



## STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

Introduced	December 2015
Review 1	December 2018
Review 2	December 2021
Review 3	December 2024
Next Review	December 2026

### DEFINITION:

For the purpose of this policy, **The School** refers to Dunes International School and **student protection** is defined as all those measures, steps and actions that must be taken to avoid subjecting students while at School or outside it, during any School activities and during their transportation to any danger or harm, be it exploitation, violence, physical harm, sexual abuse, any verbal insult, moral threat or harm of any kind. It is every student's right to be in a safe school environment that is free of any form of abuse and that continuously offers care, support and protection to all students without discrimination.

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures and measures that will be taken to protect students from harm, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. It aims to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding students and to establish clear guidelines for reporting and addressing concerns.

### POLICY FRAMEWORK

Our Student Protection Policy is guided by the following principles:

- **Respect and Dignity:** Every student has the right to be treated with respect and dignity.
- **Student Rights:**
  - All students have the right to be -
    - a. Heard and to express their voice/opinion and participate in decision making processes in the school
    - b. Treated with dignity and respect
    - c. Treated with fairness and justice
    - d. Supported by an advocate and provided with necessary support when required
    - e. Safe, protected from harm, and aware of what constitutes risk and harm





- **Safety and Security:** Ensuring a safe environment free from harm and abuse. Best interests and safety of the student shall be a primary consideration in all actions taken to safeguard their wellbeing. Zero tolerance of all forms of maltreatment will be upheld in all actions and environments pertaining to students.
- **Shared Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the principal and all staff – to recognize, respond to, and manage student protection risk and impact to the best of their ability.
- **Awareness and Education:** Educating all stakeholders about student protection issues and preventive measures.
- **Confidentiality and Sensitivity:** Handling all student protection concerns with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** All mandated reporters and stakeholders of the school are responsible and accountable for ensuring student protection measures are in place and applied and upheld.
- **Complete Protection of Reporters:** All mandated reporters and stakeholders will be protected and shall not be hindered or penalized in any manner for carrying out their responsibilities to report and safeguard students from all forms of maltreatment.

### TYPES OF STUDENT MALTREATMENT/ABUSE

- **Physical Abuse** - An intentional physical act which results in, has a high likelihood of resulting in, or poses a threat of resulting in immediate and/or long-term physical injury or harm to the student's health, survival, and development.
- **Emotional Abuse** - An act, whether consistent or inconsistent, used to make a student feel unloved, worthless, and of no value and integrity, interfering with the student's positive mental and emotional development.
- **Sexual Abuse** - Involvement of a student in sexual activity that they may or may not fully comprehend, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Student sexual abuse is evidenced by the activity between an adult and a student, or between a student and another student, who by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. The intent of the activity is to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.
- **Neglect** - Failure of a parent or any adult supervising a student to provide for the basic needs and rights of a student towards their physical safety, development, and wellbeing, which may lead to a failure to thrive in the context of the resources reasonably available to the parent and causes or has a high probability of causing significant harm to the student's health and/or physical, social, educational, mental, spiritual, or moral integrity.



- **Exploitation** - Use of the student in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, student labor and exploitation of students in prostitution or involvement of the student in gangs, militia or military. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social development.
  - Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where there is abuse of power by a youth, adult, or group who may coerce, manipulate, or deceive a student into sexual activity by physical contact and/or use of technology for monetary, social, or political profits.
  - Economic exploitation is the use of a student who is below the minimum age of labor in the workplace or related activities for the benefit of others through the production, distribution, and consumption of goods or of a particular service delivered by the student.
  
- **Bullying** - Repeated physical, social, or verbal aggression exercised by students who feel they are in a position of power against other students who are perceived weaker or powerless, to achieve specific gains or draw attention, in a way that hurts the student physically and/or emotionally. Bullying can be committed by groups or individuals, in online (cyberbullying) or offline settings. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Online bullying can follow the bullied student wherever they go via social networks and mobile phones and has a wider reach than bullying in the real world.

### IMPORTANT CONTACTS (INTERNAL):

Name of Child Protection Coordinator – Ms. Nirmala Nair (Social Worker)

#### Members of Child Protection Team

- Principal
- Safety Officer
- Counsellor
- Social worker

### IDENTIFICATION OF MALTREATMENT

#### When to be concerned

Staff should be concerned if a pupil:

- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's activities.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Frequently have injuries, even when apparently reasonable explanations are given.
- Offers confused or conflicting explanations about on how injuries were sustained.





- Exhibits significant changes in behavior, performance or attitude.
- Indulges in sexual behavior which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age.
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.

### Dealing with a disclosure

If a pupil discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff:

- Listens to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief;
- Accepts what is being said;
- Allows the child to talk freely;
- Reassures the child, but not make promises which might not be possible to keep;
- Not promise confidentially, as it might be necessary to refer the case to the Safety officer;
- Reassures the pupil that what has happened is not their fault;
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell;
- Listens, rather than ask direct questions;
- Asks open questions rather than leading questions;
- Not criticize the perpetrator;
- Explains what has to be done next and who has to be told.

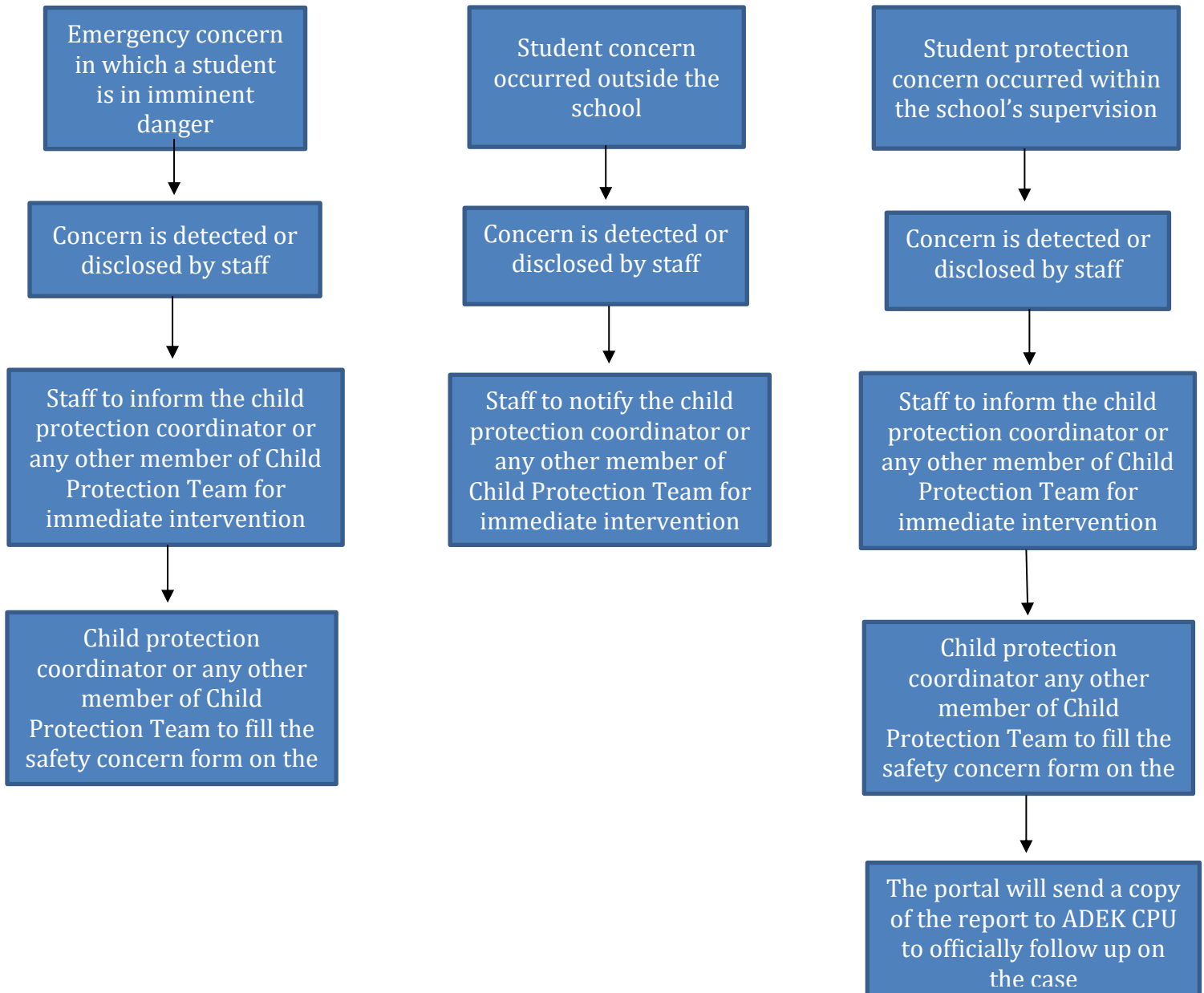
### REPORTING OF INCIDENTS:

- Staffs are mandated by Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights to report all cases of alleged and/or suspected maltreatment (conducted by any alleged/suspected perpetrator inside or outside of the school) directly to the ADEK Child Protection Unit (CPU) within 24 hours upon suspicion.
- All concerns of student maltreatment disclosed in the school, whether the maltreatment took place inside or outside of school, should be notified to the Child Protection Coordinator or any other member of the Child Protection Team.
- All cases of bullying will be handled in accordance with the procedures defined in National Policy for the Prevention of Bullying in Educational Institutions framework. Severe bullying would be considered as maltreatment, which should be handled according to the procedures defined in this policy.
- If any staff receives an allegation or has a concern that a student may have been maltreated, is being maltreated, or is at risk of maltreatment, they shall report the matter to the CPC, or any other member of the Child Protection Team immediately.
- In case the reporter is unable to reach the CPC, or other members of the CPT, or it is not in the best interest of the student to inform the CPC or the team, then they should inform the CPU at ADEK and/or the FCA directly by filling out the Safety Concern Form online on the digital safety concern portal.



- In emergency cases, where the student is in imminent danger, it should be reported without delay by the CPC to the Police (999) and the Principal, with a copy of the Safety Concern Form online on the digital safety concern portal.

Staff should follow the procedures given in the below chart:





### Important contacts (External):

- Abu Dhabi Police: 999
- Family Care Authority (FCA): 800444 [icm@adfca.gov.ae](mailto:icm@adfca.gov.ae)
- MoE Child Protection Unit (CPU)\*: 80085 [cpu@moe.gov.ae](mailto:cpu@moe.gov.ae)
- Safety Concern Portal: <https://daasafetyconcern.abudhabi>

### Suspected Child Abuse by a Teacher

The following action by the School authorities is to be taken in case of suspected child abuse by a teacher:

- Immediate suspension of any member of staff who is accused of an offence involving student abuse, until an investigation in this matter is completed and a decision is made concerning this member of staff's fitness to continue to work at the School.
- Immediate termination of the employment of anyone found guilty by a competent authority of an offence of student abuse.
- Anyone who fails to comply with this policy is subjected to legal accountability and the penalties stipulated in accordance with the ADEK regulations.

### DATA CONFIDENTIALITY

- Case reports and student data must be kept strictly confidential. The identities of the student subject to alleged and/or suspected maltreatment, the alleged/suspected perpetrator, and the person reporting the alleged/suspected case must be kept confidential by all parties involved in the case.
- Staff must share information about a child's welfare only with designated personnel in the school, such as the Child Protection Coordinator or member of CPT. Staff should avoid discussing child protection concerns with unauthorized individuals, including colleagues, parents (other than the child's own), or students.
- The data should be shared only with authorized individuals from the ADEK CPU and the FCA, within investigative teams, and the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department.
- Authorized individuals are strictly prohibited from discussing active or closed cases with the media, any third parties or other staff, and/or unauthorized ADEK staff, with the exception of investigative and judicial authorities and within the legal responsibilities.
- Parents or guardians must be informed about concerns, unless doing so might compromise the child's safety or contradict legal requirements.



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Principal:

1. Comply with the provisions of this policy.
2. Publish and post this policy to protect students from maltreatment.
3. Ensure that procedures to prevent situations that could lead to the maltreatment of students are in place and understood by all school staff.
4. Ensure the oversight of students at all times while under the supervision of the school.
5. Ensure that there is priority emphasis within the school on the protection of the students and for taking immediate actions when there is suspicion of cases of student maltreatment.
6. Ensure that students know how, where, and to whom to safely report their concerns about alleged and/or suspected maltreatment without fear of retribution or punishment.
7. Ensure that all stakeholders are aware of how, where, and to whom they can safely report their concerns about the potential exposure of any student to alleged and/or suspected maltreatment without fear of retribution or punishment.
8. Include the views and recommendations from students and parents regarding safety and protection reporting within the school.
9. Immediately report any case of alleged and/or suspected maltreatment of students as stated by this policy.
10. Ensure that all staff and volunteers targeted for student protection training fully attend and participate in all training sessions and sign off on safeguarding training and student protection training.
11. Conduct orientation sessions for parents upon student registration or enrollment and at the start of every school year to promote this policy and to inform them of their roles and responsibilities, and their rights and duties.
12. Maintain students' records in compliance with Policy 35 (Records) and ensure confidentiality of open and closed cases in accordance with the guidelines.
13. Immediately suspend any staff who is suspected of an offense involving student maltreatment on a temporary basis until the suspicion is adjudicated.
14. Ensure that students have a safe and confidential opportunity to report any concerns they may have regarding their rights to safety and wellbeing.
15. Ensure the vetting, hiring, and monitoring of all staff, volunteers, and invited visitors according to this policy and relevant safeguarding measures.

### All Staff:

1. Report immediately an alleged and/or suspected case of maltreatment upon discovery.
2. Care for students at all times while under the school's supervision.
3. Understand this policy to address alleged and/or suspected student maltreatment cases.
4. Attend and participate in mandated student protection and safeguarding training.

### Parents:

1. Cooperate with the school's principal and staff, answer all inquiries related to the student's behavior, academic performance, and respond to their feedback and guidance.
2. Attend all scheduled parent meetings with the school.





3. Communicate any concerns, observations, or changes in the student's behavior to the school's principal, board members, and/or to the concerned institutional staff.
4. Support the school in ensuring safe online practices during distance learning and homework.

### TRAINING:

- The CPC and CPT shall complete all student protection policy and safeguarding training as mandated by ADEK.
- All staff shall complete in-school training on student protection and also any ADEK-mandated student protection policy and safeguarding training sessions.
- Students will be taught about student protection through various means and media, to help them understand personal safety and wellbeing.

### Amendments:

Review 1	No Change
Review 2	No Change
Review 3	Changes made as per the latest ADEK Student Protection Policy.  Changes made in the following sections:  Name of Policy, Purpose, Principles, Types, Contact Persons/Child Protection Team/Child Protection Coordinator, Reporting of Incidents, Confidentiality, Roles and Responsibilities of Principal, Training

Principal  Mr. Paramjit Ahluwalia	
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