



SWISS  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCIENTIFIC SCHOOL  
— D U B A I —

# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## 2017/18

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# SISD Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## Introduction

The health, safety and well-being of all our children is 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 have a duty and will report any suspected or disclosed issues of child protection to the Child Protection Officer (CPO). If the threat is immediate or ongoing it will be reported to the appropriate local safeguarding authorities as set in place by the UAE.

## Purpose of the Child Protection Policy

The safeguarding of children and young people from harm is the highest priority here at SISD. 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 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. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

## 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.

## Aims

This policy ensures that all SISD staff 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 to be concerned

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
- Regularly has unexplained injuries
- Frequently has injuries even when apparently reasonable explanations are given
- Offers confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude
- Indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age
- 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
- Do not criticize the perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.

## SISD Child Protection Procedures

When a child reports abuse, the staff member will inform the designated Child Protection Officer (Yvonne Donoghue) immediately. In the event of the CPO's absence, the deputy CPO (Niamh Hogan) is to be informed. The CPO will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident. At this stage 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 CPO will then form a school-based response team to address the report. The response team may include the Head of School and/or relevant departments, school doctor, nurse, counsellor, teacher, and other individuals as the CPO 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 CPO in order to gain more information.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counsellor, or administrator as appropriate
- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns where appropriate and without further endangering the child.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counselling.
- Consultation with local authorities e.g. Dubai Police, Al Ameen, Dubai Foundation for Women and Children, Dubai Community Development Authority.

Subsequent to a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect, the following actions may take place:

- The CPO will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The CPO will provide the child's teachers with ongoing support, and provide strategies for the teacher to use.
- The CPO 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 Head of School refers the case to local authorities for further action.

## Responsibilities of all SISD staff members

- 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 CPO.
- 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 SISD staff are expected:**

- To be aware of symptoms of abuse
- To report concerns to CPO as appropriate
- To keep clear, dated, factual and confidential records of child protection concerns.

## Specific responsibilities of the School Doctor/Nurse and Counsellor

- The school Doctor/Nurse or Counsellor may be requested to provide physical treatment and emotional support after a child has been abused.
- The Doctor or Nurse may be required to conduct an examination if there are physical injuries and write an initial report about the child's physical and emotional condition.
- The Doctor/ Nurse and/ or Counsellor can provide positive encouragement to the child, liaise with family members determine how best to promote the child's safety both at school and at home.
- Child abuse can leave deep emotional scars and the School Doctor or Nurse should recognize these and help develop a rehabilitation plan in liaison with the CPO and other appropriate staff in the case team.
- In some cases, the child may have to take medication as a result of the abuse. The School Doctor or Nurse should ensure that all standards and procedures for administering medications in the school setting are met.

## Specific responsibilities of the HR department and Security

- When recruiting any member of the teaching staff or support staff with access to children, all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure compliance as far as possible with the following:
  - Provision of an up-to-date police 'good conduct' letter and/or criminal records check
  - That two or more references are taken up from previous employers with follow-up questions with regard to the applicant's compliance with any Child Protection procedures
  - A declaration signed by the prospective employee on any application form and/or contract that s/he has not been convicted or undergoing court or disciplinary proceedings for any offence involving child abuse and/or breach in exercising a duty of care for children
  - The Security staff undertake to be vigilant and adhere to the procedures governing the access, detailed record-keeping, provision of a Visitor's Pass to be worn for ease of identification and monitoring of visitors to the school.

## Roles and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and visitors to SISD. The staff at SISD have a responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of our students. All staff must report any suspected incidents of child abuse to the Child Protection Officer immediately.

The CPO will:

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

## Relevant legislation or authorities

This Child Protection 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 Child Protection Laws, last updated in June 2016.

All staff (both teaching and non-teaching), including volunteers who apply to work at the school, will be subject to a rigorous recruitment process to ensure, as far as possible, their suitability to work with children and eligibility to work in the UAE. At least, two references will be taken up and they will be required to give evidence of their qualifications. Staff will be provided with a copy of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and will be required to sign a document certifying that they have read it and agree to abide by its contents.

All these policies are applicable when students go on trips away from school. At least one male and one female will be present to support students. Child Protection is the responsibility of all staff and especially those working with children. Staff should discuss any concerns regarding Child Protection with the CPO. The Head of School is responsible for reporting issues related to this policy to the CEO/ Board. Board members will not be given specific details relating to child protection situations.

## Allegations against staff or the Head of School

Teachers who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the Head of School, who will inform the CPO. If the Head of School is absent, the allegation should be passed to the SISD founder, Omar Danial. If the allegation is against the Head of School, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the SISD founder and CPO, without notifying the Head of School first.

## Policy Review

This policy is to be reviewed annually, though any deficiencies or weaknesses in children protection arrangements will be remedied without delay. The Head of School, founder of the school and CPO will undertake an annual review of the school's Child Protection/ Safeguarding policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

DATE FOR REVIEW January, 2018

I confirm that I have read the SISD Child protection and Safeguarding Policy in full and I agree to abide by its contents.

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Teacher's signature