



*LEARNERS TODAY, LEADERS TOMORROW*

# Canadian International School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## Purpose

Children are vulnerable to the experience of neglect, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or a combination of these types of child maltreatment. The Canadian International School of Abu Dhabi (CIS) fully recognizes its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at our school. Every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment and abuse. This policy outlines the school's safeguarding processes and procedures, in accordance with ADEK and Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 concerning Child Rights (Wadeema's Law).

## Aims

Student protection and safeguarding procedures and measures are in place at CIS to protect student safety and wellbeing in the following ways:

- Establish a safe and caring environment in which children can learn and develop.
- Ensure school stakeholders have access to school policies and procedures in support of student protection and wellbeing.
- Raise awareness of child protection and safeguarding roles and responsibilities with staff and volunteers through training and review of school protocols.
- Protect students while in the school's care from all acts and omissions constituting physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect, and bullying.
- Recognize that all school staff are mandated reporters of cases of abuse and/or suspected abuse inside and outside the school.
- Define duties and responsibilities of Child Protection and Safeguarding Team and school staff for responding to suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect.
- Identify and refer concerns of abuse or neglect to relevant authorities, as enforced by the UAE Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Rights (Wadeema's Law) and other relevant UAE laws.
- Provision of effective and responsive physical and digital security measures.

## Safeguarding Responsibilities

CIS has a responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students. The Head of School shall accept *in loco parentis* (in the position of a Parent/Guardian) responsibility for all students while they are under the school's supervision and care.

Safeguarding matters are handled sensitively, professionally, and in a way that supports student needs at CIS. Providing appropriate training and induction for all staff is a priority to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities and feel confident in executing them. It is critical that staff, students, and parents are assured they can voice any concerns regarding the safety or wellbeing of children, knowing that their concerns will be heard and taken seriously. This commitment is upheld through a consistent school culture of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students while also ensuring the protection of staff. Clear child protection and safeguarding procedures, comprehensive induction and training, and ongoing discussions on pertinent issues contribute to maintaining this school ethos. Additionally, the attentive vetting of prospective staff and volunteers is a crucial aspect of our commitment to

child protection and safeguarding, ensuring that all staff at CIS are deemed suitable for respective roles.

While CIS is committed to working openly with parents and guardians whenever possible, it is important to note that the school reserves the right to contact ADEK and child protection authorities without notifying parents, if such an action is deemed to be in the best interests of the child.

### Child Protection Team

All adults at CIS should be aware of the school safeguarding measures to ensure physical and digital safety of students and be aware of the signs of abuse. If an adult identifies that a child may be in an abusive situation, they should record their concerns and promptly report them to the Child Protection Team (CPT). The CPT is a tiered structure of responsive support, led by the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) with designated Child Protection Officers (CPOs).



The CPT commits to safeguarding the school community in the following ways:

- Ensure that there is a designated and appropriately trained Child Protection Coordinator (CPC).
- Provide regular and appropriate training to staff to fulfill their child protection responsibilities.
- Ensure all staff are fully aware of and understand their responsibilities and obligations under this policy, referring any concerns of abuse to the CPC or CPO.
- Provide all staff and volunteers with the name of the designated CPC and CPOs, and their contact details.
- CPC and CPOs to notify and refer concerns to ADEK and relevant government

authorities of any cases of suspected child abuse. Maintain confidentiality throughout reporting procedures, data collection, and information storage.

- CPC and CPOs to keep written records of child protection concerns secure and separate from the main student file, in the child protection log.
- Inform parents of any concerns, and provide them with opportunities to change the situation, where this does not place the child at greater risk.
- Ensure that when a student leaves the school, necessary information and/or records of concern are transferred to the new school.
- Engage in annual review of safeguarding policy, practices, and procedures in the CIS school community.

## Security and Digital Safety

As a school we will safeguard the physical and digital safety of the school community through:

- Provision of 24-hour on-site security guards and CCTV systems, in accordance with the ADEK safeguarding policy and government regulations.
- Proactive and responsive visitor access practices, parent ID badges, visitor sign-in and access passes, as per ADEK safeguarding policy.
- Monitored, supervised, and regulated school drop-off and pick up practices.
- Ongoing safeguarding the personal privacy of staff, student, and parents.
- Ensure the confidentiality of student's personal data.
- Secure web browser to protect online use and personal data. Responsive measures to student technology use that are not in line with school policy.
- Promotion of wraparound digital safety safeguarding supports through student and parent information distribution on digital safety and supportive technology use.
- Development of physical and digital security breach procedures, in line with ADEK policy and local regulatory requirements.
- Coordinated school emergency planning and drills throughout the school year, in line with ADEK and government policy.
- Adherence to school transportation guidelines as per ADEK and government policy.

## Safeguarding Awareness Strategies

CIS recognizes the responsibility to ensure students are welcomed into a safe and caring environment. As a school, we will safeguard the school community using the following strategies:

- Develop a school ethos that promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives students a sense of belonging, safety, and connection.
- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are heard.
- Train all school leaders and staff members in ADEK child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Provide counselling and student support services, enabling student access to targeted and specialized support that promotes learning and development.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried about any problems.

- Student awareness of school counsellor and administration office locations, with direct ability to consult support when needed.
- Proactive and responsive teacher and administration responses to presenting concerns in the school community.
- Active supervision of students during instructional and non-instructional times.
- Attentive curriculum content delivery that focuses on the positive development of student self-esteem and emotional regulation, community. Inclusion of opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognize and stay safe from abuse.
- Consistent monitoring of student attendance and unexplained absences.
- Provide information and referrals to community resources to support protection, care, and wellbeing for students and families. Liaise with community agencies that support students.
- Ensure parents understand the responsibility placed on the school and its staff for child protection and safeguarding by providing a copy of this policy on request and posting the policy on the school website.

## Child Protection Procedures

The best interests and safety of the student are the highest priority when responding to child protection and safeguarding concerns. Where there is a conflict of interests between the child and parent, the interest of the child takes precedence.

### **If a member of staff suspects abuse (i.e., through physical injury) they must:**

1. Record their concerns.
2. Report it to the CPC or CPO immediately.
3. Determine if there is a requirement for immediate medical intervention and, if so, assistance must be called for.
4. Make an accurate record of all that has happened immediately, including details of:
  - Dates and times of observations/disclosures,
  - Dates and times of any discussions they were involved in,
  - Any injuries, and
  - Action taken

### **Following a report of concerns from a member of staff, the Child Protection Team (CPT) must:**

1. Determine if reasonable and sufficient grounds for suspecting child abuse are present. If reasonable and sufficient grounds are present, a referral must be made to ADEK and the relevant government authority through the completion of a safety concern form or contacting the MOI Child Protection Centre Hotline (116111).
2. If there is no clear risk of harm the CPT will either actively monitor the situation or seek advice from the relevant government authorities.
3. If a child is in immediate danger and urgent protective action is required, the police should be called using the 999 service. The CPT should also notify ADEK and the Family Care Authority (FCA) and seek advice from relevant authorities about informing the parents of the referral.
4. Where appropriate and in the circumstance where it does not place a child at

greater risk, the school should make attempts to discuss any concerns about the child's welfare with the family, prior to referral to relevant authorities. Consultation with relevant authorities can assist in determining this decision, in the best interests of the child.

**When responding to allegations against staff and volunteers:**

- Immediately report any concerns about any staff member or volunteer's conduct to the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) or Head of School. Concerns shared with the CPC will be directly communicated with the Head of School. Prompt and appropriate action will be taken, in line with ADEK policy guidelines.

## Additional Resources

More information can also be found at the following websites:

- Wadeema's Law: <https://uaelegislation.gov.ae/en/legislations/1176/download>
- Family Care Authority: <https://adfca.gov.ae/>
- Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre: <https://moi-cpc.ae/ar/default.aspx>
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text>
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Child Friendly Version): <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text-childrens-version>

## Appendix 1: Briefing Sheet for Staff

**While working in Canadian International School, you have a duty of care towards the students in attendance. This means you should always act in a way consistent with prioritizing and supporting their safety and welfare.**

If you have a concern about a student, particularly if you suspect or think they may be at risk of abuse or neglect, it is your responsibility to share that concern with the school's Child Protection Team (CPT). The following members of staff are direct contacts on the CPT:

- Child Protection Coordinator (CPC): *{insert name of CPC}*, who can be contacted through email *{insert email}* or extension *{insert extension}*.
- Child Protection Officer (CPO): *{insert name of CPC}*, who can be contacted through email *{insert email}* or extension *{insert extension}*.

Reasons for a child protection concern may include, but are not limited to:

- Observing a physical injury, which you believe may have been non-accidental.
- Observing something in the appearance of a student suggesting they are not being sufficiently cared for.
- The student verbally shares they have experienced or are currently experiencing abuse.
- Observing behaviour that leads you to be concerned about the student.

In any of the circumstances listed above, you must write down what was seen or heard, and date and sign your account, and give it to the CPC. It is important to understand that legal action against a perpetrator can be seriously impacted by any suggestion that the child has been led in any way. It is not your responsibility to investigate child protection concerns. Your responsibility is to listen to the child and promptly pass on concerns to the CPC or CPO.

If a child talks to you about abuse, you should follow these guidelines:

- Do not directly question the child, just listen.

- Never stop a student who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make it clear that you may need to pass on information to a member of staff in the school who will try to get them help.
- Do not promise confidentiality. You are professionally and legally obligated to share any information relating to abuse or child protection.
- Write an objective account of the conversation immediately, as close to verbatim as possible. Put the date and timings on it, and mention anyone else who was present. Sign the account and give your record to the designated CPC, who will contact relevant government authorities, if appropriate.

It is important to safeguard yourself by following the below guidelines:

- Do not use student washrooms. Adults in the school should use designated staff washrooms.
- Do not place yourself in a situation where you are alone with a student.
- Maintain professional boundaries with students.

**Remember, if you have a question or concern, discuss it with the CPT.**