



Child Protection Policy

2023 - 2024

Policy 3: Students Protection

Corresponding to Article (5) of the Organising Regulations

Note: Word “ School” in the text refers to Garden City British School **DEFINITION(S):**

For the purposes of this policy, **students protection** is defined as all those measures, steps and actions that must be taken to avoid subjecting students while at School or outside it, during any School activities and during their transportation to any danger or harm, be it exploitation, violence, physical harm, sexual abuse, any verbal insult, moral threat or harm of any kind. It is every student’s right to be in a safe School environment that is free of any form of abuse and that continuously offers care, support, and protection to all students without discrimination.

PURPOSE(S):

- To emphasise the protection of students as a core principle, which stems from the moral obligation, and to safeguard them from abuse or harm and to ensure their security and welfare, as required pursuant to applicable laws in force in the UAE.
- This is to prepare comprehensive School policy and procedures to
 - Protect students and prevent exploitation, bullying, physical and/or sexual abuse, insult or harm of any other kind which students may face, and to identify those who may have suffered harm.
 - Promote students' cultural, social, and mental growth to enable them to become strong, self-confident members of society.

POLICY:

The School is fully responsible for the care and protection of students whilst they are in the School's care, or traveling to and from the School using School-provided transportation means, and while moving between all activities organised by the School. The School must take all possible measures to protect students from any form of exploitation, abuse, oppression, insult, and/or any other physical, sexual or emotional threat, danger, or harm. The School must exercise the utmost care over the security of students in their care.

The School's Principal shall accept *in loco parentis* (in the position of a Parent/Guardian) responsibility for all students whilst they are in the School's care, including traveling to and from the School using School-provided transportation means, and while moving between, waiting for, and taking part in all activities organised by the School.

School management must also ensure the supervision of students 45 minutes before the start of the school day and 90 minutes after school hours, and must notify Parents/Guardians of their responsibility toward their children outside of these two periods.

The School has developed a student protection policy that follows, adheres to, and aligns with all the relevant laws and regulations issued by ADEK and the relevant authorities in the UAE. This policy shall act as a reference in respect of all measures and procedures taken by the School to protect students from any form of abuse or harm. This policy shall include, for example, the following:

- The safety of School buildings, transportation, and School activities. •
Students' health, welfare, and well-being.
- Conduct and discipline of students.
- Confidentiality of students' personal data.
- Security of School IT systems.
- Supervision of students at all times during school day hours and related School activities.
- Counselling and School support services, enabling students to have access to a trusted professional counselor, a social worker, or someone in an equivalent position.

- Conducting the necessary background checks on all School personnel in association with the relevant authorities.
- Reporting procedures in respect of any incident affecting the security of students within the School to Parents/Guardians, ADEK, and other related government entities.
- Confidentiality of reports and investigations related to any kind of student abuse and communications when dealing with the ADEK and relevant government entities.
- Provision of ongoing 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 (e.g. First Aid, CPR).
- Communicating with students and their Parents/Guardians to hear their opinion through a variety of means, which may include surveys, group discussions, and opportunities for them to express their views while ensuring their privacy. Additionally, Parents/Guardians shall be continuously informed of and given clarification regarding the roles and responsibilities they share with the School to protect their children.

Such a policy shall not only be concerned with prevention, reporting, and investigation. It should also foster a safe and positive environment inclusive of the School's care system as well as the accommodation of the personal and learning needs of the students, and their rights and responsibilities, together with the School's expectations of students' behaviour.

Effective student protection is based on support and encouragement, as students need (above all else) to feel a well-placed sense of trust and confidence in those they work with, without fear of exploitation or abuse.

Reporting of Incidents

It is mandatory for School to thoroughly investigate and report immediately to ADEK all incidents of abuse that students may face including exploitation, violence, and/or any other physical harm, sexual abuse, emotional threat, or harm of any kind, all of which will be referred to as "abuse of students". If any such incident is proven or suspected, it is the responsibility of the School's Principal (or in the case of the abuse being carried out by the School's Principal, the Board of Governors/School Owner) to

- Take immediate steps to safeguard all those involved, such as reporting incidents to the relevant official entities, taking into account other laws that may be related to the incident.
- Immediately inform the PSQA Sector, Licensing and Accreditation Division, of the incident by telephone, and in writing within 24 hours of the incident.
- Report the incident immediately to concerned Parents/Guardians. • Immediately suspend any member of staff who is accused of an offense involving student abuse if

the alleged staff abuse involves a crime according to the provisions of prevailing UAE Laws, as per article 112 of the Labour Law (including notifying the relevant authorities), until an investigation in this matter is completed and a decision is made concerning this member of staff's fitness to continue to work at the School.

- Carry out a formal investigation obtaining written statements from those involved;
- Provide the PSQA Sector, Licensing and Accreditation Division, with a written report within 24 hours of the incident via the official email account.
- Immediately terminate the employment of anyone found guilty by a competent authority of an offense of student abuse, in accordance with the provisions of United Arab Emirates Federal Law No. (8) of 1980 Labour Law and its amendments.

ADEK shall require School, when handling cases of student abuse, to conduct an investigation, and to maintain clear and scrupulous communications and actions when dealing with relevant government entities such as the Health Authority – Abu Dhabi (“HAAD”), the social welfare institutions and police departments. The School should keep relevant records and inform ADEK of such communications if so requested.

When the School uncovers a case of severe abuse to a student outside of School, it must take the matter seriously and follow up on the case with the social worker. The school shall take the necessary steps to protect the student, including by communicating with the Parent/Guardian to discuss the matter, or by forwarding the case to the relevant official entities in the UAE (social support institutions). The School must prepare a detailed report concerning the incident and procedures taken in this regard. This report should be kept in the student's folder. If the abuse is a crime, the School is required to notify the relevant official entities.

Failure to Comply with this Policy

Anyone who fails to comply with this policy shall be subject to legal accountability and the penalties stipulated in accordance with the ADEK's regulations, policies, and requirements, notwithstanding any other penalties imposed by the Penal Code or any other relevant law.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

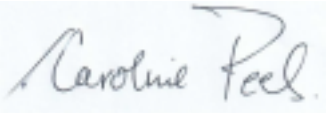

School's Owner and Board of Governors will:

- Ensure that buildings provide secure and supportive environments that comply with ADEK's requirements.
- Approve the School's student protection policies, procedures, and updates.
- Ensure that the School's recruitment policy and procedures include a condition of completing the required background checks on all School staff, in association with the relevant authorities.
- Make sure that the School's policy includes procedures that will prevent situations that could give rise to the abuse of students, for example by supervising students at all times while they are in the School's care.

School's Principal will:

- Develop a student protection policy and publish it in School, implement it effectively, and review and update it as necessary.
- Ensure that all School staff has undergone the required background checks.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to prevent situations that could lead to the abuse of students.
- Ensure that there is a consistent emphasis within the School on the protection of the students and for taking immediate action when there is suspicion of cases of student abuse.
- Ensure that students and others can safely report their concerns without fear of retribution or punishment.
- Canvass the views of students and Parents/Guardians regarding security and protection inside the School.

- Report for investigation any case of possible abuse or harm to students in the School, as required by ADEK's guidelines.
- Ensure that all staff is appropriately trained in the area of awareness of student protection issues and confidential investigation procedures.
- Maintain clear student records and update them periodically.

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