



# ABUDHABI INDIAN SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

### **CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER:**

NAME: Mr. NEERAJ BHARGAVA  
CONTACT NUMBER: 02 - 4488025

### **CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR:**

NAME: Mr. RAVINDRANATH TATAA, Mr. SHEIK ALOUDEEN, Mrs. MARY MATHEW  
CONTACT NUMBER: 02 - 4488025

### **DEPUTY CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR:**

NAME: Mrs. CYRILLA SEBASTIAN, Mrs. RACHNA VOHRA, Mrs. LATHA ASHOK  
SWAMINATHAN, MRS. UMA MAHESWARI, MR. SAIJAN VARKEY, MS. MAY  
HAMDI

CONTACT NUMBER: 02- 4488025

## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

### **ABU DHABI EDUCATION COUNCIL - PSQA**

CONTACT NUMBER: 02 615 0000  
Email: [child.protection@adec.ac.ae](mailto:child.protection@adec.ac.ae)

## ALTERNATIVE REFERRALS

When members of the school have **URGENT** and **IMMEDIATE** concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person during school hours they should make an immediate referral to a member of the Child Protection Team or any accessible member of the Leadership Team.

To make **URGENT** referrals **OUT OF OFFICE HOURS** telephone 056 - 7222798  
For all **NON – URGENT** referrals and enquiries telephone 02- 4488025

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR ABUDHABI INDIAN SCHOOL

## INTRODUCTION

Abu Dhabi Indian School is concerned about the welfare and safety of all its pupils and attempts to create an environment in which pupils feel secure and valued and in which they are listened to and taken seriously.

All adults working at Abu Dhabi Indian School should be aware of their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of every pupil, both physical and emotional, inside and outside school. This involves ensuring that pupils are protected from significant physical or emotional harm and that there is a positive commitment to ensure the satisfactory development and growth of the individual.

Everyone working at Abu Dhabi Indian School should be aware of and, when necessary, follow the school's Child Protection Guidelines, which are in line with the Ministry of Education, UAE and Abu Dhabi education Council (ADEC).

## PURPOSE

An effective whole-school child protection policy is one which provides clear direction to staff and others about expected behaviour when dealing with child protection issues. An effective policy also makes explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns, referrals and monitoring may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the child.

There are three main elements to our child protection policy;

- a) Prevention through the creation of a positive school atmosphere and the teaching, and pastoral support offered to pupils.
- b) Protection by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.
- c) Support to pupils who may have been abused.

This policy applies to all Students, Teaching and Non Teaching Staff, supervisors, Headmistress, Headmaster, Principal and visitors to Abu Dhabi Indian School.

This school recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation.

## SCHOOL POLICY

Abu Dhabi Indian School wants the pupils in its care to:

- ❖ Be healthy
- ❖ Enjoy their lives

- ❖ Achieve economic well-being
- ❖ Make a positive contribution to society
- ❖ Stay safe

This policy aims to:

- ❖ Provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behavior in dealing with Child Protection and Safeguarding issues.
- ❖ Ensure that Child Protection concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the child.
- ❖ Ensure that parents are aware of our policies and procedures.
- ❖ Make clear our commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures.

## **CHILD PROTECTION IN SCHOOL**

The school must provide a safe environment for its students. The management is responsible for this aspect of child protection through its Works, Maintenance and Health and Safety programmes. The HR Department is responsible for the implementation of Safer Recruitment procedures for people wishing to work at the school.

The School must promote satisfactory development and growth by providing intellectual and physical challenge through the development of a sound curriculum policy that will promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.

The school is also bound to take reasonable measures to safeguard the emotional welfare of its pupils from bullying or abuse within the school. All Students are expected to abide by the Policy for the safe environment that the school intends to provide for them.

## **CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER (CPO)**

The designated Child Protection Officer is the Principal, Mr. Neeraj Bhargava. He has the responsibility for dealing with child protection issues and liaising with other agencies (ADEC) where necessary. He will ensure that guidelines outlined in Child Protection Policy of the school is followed particularly with respect to the appointment of staff. Staff who will have unsupervised access to students will be subject to the statutory CRB checks and be checked for compliance with the Independent Schools Standards regulations on appointment.

The CPO will gain assurance that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organization who are working with the school's students. The CPO can be contacted by telephone on 02-4488025 or by email, [principal@adisuae.com](mailto:principal@adisuae.com).

The **Child Protection Coordinators** of the school are Vice Principal, Mr. Ravindranath Tataa ([ravitataa@adisuae.com](mailto:ravitataa@adisuae.com)) 02-4488025, Head Master, Mr. Sheik Aloudeen ([sheik@adisuae.com](mailto:sheik@adisuae.com)) 02- 4488025 and Head Mistress, Mrs. Mary Mathew ([marymathew@adisuae.com](mailto:marymathew@adisuae.com)) 02-4488025.

## **DEPUTY CHILD PROTECTION COORDINATORS AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLICY**

The Deputy Child Protection Coordinators are Mrs. Cyrilla Sebastian ([cyrilla@adisuae.com](mailto:cyrilla@adisuae.com)), Mrs. Latha Ashok ([lathaashok@adisuae.com](mailto:lathaashok@adisuae.com)), Mrs. Rachna Vohra ([rachnavohra@adisuae.com](mailto:rachnavohra@adisuae.com)), Mrs. Uma Maheswari ([uma@adisuae.com](mailto:uma@adisuae.com)), Mr. Saijan Varkey ([saijan@adisuae.com](mailto:saijan@adisuae.com)) and Ms. May Hamdi ([mayhamdi@adisuae.com](mailto:mayhamdi@adisuae.com)). It is their role to:

- Ensure that the School has a child protection policy and that the required procedures are in place, which are consistent with ADEC procedures.
- Ensure to review the School's Child Protection policy and procedures, and the efficiency with which the related duties are undertaken. They have to report on changes to the Child Protection policy/procedures, training undertaken by the CPO and other staff members, the number of incidents/cases (without details or names) and the place of child protection issues in the school curriculum.
- Ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements at Abu Dhabi Indian School will be remedied without delay.

## **TRAINING**

All adults working at Abu Dhabi Indian School will be given a briefing on the child protection policy and procedures. This includes the briefing of new staff as a part of their induction after arrival at the school and refresher training for all staff at three – yearly intervals. Part-time staff who work with students will be made aware of arrangements. Student Council Members of the School will also receive some basic training upon their appointment.

## **DEFINITION OF ABUSE**

Abuse can be defined as having occurred when a child is subjected to physical violence, sexual interference, emotional pressure or neglect. Additionally, there are some miscellaneous categories of abuse, such as exposure to racial or religious harassment or that occurring as a result of parental incapacity, for example due to mental illness or an addiction.

Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children looking at sexual images or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in the impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide food, clothing, and shelter; failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm; failing to provide adequate supervision or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such 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 inadequate; not giving the child opportunities to express themselves; making fun of what they say; causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; and serious bullying, including cyber-bullying. Some level of Emotional Abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, but may also occur on its own.

#### **PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A REPORT OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE**

Any staff or Student Council Member at Abu Dhabi Indian School who is told of any incident or strong suspicion of physical or sexual child abuse occurring in the school, or to a pupil of the school at home or outside the school, or who suspects or knows this to be the case themselves must report the information immediately to the Deputy Child Protection Coordinators or Child Protection Coordinators. In the event of an allegation against the Deputy Child Protection Coordinators or Child Protection Coordinators, the information should be reported directly to the Child protection Officer ( ie, Principal).

The Deputy Child Protection Coordinators or Child Protection Coordinators may, if necessary, interview the pupil to clarify the nature of an allegation or suspicion, before deciding on an appropriate course of action. If necessary, an immediate referral will be made to the CPO. The CPO will make necessary enquiries regarding the matter and if necessary, will inform the parents of the students concerned and will also report the incident to the ADEC.

#### **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STUDENTS**

Allegations of abuse made against students must be reported immediately to the Deputy Child Protection Coordinators or Child Protection Coordinators.

The Deputy Child Protection Coordinators or Child Protection Coordinators may, if necessary, interview the pupil to clarify the nature of an allegation or suspicion, before deciding on an appropriate course of action. If necessary, an immediate referral will be made to the CPO.

The CPO will make necessary enquiries regarding the matter and if necessary, will inform the parents of the students concerned and will also report the incident to the ADEC.

If found guilty, depending on the seriousness of the incident, they will be given warning, suspension or dismissal.

### **ALLEGATION AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF AND THE HEADS**

Allegation against members of staff and Heads of the school must be reported immediately to the CPO (ie, Principal). If the Allegation is against the Principal, the incident has to be reported to the Board of Governors. An allegation of abuse by a teacher or staff member will be taken very seriously and treated in accordance with procedures of ADEC.

The quick, consistent and fair resolution of the allegation will be made a clear priority for the benefit of all concerned. Unless the allegation is demonstrably false, the Principal will immediately suspend the staff member who is alleged to have abused a student / students. He will carry out a formal investigation obtaining written statements from those who are involved and will also notify ADEC about the incident and send a written report to the Council within 24 hours of the incident. Anyone found guilty of such an offence will immediately be dismissed.

Sensible precautions will be taken to prevent false allegations being made.

### **GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR STAFF**

We are required by the legislation to brief all staff on procedures relating to child protection and responding to allegations of child abuse. Staff is asked to operate according to these guidelines.

- Staff should familiarize themselves with the School's Child Protection Policy.
- Staff should be aware of the following signs that may indicate abuse:
  - ❖ Possible physical signs may include unexplained or repeated injuries, bruises in odd places, marks of slapping, biting, gripping etc, cuts in odd places, poor hygiene, marked weight fluctuations.
  - ❖ Possible behavioral signs may include a marked change in behavior, eating disorders, excessively affectionate or sexual behavior, emotional isolation, school refusal, an inability to sleep, theft, habits such as thumb-sucking, 'frozen watchfulness'. Remember that these symptoms are 'possible' signs and do not automatically mean that abuse has or is taking place; there may be other explanations. In most cases it will be appropriate to discuss your observations with the class teacher / supervisor to help you decide whether you should refer them to the CPO.

- Child abuse to be reported includes abuse of a pupil by a staff member or other adult, abuse at home which a pupil reports to staff, abuse by a stranger outside school, and abuse of one pupil by another pupil. In the case of abuse by a pupil, or group of pupils, the key issues identifying the problem as abuse (rather than an isolated instance of bullying or ‘adolescent experimentation’ which could be handled within the normal framework for discipline) are:

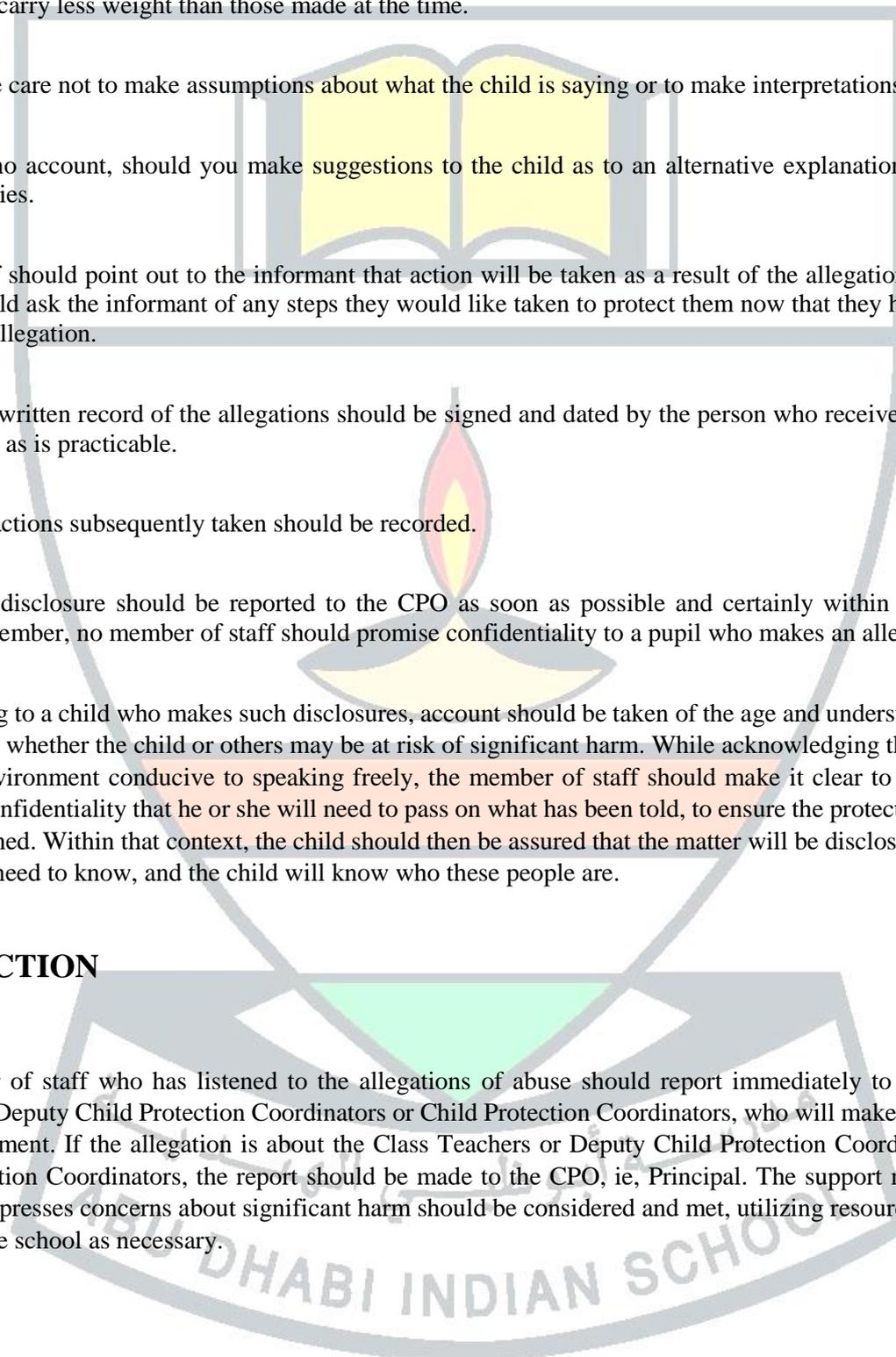
- ❖ The frequency, nature and severity of the incident(s);
- ❖ Whether the victim was coerced by physical force, fear, or by a pupil or group of pupils significantly older than himself, or having power or authority over him;
- ❖ Whether the incident involved a potentially criminal act; and
- ❖ Whether if the same incident (or injury) had occurred to a member of staff or other adult, it would have been regarded as assault or otherwise actionable.

- Any member of staff who is told of any incident or strong suspicion of physical or sexual child abuse occurring in the School, or to a pupil of the School at home or outside the School (or who knows of or suspects such abuse) must report the information immediately to the Class Teachers or Deputy Child Protection Coordinators or Child Protection Coordinators. If the allegation is about the Class Teachers or Deputy Child Protection Coordinators or Child Protection Coordinators, the report should be made to the CPO, ie, Principal.
- Staff should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to anyone raising complaints about abuse but may point out that they will pass on information to only a minimum number of people who have to be told to ensure that proper action is taken to sort the problem out. If any of this happens a written record should be made as soon as possible - ideally at the time of the disclosure and a copy given to the CPO.
- Staff should be aware that the Head, if necessary, would suspend from duty, pending investigation, any staff member who is alleged to have abused a pupil or pupils. Current advice encourages schools to suspend, without pre-judgement of guilt, and as a precautionary measure, where there is a concern about possible abuse.
- The School is also required to refer all allegations to the Abu Dhabi Education Council. This referral must happen within 24 hours (in writing or with written confirmation of a telephone referral).

## **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

### **LISTEN TO THE CHILD**

- Children who report to a teacher, prefect or other adult working at Abu Dhabi Indian School that someone has abused them must be listened to and heard, whatever form the communication may take. The following points give guidance on how to deal with a child who makes an allegation:
- Listen to the child, but do not conduct an interview or ask the child to repeat the account. Avoid asking questions and make sure that any questions asked are open-ended (i.e. not inviting yes or no as an answer).
- Do not interrupt when the child is recalling significant events.

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- Make a careful note of all information, including details such as timing, setting, who was present and what was said, in the child's own words. The account should be obtained verbatim or as near as possible. Always record what was said as contemporaneously as possible. Notes written up afterwards will carry less weight than those made at the time.
  - Take care not to make assumptions about what the child is saying or to make interpretations.
  - On no account, should you make suggestions to the child as to an alternative explanation for their worries.
  - Staff should point out to the informant that action will be taken as a result of the allegation and you should ask the informant of any steps they would like taken to protect them now that they have made the allegation.
  - The written record of the allegations should be signed and dated by the person who received them as soon as is practicable.
  - All actions subsequently taken should be recorded.
  - The disclosure should be reported to the CPO as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours. Remember, no member of staff should promise confidentiality to a pupil who makes an allegation.

In responding to a child who makes such disclosures, account should be taken of the age and understanding of the child and whether the child or others may be at risk of significant harm. While acknowledging the need to create an environment conducive to speaking freely, the member of staff should make it clear to any pupil asking for confidentiality that he or she will need to pass on what has been told, to ensure the protection of the child concerned. Within that context, the child should then be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know, and the child will know who these people are.

## **TAKE ACTION**

The member of staff who has listened to the allegations of abuse should report immediately to the Class Teachers or Deputy Child Protection Coordinators or Child Protection Coordinators, who will make an urgent initial assessment. If the allegation is about the Class Teachers or Deputy Child Protection Coordinators or Child Protection Coordinators, the report should be made to the CPO, ie, Principal. The support needs of a child who expresses concerns about significant harm should be considered and met, utilizing resources within or beyond the school as necessary.

## INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND FURTHER ACTION, IF APPROPRIATE

Immediately an allegation is made, the CPO will:

- Obtain written details of the allegation, signed and dated, from the person who received the allegation.
- Record any information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.
- Where appropriate, talk to the child concerned.
- Inform ADEC Officials about the incident.

There are four possible outcomes of the initial assessment:

- Where the pupil has suffered, is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, the incident will be referred immediately under local child protection procedures established by the ADEC.
- Where the child has alleged that a criminal offence has been committed, then again this will be referred under local child protection procedures and the police may carry out a criminal investigation.
- The allegation may represent inappropriate behavior or poor practice by a member of staff (which does not fall within the above categories) that needs to be considered under school disciplinary procedures.
- The allegation is adjudged to be apparently without foundation.

Only if the allegation is trivial or demonstrably false, will further investigations not be warranted.

Where the initial assessment by the CPO concludes that the allegation warrants investigation, there will be a referral within 24 hours to ADEC with statutory responsibilities to make enquiries.

If a referral needs to be made, parents will be consulted. In really extreme cases the law allows schools to bypass parental consent.

## PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a pupil nor should they agree with a pupil

to keep a secret, as where there is a child protection concern this must be reported to the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a "need to know basis" only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held confidentially to themselves.

## **RECORDS AND MONITORING**

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken.

These file notes are kept in a confidential file, which is separate to other files, and stored in a secure place. In the same way notes must be kept of any pupil who is being monitored for child protection reasons.

