

BRITISH INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE SCHOOL -AJMAN

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

- Providing a safe environment for children to learn in school.
- Identifying children who are suffering from various problems and taking appropriate actions for providing safe environment in school.
- Identifying and reporting any suspected cases of abuse.

Purpose

The safeguarding of children and young people from harm is the highest priority here at BIS. Our students have a right to feel safe and protected from significant physical and emotional harm both inside and outside of school. This policy is a crucial part of promoting the welfare of our students; it also is designed to inform our staff regarding the signs of child abuse and to equip them with the knowledge on what to do in the event of suspected abuse. This policy defines abuse, outlines signs of abuse and explains the procedures for investigating and reporting suspected cases.

SCHOOL COMMITMENT

- a) The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of its pupils.
- b) Each pupil's welfare & safety is our paramount importance.
- c) School has a statutory and moral duty to ensure that it functions with a view to safe guarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- d) **PREVENTION** by providing a safe environment for children to learn with robust policies, procedures, positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support for students.
- e) **PROTECTION** by identifying children who are suffering from neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse.
- f) **SUPPORT** by taking appropriate actions to see that such children are kept safe at school and home.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) Raising awareness.
- b) Overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations.
- c) Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection.
- d) Maintaining a proper record of any referrals & complaints.
- e) Informing the parents and children about the school's child protection policy.
- f) Ensuring that staff receives basic training in child protection policy.

ROLE OF SUPERVISORS

- a) Raising awareness.
- b) Reporting to the staff with lead responsibility.
- c) Will know how to make an appropriate referral.
- d) Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection.
- e) To be available to listen to children about their issue and problems.
- f) To deal with individual cases, coordinate with parents and concerned teachers.
- g) Assist school management in dealing with the issue.

ROLE OF TEACHERS

- a) To be available to listen to children about their issue and problems patiently.
- b) Listen to and take note of what the pupil says seriously.
- c) Be supportive & give realistic encouragement.
- d) Explain that why you will need to involve other people.
- e) Allow pupil to speak freely without fear.
- f) Make written record of what is said by the pupil or parents.
- g) Report to supervisor immediately with written report.
- h) Follow the school internal channels of communication in relation to child protection.
- i) Do not react emotionally and do not interrupt or stop a pupil during a disclosure.
- j) Do not promise confidentiality and make promises.
- k) Do not contact parent immediately without discussing with the supervisor or staff with lead responsibility.

REPORTING AND DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OR ABUSE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

- a) The procedures apply to all staff (Teachers, Administrators, Management, support staff, drivers, conductors and volunteers).
- b) A member of staff who receives an allegation about another member should follow the guidelines for dealing with disclosures.
- c) The allegation should be reported to the principal and the staff with lead responsibility.
- d) Written details of the allegation are to be made and signed & dated and submitted to the Principal.
- e) Principal or the staff with lead responsibility should make an internal assessment of the allegation.
- f) The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and is a decision whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation and if so by whom.
- g) If the allegation represents inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by the member of staff and is neither potentially a crime nor a cause of significant harm, then it will be dealt with school disciplinary procedures.
- h) If the allegations are found true appropriate actions will be taken in line with school disciplinary procedures.

REPORTING AND DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OR ABUSE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

ENQUIRIES AND INVESTIGATION

- a) Child protection enquiries by the police are not to be confused with internal, disciplinary enquiries by the school. The school may be able to use the outcome of external agency enquiries as part of its own procedures.
- b) The school will hold its own internal enquiries while the formal police or social services investigation proceeds; to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation.
- c) During the investigation by external agencies, the Principal (or designated person) will be involved and the school will give every assistance. He/she will ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained in connection with enquiries in the interest of staff about whom the allegation is made.

- d) Parents of the child making the allegation have to be informed about the likely process involved.
- e) The member of staff against whom the allegation was made should be informed about the investigation and likely process involved.
- f) Principal shall keep a written record of the action taken in connection with the allegations.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROCEDURE

A) EMBARKING THE BUS

- When students board the bus from the pick-up points, younger students must be permitted to board first.
- Do not let the child board the bus until it comes to a complete halt and the stop arm of the bus is opened out.
- Parents are not permitted to board the bus for any reason. A complaint, if any, should be lodged at the school with the Administration department.
- While in school, when students embark the bus for field trips or outings, buses will remain stationary until all students are on board.
- There will be no movement of buses when students are walking around the campus.

B) SAFETY WHILE TRAVELLING ON THE BUS

- In order to ensure safety while the child is travelling in the school bus, all students are expected to be seated in the places assigned by the conductor on the bus.
- The students have to use the safety belt provided.
- Students must not walk when the bus is moving.
- Playing in the bus is not permitted.
- In order to ensure student safety in case of an injury on the bus, first aid kits have been made available on all buses.
- If the injury is of a nature that needs medical attention, the conductor will inform the Administration department who in turn will inform the Principal before the student is transferred to the nearest hospital.

- If there is an inordinate delay in route (more than 20 minutes) to a destination due to a traffic jam, conductors must inform the school Admin & parents .

C) DISEMBARKING THE BUS

- Students and staff who are disembarking from the vehicle must not get up until the bus has come to a complete halt.
- Students in the front seats must move out first followed by students who are seated at the back.
- Conductors should assist younger children with their trolley bags when they are disembarking.
- Conductors should ensure that younger students in Foundation Stage are handed over to their respective class teachers.
- When all the students have disembarked, the conductor and driver of the bus should carry out a physical check of their respective buses to ensure that no child has been accidentally left behind in the bus.
- The watchman should ensure a second check before the buses are taken out of the school premises or parked.

D) MOVEMENT OF STUDENTS TO AND FROM THE BUS

- On arrival once students have disembarked, they should be guided to their classes.
- During dispersal, teachers of Grades must accompany students to the quadrangle and ensure that they are there till all their students have been handed over.
- The conductor of each bus must be present near the door to help students board the bus.
- The Administration department and supervisors of all sections must be out in the quadrangle to ensure that dispersal is a smooth affair.

E) CHANGING THE BUS ROUTE

- If a student normally travels by bus has to be allowed to leave the school on his/her own with another person for a day, then a written note must be present in the diary. This has to be signed by the class teacher and the department Head.
- Normally students are not permitted to change their routes on the return journey.
- If the parent desires to have a child dropped off at another point then a written note must be presented for approval to the Section Head & Administration department.
- The change in route may be allowed depending on the availability of seats on that route.

IDENTITY CARDS

All students must wear the identity card issued by the school. If the card is lost a new one will be issued on payment.

EXIT PASSES

If a student has to leave the school accompanied by a parent, he/she must have exit pass issued by reception. Exit passes will be issued to parents/ guardians who are taking the children home after the verification. Students will not be allowed to leave the school with unauthorized persons. Exit pass is the responsibility of the class teacher.

MANNING OF GATES

All gates are manned by ancillary staff on duty and all gates are kept locked when students are on the campus except the front gate where watchman will be always present.

OWN TRANSPORT STUDENTS

- Students who use their own transport to come to school are supervised by Staff from 7.15 am onwards.
- On dispersal, students are once again assembled in a room (OT room) till 2.30 pm and are monitored by a dedicated staff.

FIELD TRIPS

- All students will bring the acknowledgement slips signed by their parents permitting them to go on the field trip.
- A head count of the students boarding the bus must be made at the venue before the bus return to the school. At all times teachers must be accountable for the students in their care.
- If an accident or injury occurs during the field trip the following procedure to be followed.
- If the injury is minor first aid must be administered at site. The matter must be reported immediately to the Supervisor, concerned parent & clinic when return of school.
- If the injury needs immediate medical attention, send for an ambulance. In such case inform the Principal and the Administration. Then call the supervisor and the parent of the child. **DO NOT PANIC.**

OTHER SAFETY ISSUES

A) SHARP IMPLEMENTS IN CLASSES:

- Scissors that are used during the craft period should be locked and out of reach of children when not in use.
- Foundation Stage students are to use plastic scissors with blunt edges and those must be stored under lock and key.
- Compasses and dividers should not be used for play and teachers must remain vigilant at all times.
- Students are not allowed to bring any objects from home which is not requested by the concerned teacher.

B) SAFETY IN CLASSROOMS:

- All the doors and windows in class rooms are child friendly with stoppers and rubber beadings and without automatic locks.

C) PARENTS' ACCESS TO CLASSROOMS:

- Parents are not permitted to proceed to the classrooms to meet teachers when a class is in session. All meetings are through prior appointment when the teacher is free to meet the parent.
- Parents are required to fill in a permission slip to proceed to meet with the Section Head / Teacher.
- Teachers are not to talk to parents when a class is in session. This jeopardizes the safety of the students in the class when teachers are engaged in conversations.

D) FIRST AID/ CLINIC

- If an injury or serious illness occurs, the teacher should immediately notify the school Nurse and the Supervisor. In addition Principal should also be informed immediately and Supervisor should inform the parents about the injury.
- The teacher of the class or subject teacher must escort the pupils to the clinic in case of a serious injury while ensuring that her class has been left under control.
- The school nurse will be responsible for administering the first aid. A physician and/or emergency medical service will be called in case of serious illness or injuries.
- If it becomes necessary to release a child from school because of illness or injury, a Home Release Form must be signed by the parents. No child who is ill or injured should be sent home alone. A student accident report must be maintained for those students who may require a doctor visit or visit to hospital.

E) FIRE DRILLS AND EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

- This procedure is designed to reduce the number of potential fire incidents in schools.
- All staff members should be familiar with the school alarm system and should know the location of nearest exit route and assembly point.
- Always take school fire drills seriously and evacuate the students when the alarm sounds.
- Be familiar with the location of the fire alarm and the extinguisher.

- Evacuation drills are held to familiarize the staff and the students with the signals, evacuation routes and the exits so that in case of fire there are no hesitations or confusion in evacuating the students.
- Students should be informed about the fire drill in advance and all staff & students should participate in the fire drill.
- Students at break or not in classroom should know which teacher to report or where to assemble so that they can be accounted for.

PROCEDURE IN CASE OF FIRE

A) PROCEDURE DURING THE CLASS TIME:

Students exit class and walk in a single file to a pre-assigned point (shown in the evacuation map). All teachers should know where the evacuation point for their class well in advance. Students shall walk briskly without talking, laughing or breaking from the ranks. Students should be evacuated from the building by designated routes to the assembly area. Students should remain orderly and silent until an **all-clear signal** is given and when an all clear signal is given the students should return to their respective classes in an orderly manner. Students shall not loiter in the halls. The teacher must remain in the class until all children are out and then check if all students are out of the class. Close doors to hall and follow the class outside. The attendance register should be with the teacher.

B) PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED BEFORE SCHOOL, DURING LUNCH AND RECESS :

- Students walk to the assigned area where they will meet their teacher.
- Teachers should stop play (in case of P.E) organize the students in orderly lines and proceed to assembly area.
- Teachers should be familiar with assembly area and evacuation route designated for that class or area.
- Attendance register should be with teachers to account for all students.
- Discuss & educate the students in the class about fire drill & action to be followed in case of fire. Every room in the school has a map posted showing the exits.
- Time is crucial factor in case of fire emergency. Learn which exit to be used.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Against Abuse

The health, safety and well-being of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school. Protecting children is everyone's responsibility at our school and this includes reporting any act committed by a parent, guardian or any other person, to a child enrolled in the school which results in neglect, physical or emotional injury or sexual harm. All staff has a duty and will report any suspected or disclosed issues of child protection to the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO)/Child Protection Team. If the threat is immediate or ongoing it will be reported to the appropriate local safeguarding authorities as set in place by the UAE.

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse refers to any act committed by a parent, guardian or any other person to a child under the age of 18, which results in injury to the child. These acts include situations where there is neglect, emotional, physical or sexual harm. (Refer to Appendix A Categories of Abuse)

Aims:

This policy ensures that all staff in our school can follow the necessary procedures with regard to a child protection issue. It aims:

- To raise awareness and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse;
- To ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues;
- To inform all parties of the correct procedures to use in the case of a child protection issue.

When Staff should be concerned:

- If a student has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with the child's activities
- If a student regularly has unexplained injuries
 - If a student frequently has injuries even when apparently reasonable explanations are given
- If a student offers confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained
- If a student exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude
 - If a student indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age
- If a student discloses an experience in which he or she may have been harmed.

Dealing with disclosure

If a student discloses that he or she has been harmed in some way, the member of staff should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
 - Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely
- Reassure the child but not make promises that it might not be possible to keep
- Not promise confidentiality, as it might be necessary to refer the case to the appropriate authority
- Reassure the pupil that what has happened is not their fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Listen rather than ask direct questions

- Ask open questions rather than leading questions
- Not criticize the alleged perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told

Procedures

When a child reports abuse, the teacher will inform the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) within 48 hours. The teacher should also inform the DCPO as soon as possible if there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring. The DCPO will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident. At this stage he/she will:

- Interview staff members as necessary and document information relative to the case.
- Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school. The DCPO will then form a school-based response team to address the report. The response team may include the school doctor, nurse, counsellor, teacher, and other individuals as the DCPO sees fit. In all cases, follow up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained. Based on acquired information, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions that may take place are:
 - Discussions between the child and the DCPO in order to gain more information
 - In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counsellor, or administrator
 - Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns
 - Referral of the student and family to external professional counselling
- Consultation with local authorities. Subsequent to a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect, the following actions may take place:

- The DCPO will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The DCPO will provide the child's teachers with ongoing support, and provide strategies for the teacher to use.
- The DCPO will maintain contact with outside therapists, in order to update the therapist about the progress of the child in school, and to keep the school informed about the progress of the therapy.
- The School Principal refers the case to local authorities for further action

Responsibilities of the whole school staff

- There is a named person(s) in our school who is the DCPO. This is normally the Principal but he/she may delegate this responsibility in some circumstances.
- All members of the school staff have a responsibility to identify and report suspected abuse and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the students in the school. In doing so, they should seek advice and support as necessary from the DCPO.
 - All staff are expected to attend regular and relevant professional development sessions.
 - All staff are expected to provide a safe and caring environment in which children can develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings and opinions. Children should be treated with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behaviour.
 - All staff are expected to be aware of symptoms of abuse, to report concerns to DCPO as appropriate and to keep clear, dated, factual and confidential records of child protection concerns.

Roles and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and visitors to BIS. The staff at BIS have a responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of our students. All staff must report any suspected incidents of child abuse to any one of the Designated Child Protection Officers (DCPOs). The following persons are DCPOs for all child protection issues here at BIS:

- Senior Management (Principal, Head of Primary, Head of Secondary, Supervisors)
- The School Doctor
- The School Counsellors

The DCPOs will:

Follow the agreed procedures (refer to Appendix B What to do on Disclosure)

- Know how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse (refer to Appendix A)
- Provide advice and support to staff
- Maintain relevant records of incident reports (refer Appendix C)
- Keep all information confidentially and safe in a locked cabinet
- Know when and how to submit a referral to outside agencies (refer Appendix D)

Relevant legislation or authorities This Policy is underpinned by the fundamental principle of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 of which the United Arab Emirates (UAE) ratified on the 3rd January, 1997 along with the UAE local laws (the Emirates Human Rights Association have launched a Federal Law, the Child Rights Law, which is to be established December, 2014).

Framework

Child Protection is the responsibility of all staff and especially those working with children. The Designated Senior Person for Child Protection at BIS is the Principal and in his/her absence the relevant Head of Section is in charge of child protection/safeguarding matters. Heads of Section are Designated Persons (DPs) within their own Section. The Principal will be assisted by each Head of Section including the Vice Principal and the School Counsellor(s). The Principal and Heads of Section will disseminate policy and provide training for all staff. Staff should discuss any concerns regarding Child Protection with the relevant Head of Section. The Head of Section will then consult with the School Counsellor and the Principal who will advise on the monitoring of children and the making of referrals to the appropriate organisations. The Principal is responsible for reporting issues related to this policy to the Directors and Governors..

This Policy is reviewed by the Senior Management Team in June 2017. It will be next reviewed in June 2018.

APPENDIX A

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE PHYSICAL ABUSE:

Is actual or attempted physical injury to a child where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Signs and symptoms:

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

EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs which results in a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child. This includes conveying to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved.

Signs and symptoms:

- Physical/mental/emotional developmental lags
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive
- Over reaction to mistakes

- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour (eg, rocking, thumb sucking etc)
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-mutilation
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

SEXUAL ABUSE:

Where a child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) – including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated the behaviour.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, language, behaviours
- Loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressive behaviours such as thumb sucking, needing previously discarded cuddly toys
- Becoming withdrawn, isolated
- Inability to focus
- Reluctance to go home
- Bed-wetting
- Drawing sexually explicit pictures

- Trying to be ‘extra good’
- Over-reacting to criticism
- Have outbursts of anger/irritability

NEGLECT:

Refers to persistent or deliberate failure to meet a child’s physical or psychological needs eg. a failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, failure to protect a child or failure to provide adequate medical care. It may also involve neglect or failure to give adequate response to a child’s emotional needs.

Signs and symptoms:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor peer relationships
- Stealing

APPENDIX B

WHAT TO DO ON DISCLOSURE

Stay calm (Don't over-react, however shocked you may be)



Listen, hear and believe (Listen carefully, take it seriously)



Give time for the person to say what they want (Don't make assumptions and don't offer alternative explanations, ask questions beginning with Tell me about... Explain... Describe... Avoid 'who, what, when, where' questions)



Reassure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling. (Do not promise confidentiality; explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed)



Record in writing as near verbatim as possible and as soon as possible on a Disclosure Form (Use the child's own words, make your record as soon as possible after the event, so that you don't forget anything, and include information about what action was taken afterwards)



Report to the DCPO

APPENDIX C

BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE FORM

Name of Person Making Allegation/Disclosure:

Time and Date:

Parent(s) Name and Contact Details:

Nature of Disclosure: (Continue on separate sheet as required, recording as close to verbatim as possible)

Name and Signature : _____

Role : _____

Date and Time : _____