



مدرسة سمارت فيجن  
SMART VISION SCHOOL

# Child Protection Policy

## 2023-2024

This procedure is reviewed annually to ensure compliance  
with current regulations

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## **1 Introduction**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development. - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

## **2 The law on children's rights in Dubai**

Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 concerning child rights, also known as Wadeema's Law, stresses that all children must be provided with appropriate living standards, access to health services, education, equal opportunities in essential services and facilities without any kind of discrimination. The law protects children against all forms of negligence, exploitation, physical and psychological abuses.

In addition, smoking in public and private vehicles and indoor facilities where children are present is also prohibited under the law. The law allows childcare specialists to remove children from their homes against parents' wishes and without judicial permission in cases of imminent danger. In less severe cases, specialists may intervene by visiting the child regularly, providing social services and mediating a solution between the family and the child.

Those who put children in danger, abandon them, neglect them, leave them without supervision, do not enrol them in school or register them upon their birth will be subject to a prison sentence or a fine. The law applies to all children up to the age of 18.

## **3 Statement of School Policy on Confidentiality**

The welfare of our students will always be our central concern. Students are actively encouraged to raise personal and general concerns with members of staff and seek advice in confidence. It is important to note, however, that such discussions, whilst remaining confidential in nature, must take into account a full appreciation of our duty of care. This will mean that information may have to be shared with senior members of staff or parents on a need-to-know basis - not as a breach, but as an extension of a confidence given. This aspect of the policy will apply if there is a risk of an individual becoming a danger to himself/herself or others. In such a situation a student will be counselled and, if at all possible, persuaded that it is desirable for a confidence to be shared with others.

### **3.1 Best practice indicates that:**

- The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration. - Children are best cared for in their own family. (The term “family” being widely defined).
- Schools have a responsibility to make their child protection policy known to both parents and teachers so that it is clear that, should a child’s needs appear to indicate it, referral will be made to or advice sought from external agencies and/or authorities as part of the School’s pastoral policy.

See also the Smart Vision School Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **3.2 What school staff should look out for**

Staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for support for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- Has special educational needs.
- Is a young carer.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- Is a privately fostered child.

## **4 Child Abuse: Categories and Definitions**

Abuse: A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

### **4.1 Physical abuse:**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Possible signs of physical abuse:

- Unexplained injury or refusal to explain or discuss their injuries.
- Circular marks that could be caused by a lit cigarette or cigar.
- Long bruises (possibly made by a belt or stick).
- Teeth marks.
- Fingertip/nail/slap marks or bruises.
- History of bruises/injuries with inconsistent explanations. - Bilateral black eyes.
- Self-destructive comments, possibly repeated, or tendencies. - Aggression towards others.
- Untreated injuries.
- Fear of medical treatment.

### **4.2 Emotional abuse:**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Possible signs of emotional abuse:

- The child is developmentally delayed.
- Inappropriateness of social responses.
- Self-mutilation.
- Extreme passivity or aggression.
- Truancy from school or running away from home.
- Drug or solvent abuse (either in the child or in its principal carer(s)).
- Excessive fear of situations or people.

- Social isolation.
- Depression.

### **4.3 Sexual abuse:**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Possible signs of sexual abuse:

- Depression, suicidal tendencies, self-harming.
- Anorexia or bulimia.
- Acting in a sexually inappropriate manner towards adults/peers. - Truancy/running away from home.
- Seeking guidance for a “friend with a problem of abuse”.
- Sexually abusing a younger child/sibling.
- Sudden changes in school or work habits.
- Fear of people.
- Abnormal precociousness or aggression. Chronic medical problems (stomach pains/headaches).
- Withdrawn and/or isolated behaviour.
- Genital, abdominal or anal injury or pain.

### **4.4 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Possible signs of neglect:

- Failure to thrive (looks thin, emaciated, unwell, below average height, weight).
- Unusually hungry.
- Has regular accidents especially burns.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Avoidance of school medicals.
- Tiredness.
- Reluctance to go home.

- Poor social relationships.
- Frequent lateness/non-attendance.

#### **4.5 Peer on Peer Abuse:**

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer-on-peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying).
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery). - Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

## **5 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**

- To be fully conversant with the School's Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- To be available to all staff of the School community for consultation on child protection issues.
- To ensure that appropriate action is taken in the School and that procedures are followed in actual or suspected cases of child abuse.
- To liaise with other professionals to ensure that children at risk are monitored.
- Where appropriate to organise child protection conferences or reviews.
- In consultation with the Principal to monitor staff development and training needs with regard to Child Protection Issues and to provide training as appropriate. To ensure that training is current and relevant.
- To ensure that the curriculum offers opportunities for raising student awareness of Child Protection Issues and developing strategies for ensuring their own protection.
- In the absence of the designated teacher a deputy, who must be nominated in advance, must take responsibility for Child Protection Issues within the School.
- To review the School's Policy on Child Protection (to include policies on Bullying) with the Principal and Leadership Team on an annual basis.
- To keep school records of Child Protection issues on file for three years beyond the leaving age of the child.
- To share school records with the DSL at the receiving school when the child transfers to a new school.

### **5.2 Teachers and support staff:**

Smart Vision School takes the view that there must be someone at the school that a pupil in difficulty can talk to. This is most likely to be their class or homeroom teacher, but could also include teaching assistants, subject specialists and Inclusion staff. The Principal, Senior Leadership Team and School Nurse also make themselves available to all members of the Smart Vision School community for discussion and advice. Anyone approached should clearly understand that they are receiving a student's concern, not making a diagnosis. None of the signs listed may actually prove that a child is

being abused and these indications should not be taken as proof. They may be indicators, which when put into context, provide justification for action. It must be remembered that even an explicit disclosure by a child may be untrue. Children may sustain injury by accident or design in order to implicate someone else. Emotional abuse is more than just the occasional criticism of a child. Abuse is a symptom of continued negative treatment that ostracises or belittles a child. This is usually the result of extremes of inappropriate care by the parents and so very difficult to confront.

## **6 Responding to Child Protection Disclosures**

### **6.1 When a pupil makes a disclosure:**

- Receive what is said.
- It is important that you remain objective.
- Until other agencies are brought into operation, the child is simply alleging that something has taken place. It may be the case that the child has an ulterior motive in making an allegation.
- Accept what you are told. It is not your responsibility to investigate its truth or otherwise or decide if the information is correct.
- Listen without displaying shock or disbelief. To do so could affect the child and prevent the disclosure of information.
- Reassure the child.
- Acknowledge the child's courage and strength in deciding to disclose the information. The step of disclosure is in itself often the most difficult for a young person to take and will have been the subject of a great deal of thought before being anywhere near confident of doing so.
- Remind them that they are not to blame for what is happening. - Do not promise confidentiality. Given that the safety of the child is paramount, a member of staff cannot give assurance that the information presented does not need further investigation. - Do not promise that everything will be alright. This most obviously may not be true and to raise expectations can be as devastating as the outcome of the allegations.
- React. This is the most skilled part of the initial disclosure of the allegation.
- Respond to what the student has said but do not interrogate. Avoid leading questions.
- Questions must be open ended: "Do you want to tell me anything else? And? Yes? Can you remember any more details?" - Reflect/seek clarification. If the situation allows, "Can I be clear about the detail of what you are saying?" This is recommended so that you are able to decide whether this is a child protection issue or not.
- Explain to the pupil what you intend to do next. This will focus on the process the School adopts and contacting the designated person within the School. It may also mean an outline of the referral process given the nature of the allegation.

There is a careful judgment to be made in ensuring that you have enough information to make an appropriate referral and allowing a young person to talk without being silenced, whilst making sure that you do not inadvertently lead the child, perhaps by assumption and unintentionally, by the nature of the question.



## **6.2 Recording:**

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the meeting. THIS MUST BE HANDWRITTEN (on the form included as appendix A, whenever possible). This may be possible in the meeting itself but it would be advisable to ask permission of the child in the first instance.
- Write up your notes in full using Appendix A at the first opportunity.
- Describe observable behaviour, e.g. was shaking, continued to cry, constantly moved around the room. Do not interpret these features.
- Record the actual words spoken by the child wherever possible. - Report the disclosure immediately to the DSL and give them the completed form.

## **6.3 Monitoring of Low-Level Child Protection Concerns in School**

All concerns a teacher has regarding a child protection issue must be discussed with the DSL. Often there are insufficient grounds or evidence to suggest referral to an outside agency. However, it must be stressed that this is not sufficient reason to ignore a concern. It may be that the DSL will contact external agencies or authorities to seek clarification on what action should be taken.

## **6.4 Monitoring the home circumstances:**

It may be that the decision is made to monitor the family. In this case a decision will be made as to:

- Which aspects of the student should be monitored? - Who should be involved in the process and what their responsibilities should be?
- A date at which time a review will take place (approx. 4–6 weeks).

Consultation with the parents will need to take place at this time but needs to be undertaken carefully so as not to arouse any suspicions on their part. The reason for this is twofold: if abuse is taking place it may cause a change in patterns of behaviour, etc., which may prolong the evidence gathering which would bring about referral and, secondly, there may be no cause for concern at all and 'clumsy monitoring' would serve only to upset those involved. Abuse at home can potentially come from a variety of sources – friends, nannies, drivers, siblings, extended family.

The focus in such contacts with parents will be on the individual's work and behaviour and thus eliciting further information from parents/carers.

Records must be kept in a separate file to the other school records. The written record must contain only observable behaviour and verbatim accounts and again not be interpretative or speculative. These records may be required as evidence.

## **6.5 Review:**

At the stipulated time of review the following will be established: - Grounds for further action.

If it is decided not to refer the issue, it must be indicated on the record that monitoring took place, the date of the decision not to refer and the reasons for this decision.

- If further monitoring is warranted, a new review date must be set. It is likely that this should be a brief period of time and if the results of the subsequent review are inconclusive the issue will be referred.

## 6.6 Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology. Like all forms of child sex abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years.
- Can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual. - Can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity.
- Can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both.
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.
- May occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).
- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.
- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation.
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late.
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

## 7 Online Safety

Students who use mobile phones, smart watches, tablets, games consoles and other devices with internet connectivity are at risk of exploitation, grooming and exposure to inappropriate material. It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate material or behaviours online. Smart Vision School will adopt a whole centered approach to online safety which will empower, protect, and educate our learners and staff in their use of technology, and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

Smart Vision School will ensure online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies. Online safety is considered as a running and interrelated theme when devising and implementing our policies and procedures and when planning our curriculum, staff training, the role and responsibilities of the school and parental engagement.

Smart Vision School identifies that the breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content. For example pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users. For example peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. For example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of explicit photography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
- Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Smart Vision School recognises that technology, and the risks and harms related to it, evolve and change rapidly. The school will carry out an annual review of our approaches to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment which considers and reflects the risks our children face.

## **8 Parents and Child Protection Issues**

Schools and their staff are placed in a delicate position when allegations of abuse or investigation of abuse is on-going, as the School still needs to maintain a working, constructive relationship with the parents/carers involved.

Allegations of abuse and those cases subsequently proven to be abuse can result in difficulties in maintaining a constructive and open relationship with parents.

Parents will have a range of feelings in relation to abuse of their children. They may well be angry at the School staff for having made a referral, be anxious about confidentiality of the issues and concerned that the children involved may be stigmatised as a result. If the family is broken up, parents are likely to be distressed as well as feeling guilt and shame. It is paramount that parents are made aware of the School's responsibility to the student so that they are aware that concerns will be dealt with. A clear statement of the child protection and confidentiality policies will be both a support to parents in working with them and provide a clear statement regarding the reasons for such policies. In this way all parents should recognise that the priority is the child's welfare.

### **8.1 Dealing with Parents:**

Teachers and support staff should not discuss child protection matters with parents without involving the DSL. If a parent makes a disclosure, tell them that you must involve the DSL and arrange a meeting immediately, or as soon as possible if the DSL is not available.

Guidance for staff who are required to discuss child protection matters with parents:

- Provide the clear guideline that the nature of the discussion will be on the student's progress, performance and behaviour. - Remain objective.
- Acknowledge their feelings.
- Be clear that your responsibility is to the child's welfare and state and reinforce this to parents.
- If a child is at the center of a child protection allegation, it is prudent to offer parents the name/s of agencies that will be able to advise and support them.

## **9 Allegations Against Members of Staff**

Allegations against members of staff must be treated with the same professional regard as those made against others. It is recognised that abuse does take place in the context of schools, although fortunately the incidences are rare. It may be that allegations are falsely made. What is important is that staff should feel that they will be treated fairly and according to clearly set out procedures which will give them confidence that abuse and false allegations will be dealt with.

Managing accusations of abuse against staff members is the sole responsibility of the Principal and not the DSL. If you are concerned that a member of staff is not behaving appropriately towards a child or children, report your concerns to the Principal immediately.

## 10 Appendix A: Record of Child Protection Concern

Date:  
Pupil's name:  
DOB:  
Nationality:  
SEND (Y/N):

Child Protection Concerns – details:

- Place
- Time
- What did you see?
- What was said?
- Who else was there?
- Is this the first time that you have been concerned about this child? If not, give details.

Signature of person who completed this form:

Signature of DSL:

Received on: