



## Good Will Children Private School Student Protection Policy School Vision and Mission

### **Vision**

Empower students to develop a growth mindset and reach their full potential through collaboration, exploration, and citizenship, so they can impactfully contribute to the global community of a changing world.

### **Mission:**

- GCPS develops the content knowledge, skillset, and ethics to make positive global citizens, true innovators, and passionate leaders.
- GCPS cultivates a deep understanding of Islamic values and the culture of the UAE to develop a character that is identified by integrity, self-discipline, and tolerance.
- By promoting a learning environment of academic excellence and building strong partnerships with families and the wider community, we prepare students to be lifelong learners with high expectations and an appreciation for diversity.
- To provide broad and balanced learning opportunities that enable students to experience rich language acquisition and reach their full potential.

**Adopted on: September 2024**

**Revised on:**

### **Distribution List**

Principal /Board of Members

School Heads

Academic Staff

Administration Staff

Parents

## **Policy Framework:**

### **Introduction**

Every student has the right to learn and thrive in an educational environment that prioritizes their safety, dignity, and well-being. This policy underscores the commitment of every educational institution to establish and maintain measures for student protection, focusing on preventing maltreatment and addressing any concerns promptly and effectively.

### **Purpose**

- **Protective Measures:** Safeguard students under the care of educational institutions from all forms of maltreatment, as defined by relevant UAE laws and regulations.
- **Risk Identification and Support:** Identify and support students who may be at risk of harm, in accordance with UAE Federal Laws and other relevant statutes.
- **Mandated Reporting:** Mandate all staff and volunteers within educational institutions to report suspected or alleged cases of student maltreatment, both within and outside the institution.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Define the roles and responsibilities of principals, staff, and parents in responding to cases of alleged or suspected student maltreatment.
- **Collective Responsibility:** Emphasize that the care and protection of students are collective responsibilities shared by all educational institutions, requiring coordinated efforts to ensure their well-being.

### **Definitions**

**Child:** Any resident of the UAE under 18 years of age.

**Child Protection Coordinator (CPC):** An appointed staff member at the educational institution responsible for acting upon child protection concerns, coordinating with authorities, and providing support to the child.

**Child Protection Unit (CPU):** The organizational unit at ADEK responsible for developing and implementing student protection mechanisms and receiving student maltreatment concerns.

**Child Protection Specialist (CPS):** An ADEK-appointed person charged with preserving the rights of the child and protecting them within the limits of their powers.

**Educational Institution:** Any learning, care, and/or educational entity under the regulatory jurisdiction of ADEK.

**Mandated Reporter:** A person required by law to report student maltreatment concerns to the Child Protection Specialist.

**Parent:** The person legally liable for a child or entrusted with their care.

**Safeguarding:** Protecting students from all risks of harm, including maltreatment.

**School Day:** The educational institution's operating hours, including transportation and extracurricular activities.

**Staff:** An individual employed by a school on a remunerated contractual basis.

**Student:** A resident enrolled in an educational institution in Abu Dhabi.

**Student Maltreatment:** Refers to abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, and cyberbullying of a student.

**Student Protection:** All measures to prevent, protect, and support students from the risk of maltreatment.

**Supervision:** Responsible care and watch over an individual in the interest of their security.

**Invited Visitor:** An individual visiting the educational institution temporarily to interact with students.

**Volunteer:** An individual engaged by an educational institution on a non-remunerated basis.

## ACRONYMS

- **ADEK:** Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge
- **CPC:** Child Protection Coordinator
- **CPS:** Child Protection Specialist
- **CPU:** Child Protection Unit
- **FCA:** Family Care Authority
- **MoE:** UAE Ministry of Education
- **MoI-CPC:** UAE Ministry of Interior – Child Protection Center

## TYPES OF STUDENT MALTREATMENT

1. **Physical Abuse:** Intentional physical acts that result in or pose a threat of immediate or long-term physical injury to the student's health.
2. **Emotional Abuse:** Acts that make a student feel unloved, worthless, and interfere with their positive mental and emotional development.
3. **Sexual Abuse:** Involvement of a student in sexual activity that violates laws or social taboos, often exploiting the student's trust or power dynamic.
4. **Neglect:** Failure to provide for the basic needs and rights of a student, leading to significant harm to their health, development, and wellbeing.
5. **Exploitation:** Use of the student for the benefit of others, including labor, prostitution, or involvement in gangs, militia, or military, to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health.

- **Sexual Exploitation:** Coercion, manipulation, or deception of a student into sexual activity for monetary, social, or political gains.
- **Economic Exploitation:** Use of a student below the minimum age of labor for the benefit of others through production or service.
- 6. **Bullying:** Repeated physical, social, or verbal aggression by students in a position of power against weaker peers, causing physical and/or emotional harm.
  - **Cyberbullying:** Bullying that occurs online via social networks and mobile phones, extending the reach of bullying beyond physical settings.

## Principles

1. The best interests and safety of the student are paramount in all actions to safeguard their wellbeing.
2. The educational institution, including the principal and all staff, must recognize, respond to, and manage student protection risks effectively.
3. All mandated reporters, staff, and volunteers are responsible for ensuring student protection measures are applied and upheld.
4. Mandated reporters and educational institution members reporting maltreatment should be protected and not penalized for fulfilling their responsibilities.
5. Students have rights to be heard, treated with dignity, fairness, justice, supported, and kept safe from harm.
6. Zero tolerance of all forms of maltreatment must be implemented and upheld in all student-related actions and environments.

## Policy

### 1. Legal Obligations and Rights

1.1 This policy complies with federal student protection regulations and policies.

1.2 Educational institutions must comply with this policy and develop their own if meeting minimum standards and not contradicting.

1.3 Compliance with the guide on Handling Student Maltreatment Concerns within Educational Institutions is mandatory.

1.4 Stakeholders must understand and agree to the policy, including students, who shall receive a student-friendly version.

1.5 Principals act as guardians of students' rights and responsibilities.

1.6 Equal rights for care, protection, and safety are ensured for all students.

## 2. Reporting of Concerns of Maltreatment within Educational Institutions

- 2.1 Staff must report all cases of suspected maltreatment to the ADEK Child Protection Unit within 24 hours.
- 2.2 Concerns disclosed within institutions must be reported to the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) or representative.
- 2.3 Bullying cases are handled according to the National Policy for the Prevention of Bullying in Educational Institutions.
- 2.4 Appointment of a CPC and a Child Protection Team (CPT) is mandatory.
- 2.5 Any staff or volunteer receiving a maltreatment concern must report it immediately.
- 2.6 If unable to reach the CPC, staff should inform the ADEK CPU or Family Care Authority (FCA) directly.
- 2.7 Emergency cases must be reported immediately to the Police and the Principal.
- 2.8 Emergency cases are defined in the Handling Student Maltreatment Concerns guide.

## 3. Data Confidentiality

- 3.1 Case reports and student data are strictly confidential.
- 3.2 Data should only be shared with authorized individuals from ADEK CPU, FCA, and Abu Dhabi Judicial Department.

## 4. Training

- 4.1 CPC and CPT must complete mandated training.
- 4.2 All staff must complete required training sessions.
- 4.3 Volunteers and invited visitors must receive proper induction and training.
- 4.4 Counselling staff must receive continuous training and supervision.

## 5. Vetting, Hiring, and Monitoring of Staff, Volunteers, and Visitors

- 5.1 Proper vetting and screening of all personnel is mandatory.
- 5.2 Principals are responsible for ensuring suitability and compliance with safeguarding requirements.

5.3 Continuous monitoring of staff is necessary.

## 6. Acceptable Adult Behaviours

6.1 Staff and volunteers must respect students' rights and avoid actions risking maltreatment.

6.2 Inappropriate behaviours are prohibited.

6.3 Incidents of inappropriate behaviour must be reported.

6.4 Serious allegations of sexual misconduct lead to immediate removal and reporting to authorities.

## 7. Student Protection Learning Resources

7.1 Age-appropriate learning resources on personal safety and wellbeing must be provided.

7.2 Resources must be taught by trained staff and include easy-to-use references for seeking assistance.

## 8. Policy Dissemination and Review

8.1 The policy must be publicly available and disseminated annually.

8.2 Regular review and updates are required every five years or as necessary.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- **ADEK:** Develop, monitor, and enforce policies, support institutions, receive and filter reports, cooperate with relevant entities.
- **Principals:** Comply, publish, ensure procedures, oversee students, prioritize protection, report cases, ensure training, maintain records.
- **Staff and Volunteers:** Report concerns, care for students, understand policy, attend training.
- **Parents:** Cooperate, attend meetings, communicate concerns, support safe practices.

## Compliance

- Effective date: Start of Academic Year 2024/2025.
- Full compliance expected by Academic Year 2025/2026.
- Non-compliance subject to legal accountability and penalties.