

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Written by:	Counsellor, EAS	Reviewed:	November, 2021
Approved by:	Principal, EAS	Next Review:	June, 2022

Key contacts for immediate referrals:

1. School Counsellor
2. School Doctor
3. School Principal

Emirates American School is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for children. Child safety is extremely important at our school. Because of their day to day contact with individual children during the school terms, teachers and other school staff are particularly well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse or changes in behaviour of the children.

➤ PURPOSE

To develop an effective child safety and protection policy which provides clear direction to staff and others about the emotional and physical safety of children and also list the expected behaviour when dealing with child protection issues. School will ensure that child protection concerns, referrals and monitoring must be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the child.

➤ INTRODUCTION

At EAS we identify our responsibility to protect and safeguard our children. "The welfare of the child is paramount". It is the statutory responsibility of the school management to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The main elements to our child protection policy;

1. Alertness, awareness, attention, and early detection of signs of physical and emotional illness, abuse, discomfort, and anti-social behaviour.
2. Prevention through the creation of a positive school atmosphere and pastoral support offered to pupils.
3. Protection by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child safety and protection concerns.

➤ SCHOOL POLICY

We recognize that for our pupils' good health and high self-esteem, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult will help to lead a healthy and happy life and prevent abuse. Our school will therefore: -

1. Establish and maintain an environment where pupils feel safe and secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
2. Ensure that pupils know that there are adults within the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty
3. Include in the curriculum activities which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from illnesses and abuse.
4. Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues.

➤ **FRAMEWORK**

Child safety and protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children in the school.

➤ **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

All adults working with children have a responsibility to protect them. There are, however, key people within school who have specific responsibilities under child safety and protection procedures. The names of those carrying out these responsibilities for the current year are listed on the cover sheet of this document. It is the role of the School Counsellor to ensure that all of the child protection procedures are followed within the school and to make timely referrals to the Principal and Supervisors in accordance with school procedures. Additionally, it is the role of the School Counsellor to ensure all staff employed including temporary staff and volunteers within the school are aware of the school's internal procedures, to advise staff and to offer support to those requiring this. Wherever possible, as part of the recruitment process, past records and other referrals will be sought on all staff that have substantial and unsupervised access to children. The School Counsellor will provide an annual report for the Management, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures.

➤ **PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF ILLNESS**

1. Children and staff will be educated about best practices in hygiene.
2. Water at the school will be tested regularly – at least twice a year.
3. Each child at school will receive medical advice as per their need.
4. Parents have the responsibility to keep sick children home from school during periods of sickness.
5. Vaccination requirements of the Ministry of Health will be strictly adhered to.
6. All sickness, illness or medical conditions shall be treated without delay.

➤ **PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF SICKNESS**

1. All injuries will be treated immediately.
2. First Aid Kits will be kept at the school and these will be easily accessible.
3. Contact names of the local doctor, hospital and ambulance service will be available at the clinic of the school.
4. All accidents shall be recorded– for regular review – with recommendations. The approach involves identifying risks, then taking steps to eliminate or minimize these risks.

➤ **PHYSICAL SAFETY OF THE CHILDREN**

1. No physical violence, (hitting, physical disciplining, smacking, fighting) will be tolerated at the school. This includes physical violence from teachers, assistant teachers, shadow teachers, visitors, other staff, parents, or fellow-students. Children will be treated respectfully and encouraged to report any violence and provided with protection if this is necessary.

2. Police will be involved if there is any issue of violence that cannot be immediately resolved or if the violence poses a serious risk to the child's mental, physical or emotional well-being, regardless of the source of the violence.
3. Emotional safety is also recognized – and this includes situations such as bullying or persistent belittling of individuals by others. Neither of this behaviour will be tolerated.

➤ ANTI-BULLYING

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for young people so they can enjoy their involvement with the school in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind – physical, mental or cyber- is unacceptable within EAS. This includes bullying of young people by adults and bullying of young people by other young people. If bullying does occur, all young people should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

➤ SUPPORT

Principal and all other staff who work with children will undertake appropriate child protection awareness training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively. The school will ensure that the School Counsellor also undertakes training to keep knowledge and skills up to date. Temporary staff and volunteers who work with children in the school will be made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities. Support will be available for staff from the Supervisor's in the first instance, and from members of the school's leadership team where there are concerns about queries about child protection. All staff should have access to advice and guidance on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters will form part of staff induction and will be referred to in the staff handbook.

➤ PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a pupil nor should they agree with a pupil to keep a secret, as where there is a child protection concern this must be reported to the School Counsellor and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities. Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a "need to know basis" only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held confidentially to themselves.

➤ MEASURES BY SCHOOL

The measures decided, will take into account:

1. The local inter-agency procedures of the UAE, the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving serious harm will always be referred to the UAE authorities without further investigation within the school.
2. The wishes of the pupil who has complained, provided that the pupil is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after appropriate consultation, that override a pupil's wishes.
3. The wishes of the complainant's parents, provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the pupil's best interests and that they are properly informed. Again, it may be necessary, after appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the Designated Person is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child at risk, he or she will take further advice from the relevant professionals before making a decision to disclose confidentiality.
4. If there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the Designated Person will consult with Principal who may choose to liaise with relevant authorities.

➤ RECORDS AND MONITORING

- Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. EAS is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies. Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen,
- Putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. These file notes must be kept in a confidential file, which is separate from other files, and stored in Principal's office. In the same way notes must be kept of any pupil who is being monitored for child protection reasons.

➤ SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK

Our school recognizes that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or view the world as a positive place. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

The school will endeavour to support pupils through:

- The curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- The implementation of the school's behaviour management policies.

- A consistent approach agreed by all staff which will endeavour to ensure the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued.
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child's best interest to do so.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.
- Recognition that statistically children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse so staff who work in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and / or emotional and behavioural problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.
- Recognition that in a home environment where there are domestic issues, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

➤ **SAFE SCHOOL, SAFE STAFF**

1. It is essential that the high standards of concern and professional responsibility adopted with regard to alleged child abuse by parents are similarly displayed when members of staff are accused of abuse.
2. Only authorized agencies may investigate child abuse allegations. Whilst it is permissible to ask the child(ren) simple, non-leading questions to ascertain the facts of the allegation, formal interviews and the taking of statements is not.
3. Where allegations are made against a staff member, this should be immediately referred to Principal of the school or the management who shall take appropriate action.
4. If for any reason it is decided that an external referral is not appropriate, it will be necessary to address matters in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures.

➤ **USE OF THE SCHOOL PREMISES BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, using the school premises, the Principal and School Administration will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection.

➤ **WHISTLEBLOWING**

We recognize that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they should speak to the Supervisors or directly to Principal.

➤ **POLICY REVIEW**

The School Management is responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy. And for ensuring that the list of key contacts on the cover sheet is kept up to date.

رؤيتنا: إعداد طلاب بمهارات القرن 21 ليكونوا مواطنين يتحملون مسؤولية بناء مجتمعهم ويحافظوا على هويتهم.

Our Vision: To inculcate and develop 21st century skills in students and enable them to become productive and responsible citizens.