



CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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TABLE OF CONTENT

I. INTRODUCTION	2
II. DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE	2
A. PHYSICAL ABUSE	2
B. SEXUAL ABUSE	3
C. EMOTIONAL ABUSE	3
D. NEGLECT	3
III. WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE?	4
IV. WHO ARE THE DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS AT ICE?	5
V. HELPFUL NUMBERS	5

I. Introduction

All of us who are involved in working with children and young people must do our utmost to ensure their protection and welfare. ICE takes this responsibility very seriously and there is a very strong culture of child protection across all the school.

All children have the right to protection regardless of their nationality, religion, age, race or gender. The protection and welfare of children must continue to be of paramount importance for everyone working in the school. The purpose of these procedures is to give clear direction and guidance to school management and personnel should a case of abuse be observed, no matter of which nature it is. This policy ensures that all working staff in the school follow the necessary procedure in the case of child abuse.

II. Definition of Child abuse

Child abuse is generally defined as the act or the failure to act on a part of a guardian which results in the serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation or even death.

There are 4 distinct categories of child abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

A. Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, non-accidental physical trauma or injury. It is an injury resulting from physical aggression. Even if the injury was not intended, the act is considered physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include:

- Beating, slapping, or hitting shaking
- Pushing, shaking, kicking, or throwing.
- Pinching, biting, choking, or hair-pulling.
- Burning with cigarettes, scalding water, or other hot objects.
- Severe physical punishment.

Physical abuse does not always leave visible marks or injuries. It is not how bad the mark or injury is, but rather the act itself that causes injury or trauma to the child.

Is physical punishment the same as physical abuse?

Physical abuse is an injury resulting from physical aggression. ***Physical punishment*** is the use of excessive physical force with the intent of inflicting bodily pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control. ***Physical punishment*** can in some cases easily get out of control and become ***physical abuse***.

Some signs of Physical Child abuse:

- Burns, bite marks, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object.
- Resistance to going home.
- Fear of adults.

B. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult, stronger child or adolescent uses their power or authority to involve a child in sexual activity.

Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional and can include:

- Fondling - Touching or kissing a child's genitals, making a child fondle an adult's genitals.
- Violations of bodily privacy - Forcing a child to undress, spying on a child in the bathroom or bedroom.
- Exposing children to adult sexuality - Performing sexual acts in front of a child, exposing genitals, telling "dirty" stories, showing pornography to a child.
- Commercial exploitation - Sexual exploitation through child prostitution or child pornography.

Some Signs of Sexual Child Abuse

- Inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual acts.
- Seductiveness.
- Avoidance of things related to sexuality, or rejection of own genitals or body.
- Either over compliance or excessive aggression.
- Fear of a particular person or family member.

C. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child's social, emotional, cognitive or intellectual development is impaired or threatened. It can range from a simple verbal insult to an extreme form of punishment. It can be a verbal abuse, a mental abuse or a psychological maltreatment or abuse. Bullying belongs to the emotional abuse category

It can include emotional deprivation due to persistent:

- rejection
- hostility
- teasing/bullying
- yelling
- criticism
- exposure of a child to domestic and family violence.

D. Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child's basic necessities of life are not met, and their health and development are affected. Basic needs include:

- food
- housing
- health care
- adequate clothing

- personal hygiene
- hygienic living conditions
- timely provision of medical treatment
- adequate supervision.

There are three basic types of neglect; physical neglect, educational neglect, and emotional neglect.

Physical Neglect	Failure to provide food, clothing appropriate for the weather, supervision, a home that is hygienic and safe, and/or medical care, as needed.
Educational Neglect	Failure to enroll a school-age child in school or to provide necessary special education. This includes allowing excessive absences from school.
Emotional Neglect	Failure to provide emotional support, love, and affection. This includes neglect of the child's emotional needs and failure to provide psychological care, as needed.

Some Signs of Child Neglect:

- Clothing unsuited to the weather.
- Being dirty or unbathed.
- Extreme hunger.
- Apparent lack of supervision.

III. What to do if a child discloses abuse?

If there is a report of child sexual abuse to be made, it's important that the information be handled delicately. If a child discloses any kind of abuse:

- Remain calm and don't pass any judgment
- Reassure the child that you believe her (or him) and make them feel safe
- Tell the child you are proud of her or him
- Show appropriate affection
- Listen carefully and never lead a child to say something specific or "fill in the blanks"
- Take the child seriously and clarify what she/he is saying by saying something like, "I'm not sure I understand – can you please tell me again what you're saying?"
- Understand that child may not know all the proper words for what they are describing
- Record in writing precisely and using the exact words used by the child and as soon as possible on a disclosure form.
- Report immediately to the Designated Child Protection Officer or any member of the Child Protection team

Please bear in mind that disclosure of child abuse often takes place in bits and pieces, possibly even with the child denying the abuse at times. It's important to understand that what they are saying may not initially make sense to an adult and they may have trouble with sequences of events.

IV. Who are the Designated Child Protection Officers at ICE?

- Senior leading team (Principle, Vice Principle, Director of Primary School)
- School Nurse
- School Doctor

If any allegation is made against any member of the staff, the matter should be reported immediately to the Principal, or his Vice Principal if he was absent.

If the allegations are made against one of the Senior management team, the incident should be reported immediately to the governing board without notifying the senior management team.

V. HELPFUL NUMBERS

- Police: 999
- Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre Hotline: 116-111
- Child Protection Centre (under CDA Dubai): 800 988
- Dubai Foundation for Women and Children: 800 111