



OUR OWN HIGH SCHOOL, AL WARQA'A, DUBAI
Child Safeguarding Policy



Reviewed : 20th March 2021
Next Review : 20th March 2022

1. Introduction:

1.1. Our Own High School ensures that children are effectively safeguarded from the potential risk of harm and that the safety and well-being of the children is of the highest priority in all aspects of the schools' work. All the staff at Our Own High School is committed to provide a safe environment where children can play, learn, develop and achieve. Each school has specific procedures that are in place within the school for managing and reporting any child safeguarding issues.

2. Purpose:

2.1. The four main elements to our child protection policy:

- Prevention (e.g. Positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils)
- Protection (by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns)
- Support (to pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused)
- Working with Parents (to ensure appropriate communications and actions are undertaken)

3. Scope:

3.1. The scope of this policy covers child safeguarding within Our Own High School. This includes the effective recruitment, management and monitoring of all OOW employees and any other persons who may be required to work with or within our school. It also extends to ensuring that effective reporting mechanisms are in place for incidents which may occur within the family environment.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. Safe guarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Essentially, everyone who comes into contact with children and their families have a role to play in safeguarding for children.
- 4.2. All employees and support staff have a responsibility for providing a safe environment in which children can learn.

- 4.3. The GEMS designated VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection has overall responsibility for child safeguarding across all GEMS schools. The appointed person is the VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection – Ms. Sara Hedger
- 4.4. The school principal has appointed a safeguarding lead (Ms. Anitha Nair) and two deputy (Ms. Sindhu Madhavan) and (Ms. Pooja Harikumar). The child safeguarding lead has responsibility within the school for child safeguarding.
- 4.5. The child safeguarding lead is responsible for reporting any safeguarding incidents or concerns to the VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection and other relevant head office stakeholders. This can be done via the HSE incident reporting system.
- 4.6. All employees and support staff have a responsibility for reporting any safeguarding incidents or concerns to the designated lead or deputy and the principal within their school.
- 4.7. The school principal is responsible for ensuring that suitable and sufficient background checks are conducted for every employee. This is conducted in partnership with the central human resource department.
- 4.8. Each school principal is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all employees receive safeguarding training upon joining and at the beginning of the academic year at 2 yearly intervals.
- 4.9. The GEMS VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection and School Principal are responsible for identifying and reporting significant incidents to the relevant external authorities.

5. Definitions:

- 5.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy 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; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.*
(Department of Education, 2016)
- 5.2 Child – each and every child below the age of 18. (Federal law 3, 2016).
- 5.3 VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection (CPO) – the designated senior employee within GEMS school support centre who has specific responsibility for evoking and leading the GEMS crisis management team for high level child safeguarding incidents.
- 5.4 Child abuse: Each and every act or omission that would harm the child in a manner that prevents his upbringing and growth in a proper safe and healthy manner (Federal law 3, 2016).
- 5.5 Child neglect: Failure of parents or custodians to take the measures necessary for preserving the child's life and physical, psychological, mental and moral wellness from danger and protecting his various rights (Federal law 3, 2016).

6. Types of abuse:

- 6.1. Physical abuse – this involves causing physical harm to a child, examples can include, hitting, throwing, shaking, burning and scalding.
- 6.2. Emotional abuse – this can be seen as the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It may involve telling a child that they are useless, worthless or unloved. Emotional abuse may also mean not giving a child an opportunity to express his/her views or by continually diminishing what they say or do.
- 6.3. Sexual abuse – this involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The abuse may be in the form of physical contact or through non-physical contact, for example, forcing children to watch sexually explicit photos/videos. It may also include the grooming of children to lead to sexual abuse.
- 6.4. Neglect – this refers to the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or physiological needs. Neglect may include, failing to provide sufficient food, clothing or shelter for a child. It may also refer to a lack of supervision for a child or preventing access to appropriate medical needs.
- 6.5. The school recognizes abuse and neglect for Students of Determination and provides clear guidance to staff and volunteers to identify and report the same.

7. Procedure

7.1. Training

- a. All school employees must be fully aware of the child safeguarding systems that are in place. School specific information is given during the school induction, this will include:
 - i. A copy of the child safeguarding policy
 - ii. A copy of the staff code of conduct
 - iii. General child safeguarding training covering the reporting system within the school, signs to look out for etc.
 - iv. A copy of the inclusion policy and training on understanding the vulnerability of the students of determination.
- b. The school principal, child safeguarding lead and their deputy, will complete required/recognized child safeguarding trainings as required.

7.2. What staff members should do if they have concerns over a child

- a. If a staff member has any concerns regarding a child's welfare he or she must report their concerns to the school safe guard lead/deputy, who must then communicate to the principal and the VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection where necessary
- b. The safe guard lead/deputy will consult with the staff member and principal; a decision will then be made on the appropriate action to take. This may include, reporting the concern to the VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection.
- c. The incident must be reported via the HSE reporting system within 24 hours.

- d. In all circumstances, the welfare of the child must take ultimate priority.
- 7.3. What staff members or the school should do if they suspect the child to be in immediate harm
- a. If a child is deemed to be in immediate danger, the GEMS VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection must be notified immediately by the principal
 - b. The GEMS VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection will consult with the, crisis management team, safeguard lead and principal, in order to determine the next course of action. Based upon the severity of the situation, the issue may be reported to external authorities and the relevant child protection specialist.
 - c. GEMS will assist the external authorities during any investigations.
 - d. The incident must be reported via the HSE reporting system within 24 hours.
 - e. In all circumstances the welfare of the child must take ultimate priority.
- 7.4. What staff members or the school should do if they have concerns over a fellow staff member
- a. If an employee has any concerns over the behavior of another employee, they must report their concerns to the safeguard lead and school principal. This includes concerns over any third party providers (like STS, slices and infra care)
 - b. The safeguard lead and principal will investigate the incident. If an employee has concerns over the behavior of the principal, they must report it to the GEMS child protection officer.
 - c. The GEMS VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection will consult with the crisis management team in order to determine the next course of action.
- 7.5. Allegations of abuse made against other children
- a. A pastoral care process is in place within our schools to tackle bullying and abuse, if the abuse is deemed serious, then it must be reported to safe guard lead and principal. The safeguard lead will commence initial investigations; this may include liaising with counsellors and teachers.
 - b. Depending upon the severity of issue, the school principal may report to the GEMS Child Protection Officer. The GEMS VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection will decide to invoke the crisis management team and report to the external authorities' child protection specialist.
- 7.6. Elements to consider during an investigation
- a. The initial investigations conducted may determine that no further actions are required. In this instance, the incident and supporting information is still required to be submitted onto the HSE reporting system.
 - b. During any investigations the welfare of the child is of paramount importance. If the allegation is against a staff member, then the child should be removed from contact with the staff member as investigations are conducted. The school will endeavour to ensure that the investigations are conducted effectively and quickly.

- c. If during or after the investigations the alleged allegations are confirmed to be true, then the staff member will be immediately suspended and dealt with under GEMS disciplinary process.
- d. If the allegations are peer on peer, then the safeguard lead will determine if the parents are to be informed. If the parents are informed then the name of the child/other children should not be disclosed. The safeguard lead will work with the parents to investigate the incident.
- e. Any persons who are conducting the investigations must ensure that they remain open minded, this means listening to all parties in an equal and unbiased manner. The welfare of the child is of paramount importance. Any parties should be separated from contact during the investigations.
- f. If any allegations are found to be untrue then the information gathered must be included into the HSE reporting system and held on file.

8. Other relevant policies

- 8.1. The school Body's responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children goes beyond pure child protection. The duty is now to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. This policy therefore compliments and supports other polices. They are as follows:
- a. Anti-Bullying Policy
 - b. Cyber Policy
 - c. Behaviour Policy
 - d. Staff code of conduct

9. Storage of records/ reports

- 9.1 Due to the sensitive nature of child safeguarding issues, all reports must be securely stored at school within the child's file.
- 9.2 Access to information must be strictly limited to the safeguard lead or deputy within the school, the principal, the GEMS VP - Safeguarding & Child Protection or deputy, the Senior Vice President of schools and the VP Health, Safety and Environment.
- 9.3 Incident information will be accessible via the HSE reporting system; this will include the actual incident report and any subsequent investigation findings and actions.
- 9.4 Specific information may be requested by the external child protection specialist; in this case, the information will be released by the GEMS child protection officer.

10. Safer recruitment

Refer to the HR policy - Criminal Clearance Checks Policy. The policy provides detailed information relating to the safeguarding recruitment process within GEMS.

Distance Learning Safeguarding Policy

Implemented	:	1 st April 2021
Next Review	:	1 st September 2021

At Our Own High School we give utmost priority to the safety of all students and staff. All staff conduct throughout digital and remote learning will remain in line with GEMS Safeguarding Policy Manual, GEMS Safer Working Practice Guidance and all other relevant policies.

The conduct of all parties, including students, parents and staff includes the strict prohibition of cyber bullying, online harassment and the use of inappropriate language in any communication.

Online Safety for Staff and Students

- All 'live sessions' will have a minimum of 3 participants (including the teacher). There will be no 1:1 sessions.
- Staff in live sessions from home to ensure that the background is blurred so that their place of residence cannot be identified and there are no personal/ unprofessional materials in the background eg: papers with addresses, personal photos etc.
- All live sessions will be recorded and stored in the cloud so that they can be reviewed and revisited by students and staff when necessary. Students and parents will have access to the recorded lessons for a week.
- Safe working practice will be revisited with staff to avoid behaviors that may be outside of the GEMS Safer Working practice guidance and any relevant codes of conduct.
- Teachers will reinforce online behavior expectations regularly with students.
- Instance of any kind of Cyber bullying will lead to disciplinary actions as per the cyber policy.

To report any concern about online safety or the safe functioning of a learning platform the following guidelines to be followed.

For Students / Parents:

- First point of contact is the teacher in the class
- Report the matter to the Supervisor via email / phone call if required to be escalated
- Seek help from the counsellor
- Share your grievance with the Head of the segment / Headmistress / Principal if required to be further escalated

Teachers / Non-teaching staff:

- For minor issues help the students and report the matter to segment supervisor on the same day

- For major issues immediately inform the line manager (Supervisor) and alert DSL through online reporting on HSE on the same day.
- Supervisor will seek the support of DSL and Principal immediately and support the student / staff and family.
- Designated Safeguarding lead to take actions or assign a staff for further investigation the same day.
- Major safeguarding concern should be informed to Principal immediately by the DSL.
- Principal consults the Head of Safeguarding at GEMS School Support / external agency or both as appropriate.

We strongly believe that every individual has the right to feel safe and secure at all time.

Involvement of outside agencies:

Dubai Foundation for Women and Children (DFWAC)

This is the first licensed non-profit shelter in the UAE for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, child abuse and human trafficking. It was established in July 2007 by His Highness Sheikh

Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to offer victims immediate protection and support services in accordance with international human rights obligations. The Foundation provides a helpline, emergency shelter, and support services to women and children victims. DFWAC aims to protect physically, sexually

and emotionally abused women and children, prevent ongoing abuse and the escalation of violence and promote social awareness through education and outreach.

DFWAC provides:

- A safe shelter
- Case management
- Medical care
- Psychological support
- Counselling
- Legal, consular and immigration assistance
- Helpline 800 111 or email help@dfwac.ae
- Website – www.dfwac.ae

Dubai Police Human Rights Department 24/7 Duty Officer 056 6862121

Latifa Hospital Child Welfare Unit

Tel: 04 2193000

Fax: 04 3241717

PO Box 4115 Dubai, UAE

Working Hours: 24 Hours

Community Development Authority (Centre)

Any child in Dubai who needs help, protection from abuse, or advice can pick up the phone and dial 800-988 any time. Four social workers and psychologists at the Child Protection Centre in Al Barsha are on standby to assist residents under 18 years of age to ensure their rights are protected and upheld. The recently opened centre under the Community Development Authority (CDA) is part of CDA's comprehensive strategy to make Dubai the most secure and ideal environment for children to live. It is tasked with rehabilitating, providing counselling, visiting and assisting children in need.

Al Ameen Reporting (Dubai & Federal Police)

The Al Ameen Service officially launched in September 2003. Using this service, the people of Dubai can communicate confidentially with the authorities to keep abreast of developments in Dubai, and on issues that concern them.

www.alameen.ae/en/

Shaykh Murtada
9/6/2021



11. Child Safeguarding Concern form and tracking sheets

Name of the Child:		Grade/ Section:	
Reported by:			
Witness:			
Date:	Time:	Location:	
(Of Observed behavior/ discussion/ disclosure)			
Concern/ Incident: (to be completed by reporting adult) Note: Please do not interpret what is seen or heard, simply record the facts			
Injuries observed – Please tick		Yes	No
Name of the witness to injuries:			
Date Injuries seen:			

Discipline and Child Protection Action Form

For: Supervisors	Date:	Time:
Name:		
Action Taken	By Whom	Out Come
Discuss with Child Ensure the child's wishes and feelings are ascertained where appropriate		
Monitoring Sheet		
Contact Parents Please Tick Telephone Call Meeting		
Refer to ?		
Other (Please Specify)		