



EMINENCE PRIVATE SCHOOL مدرسة أيميننس الخاصة

Child Protection Policy

Version 4.0





POLICY		CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
STATUS		Implemented
FOCUS		Protecting every child at the school through established norms and laws
RESPONSIBILITY		School leadership with child protection officer
APPLICABILITY		School Community
DATE OF REVIEW		FIRST REVIEW: November 2020 SECOND REVIEW: March 2021 THIRD REVIEW: March 2022 FOURTH REVIEW: June 2023 NEXT REVIEW: June 2024



Policy Objective

The main objective of this policy is to ensure that the school operates in a way that prioritizes the safety of every student studying in the school. The policy also ensures that all staff are aware of the importance of child protection and know how to implement the procedures that apply in cases that involve any child protection issues.

Rationale

Child protection is a universal concern, and every child has a right to be protected. Though the family of the child is primarily responsible for child protection, the school and the community at large also play vital roles in ensuring the child has a safe environment outside his/her home. The Child Protection Policy of Eminence Private School has been formed under this firm belief.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all the stakeholders of the school – Staff, Parents and Students. The policy is reviewed annually by the School Leadership for its effective implementation.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School Leadership along with the Child Protection Officer is primarily responsible for the implementation of this policy.

School Leadership

The principal and vice principal are the designated senior leadership in this case.

- Develop the child protection policy and ensure all stakeholders are aware of it, implement it effectively.
- Ensure that all procedures are in place to prevent situations that could lead to the abuse of students.
- Ensure that there is consistent emphasis in 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 through clear reporting structures which includes the possibility of anonymous reporting.
- Ensuring that all staff are fully trained in safeguard norms and knowing to spot and raise concerns.
- Ensure that there are proper student records which are updated periodically.
- Ensure that the Child Protection Officer of the school is fully equipped for the role.



Child Protection Officer

Child protection officer is also the Counsellor of School. He/she is also an integral part of online safety team.

- Assist the school leadership in all child protection issues of the school.
- Ensure that staff receive the necessary training to understand and deal with child protection.
- Keep and maintain a record of all child protection information of the school.
- Follow the agreed procedures
- Keep updating self on child protection rules and process in the country,
- Provide advice and support to staff in matters of child protection
- Work with the school leadership in investigating child protection claims and/or issues,
- Work with the child/children in who are involved in child protection issues.
- To continuously monitor and follow up on children who had issues.
- Generate and maintain confidential reports on incidents and actions taken as well as follow up done where needed.
- Be available for all staff to discuss any safeguarding issues or concerns.
- Communicate with families on the school's policies and procedures, as well as any concerns or referrals where appropriate.
- Ensures that all staff sign the undertaking on corporal punishment to indicate that they have read and understood the child protection measure as mentioned in the school Staff Behavior Policy

Helplines

Students can always approach the following school communication numbers or emails to report any incident or to seek any help. These details are available on the school website.

Front Desk: 09 222 0404

School Mobile Number: 054 799 9720

Ms. Sushma Nalapat– Head of Operations/ OSL, ops.manager@eminenceschool.org

Ms. Merin Paul– Counsellor/Child Protection Officer, counsellor@eminenceschool.org

External helpline numbers to report,

Call **80085** to report in the Child Protection Unit of the Ministry of Education or email to cpu@moe.gov.ae

999 for any emergencies(police)



Definitions

The following are the key definitions under the policy:

Child Abuse: Every action or omission that would lead to the harm of the child and prevent the latter's upbringing and growth in a sound, safe and healthy manner (as stated in Wadeema's Law – Article 1).

Child Neglect: Failure of the parents or the custodian to take necessary actions to preserve the child's life, as well as his/her physical, mental and moral integrity from risks and to protect his/her various rights.

Violence against Children: Deliberate use of force against any child by any individual or group that would lead to actual harm to the health, growth or survival of the child (as stated in Wadeema's Law – Article 1).

Child Pornography: Production, display, publication, possession or circulation of a picture, film or drawing through any means of communication, social media platforms or other means where the child is shown in a disgraceful manner in a sexual act or sexual show, whether such act is real, virtual or simulated (as stated in Wadeema's Law – Article 1).

Child Sexual Abuse - Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts.

Signs & Symptoms

The symptoms listed below are not exhaustive, instead they are basic things to look for. The symptoms may vary from the ones listed below for many. The main thing is to be vigilant of behavioral changes and/or unusual actions that may be indicator of an underlying problem.

1. Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g., requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
2. Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy.
3. Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
4. Patterns of physical illnesses e.g., headaches, stomach aches.
5. Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.
6. Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g., stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
7. Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers.
8. Possessions missing or damaged.
9. Increased requests for money or stealing money.
10. Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
11. Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.



Different Types of Abuse and their severity (Ref: based on Child Protection Measures by MoE)

Types of Abuse and its Definition		
Sr. No.	Type of Abuse	Definition
1	Physical Abuse	Means causing any physical harm to a child, failure or unwillingness to prevent physical harm to the child.
2	Sexual Abuse	Means enforcing, attracting, or involving a child in any sexual behavior, whether he is aware of it or not. It also includes practices that do not involve any physical contact; such as involving children in watching or producing pornographic material, or watching sexual practices, or encouraging children to act in ways that are sexually inappropriate
3	Psychological Abuse	Means dealing in an abusive psychological manner that the child causes severe and permanent damage to him, which affects his psychological growth and development.
4	Neglect	The failure of the parent or caregiver to take the necessary measures to preserve his life and physical, psychological, mental and moral integrity from danger and to protect his various rights.

Guidelines

Teacher/Staff

All teachers are expected to provide a safe and secured environment to children so that they develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings and opinions. Children should be treated with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behaviour.

- Model friendly and approachable attitudes and behavior
- All staff should attend the classes and awareness sessions conducted by the school Child Protection Officer as well as external trainings provided by the school so as to understand child protection.
- Contribute towards the implementation of this policy and Eminence's other policies such as Behavior Policy and Anti-bullying Policy.
- Class teachers, in most cases, would be the first person to be informed about a concern. They shall detail the accurate written records of concerns and liaise it with designated child protection staff/school counsellor.
- Keep an eye out for signs and symptoms of abuse.
- Report suspected abuse cases to Child Protection Officer, seek investigation into the matter and follow up to see if appropriate action is being taken.



Parents

Parents play very crucial role in their child's safety especially in the time of e-learning. And the school will take every tiny opportunity to help the parents with their concerns and enquiries regarding the child protection rules:

- Do not hesitate to alert the school in case of a suspected protection issue.
- Take the freedom to inform immediately to school when an abuse is suspected. They can either approach the class teacher / school counsellor (Child Protection Officer) / School Leadership / a comfortable adult in the school.
- Cooperate with the school in all the procedures for positive outcomes.
- Make efforts to attend workshops and meetings arranged by the school for discussing the policies and guidelines regarding child protection.

Students

Every student in the school may not understand or comprehend the severity of incidents so there are chances that they may reasonably confide with their close friend or any adult in the school. There are few guidelines set for the students:

- Always seek for help and talk with an adult in case of any type of emotional, verbal or physical abuse.
- Never hesitate to listen to your friend if he/she is confiding with you their trauma.
- Ensure to share the incident with either parents or with any staff of the school or student council members whoever you may feel comfortable.
- Do not attempt to carry out the investigation on your own without consulting any school authority or any adult.

School Nurse

- Ensure that any signs of abuse noticed during a physical examination are communicated to the Child Protection Officer.
- Keep records of all types of injuries, attendance at the clinic and also keep an eye on for high frequency of visits by any child to the clinic.
- Inform the Child Protection Officer of any concerns they have about the student data they are recording.
- Recommend for external help if there are signs of serious abuse which could include alerting the appropriate govt department (80085 to report in the Child Protection Unit of the Ministry of Education).
- Be a part of the group who talk to parents when there is a need.



Tips to Handle a Child Reporting Abuse

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the teacher and/or child protection officer should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief or being judgmental.
- Allow the child to talk freely; listen, rather than ask direct questions.
- Reassure the child, but don't make promises which it might not be possible to keep.
- Do not immediately promise confidentiality, as it might be necessary to refer the case to higher authorities as per the reporting structure for abuse.
- Try to reassure the child that what has happened is not his/her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- When asking questions, ask open questions rather than leading questions.
- Do not criticize the perpetrator as it may lead to heightened emotions in the child and also because the matter needs investigation.
- Explain to the child what the next step would be.
- Buy time where needed, if a discussion with Safety Leader or Principal is needed to determine course of action.

Guidelines for Online Classes (Staff)

Over and above the guidelines listed above which is applicable throughout, the following are some specific guidelines for online classes which staff need to follow:

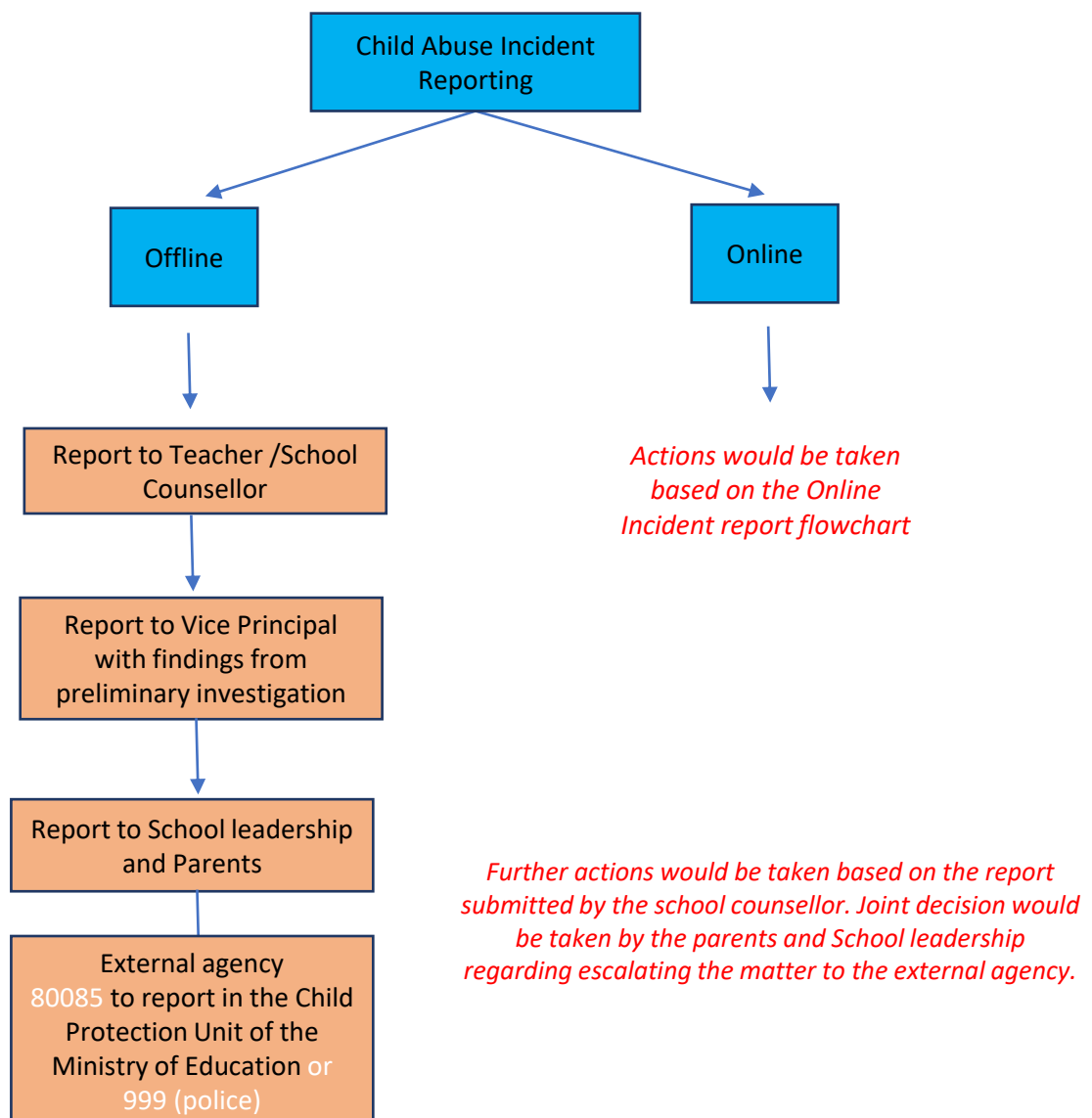
- Continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk.
- Ensure to have methods in place to give children one on one attention where possible.
- Staff and students must wear suitable clothing (in case of students – their uniform), as should anyone else in the household who may come into view. (Ref: online behavior policy)
- Students in KG1, KG2 and Grade 1 must be accompanied by an adult when online.
- Any concerns should be reported as per the approved reporting structure of the school as shown in the Online Safety Policy.
- All live sessions will be recorded for safeguarding purposes.



Steps to Report and Handle Suspected Abuse

- If a parent or a child wishes to report an incident, they can either get in touch with the class teacher or the school counselor or whomever they are comfortable with via email. They may also schedule a zoom meeting or communicate via the school's Mobile Communication App.
- Parents are also free to approach the Senior Leadership Team including Vice Principal or Grade Coordinators.
- Suspected victim would be handled with great care and patience and if it requires legal dealing the school would be taking the help from police.
- The identity of the victim shall not be disclosed except with his/her consent and no information would be published with regard to the witnesses involved with the incident.

If a staff member is suspected of abuse, an internal inquiry shall be conducted, and depending on the nature and extend of the abuse action will be taken which include and is not limited to termination from service and/or reporting to authorities.





Based on the severity, action plan taken by the school (Reference: MoE Child Protection measures)

Type of Abuse	Description of Severity Level	Intervention Duration	
		Severity Degree:	
Sexual Abuse	If the child's life is in danger and the abuse endangers his physical and health safety and requires immediate intervention or the repetition of abuses	Very high	Immediate intervention
Psychological	If the life of the child is not in danger and the abuse threatens his psychological, moral or mental integrity and affects his educational and health rights and his right to protection or the repetition of abuses	High	Within a working day
Neglect	If the child's life is not in danger and there is no threat to his psychological, moral or mental integrity and the abuse affects his educational and health rights and his right to protection and the repetition of abuses	Medium	Within two working days
Exposure to any form of neglect and harassment, which includes abuse, but it is one of the violations expected at that age and geographical region, such as the use of titles that denotes racism or excessive expressions, provided that repetition of violators is monitored	If the child's life is not in danger and there is an abuse that affects his psychological integrity.	Low	Within 3 working days



UAE Law on Child Rights

For education providers in UAE there is a clear obligation to ensure that children's safety and welfare is safeguarded to the greatest extent possible. UAE protects children by enforcing laws to protect them and empowers them by providing education, good health and other facilities. Eminence Private School always ensures to follow all the national guidance and abide by the laws enforced for students' safety and care. Some of the laws of UAE are:

1. Wadeemas Law

Federal **Law** No. 3 of 2016 concerning child rights, also known as **Wadeema's Law** stresses that all children must be provided with appropriate living standards, access to health services, education, equal opportunities in essential services and facilities without any kind of discrimination. Wadeema, the Emirati girl whose death shocked the nation and prompted the creation of the UAE's new child protection law, was found buried in the Sharjah desert in 2012. Some of the enforced laws since then are:

Article 42 in Wadeema's Law:

According to the Article 42 as mentioned in the Wadeema's Law states that every person shall notify the child protection specialist or child protection units in case of anything that threatens the child's physical, psychological, moral or mental integrity or health.

The notification shall be mandatory for the educators, physicians, social specialists or others entrusted with the protection, care or education of the child.

Article 43 in Wadeema's Law:

According to the Article 43 as mentioned in the Wadeema's Law states that every person who reaches the age of majority shall assist any child who asks him/her to notify the competent authorities or concerned entities about his/her suffering, the suffering of any of his/her siblings or any other child in the same situation.

Article 60 in Wadeema's Law:

In this article it is stated that whoever violates the provisions of Clause 2 of Article (11), Articles (28), (34), (35) or Clause 2 of Article (42) of this Law - Wadeema's Law (PDF, 250 KB) shall be punished by imprisonment or a fine not less than AED 5,000 (five thousand).

2. Protection of children's data online

Article 29 of Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 Concerning Child Rights, mentioned in Wadeema's Law (PDF, 250 KB), states: The telecommunications companies and internet service providers shall notify the competent authorities or the concerned entities of any child pornography materials being circulated through the social media sites and on the Internet and shall provide necessary information and data on the persons, entities or sites that circulate such material or intend to mislead the children. which guarantees the protection of children from all forms of exploitation and abuse.

Articles 29 and 37 prohibit the exploitation, production, filming, possession and circulation of child pornographic materials and calls for the immediate removal of child sexual abuse material from the internet and child online abuse. Ministry of Interior and the National Programme for Happiness and Wellbeing launched the 'Child Digital Safety' initiative in March 2018, in a joint effort to raise awareness among children and school students about online threats and challenges, and promote a safe and constructive use of the internet.



3. The 'Child Protection Unit' initiative

Ministry of Education (MoE) has launched a 'Child Protection Unit' initiative for the benefit of students of government and private schools across the UAE. The initiative is aimed at protecting children from all forms of harm, negligence and abuse which they may experience at school or home and maintaining their safety with regard to their physical, psychological and educational aspects.

- To report child abuse case outside the scope of the school the following channels can be used:
- All Emirates: Call 116111, Child Protection Center, Ministry of Interior
- Call 80085 to report in the Child Protection Unit of the Ministry of Education
- Or submit the report via e-mail CPU@moe.gov.ae and attach the supporting papers and documents, if any
- Or report via the link of child protection on the Ministry's website <https://bit.ly/3bd2Y05>
- Emirate of Dubai, call 800988 Child Protection Center, Dubai Community Development Authority;
- Emirate of Sharjah, call 800700, Child Protection Center, Sharjah Social Services Department

Keeping Track of Incident Records

School takes all the necessary and crucial steps whenever any concern or issues arises with respect to the child protection and safety. The Child protection officer ensures that all the records are properly documented and clearly reviewed, signed and dated. These records if required further are taken as part of evidence for a subsequent part of the investigation. Reports are also generated whenever an issue arises, and the designated Child Protection Officer ensures that all the records are accurately and timely circulated among the concerned department.

Cross References

Online safety policy

UAE Children's protection laws – Official website of MoE.

Online behaviour policy

Antibullying policy

Staff behaviour policy

Resource Link

[Safeguarding Children's Right to Education | Child Protection Law UAE | Al Tamimi & Company
https://u.ae/-/media/Information-and-services/Social-Affairs/En-Federal-law32016childrenrightsEn-Wadeemas-law.ashx](https://u.ae/-/media/Information-and-services/Social-Affairs/En-Federal-law32016childrenrightsEn-Wadeemas-law.ashx)