

مدرسة الوحدة العربية

ARAB UNITY SCHOOL



## Child Protection Policy



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Arab Unity School is in compliance with Federal **Law** No. 3 of 2016 concerning the **rights of children which** recognizes the need for strong protection.

The **law** protects **children** against all forms of negligence, exploitation, physical and psychological abuses. This **Law** previously known as Wudeema s **Law is renamed as Child's Right law**. The **law** applies to all **children** up to the age of 18

***The AUS Child Protection policy applies to all pupils, staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to school. This policy aims to outline the identification process of child abuse cases, the management of such cases, people responsible for it and the precautions taken by school in lieu of the KHDA guidelines for child protection.***

#### **The School understands that:**

- Abuse and neglect are not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.
- A teacher's, parent's or caregiver's stress or deprivation is no excuse for abuse and neglect.
- The severity of a sign does not necessarily equate with the severity of the abuse.
- It is essential to seek competent specialist advice for medical, psychological or cultural issues.
- It is an agent of referral and not of investigation.

Clear guidelines are given in the Arab Unity School Child Protection Policy for prevention of any kind of abuse and for protection of members of AUS.

#### **Objectives**

1. All allegations, disclosures or suspicions of abuse and harm to be taken seriously and responded to promptly.
2. All school members to be trained on a regular basis so that they can respond to any suspected case in the appropriate manner.
3. Reports made by a parent to a staff member of concerns about inappropriate child behavior to be discussed by the Child Protection Officer and the reporting parent informed of the outcome of the discussions.
5. When an allegation of abuse or inappropriate behavior concerns behavior of a member of staff, the Child Protection Officer and Principal to be informed and prompt and appropriate action to be taken.

**Our DEFINITIONS of abuse are: source World health organization.**

**Child:** A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years

**Child abuse :**“Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.’

**Neglect** - The persistent or severe neglect of a child which results in impairment of health or development

**Physical Abuse** - Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering

**Sexual** – Actual or likely exploitation of a child by involvement in sexual activities without informed consent or understanding, or that violate social taboos or family roles

**Emotional** – actual or likely severe adverse effects on the emotional and behavioral development of a child by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment, not appropriate, or rejection.

**Bullying** - any persistent and uninvited behavior which insults, hurts or intimidates someone (includes cyber bullying).

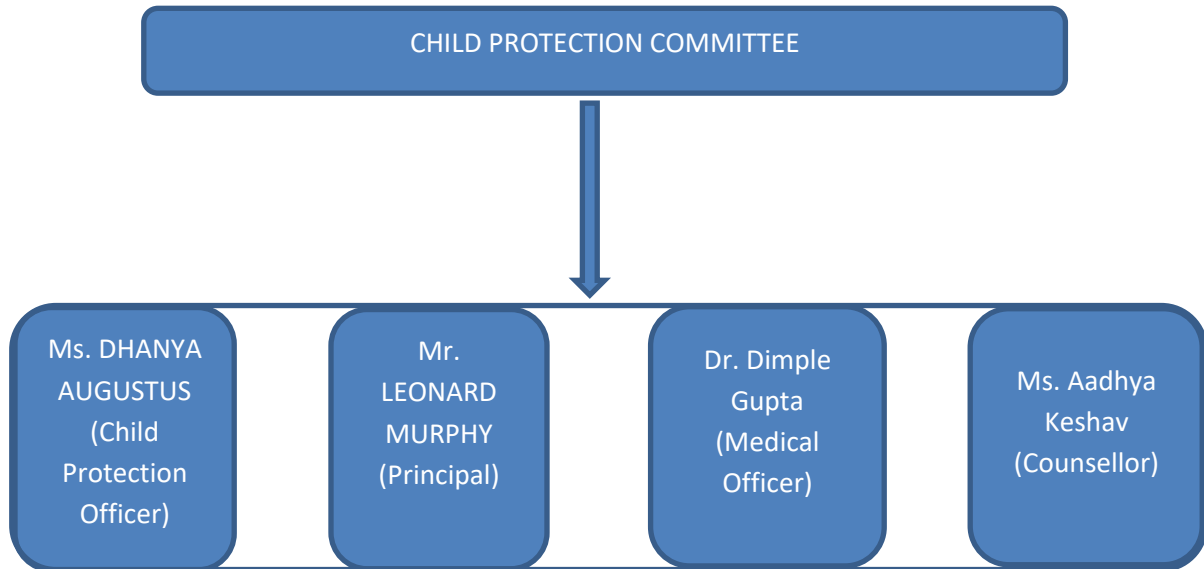
**Corporal punishment of children:** “Corporal” or “physical” punishment is any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting (“smacking”, “slapping”, “spanking”) children, with the hand or with an implement a whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, caning, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding, or forced ingestion.

**The Child Protection Policy Guidelines are divided into the following sections**

- 1. Child Protection Committee**
- 2. Process of referral**
- 3. Recognizing signs of abuse.**
- 4. Responding appropriately to any disclosure.**
- 5. Recording and reporting abuse.**
- 6. Staff Code of Conduct.**
- 7. Noncompliance of code of conduct.**

## **1. Child Protection Committee.**

The school Head of Inclusion is the designated Child Protection Officer. She works along with the Principal and other committee members



## **2. Process of referral**

- If a member of staff/ parent has identified a child protection concern with a student in the school, he/she should notify the Child Protection Officer (CPO) at the earliest.
- He/ She has to make a note of the incident by documenting it on the form.
- The CPO will investigate the case in consultation with the Principal.
- Depending on the case parents/ external authorities will notified and necessary action will be taken.

## **3. Recognising signs of abuse.**

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, drowning, suffocating. Symptoms that indicate physical abuse include:

- Bruising in or around the mouth, on the back, buttocks or rectal area
- Finger mark bruising or grasp marks on the limbs or chest of a small child
- Burn and scald marks; small round burns that could be caused by cigarette
- Fractures to arms, legs or ribs in a small child
- Large numbers of scars.

P.S – According to the Dubai Police Department any visible sign of injury is physical abuse and will be recorded as an offence.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse happens when a child's need for love, security, praise and recognition is not met. It usually co-exists with other forms of abuse. Emotionally abusive behaviour occurs if a parent, teacher or authority figure is consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else. Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:

- Excessively clingy or attention – seeking behaviour
- Very low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism
- Excessively withdrawn behaviour or fearfulness;
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please
- Eating disorders

### **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, causing damage to their health and development.

Symptoms of physical and emotional neglect can include:

- Inadequate supervision; being left alone for long periods of time
- Lack of stimulation, social contact or education
- Constant hunger; stealing or gorging food
- Failure to seek or to follow medical advice such that a child's life or development is endangered
- Inappropriate clothing for conditions

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities; whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Genital soreness, injuries or discomfort
- Sexually transmitted disease; urinary infection
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; inappropriately sexualized play, words or drawing
- A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults

- Repeated sleep disturbances through nightmares and/or bedwetting

Older children and young people may additionally exhibit:

- Depression
- Drug / Alcohol abuse
- Eating disorder; obsessive behaviour
- Self-mutilation; suicide attempts
- School/ peer/relationship problems

### **Responding appropriately to any disclosure**

#### **Things TO SAY when a child discloses**

- Repeat the last few words in a questioning manner
- 'I believe you'
- 'I am going to try to help you'
- 'I will help you'
- 'I am glad that you told me'
- 'You are not to blame'

#### **Things TO DO**

- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person.
- Reassure the child that it was right to tell you.
- Let them know what you are going to do next.
- Acknowledge the child's feelings and emotions.
- Determine if the child is experiencing extreme distress. If so, bring the young person to a counsellor/child protection officer immediately.
- Accompany the young person to the counsellor/child protection officer.

#### **Things NOT TO DO**

- Don't panic.
- Do not attempt to deal with the situation yourself.
- Do NOT formally interview the child:
  - Never ask leading questions.
  - Never push for information or make assumptions.
  - Only necessary relevant facts should be obtained, when clarification is needed.

- Do not make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents.
- Do not keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality.
- Do not take any action that might undermine any future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents or care givers.
- Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation to the designated child protection officer.

**Recording and reporting abuse.**

- Write down accurately what the child has told you. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure place for an indefinite period.
- Fill the reporting form Annexure 1
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage of the procedure.
- Report any physical or sexual abuse to the Child protection officer. If she is absent then you can report to the Principal.
- In case of Physical injury or sexual abuse, the child protection officer will seek the help of the School Doctor or Nurse to record the physical injury Annexure 11.
- In case of Bullying or Neglect- you can report to the child protection committee members.

**Staff code of conduct**

All Arab Unity School Staff are required to sign the Code of Conduct as a term of employment. Staff shall not abuse children including:

Physical Abuse – Strike, Spank, Shake, Slap;
Verbal Abuse – Humiliate, Degrade, Threaten;
Sexual Abuse – Inappropriate Touch or Verbal Exchange;
Emotional Abuse – Shaming, Withholding Love, Cruelty;
Neglect – withholding Food, Water, Basic Care, etc.

**All staff at Arab Unity School will:**

- Treat all students with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability or other status.
- Never implement physical punishment to students.
- Never use student's images for personal purpose, or use the social media to communicate any personal messages.
- Take student /parent consent before using any photographing or filming a student.

**Confidentiality**

- ❖ **Staff cannot hold on to information when intervention is needed to ensure a child's safety. *"When a child or young person is at risk of abuse or neglect, confidentiality is not an option. You must share information with the Child Protection Officer or Principal where this is necessary to protect a child or young person."***
- ❖ Staff is requested to refrain from discussing the concern with any other staff member or parent.
- ❖ No staff is allowed to share any information to other staff members or the media

**7. NON-COMPLIANCE OF CODE OF CONDUCT**

In Cases of **non-compliance** of the above-mentioned code of conduct the modus operandi will be as following.

1. The case will be investigated by the Child Protection Committee.
2. The staff concerned will then have a confidential meeting with the Child Protection Officer and others involved in the case if permitted by the Principal and will be allowed to present his/her case.
3. In cases where the Staff will be decided upon as guilty, action will be taken as per the decision of the Principal.

**POLICY REVIEW**

The school's Executive Leadership Group is responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy when needed.



# CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

## ARAB UNITY SCHOOL



Mr Leonard Murphy

**Principal**



Ms Dhanya Augustus

**Child Protection Officer (CPO)**



Dr Dimple Gupta

**Medical Officer**



Ms Aadhya Keshav

**Counsellor**