

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

Al Ittihad National Private School Abu Dhabi (INPS-AD) thrives to protect & safeguard every child under its roof, and is ready to cooperate with the Ministry of Interior -Child Protection Center (MOI-CPC), and the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) to stop any type of child abuse. The welfare of every child is paramount; and ALL children, regardless of their age, gender, language, color have the right to protection from abuse – in all its types. Enforced by the UAE Federal law No. 3 of 2016 on child rights, Federal law No. 3 of 1987 on penal code, and other relevant UAE law.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to give detailed information about the school Child Protection Policy with clear procedures on how to handle abused children & who to report to when such abuse is evident. Children have rights, most importantly the right to be safe from danger, happy and respected; the right to parental guidance not negligence, freedom of expression, of thought, conscience & religion, protection from all forms of violence, good health & health services , the right to education, leisure, play & culture; also children with disabilities have rights..... all these rights must put into practice in a warm & loving environment which comprises the family/ home & the school that the child is attending.

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All Staff members should know the procedures to seek help for any abused/or neglected child; so that they can respond to the abuse using proper means. These rights were specified by the United Nations in 1989 which acknowledges fundamental rights to which all children are entitled for their proper development. The UAE is also one of 192 countries who signed the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child "UNCRC".

Students' Supervision

School management shall ensure the supervision of students 45 minutes before the start of the school day, during the day, and 90 minutes after school hours.

First Aid Training

The INPS-AD ensures the provision of on-going First Aid training, and dissemination of knowledge regarding all health, safety and prevention matters so that all School staff know what is expected of them and what to look out for with respect to the protection and safety of students (such as, First Aid, CPR).

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

Any staff person that suspects a child has come to school abused or neglected must report that information to the Child Protection Officer (CPO) and the School Director. It is their responsibility to contact the appropriate authorities.

A teacher who works with young children has many roles to play to help protect, nurture, teach & safeguard her students. All staff members, mainly Teachers are urged to report any type of abuse whether physical (bruises, injuries...) & or /any type of neglect (physical/emotional) to their Section Principal, Child Protection Officer or School Director who will take the required action and treat each case accordingly.

The most important thing is never to ignore any sign and help the child by removing him/her from any risky or dangerous situation. This is a collaborative effort by school management & the intervention of the Ministry of interior (MOI), ADEC and/or the Police.

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Student Protection - ADEC Guidelines

Staff at INPS-AD school should follow the guidelines documented in the ADEC 2014 - 2015

Policy Manual for child abuse as indicated in Article 5:

Students protection

Article (5)

- Student enrolment in the school constitutes an implied approval from the Headmaster to assume the role of the guardian and bear the consequences of such role when the student is under the care of the school. This includes times of commuting to and from school when the means of transportation is provided by the school, as well as commuting between activities organised by the school.
- The school and its Headmaster shall always guarantee students' rights not to be subject to exploitation, violence, physical harm, sexual abuse, any verbal insult, moral threat or harm of any kind. The school must publish and implement a policy that aims to protect students from any form of these abuses. Anyone suspecting that any student is being subject to any form of these abuses shall inform the Headmaster immediately. Should any such abuse take place, the Headmaster shall abide by the student protection measures issued by the Council for this purpose, and shall suspend any school employee immediately should the said employee be accused of abusing any student. In the case of any violations of the student protection policy, the Headmaster must inform the Council immediately and submit a written report to the Council within twenty-four hours of the occurrence or suspected occurrence of any such violations.
- The Council shall take measures to ensure the protection of students.

What are different types of child abuse

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional, and /or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or child care provider failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation, or lack of supervision.

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Physical

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behavior,

Emotional

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.

Sexual

Sexual abuse: (forcing/enticing a child to take part in sexual activity)

School Procedures

The most important thing for a teacher to do is first to directly report the incident to the school management, *document it* (Appendix 1), and write down all his/her observations and speculations.

The school management has a big role in protecting ALL the children that attend the school even if it means protecting them from their own parents by following clear procedures & being consistent in following up with the child & his/her family.

The school management will assume the responsibility of reporting the incident to the Ministry of Interior – Child Protection Center "CPC" and to the Abu Dhabi Education Council "ADEC" if the case is either: Neglect, Physical, Emotional or sexual abuse.

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The team that works with children (teacher, assistant, nurse, etc...) is responsible for observing children and recognizing any type of abuse and reporting it to the school management. Every adult surrounding the child shares the responsibility of preventing child abuse in any form. These adults are mainly his parents, but if one or both of them are posing a threat & endangering the life &/or wellbeing of the child, then the MOI-CPC will protect this child even from his/her own parents. Every child has a natural right to survive in a healthy, happy, & safe environment

Contact and Personal Privacy

There are occasions when it is appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. When physical contact is made with students this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one student in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different student.

The following guidelines will assist staff with a decision-making protocol in circumstances that require physical contact:

Physical contact should never be secretive or casual, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff or volunteer sees an action by other staff members that could be misinterpreted or is felt to be inappropriate, the incident and circumstances should be reported.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with a student or students, is likely to raise questions, unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example, in relation to students with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review.

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Where feasible, staff should seek the student's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe, and take note of the student's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact which is acceptable to the student for the minimum time necessary.

There may be occasions when a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive, or subject to misinterpretation.

Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance should seek further advice from the Senior Administrative Team.

Some staff, for example those who teach PE or games will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a student so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument, or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the student's agreement. Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the students.

Students are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes, going to the bathroom and/or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard students, satisfy health and safety considerations, and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the students concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

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One to One Situations and Meetings with students

Staff working in one to one situations with students is more vulnerable to allegation. Staff must recognize this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and students are met. Meetings should be held in a public or otherwise openly viewed space. As appropriate, individual meetings that may compromise the staff member or may be misinterpreted should take place in the presence of another faculty member or senior leadership.

Behavior Management and Physical Intervention

All students have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is prohibited in all schools according to ADEC's expectation and, as such, staff should never touch a child in an aggressive way. Staff must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a student. This includes both physical and emotional humiliation. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is not acceptable in any situation. Shouting aggressively is not acceptable in any situation.

Deliberately frightening students by overweening physical presence is not acceptable in any situation. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a student from injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behavior prejudicial to good order, and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment.

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Child Protection Officer (CPO)

The CPO is the designated staff member who assumes the responsibility for child protection within the school. S/he shall involve other agencies over suspected or actual cases of child abuse (ADEC, MOI- CPC,).

The Health and Safety Officer is usually the CPO. The CPO assumes the responsibility of being fully committed to safeguarding & promoting the welfare of all children of all ages

In addition to that INPS-AD has a list of policies that also contribute to the child's care & welfare, namely: bullying policy; behavior policy, health & safety policy.

All staff members at the beginning of each academic year are informed of the name of each CPO and that they have an individual responsibility of reporting any child protection concerns that they might come across; as well as inform the staff members of the child protection procedures of the school. All staff members need to be alert to the signs of abuse and how to respond to a student who may tell or speak out about being abused.

The role of the designated CPO is that:

1. Ensure that the parents have a clear understanding of the responsibility placed on the school & staff in relation to child protection (parents' orientation day, memos, parents meetings etc.)
2. CPO will provide a training session for all staff members
3. CPO will develop effective links with local agencies & cooperate as required with their inquiries on child protection procedures & matters
4. CPO will keep written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event & action taken), even when there is no need to refer the matter or take it further
5. When there is a cause to take the matter further, the CPO must ensure that the case is discussed with all relevant parties & that there are set procedures for reporting & following-up concerns

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6. Ensure that the written records are kept in securely-locked locations in the respective sections of the school. These records are updated when new incidents occur.
7. CPO will liaise/guide & support staff to ensure that students have the correct information with regards to "Child Protection" and are aware of his/her role that he/she are ready to provide support & advice when it is needed
8. CPO will ensure that designated notice boards are found all around the school, that the name and telephone numbers of "Child Protection Officers" & related persons who can be contacted in case of emergency or if any child or staff member feels the need to raise a concern or seek help.

The Child Protection Team

The team comprises of CPO, school Nurse, Social worker, the Senior Leadership team will be informed at all times of any situations causing concern.

Confidentiality, Reports & Records

The degree of confidentiality in child protection work is governed by the need to protect the child. INPS- AD has a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly ADEC & CPC. If a student confides in a member of staff and request that the information is kept secret it is important to explain to the student the member of staff has the responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies on a need to know basis. The Director and other members of INPS – AD staff will share information only within appropriate professional contexts and child protection records will be kept securely locked.

Child protection records & reports will be objective & based on evidence. They will distinguish between fact, observation, allegation & opinion.

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Identifying Abuse

Unexplained changes in behavior or school performance may indicate abuse. The more obvious signs, such as bruises, may be apparent especially when students change for physical education class.

Inadequate clothing, poor growth, or apparently deficient nutrition may indicate physical neglect, while attention seeking or excessive dependence may point to emotional neglect.

Supporting Student at-risk

INPS-AD recognizes that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth & to view the world as a safe place. They may feel helpless, humiliated, & might blame themselves for any mishaps or violence in their direct environment. The school may be the only *secure, stable, and predictable element* in the lives of children at-risk. Nevertheless, when at school, their behavior might be challenging & defiant, and they may be withdrawn.

INPS-AD will support these children through

- The content of the curriculum which encourage self-esteem, motivation & self-regulation
- The school ethos which promote a positive, supportive & secure environment & give students a sense of value
- The school's behavior policy emphasizes the need to support students. All staff members agree on a consistent approach which focuses on the behavior of the child, in order not to damage the student's sense of self worth
- Keeping records & notifying the school Director & any other relevant parties in case of a recurrence of a concern
- If the child at-risk will move to another school, INPS-AD will transfer the information to the next school. In case that INPS –AD doesn't know which school the student has moved to, then it will contact the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) to inform them.

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Who are the current players in child protection?

- The MOI Child Protection Centre (CPC)

Phone: 1166111

Email: childprotection@moi-cpc.gov.ae

Website: www.moi-cpc.a

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Documenting Abuse Incidents

Child's Name: _____

Age: _____ Class: _____ Date of Disclosure: _____

Child's EXACT WORDS describing the incident:

Questions & Answers:

Teacher's/ CPO observations on the child's behavior/body language while talking about the incident

Teacher/ CPO name

Signature: