

Gulf Model School Dubai

Policy No.: GMS 14/2019

Introduced : April 2018
Revised : June 2019

Next Review : March 2020
Implemented by : Principal and Board Members

CHILD SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY (CSPP)

Introduction:

Gulf Model School Dubai recognizes the contribution it makes to Child Protection. All staff at GMS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This policy exists to protect GMS pupils, of all ages from abuse. Additionally further policies contribute to the GMS aim of total care: Bullying Policy, Equality Policy, Behavior Policy and Health and Safety policy.

Elements of GMS CSPP policy:

1. Prevention through the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils. The promotion of positive, supportive and secure environment which encourages self-esteem and values all individuals.
2. Procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. To promote observance and a sense of responsibility, to report all concerns regarding a person's safety or welfare to the designated person for child protection.
3. Support for pupils and staff who may have been abused.

The legal framework for this policy is based on:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Working together to safeguard children
- UAE Inclusive Education Framework

Aims:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times
- Ensure that all staff are alert to the signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including by other children i.e. bullying, discriminatory behavior
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Keep the child at the center of all what we do
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate.

Definition of Child Protection:

Child Protection is about protecting children from or against any perceived or real danger / risk to their life, their childhood. It is about reducing their vulnerability to any kind of harm and in harm situations. It is also about protecting children against social, psychological and emotional insecurity and safety net and those who do, receive necessary care and protection to be brought back into the safety net.



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Child Protection refers to protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. It is integrally linked to every other right of the child. Every child has a right to protection. This not only includes children who are in difficult circumstances and those who have suffered violence, abuse and exploitation but also those who are not in any of these adverse situations and yet need to be protected in order to ensure that they remain within the social security and protective net.

Child abuse and its types:

General Definition

Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and / or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of an interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be a single or repeated incidents.

An action that causes actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering is called Physical abuse.

1. Beating (with hands or objects).
2. Pinching / Pushing.
3. Hurling objects at a person.
4. Making a child kneel for an extended period of time
5. Being made to stand for hours on end inside the class / outside the class / in the sun
6. Making a child run in the playground for a long period of time which proves injurious to health
7. Bullying.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potentials and in the context of the society in which the child dwells.

Actual or likely severe adverse effects on the emotional and behavioral development of a child by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection

For example: Shy and withdrawn, disinterest in activities or school generally, noticeable change in mood.

Any action that causes mental trauma for a child by severe or persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection resulting in behavioral problems

1. Humiliating a child by calling him/her names (especially in front of his peers, teachers, and parents)
2. Hurling verbal abuses at a child
3. Startling a child by banging on the desk or striking the desk with an object
4. Misrepresenting a child's learning disability as a discipline problem
5. Denying a student adequate time for Recess/Games,
6. Abusing a child's parents in class.
7. Making negative comparisons to other students/siblings.
8. Turning a blind eye to bullying.

Neglect and negligent treatment

Neglect is the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical,



mental spiritual moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in 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 violate the laws of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.

Cyber Abuse

Cyber abuse is to harm or harass a child in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner through the use of internet and social media. Cyber abuse includes posting rumors or gossips about a child in the internet bringing about hatred in other's minds; or it may go to the extent of personally identifying the student and publishing materials severely defaming and humiliating him/her.

Potential Abuse

Situations where medical and social assessments indicate a high degree of risk that a child may be abused in future, including situation of another child in the same household having been abused or where there is a known abuser, is classified as potential abuse.

Exploitation

Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labor and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, or spiritual, moral or social-emotional development.

A **bullying incident** should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. The schools' **anti-bullying policy** outlines the procedures for dealing with serious bullying incidents.

Indicators of Child Abuse:

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Exhibits significant changes in behavior, performance or attitude.
- Abrupt changes in regular behavior or shows signs of aggressiveness
- Unexplained / unaddressed injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Offers confused or conflicting explanations about on how injuries were sustained
- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with Children's activities
- Frequently / repeated injuries, even when apparently reasonable explanations are given.
- Indulges in sexual behavior which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age.
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.

The role of GMS Staff:

- To treat abuse seriously
- To listen and look out for telltale signs
- To take appropriate action immediately – Report to the 'Child Safety & Protection Team'
- To record all incidents – time, place, information etc.



Child Safety & Protection Team Members:

The member of the GMS 'Child Safety and Protection Team' shall be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare.

SN	Name	Designation	Contact Details (Email ID)
1	Dr. S. Reshma	Principal	principal@gmsdubai.ae
2	Ms. Radha Ganesh	Counselor	counselor@gmsdubai.ae
3	Ms. Parita	KG Supervisor	kgsupervisor@gmsdubai.ae
4	Ms. Radhika	Admin Rep	adminmanager@gmsdubai.ae
5	Ms. Aarti	Pre-Primary Rep	kgcoord@gmsdubai.ae
6	Ms. Amrita	Primary School Rep	amrita.s@gmsdubai.ae
7	Mr. Gamal	Middle School Rep	gamal.ak@gmsdubai.ae
8	Ms. Simi	Sec School Rep	simi.n@gmsdubai.ae
9	Mr. Jose	Higher Sec School Rep / Staff Representative – Governing Council	jose.k@gmsdubai.ae
10	Miss Viveha	Student Rep Girl	School Head Girl
11	Master Roshan	Student Rep Boy	School Head Boy

The role of the GMS Child Protection Team

- Have individual responsibility for reporting child protection concerns.
- Keep written records of concerns about children - noting the date, event and action taken.
- Where there is cause to take the matter further, the member of the committee must ensure that the case is discussed with all relevant parties and that there are set procedures for reporting and following up concerns.
- Monitor child protection awareness in the school and ensure that due diligence is given to Child Protection issues.
- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure that children know that there are adults and persons in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- The Principal and the Child Protection Team will meet regularly to discuss Child Protection within the school and to review policies and share best practice procedures.

Responsibilities of the whole school staff:

- All school staff has a responsibility to identify and report suspected abuse and to ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils in their school. In doing so they should seek advice and support as necessary from the designated staff, i.e., Principal/Supervisor/Counselor.
- Staff is expected to provide a safe and caring environment in which children can develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings and opinions. Children should be treated with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behavior.
- All school staff are expected to:
 - ✓ Be aware of signs and symptoms of abuse.
 - ✓ Report concerns to the designated staff as appropriate.
 - ✓ Keep clear, dated, factual and confidential records of child protection concerns.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and distributed on a **need to know** basis only. This includes the following people:

- ✓ Principal
- ✓ Other team members
- ✓ Parents of the student who is alleged to have been abused. (If any one parent is the abuser than the other parent or guardian or immediate relative with whom the child is comfortable with.)



Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures:

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure and include:

- Child's Name and Address
- Age of the child and Date of Birth
- Date and Time of the observation or the disclosure
- Exact words spoken by the child
- Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses
- Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

Dealing with a disclosure:

If a pupil discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief;
- Accept what is being said;
- Allow the child to talk freely;
- Reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep;
- Not promise confidentiality, as it might be necessary to refer the case to the Counsellor.
- Reassure the pupil that what has happened is not their fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell;
- Listen, rather than ask direct questions;
- Ask open questions rather than leading questions;
- Not criticize the perpetrator;
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.

People who could be involved in child abuse:

1. Students
2. Staff Members (Teaching / Non-teaching)
3. Parents
4. Outsiders (Relatives, Friends, Unknown Person)

Procedure to be followed in case of abuse of a student

1. ABUSE BY A STUDENT:

- Student reports the case of abuse to the class teacher.
- Class teacher reports to the Supervisor.
- A minor issue is settled by the Supervisor by advising the students involved in the case. In major issues the matter is taken up either directly with the Principal / Counsellor or through the mentioned path.
- Students are sent for counseling and for medical checkup if the issue is major i.e., in cases of serious harm.
- Parent is informed by the Supervisor in minor cases and by the Principal in major cases.
- The student who is affected is monitored by the Supervisor for at least one week.
- The record is maintained by the Supervisor of any such incidents that takes place in the section.

NOTE:

- **Student who has been the victim can refer the case directly or with the help of a fellow student, to the Counsellor / Principal.**



2. ABUSE BY A TEACHER:

- Student reports to the Supervisor / Counsellor / Parent.
- A report is written by the Supervisor / Counsellor and maintained by the Supervisor
- Supervisor / Counsellor / Parent informs the Principal.
- The teacher concerned is called by the Supervisor / Principal and questioned on his / her views on the matter reported by the student.
- The Supervisor warns the teacher in minor issues and the Principal in major issues.
- A memo is issued to the concerned teacher by the Principal.
- Parents are informed by Supervisor / Principal and assured that action will be taken on the Teacher and no such incident will occur hence forth.
- In the case of the teacher resorting to abuse / harassment in spite of the repeated warnings (thrice) then he / she will be taken to the COO for further action.
- The student is counseled by the counselor.

NOTE:

- **Student who has been the victim can refer the case directly or with the help of a fellow student, to the Counsellor / Principal.**
- **If in any of the issue the above mentioned designated Staff is involved than the matter can be taken up directly with the highest authority (unless he / she is not an abuser.)**

3. ABUSE BY A SUPPORT STAFF:

- Student reports to the Class Teacher/ Parent/Counselor and a report is maintained by the concerned authority.
- The Class Teacher / Parent / Counselor inform the Supervisor.
- The Supervisor then informs the Principal.
- The Principal takes up the issue with the concerned head of the Support Staff.
- The Support Staff is called and warned by the concerned head of that department.
- In extreme cases the matter is taken to the CEO and the concerned person is terminated.

4. ABUSE BY A PARENT:

- Student reports to the Class Teacher/Counselor a report is maintained by the concerned authority.
- The matter is brought to the notice of the Supervisor / Principal.
- The Parent is called to the school and advised.
- The student is sent for Counseling to the school Counselor.

5. ABUSE BY A RELATIVE:

- Student reports to the Class Teacher / Counselor a report is maintained by the concerned authority.
- The matter is brought to the notice of the Supervisor / Principal.
- The parent is called to the school and the matter is discussed for further actions.
- The student is sent for Counseling to the School Counselor.

6. ABUSE BY OUTSIDERS (DURING TRIPS, PICNICS,ETC):

- The Student reports to the Class Teacher/Counselor a report is maintained by the concerned authority.
- The matter is brought to the notice of the Supervisor/Principal.
- The teacher in charge reports to the concerned authorities where the trip/picnic takes place.
- The parent is informed about the issue.
- The Student is sent for Counseling to the School Counselor.



7. ABUSE BY WORKERS OTHER THAN SCHOOL STAFF (e.g. Contractors, Maintenance, etc):

- The student reports to the Class Teacher/Counselor a report is maintained by the concerned authority.
- The matter is brought to the notice of the Supervisor/Principal.
- The Principal takes up the issue with the concerned head of the Staff
- The Staff is called and warned by the concerned head.
- If the issue continues and if no action is taken by the concerned head, the matter is taken to the COO.
- The head of the concerned person is called by the COO and discussed strictly which may even lead to the cancelation of the Schools' contract with them.

IMPORTANT: CASES DIRECTLY REFERRED BY THE STUDENT TO THE COUNSELING CENTER WILL BE TAKEN UP WITH THE PRINCIPAL / SUPERVISOR ONLY WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE STUDENT.

Complaints Redressal Mechanism:

- Complaint box where children can leave notes explaining their issues. The box will be opened periodically by the Principal and or by a Board Member.
- To have a mechanism for reporting and response of child protection violation.



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