

Safeguarding Policy and Practice

Introduction

The health, safety and well-being of all our children is of paramount importance to all the adults who work in Innoventures Education schools and nurseries. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our schools.

Protecting children is everyone's responsibility and this includes reporting any act committed by a parent, carer or any other person, to a child which results in (or the risk of) 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 **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**. If the threat is immediate or on-going it will be reported to the appropriate local safeguarding authorities as set in place by the UAE and to Innoventures Education Head of Compliance.

Purpose

The safeguarding of children and young people from harm is the highest priority. 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.

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse refers to any act committed by a parent, carer or any other person to a child under the age of 18, which results in injury to the child (or risk of). These acts include situations where there is neglect, emotional, physical or sexual harm. (Refer to categories of abuse section).

Aims

This policy ensures that all staff in schools can follow the necessary procedures with regard to safeguarding issues.

It aims:

1. To raise awareness and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse;
2. To ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with safeguarding issues;
3. To inform all parties of the correct procedures to use in the case of a safeguarding issue.

When to be concerned

Staff should be concerned if a student:

- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps/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 sexualised 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.

It is vital to highlight at this point that students of determination, including communication or behaviour difficulties, have a higher risk of bullying, neglect and abuse than others. Often, they are not identified or looked at as at-risk when it comes to indicators of possible abuse owing to mood, injury or behaviour being attributed to the pre-existing condition rather than signals for safeguarding. Staff specifically involved with children with SEND are to be alert to these factors.

Dealing with disclosure

If a student discloses that he or she has been feels at risk or is 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
- Not criticise the perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.

Procedures

When a child reports abuse, the teacher will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within **six** hours. The teacher should also inform the DSL as soon as possible if there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring. The DSL will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident. At this stage he/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 DSL will then form a school-based response team to address the report. The response team may include the school doctor, nurse, counsellor, teacher, and other individuals as the DSL 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 DSL in order to gain more information.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counsellor, or administrator.
- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counselling.
- Consultation with local authorities.

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

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

Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Each school should have two trained safeguarding Leads (Primary and Secondary), the named person(s).

The DSL will be trained by/through Innoventures Education. Each school should have two – Primary and Secondary. They can support each other and cover each other if absent or unavailable. The DSL's will: Follow the agreed procedures (refer to what to do on disclosure section later)

- 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

Principal

The Principal should not be a DSL. This both protects the Principal from partiality and also allows them to be a confidential point of reference for the DSL.

The Principal 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.

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 DSL.

All staff are expected:

- to attend regular and relevant professional development sessions.
- 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.
- to be aware of symptoms of abuse, report concerns to DSL as appropriate and 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 recognise these and help develop a rehabilitation plan in liaison with the DSL 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 Human Resources 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 three key steps:

- 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.

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.

Specific responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

Parents are expected to engage with all aspects of support offered by the school with respect to child protection and safeguarding. If a child is in a position where they have become a significant risk to themselves or others, it is the responsibility of parents to be attentive, proactive, and responsive to their child's needs, ensuring they receive the appropriate external support and intervention when facing extreme cases of disorders reported on behalf of the school.

Relevant legislation or authorities

This 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 laws. Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 (Wadeema's Law) Issued on 8th March 2016 protecting the overall rights of the child, including fundamental rights of life, security and care, family rights, health rights, social rights, cultural and education rights.

Safer Recruitment – commitment to recruitment, selection and training

Innoventures Education safer recruitment procedures will be followed for all staff employed. 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. At least one person on an interviewing panel must have completed safer recruitment training (e.g. NSPCC Safer Recruitment or similar course/ qualification).
- Staff will be provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and code of behaviour and will be required to sign a document certifying that they have read it and agree to abide by its contents.

School journeys and trips

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.

Allegations against staff or the Principal

Teachers who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the DSL. In turn, the DSL should report to the Principal.

If the principal is absent, the allegation should be passed to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

If the allegation is against the Principal, the DSL should immediately inform the CEO without notifying the Principal first.

Understanding abuse

Physical abuse

Is actual or attempted physical injury to a child where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

- Unexplained injuries or burns (particularly if they are recurrent)
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression towards others
- Self-destructive tendencies

Emotional abuse

Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child. This includes conveying to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved.

- Physical/mental/emotional developmental lags
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive
- Over reaction to mistakes
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour (eg, rocking, thumb sucking etc)

- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-mutilation
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

Sexual abuse

Where a child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) – including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated the behaviour.

Signs and Symptoms (sexual abuse):

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, language, behaviours
- Loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressive behaviours such as thumb sucking, needing previously discarded cuddly toys
- Becoming withdrawn, isolated
- Reluctance to go home
- Bed-wetting
- Drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'extra good'
- Over-reacting to criticism
- Have outbursts of anger/irritability

Neglect

Refers to persistent or deliberate failure to meet a child's physical or psychological needs e.g. a failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, failure to protect a child or failure to provide adequate medical care. It may also involve neglect or failure to give adequate response to a child's emotional needs.

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor peer relationships
- Stealing

Policy Review

This policy is to be reviewed annually, though any deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements will be remedied without delay.

The principal and CEO (on behalf of the Board) 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 - July 2024