

MAS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Date Updated
September 2023

Date of Review
Annually

Vision: Mirdif American School enables all children to flourish in a holistic, positive, nurturing learning environment that prepares them to become contributing and impactful members of society.

Mission: Mirdif American School is committed to providing an inclusive environment that inspires and develops students who are: ethical, compassionate, forward thinking, resilient, reflective, collaborative, productive, and innovative.

MAS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Introduction

At Mirdif American School (MAS), the health, safety, and well-being of all our children are of paramount importance. All children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, or disability. Everyone is responsible when it comes to protecting children and this includes reporting any act committed by a parent, guardian, or any other person, to a child enrolled at MAS that results in neglect, physical, emotional injury, or sexual harm.

Our school is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children in our care. We recognize our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to protect them from harm and abuse.

This policy outlines the measures that we will take to achieve this, in line with UAE law and best practices.

All staff members are committed to reporting any suspected or disclosed issues of child protection to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or any of the safeguarding officers following the MAS process map for safeguarding.

Aims

- Maintaining a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
- Every child, irrespective of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion, or sexual identity, possesses equal entitlement to protection.
- Children who experience safety and a sense of security are more adequately prepared for acquiring knowledge.
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children, where they can learn and develop free from harm or abuse.
- Using an effective curriculum to clearly define what is and is not acceptable behavior, how to speak up regarding concerns, and how to become (as an adult) a safe and respectful citizen.
- Foster an open and supportive culture where children feel safe and able to raise concerns or seek help if they are worried or distressed.

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- Recognizing and reporting incidents of harm and possible offenses against children.
- Establish clear procedures for reporting and recording concerns about the welfare of children, and ensure that these are followed consistently.
- Supporting children who have been abused.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities and are trained to recognize and respond to signs of abuse or neglect.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers, and external agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.
- Students and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support from MAS
- Regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and make improvements as necessary to ensure that it remains up-to-date and fit for purpose.

Terminology

1. **Safeguarding:** refers to the collective efforts and measures taken to ensure the well-being, safety, and protection of all students. It involves creating and maintaining a safe environment where students can learn, grow, and thrive, free from harm or abuse.

Safeguarding is an ongoing commitment to providing a secure and nurturing environment where students can learn and grow without compromising their safety and well-being.

2. **Child protection** refers to the measures and actions taken to ensure the safety, well-being, and protection of children who are at harm or at risk to be at harm, abuse, or neglect within the educational environment.

Purpose

MAS is an inclusive school that honors diversity and respects individuals. We are proactive in identifying barriers that restrict students' achievement, participation, and learning and will take action to remove any obstacles which lead to educational and

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emotional exclusion. Our students have a right to feel safe and protected from significant physical and emotional harm both inside and outside of school.

This policy is a crucial part of promoting the welfare of our students; it is designed to inform our staff regarding the signs of child abuse and to equip them with knowledge on what to do in the event of suspected abuse.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is a moral, ethical, and legal responsibility of any teaching professional or other staff member to report suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, bullying, or safety concerns to the DSL or any of the safeguarding Teams

Key Personnel

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is: Christine Jabbour

Contact details: email: christine.jabbour@mirdifamericanschool.ae tel: 0589855123

The Principal: Lisa Brown

Contact details: email: Principal@mirdifamericanschool.ae

The Vice Principal: Fay Houry

Contact details: email: viceprincipal@mirdifamericanschool.ae

The Safeguarding Officer: Marwan Moussa

Contact details: email: marwan.moussa@mirdifamericanschool.ae

The Safeguarding Officer: Alaa Abdulbaki

Contact details: email: alaa.baki@mirdifamericanschool.ae

The Safeguarding Officer: Dale Hagemann

Contact details: email: Dale.Hagemann@mirdifamericanschool.ae

Good practice guidelines and UAE code of conduct

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards students, we need to agree on standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

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- Promote a positive, respectful work environment aligned with school values.
- Maintain high ethical standards, integrity, and honesty.
- Respect and maintain confidentiality of sensitive information.
- Commitment to Excellence: fulfill roles and responsibilities diligently.
- Actively participate in professional development for skill enhancement.
- Treat all individuals with respect, embracing diversity.
- Create an inclusive environment catering to diverse needs.
- Be alert to changes in student behavior, signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation.
- Adhere to child protection, behavior, and guidance policies.
- Obtain student consent for physical contact.
- Collaborate effectively with colleagues.
- Engage in clear, respectful, and timely communication with stakeholders.
- Follow health and safety regulations from relevant authorities.
- Report health or safety concerns promptly.
- Adhere to dress code policy, maintain professional appearance.
- Follow UAE Code of Conduct, serve as positive role models.
- Familiarize and comply with the policy.
- Provide feedback and suggestions for policy improvement.
- Contribute to the school's continuous enhancement initiatives.

Abuse of Position of Trust

All School staff are aware that inappropriate behavior towards students is unacceptable and that their behavior towards students must be beyond reproach. Any relationship with a student, even if over the age of consent, is regarded as 'an abuse of a position of trust'.

The School's Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct) sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members.

Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect than others. Several factors may contribute to that increased vulnerability, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues, a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur, as well as an individual child's personality, behavior, disability, mental and physical health needs and family circumstances.

To ensure that all of our students receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

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- Disabled or have special educational needs.
- Young carers.
- Affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and violence or parental mental health needs.
- Asylum seekers.
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying behaviors.
- Living in temporary accommodation.
- Living transient lifestyles.
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations.
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality.
- At risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- At risk of being drawn into extremism.

This list provides examples of vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

Early Help

The School recognises that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. All School staff are trained to notice any concerns about children which may help to identify that they would benefit from early help.

The School is committed to working in partnership with children, parents and other agencies to:

- Identify situations in which children and/or their families would benefit from early help
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help; and provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, developing an action plan that will focus on activity to improve the child's outcomes.

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- The School will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for any child who:
 1. Is disabled and has specific additional needs.
 2. Has special educational needs
 3. Is a young carer
 4. Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behavior
 5. Is in a family whose circumstances present challenges for the child, such as adult substance abuse, adult mental ill health, domestic abuse
 6. Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; and/or

Careful consideration should be taken regarding who to involve in the 'Early Help' process. The process should involve the child and family as well as all the professionals who are working with them. However, if by doing so this puts the child at further risk, relevant best interests and decisions should be made, in consultation with UAE inter-agencies.

The School will keep the needs and circumstances of children receiving early help under constant review. If the child's situation does not improve and/or the child's parents and/or the child do not consent to early help being initiated, the School will make a judgement about whether, without help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, a referral to Children's Social Care may be necessary.

Attendance

We recognise that full attendance at School is important to the well-being of all our Students and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them at School. Attendance is monitored closely. Our attendance policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by our SLT.

Children Missing from Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Effective information sharing between parents, Schools and authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory School age are safe and receiving suitable education.

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Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. The DSL will monitor unauthorized absence and take appropriate action, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the School day.

Where a student has 10 consecutive School days of unexplained/unapproved absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the School to establish their whereabouts without success, the School will make an immediate referral to relevant UAE authorities.

Reasonable steps include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts.
- Letters home (including recorded delivery).
- Contact with other Schools where siblings may be registered.
- Enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the student/family.
- All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the student's file.

The School is required by UAE educational law to have an admission register and, with the exception of Schools where all students are boarders, an attendance register. All student must be placed on both registers.

Helping children to keep themselves safe

The UAE School Inspection Framework mandates governing bodies and proprietors to ensure that children receive education on safeguarding, including online safety, as an integral part of a comprehensive curriculum. At our school, we provide teaching and learning opportunities to impart knowledge about safeguarding. This includes guidance lessons that encompass aspects of personal, social, and health education, as well as the incorporation of these principles throughout various aspects of school life.

Our approach aims to equip children with the skills to understand and manage risks. Through supportive interactions with our staff, children learn to identify and mitigate potential risks they may encounter. These discussions empower children and promote responsible behavior, fostering a positive environment that prioritizes sensible decision-making rather than instilling fear or anxiety. We also emphasize teaching children how to conduct themselves responsibly and behave appropriately.

In line with our commitment to online safety, children receive regular reminders about the importance of responsible online behavior, the risks associated with sharing content and images online, and strategies to address bullying, including cyberbullying. We

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actively cultivate an atmosphere of respect, encouraging children to approach a staff member of their choice should they have any concerns.

When discussing risk, we address the specific issues and risks related to young people engaging in the sending, receiving, and dissemination of indecent images, commonly known as 'sexting.' We acknowledge that while some young people may engage in such behavior within the context of a romantic relationship without intending harm or distress, it is important to recognize the associated risks. Our staff members are trained to be vigilant, identify and record concerns related to young people involved in sexting, including listening attentively to young people's conversations with their peers and staff, as they would with any other safeguarding concern.

Whenever concerns arise, our staff members will engage in conversations with the involved children and, unless there are compelling reasons to believe that doing so would increase the child's risk of significant harm, inform parents about their concerns.

At our school, we are dedicated to ensuring the well-being and safety of all our students by proactively addressing safeguarding concerns and providing appropriate support and guidance.

Support for Students, families and staff involved in a child protection issue

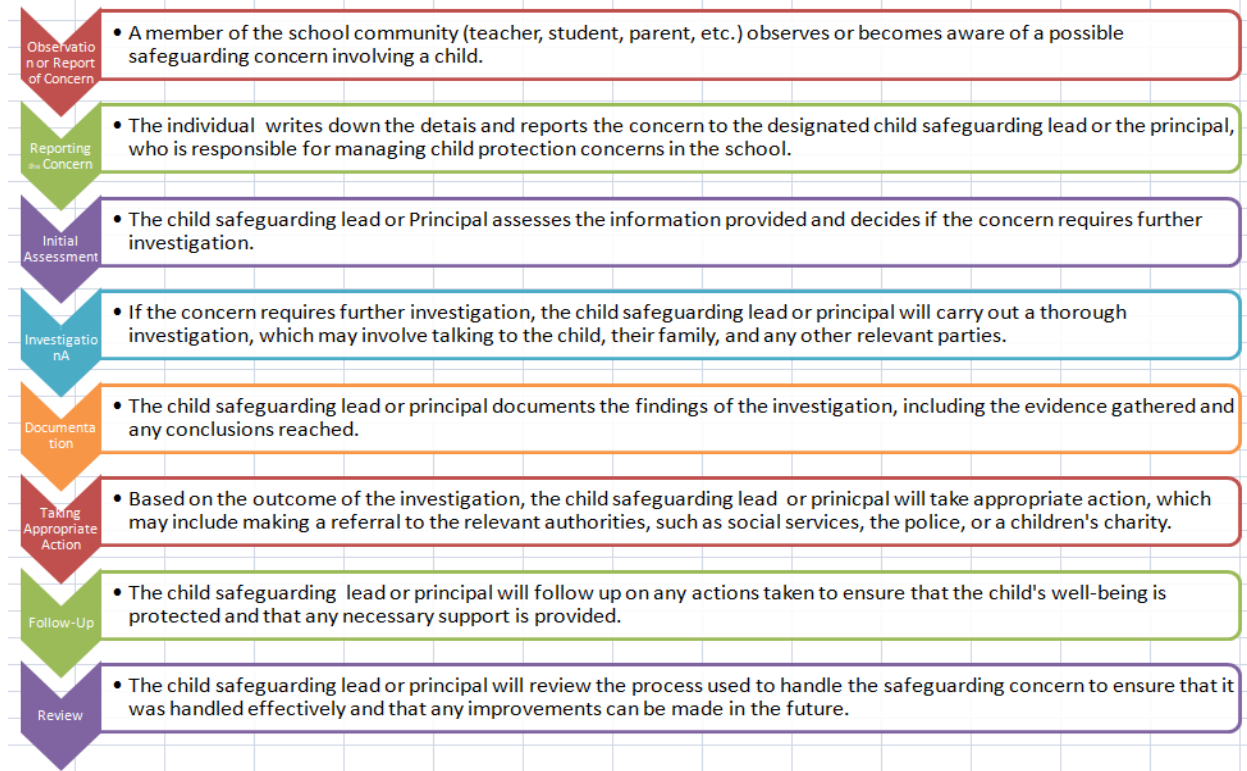
Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved.

We will support Students, their families, and staff by:

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Complaints Procedure

In situations where a student or parent expresses concerns about instances of poor practice towards a student that does not initially meet the criteria for child protection action, our school has a well-defined complaints procedure in place. Examples of poor practice include singling out a student unfairly, attempting to humiliate them, engaging in bullying or belittling behavior, or any form of discrimination against them.

Complaints raised by staff members are addressed according to the school's complaints, disciplinary, and grievance procedures.

If a complaint escalates and becomes a child protection concern, it will automatically be handled in accordance with the school's child protection procedures. Our priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of all students, and appropriate measures will be taken to address any child protection concerns that arise.

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Whistle blowing if staff have concerns about a colleague

Staff members at Mirdif American School may find themselves in a challenging position when they have concerns about the behavior of a colleague towards a student. They may feel uncertain about the situation and worry about the potential impact of reporting on their colleague's career. However, it is crucial for all staff to prioritize the well-being of the child above all else.

To address these concerns, the school has implemented a whistleblowing policy ([Whistle blowing Policy](#)) that allows staff to confidentially raise concerns or allegations. This policy ensures that a sensitive inquiry can be conducted to address the issue appropriately

It is expected that staff members report any concerns about poor practice or possible child abuse by their colleagues, even if they may seem minor infractions of the school's Staff Behavior Policy (Code of Conduct). Reporting these concerns to the Principal enables early intervention to maintain appropriate boundaries and a safe environment that protects children and minimizes the risk of serious abuse within the school.

If there are any concerns or complaints about the Principal, they should be reported to the designated personnel at Mirdif American School, whose contact details are prominently displayed in the staff room for any staff member to access in such situations.

Allegations against staff

In the event of an allegation against a staff member at Mirdif American School, specific procedures must be followed to ensure a fair and thorough investigation. Although it is uncommon for a child to make entirely false or malicious allegations, misunderstandings and misinterpretations can occur. It is important to note that a child may sometimes accuse an innocent party due to fear of naming the actual perpetrator. Nonetheless, the school acknowledges that certain professionals may pose a significant risk to students, and all allegations must be taken seriously.

Staff members who are the subject of an allegation have the right to a fair, prompt, and consistent handling of their case. They will be kept informed of the progress throughout the process. Suspension is not automatically imposed and alternatives will be explored. However, in certain circumstances where it is deemed necessary for a fair and expedient investigation that safeguards all parties involved, staff may be

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suspended. In such cases, the school will provide support and designate a named contact for the suspended staff member.

As previously stated, all allegations against staff should be reported to the Principal. Additionally, allegations against staff should be promptly communicated to MAS Safeguarding Team within 24 hours. Allegations against the Principal should be reported to Mirdif American School DSL.

Staff, parents, and governors are reminded that the publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is strictly prohibited by law. This includes verbal conversations, written communication, and content posted on social media platforms.

Allegations involving former staff members or historical allegations will be reported to the police in accordance with the appropriate procedures.

Mirdif American School is committed to maintaining confidentiality and preventing unwanted publicity while investigating or considering an allegation, in accordance with MAS Policy.

Staff Training

Ensuring that all staff members are equipped to recognize potential signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, as well as knowing the appropriate actions to take, is of utmost importance at Mirdif American School.

During the induction process, new staff members who will have direct contact with children and volunteers receive comprehensive training that covers various essential aspects, including:

- Familiarization with the School's child protection and safeguarding policy.
- Identifying signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.
- Responding to disclosures of abuse or neglect by a child.
- Procedures for reporting and recording concerns.
- Familiarity with the Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct).
- Introduction to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

It is essential that all new staff members, governors, or volunteers have a clear understanding of these policies and guidelines before commencing their work at the school. Therefore, the School's Child Protection Policy and Staff Behaviour Policy (UAE Code of Conduct) are provided alongside the appointment confirmation letter, with a requirement for individuals to read these documents prior to their start date. On their

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first day of work, they have the opportunity to address any questions and are then asked to sign a confirmation indicating their understanding of and commitment to comply with these policies.

All staff members, including the Principal (unless serving as the DSL), volunteers, and governors, receive appropriate and regularly updated training on safeguarding and child protection. This training, conducted during inset days and staff meetings, ensures they possess the necessary skills and knowledge aligned with UAE guidance and GEMS requirements, enabling them to effectively safeguard children. Thematic updates are provided as needed, at least annually.

The DSL receives refresher training every two years, which incorporates up-to-date inter-agency procedures. Moreover, the DSL regularly updates their knowledge and skills, staying informed about relevant developments through annual updates and accessing inter-agency training as part of their professional growth.

Staff members are also made aware of the increased vulnerability certain groups face, such as children with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children, young carers, and the risks associated with specific safeguarding issues, including child sexual exploitation and extremism.

Supply staff, placement-based staff, and other visiting staff are required to sign the School's Safeguarding Statement, which provides information about the School's approach to safeguarding and instructions on reporting incidents. The Safeguarding Portfolio containing this statement is accessible on the School's shared drive.

Safer Recruitment

At Mirdif American School, we prioritize the employment of staff, volunteers, and partners who are deemed "safe" to work with children. To ensure safer recruitment, all applicants are required to:

- Complete a comprehensive application form that includes their employment history, addressing any gaps.
- Provide two references, with at least one able to comment on their suitability to work with children.
- Present evidence of identity and qualifications (as per KHDA requirement).
- Undergo vetting checks relevant to their country of origin if offered employment.
- Provide evidence of their right to work in the UAE if offered employment (no criminal record).

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- Participate in an interview conducted by a panel of at least two MAS leaders, in the case of shortlisted candidates.

The school

- Asking candidates at interviews about their attitude towards safeguarding and motivation for working with children.
- Verifying the mental and physical fitness of the preferred candidate to fulfill their job responsibilities.
- Obtaining references for all shortlisted candidates, including internal candidates.
- Conducting additional or alternative checks for applicants with previous experience outside the UAE.
- Ensuring at least one member of each recruitment panel has attended child safeguarding training level 3.
- All new staff members and volunteers undergo an induction process that includes becoming familiar with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct). It is mandatory for all staff to sign a confirmation indicating that they have received copies of these policies.
- Volunteers undergo checks aligned with their responsibilities and interactions with students.
- On-site contractors are limited school access except for cases of extreme emergency when they are escorted and accompanied by a member of administration.

Site Security

To maintain a safe environment, all visitors to Mirdif American School, including contractors, are required to sign in and receive an identity badge indicating their permission to be on-site. It is expected that all visitors adhere to the School's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure the safety of the children. The Principal will exercise professional judgment to determine whether a visitor should be escorted or supervised during their time on the premises.

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Behaviour Management

Our comprehensive behavior policy is regularly reviewed by the Leadership Team and is transparent to staff, parents, and pupils. (Insert the behavior policy link)

Record Keeping

Mirdif American School maintains safeguarding and child protection records, ensuring:

- Detailed written records of concerns about children are kept, including the date, event, and actions taken, even if immediate referral to relevant agencies is not required.
- Records are organized chronologically and securely stored in locked locations including password protected online files.
- Relevant child protection records are transferred to the receiving school or other educational establishment when students move upon school and/or parental request.
- Safeguarding and child protection records are kept separate from the student's school file and accessible only to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and School leaders who require access.
- Records include detailed observations of a child's behavior, appearance, statements, interactions with staff, other children, and parents/carers, along with any concerns arising from these interactions. Exact words spoken by the child or parent/carer are recorded whenever possible. Records are signed, dated, and timed by the staff member making the record.
- Consistent recording systems are used by all staff, and records are submitted to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who completes the necessary forms to confirm actions taken.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All Staff are aware that child protection issues require a high level of confidentiality to respect the privacy of the individuals involved and to prevent compromising evidence.

Confidentiality protocols are adhered to, and information is shared appropriately. If there are doubts about confidentiality, staff seek guidance from the DSL, another SLT member, or an external agency. Staff can discuss day-to-day concerns about students with colleagues to ensure their general needs are met, but all child protection and

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safeguarding concerns are reported to the DSL, Principal, or the safeguarding officers in the case of concerns about the Principal. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis, and staff have a professional responsibility to share information with relevant agencies to safeguard children. Staff must not promise to keep secrets with children or parents.

Data Protection and Storage

Child protection information is processed for limited purposes, is accurate, and is kept no longer than necessary. It is processed in accordance with data subject rights and is stored securely to prevent unauthorized access. Sensitive information stored on portable devices or media is password protected or encrypted and kept in locked storage. The School's policy on confidentiality and information-sharing is available upon request from parents and students.

Extended School and Off-Site Arrangements

All extended and off-site activities undergo risk assessments to ensure compliance with health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Effective child protection arrangements are verified for off-site activities, including visits and work-related activities. If services or activities are provided by external organizations on the School site, their procedures, including safer recruitment procedures, are checked for appropriateness.

Photography and Images

- To protect students, their consent is sought for photographs to be taken or published, and parental consent is also obtained.
- Only the student's first name is used with an image (unless a parent requests otherwise) and students are encouraged to voice any concerns about photographs taken of them.
- Appropriate clothing is ensured for students in photographs.
- If a photo has been taken of a student without consent, the person responsible is asked to delete the image.

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Online Safety at Mirdif American School

Children and young individuals frequently utilize electronic devices such as mobile phones, tablets, and computers on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images through social networking platforms like Facebook, Twitter, MSN, TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram.

While these technologies and the internet offer sources of entertainment, communication, and education, unfortunately, some adults and young people misuse these technologies to harm children. The harm can vary from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails to grooming and enticing children into engaging in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography, or face-to-face meetings. Additionally, accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behavior, and criminal activities can distress or harm students.

To address these concerns, Mirdif American School prohibits students from accessing chatrooms and social networking sites while on school premises as protected by **insert**. However, many students own or have access to handheld devices during home time, and parents are encouraged to implement measures to ensure their children's safety while using the internet and social media at home and in the community. The school supports the use of BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) to facilitate learning, and our BYOD and Acceptable use Policy outlines our approach to online safety. (insert the policy)

The School's E Safety Policy outlines our efforts to keep students safe while at school and educates them on the responsible use of technology. Cyberbullying and inappropriate texting among students are treated as seriously as any other form of bullying and are addressed through our anti-bullying procedures. In severe cases, incidents may be managed in accordance with our child protection policy.

To ensure the well-being of our students, all staff members undergo online safety training. Furthermore, staff members are provided with guidelines regarding personal online activity, the use of social networking platforms, and electronic communication with students. Strict rules are in place, and any staff member found in violation of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action.

Child Protection Procedures

Child Abuse:

Child abuse refers to any act committed by a parent, guardian, or any other person to a child under the age of 18, which results in injury to the child. The activity that is

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undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are likely to suffer from significant harm These acts include situations where there is neglect, and emotional, physical, or sexual harm. Below are the different types of abuse:

A. Physical abuse:

It is actual or attempted physical injury to a child where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Signs:

- Unexplained injuries or burns (particularly if they are recurrent)
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression toward others
- Self-destructive tendencies

B. Emotional abuse:

It is the failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs which leads to a severe effect on the behavior and development of the child. This includes conveying to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved.

Signs:

- Physical/mental/emotional developmental lags
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Withdrawal

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- Low self-esteem
- Fear of new situations
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Self-harm

C. Sexual abuse:

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in a sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society.

Signs:

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, language, and behaviors
- Loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressive behaviors such as thumb sucking
- Becoming withdrawn, isolated
- Inability to focus
- Reluctance to go home
- Drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Overreacting to criticism
- Have outbursts of anger/irritability
- Self-harm
- Suicidal thoughts

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D. Neglect:

It refers to persistent or deliberate failure to meet a child's physical or psychological needs eg. a failure to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter, a failure to protect a child, or a failure to provide adequate medical care. It may also involve neglect or failure to give an adequate response to a child's emotional needs.

Signs:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor peer relationships
- Stealing
- Academic Challenges
- Physical/mental/emotional developmental lags
- Parents not showing up for requested meetings

What is expected to do during disclosure?

Stay calm (Don't over-react, however, shocked you may be)



Listen, hear, and believe (Listen carefully, take it seriously)



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Give time for the person to say what they want (Don't make assumptions and don't offer alternative explanations; Ask questions beginning with 'Tell me about...Explain...Describe...'.
Avoid 'who, what, when, where questions)



Reassure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling. (Do not promise confidentiality; explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed)



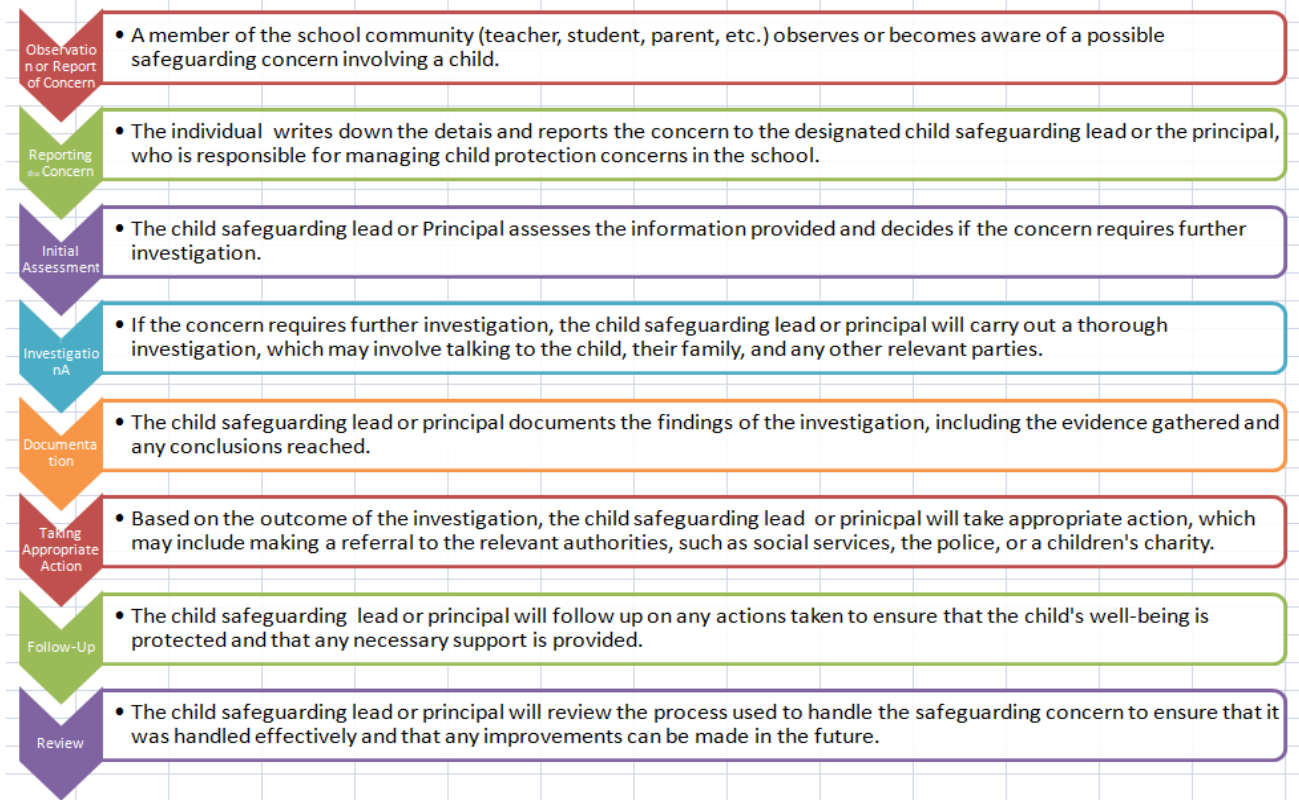
Record in writing as near verbatim as possible and as soon as possible so that you don't forget anything, and include information about what action was taken afterward.

MAS Process Map for Safeguarding

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Reporting this information

After the child discloses the information about abuse, the following steps must be taken:

1. Make some brief notes at the time or immediately afterward
 - a. Record the date, time, place, and context of the disclosure or concern.
 - b. Record facts and not assumptions and interpretations.
 - c. Note the non-verbal behavior and the keywords in the language used by a student (do not translate into "proper terms").
 - d. Sign and date the note.
2. Mark observed injuries and bruises on the Body Map.
3. Meet with the DSL and describe the situation that took place or fill the form (Insert form here)
4. Meet with the principal and DSL to discuss how to proceed with the information.

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In other situations, the child might not disclose any information but you may suspect abuse based on your own observations. In this case, a similar procedure is carried out:

1. Write a letter describing your concerns and reasons for them
2. If any injuries or bruises are visible, record them on the Body Map
3. Meet with the School DSL to discuss your concerns
4. A meeting will be held between you, the School DSL, and the Principal to discuss the issue and how to proceed

Please always report any suspected case of abuse, even if you are doubtful yourself by filling the form. Our student's safety is our most important priority.

****Remember-** The best help you can provide is calm, unconditional support and reassurance. Let your actions speak for you if you are having trouble finding the words. Remember that it is a tremendous act of courage for children to come forward about abuse. They might have been told specifically not to tell, and may even feel that the abuse is normal.

Bullying & cyberbullying

Bullying is defined as an intentional act repeated more than three times to hurt another person or group. It involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying can result in significant anxiety and distress and impacts the child's well-being which can be devastating, with some cases even leading to youth suicide or self-harm.

At our school, we take all instances of bullying seriously, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. Such incidents will be promptly reported and managed according to our comprehensive anti-bullying procedures. Teachers should be watching out for bullying at all times, but be careful to use language correctly so that teasing and insults are identified and stopped quickly in class before they escalate to a bullying incident.

All students and parents receive a copy of these procedures upon joining the school, and the topic of bullying is regularly addressed through our value-based education curriculum and guidance lessons. In cases where bullying reaches a severe level or when the effectiveness of the anti-bullying procedures is called into question, the

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Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will assess the situation and may consider implementing "early help" or child protection procedures. For further information regarding children who display sexually harmful or abusive behavior towards others, please refer to the relevant section below.

Bullying is **unwanted aggressive behavior among school-aged children that has the likelihood of causing physical or psychological harm or injury and is characterized by the following:**

- a. **an imbalance of power**
- b. **is an action that is repeated**
- c. **it is intentional**

1. *Physical:* pushing, punching, kicking, hitting, pinching, spitting, tripping, blocking, and other forms of violence or threats of violence
2. *Verbal:* Name-calling, insulting, teasing, intimidating, taunting, threatening to cause harm
3. *Social or Relational:* Excluding persistent teasing, nasty jokes, hostile facial or physical gestures, encouraging others to exclude someone, lying or spreading rumors, embarrassing someone in public, damaging someone's reputation, and humiliating. Social bullying, sometimes referred to as **covert bullying, is often harder to recognize and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back.**
4. *Cyber:* Intentional and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, phones, and other electronic devices, sending/posting hurtful texts, posts, images, or videos through Emails, Messages (Text messages, Whats App, Hangout, etc.) - Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Schoology), making online threats, using other people's log-in details, deliberately excluding others online and spreading nasty gossip or rumors online.
5. *Sexual:* Use of inappropriate sexual comments or behavior
6. *Racial:* belittling, mocking, intimidating, or shaming someone because of their physical appearance, ethnic background, religious or cultural practices (Racial gestures, taunts, and/or remarks)

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If you think what you are seeing constitutes bullying stop it and report it to the counselor or safeguarding team.

Risk factors

- Depression
- Self-harming behaviors
- Mental health issues
- Eating disorders
- Dropping out of school
- Low self-esteem
- Suicide

Prevention:

- Raising awareness of what bullying is by guidance lessons
- Promoting positive-social behavior through positive reinforcement
- Promoting strategies to protect and support the targets such as counseling and monitoring
- Dealing effectively with incidents
- Regularly review the Anti-bullying policy
- Provide information and training for all members of staff to prevent bullying, manage incidents and create and maintain a culture of mutual respect, free from bullying behavior
- Increase understanding and awareness of cyber-bullying and online safety
- To educate pupils on what to do should cyberbullying arise, steps to protect themselves from cyber-bullying and how to report cyber-bullying.

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Safety of School Buildings, Transportation, and Field Trips

MAS takes multiple measures to ensure student safety at all times:

- Buildings are well maintained and equipped with security surveillance cameras and with corridor supervisors who manage entry and exit within the campus.
- The accountability of students is of utmost importance. The teachers, TAs, and Hall Supervisors are aware of the whereabouts of students at all times. Daily attendance is taken in the morning and followed up throughout the day, to make sure all students are accounted for.
- Bus transportation for field trips and other events is provided by a company that the Department of Transport licenses. Students are properly supervised by staff members. The same bus company is available for parents who would like to pay for their child to be transported to and from school.
- Learning support assistants (LSA) provide supervision to ensure the safety and well-being of children with special needs and accompany them as well.

Involvement of Outside agencies:

Based on the severity of the issue and at the discretion of the school Principal the following agencies can be contacted if required.

1. Dubai Foundation for Women and Children (DFWAC):

The first licensed non-profit shelter in the UAE for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, child abuse, and human trafficking. DFWAC aims to protect physically, sexually, and emotionally abused women and children, prevent ongoing abuse and the escalation of violence and promote social awareness through education and outreach.

DFWAC provides:

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- A safe shelter
- Case management
- Medical care
- Psychological support
- Counseling
- Legal, consular, and immigration assistance
- Helpline 800 111 or email help@dfwac.ae; Website – www.dfwac.ae

2. Dubai Police Human Rights Department:

- 24/7 Duty Officer 056 6862121

3. Latifa Hospital Child Welfare Unit:

- Tel: 04 2193000; Fax: 04 3241717
- UAE Working Hours: 24 Hours

4. Community Development Authority (Centre):

Any child in Dubai who needs help, protection from abuse, or advice can pick up the phone and dial 800-988 any time. Four social workers and psychologists at the Child Protection Centre in Al Barsha are on standby to assist residents under 18 years of age to ensure their rights are protected and upheld. The recently opened center under the Community Development Authority (CDA) is part of CDA's comprehensive strategy to make Dubai the most secure and ideal environment for children to live in. It is tasked with rehabilitating, providing counseling, visiting, and assisting children in need.

5. Al Ameen Reporting (Dubai & Federal Police):

The Al Ameen Service officially launched in September 2003. Using this service, the people of Dubai can communicate confidentially with the authorities to keep abreast of developments in Dubai and on issues that concern them. www.alameen.ae/en/

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