suspected, it is essential that collaboration with external authorities is sought for best advice.
We aim to support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence, and to raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children. In our schools every member of staff will exercise a duty of care in all parts of the school at all times.

Scope/Target Audience:

This policy is applicable to all departments of Al Ain Juniors School.

Policy Statement

There shall be a standard process & procedure for the new and/or reviewed/ updated policies. Pre-existing documents may be re-formatted at the time of the review of the document or within one year whichever occurs sooner.

The policies must be evidence base with updated references from international and/or national standards, applicable to this environment.

Introduction

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect children.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

In consort with relevant authorities, we will provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and undertake to ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability and moral fitness.

Confidentiality

All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse should only be shared on a need to know basis with the interest of the child placed first.

- We recognize that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential
- The designated staff will disclose information about a pupil to other member of staff only if it is necessary to do so.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets.

Responsibilities Of All School Personnel

All school personnel are especially well placed to observe changes in behaviour, delayed development or outward signs of abuse in children. In situation where school personnel suspect abuse, they should ensure that such concerns are reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy. Under no circumstances should they take unilateral action and all actions and interventions must be documented in detail.

The main role of the designated teacher/person is to refer suspected abuse or allegations to the authorized personnel. To be effective they will have:

- received training on how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case
- make themselves known to all members of school staff
- ensure those members of staff have annual training in child protection relevant to their needs and are able to identify and report any concern they have to the designated teacher/person immediately they arise
- ensure all members of the staff has access to and understand the school's Child Protection Policy
- ensure the AJ Group's Child Protection Policy is updated and reviewed annually in collaboration with external authorities
- keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of referrals or concerns
- provide parents with a copy of the Child Protection Policy which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of the school
- ensure they are kept appraised of changes in UAE law and ADEC regulations regarding child protection

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Types Of Abuse:

Physical	Physical hurt or injury usually caused by hitting, shaking, kicking, pushing, pinching, burning or biting. In sport, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregards the capacity of the child's immature and growing body. **Shouting at a child is a form of assault.**
Emotional	Bullying in any form: name-calling, threats, denial of rights normally accorded to others, **cyber-bullying**, teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, exclusion, or extortion. Physical and verbal attacks either in private and must not be ignored. Bullying may be a single incident or repeated actions, and may be initiated by an individual or a group. **Note**: Overt sarcasm by adults, is a form of bullying because it affects the emotions of the person it is directed towards. It also involves persistent emotional ill treatment of a child, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects of the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a child they are useless, worthless, unloved, and inadequate.
Neglect	The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
Sexual	Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in a sexually inappropriate ways.

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Indicators Of Abuse

A child may be exhibiting signs of abuse if:

- they provide specific information that they are the victims of abuse;
- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- an injury for which the explanations seems inconsistent
- unexplained changes in a child's behaviour e.g. becoming upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper;
- difficulty in making friends;
- being prevented from socializing with others;
- behavioral changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, depressed, tearful, emotional instability, reluctance to go to training or competitions;
- Consistent evidence, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

Third Party

An account of person who saw a child being abused must be treated seriously whether this comes from an adult or another child. Abuse rarely happens in public and hardly ever permits corroborating statements. This does not discount the veracity of the account.

Handling Disclosures From Children

An abuse is likely to be under severe emotional stress and a staff member may be the only adult whom the child is prepared to trust. Great care should be taken not to break that trust.

When information is offered in confidence, the member of the staff will need to reassure the child and retain his/her trust, while explaining the need for action and the possible consequences which will necessarily involve other adults being informed. It is important to tell the child that everything possible will be done to protect and support him/her.

Basis for concern must be established as comprehensively as possible, the following must be followed by the school personnel to whom a child makes a disclosure of abuse:

- Listen to the child;
- Offer reassurance but not make promises;
- Allow the child to recall significant events;
- Explain that further help may have to be sought;

- Record the discussion accurately (see next section) and pass this to the designated Child Protection Officer (no tapes or conversations may be made as this contravenes the law).
- Ensure any records they keep are secure and confidential.

Records And Monitoring

When child abuse is suspected, it is essential to note carefully:

- What has been observed - signs of physical injury should be described in detail and if appropriate, sketched. Under no circumstances should clothing be removed.
- When they observed it.
- Any comment by the child concerned, or by any person about how an injury occurred should be noted, preferably quoting words exactly used, as soon as possible after the comment has been made. The written record should be checked for accuracy, signed and dated by both the recorder and the person making the allegation. All records created should be regarded as highly confidential and retained in a secure location.

Actions To Be Taken

School Personnel

If a school employee receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a pupil is being abused the school employee should, in the first instance, report the matter to the Designated Person in the school.

Serious allegations of sexual misconduct by staff, volunteers, and/or invited visitors shall be directly reported to the Police and FCA and the concerned.

Designated Person

If the school employee and the designated person are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation, the designated person should report the matter to the management immediately.

Private Tuition

Private tuition in banned in the emirate of Abu Dhabi and across the UAE and authorities have made repeated statements regarding this fact. The staff at AAJ Group of schools are not permitted to carry out private tuition as the management believes all students are entitled to full and equal access to good teaching and that this is best carried out during the school day. Parents will be sent a letter at the beginning of each year reminding them that they must not solicit the staff of the AAJ Group of schools to conduct such tuition either in their homes or in the homes of staff.

School staff have been warned of the dangers of conducting private tuition including:

- Malicious allegations
- Pressure to act corruptly
- Tiredness

- Removal of 'Professional Distance'

Parents and staff who disregard school directives regarding private tuition therefore understand that they accept full responsibility for any actions that may arise. The AAJ Group of schools accepts no responsibility in such instances.

Private Communications Between Staff And Students

All communications between staff, students and their parents must be conducted through the auspices of the school and be documented.

No member of staff is permitted to initiate or maintain private communications with students. To this end no member of staff will

- issue their personal email identity to students(or their parents)
- issue their mobile or land line telephone numbers to students(or their parents)
- contact a student outside school hours for personal reasons(unless related to the student)
- solicit or engage in 'friendships' with current students on social networking sites, such as Facebook or Twitter
- Staff are advised to be extremely careful in posting personal details on such sites and should take steps to limit public access to their details

Personal Space

All staff must be aware of their proximity to students so as to avoid potential allegations of inappropriate contact. They must always consider the age and gender of the child, the situation they are in and the location of their interaction.

Where meetings take place between staff and students, doors should remain open and/or a third party be present.

Staff Code Of Conduct

School staff is not expected to—

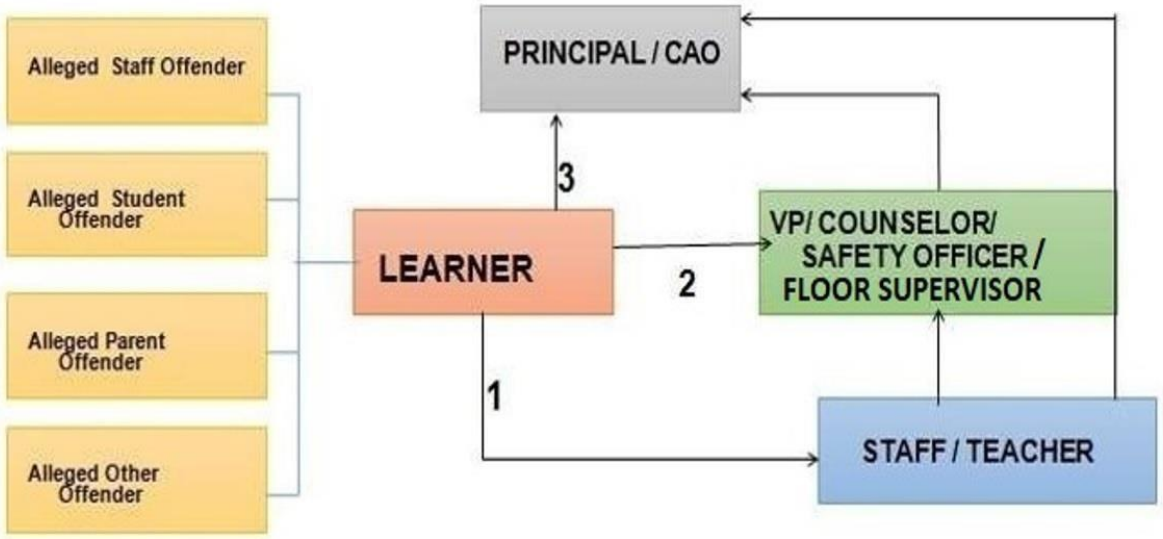
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves

- condone, or participate in, behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others.

Procedure Of Referral

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE – FLOW CHART



Intervention

There will be circumstances where staff must intervene to stop a child injuring themselves or others, or damaging school property. Reasonable restraint at the lowest possible level may be used. However, it is preferable to seek advice or ask for a senior member of staff to attend.
ADEK Regulations Regarding Physical and Verbal Abuse of Students

The regulations are very clear:

"ADEK will not tolerate maltreatment of students, which includes both physical and verbal abuse, in any way."

If a staff member if suspected of inappropriate behavior towards a child:

- The matter must be reported to senior staff, however minor;
- Senior staff will inform ADEC of the allegation and ensure a full investigation is carried out;
- The staff member who is alleged to have engaged in inappropriate behavior towards a child will be asked to write a statement, which they must sign and date. A copy will be given to them.
- Depending on the severity of the allegation, and on the advice of ADEC, the member of staff may be suspended from duty. This means they will not be permitted on school premises until notified they may return. During the period of suspension, the staff member may not, under any circumstances, contact the victim or their parents, or any witnesses.
- In the event the allegation is proven, and on the advice of ADEC, the member of staff may be terminated. In this instance the termination will be effective immediately.
- In very serious cases involving the police, the school will cooperate with such authorities.

Safety Concern Referrals in Abu Dhabi Schools summarizes how maltreatment concerns should be handled in cases where the alleged student maltreatment occurred both inside and outside of the supervision of the school

Safety Concern Referrals in Abu Dhabi Schools Relevant contact details are as follows:

- Abu Dhabi Police: 999
- Family Care Authority (FCA): 800444 icm@adfca.gov.ae
- MoE Child Protection Unit (CPU): 80085 cpu@moe.gov.ae
- Safety Concern Portal: https://daasafetyconcern.abudhabi/