

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Al Rawabi School

Based on the Kingdom of Bahrain Child Protection Protocol

1. Purpose

This policy outlines Al Rawabi School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children in line with the Kingdom of Bahrain's Child Protection Protocol. The school is dedicated to creating a safe environment for all students and ensuring that every child is protected from harm.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the school community, including staff, students, volunteers, parents, and external contractors. It ensures that child protection is a collective responsibility and outlines the roles and procedures to be followed in the event of concerns about a child's welfare.

3. Definitions

- **Safeguarding:** Measures to protect children from harm, including abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to promote their well-being.
- **Child Protection:** Actions taken to protect a child at risk of significant harm.
- **Child:** Any person under the age of 18 as defined by the Bahrain Child Protection Protocol.

4. Principles

- **Best Interests of the Child:** The well-being of the child is the primary concern in all actions and decisions.
 - **Prevention:** Creating a culture of awareness and education to prevent abuse and neglect.
 - **Equality:** All students are treated equally regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, or disability.
 - **Accountability:** All members of the school community are accountable for their role in safeguarding children.
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5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. School Leadership (General Director and Heads of School)

- Oversee the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure all staff receive regular training in child protection.
- Designate a **Child Protection Officer (CPO: Head of Counsellors)** responsible for managing and reporting safeguarding concerns.

5.2. Child Protection Officer (CPO)

- Act as the first point of contact for all safeguarding concerns.
- Coordinate actions regarding suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Liaise with local authorities, including the Ministry of Education and the Child Protection Unit in Bahrain, as required.

5.3. School Staff

- Report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the CPO.
- Maintain a professional relationship with students, avoiding any behavior that could be misinterpreted as inappropriate.
- Participate in ongoing training and be vigilant about signs of abuse or neglect.

5.4. Parents

- Support the school's safeguarding efforts by promoting a safe environment at home.
- Report any concerns about the well-being of their child or other students.

6. Types of Abuse

Staff should be aware of the following categories of abuse:

- **Physical Abuse:** Intentional physical harm to a child.
 - **Emotional Abuse:** Persistent emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child.
 - **Sexual Abuse:** Any form of sexual activity with a child.
 - **Neglect:** Failure to provide for a child's basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing, and medical care.
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7. Recognizing Signs of Abuse

Common indicators of abuse include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained injuries or bruises.
- Sudden changes in behavior or academic performance.
- Withdrawal or fear of certain individuals.
- Inappropriate knowledge of sexual behavior.
- Poor hygiene or consistently neglected appearance.

8. Reporting Procedures

1. **Immediate Action:** If a staff member has concerns about a child's safety, they must report it directly to the CPO.
2. **Confidentiality:** Information about child protection concerns should only be shared with relevant personnel on a need-to-know basis.
3. **Documentation:** The CPO should document all concerns, actions, and decisions made.
4. **External Reporting:** The CPO is responsible for contacting the Child Protection Unit under the Ministry of Social Development or the Child Protection Center in Bahrain when external intervention is necessary.

9. Response to Allegations Against Staff

- **Internal Investigation:** Any allegations of abuse against a staff member should be reported to the **General Director** immediately. The accused staff member may be suspended while an internal investigation is conducted.
- **External Involvement:** If necessary, external authorities will be contacted, and the school will fully cooperate with any formal investigation.

10. Staff Training

All staff must undergo annual child protection training to ensure they understand the signs of abuse and the correct reporting procedures. Training records will be maintained by the Human Resources department.

11. Safe Recruitment Practices

Al Rawabi School follows safe recruitment practices, including:

- Background checks on all potential employees.
- Requiring a Good-Conduct Certificate from the Mol.
- Verification of qualifications and previous experience.
- Obtaining references from previous employers.

12. Online Safety

Given the increasing use of technology, Al Rawabi School recognizes the importance of safeguarding students online. The school will:

- Implement online safety protocols to monitor internet usage within the school. (BYOD POLICY)
- Educate students on responsible digital behavior.
- Ensure parental consent is obtained for students' photos, videos, and personal information to be shared on social media or the school's website.

13. Record Keeping

All records related to safeguarding concerns and actions taken will be stored securely and kept confidential. Records will only be accessible to authorized personnel.

14. Parental Involvement

Parents will be informed of the school's safeguarding policies during orientation / email, and provided with resources on recognizing signs of abuse. Collaboration between the school and families is essential to ensure children's safety.

15. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if needed, to ensure compliance with any changes in national legislation or local child protection protocols.
