Student Protection Policy

Approved by: Governing Board	December 2024
Last reviewed on:	August 2026
Next review due by:	August 2027

All employees will consent and sign this policy in conjunction with the school's Bullying Prevention Policy, Inclusion Policy, Behaviour Management Policy, and The Employee Handbook**.**
The Child Protection and Safeguarding policy in Educational Institutions in United Arab Emirates (September 2022) has been shared with all employees.
These policies apply to all staff (teaching and administration) working in the school.

Monitoring and review
This policy is subject to continuous monitoring, refinement, and audit by the School Management, who will undertake a complete annual review of this policy and procedures, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. This discussion will be formally documented in writing. All staff will be informed of the updated/reviewed policy, which will be made available to them electronically, or by hard copy on request.

Table of Contents

SABIS® Mission Statement 1
SABIS® Core Purpose 1
SABIS® Core Values 1
Policy Statement 1
Purpose 2
Reporting of Concerns of Maltreatment within School 5
Child protection Team 6
Emergency Reporting and Child Protection Contacts 6
Hiring and monitoring staff 6
a) Recruitment policy 6
b) Staff Training 7
Roles and Responsibilities 8
a) Director/ Deputy Director 8
b) Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) 9
c) Academic Quality Controllers (AQCs) 9
d) Teachers 9
e) Supervisors 10
f) SABIS® student Life Organization and SABIS® Student Life coordinator 10
g) School Medical Team 11
h) Parents 11
Complains About School Staff 11
When to Get Involved 12
a) Identify Child Abuse 12
b) Sexual Abuse 13
c) Neglect 13
d) Physical Abuse and Corporal Punishment 14
e) Emotional Abuse 15
f) Cyberbullying and Cyber harassment 15
Appendix 17
Reference 21

SABIS® Mission Statement

The International School of Choueifat Khalifa City (ISCKC), member of the SABIS® School Network, will be recognized as a provider of top-quality education to a highly diverse student body.
It will prepare students for success in college, equip them with the ability and desire for lifelong learning, and strengthen their civic, ethical, and moral values.
ISCKC will maintain high standards of efficiency and accountability throughout its operation.

SABIS® Core Purpose

To provide an outstanding education at a reasonable cost and help all students achieve their full potential through the implementation of the SABIS® Education System.

SABIS® Core Values

- Practice honesty and integrity
- Upholding our principles at all costs and at all times
- Continually improving and never becoming complacent
- Emphasizing quality at all times
- Making a difference
- Recognizing and rewarding efficiency, loyalty, and commitment

Policy Statement

The top priority of the ISCKC is the safety and wellbeing of all students entrusted in our care, whether on campus or online learning. The school aims to create a healthy environment where students feel secure, valued, encouraged, listened to, and protected against any occurrence that may threaten the child's physical and mental health and against any form of abuse or exploitation. The school believes in an ethos which promotes a positive and supportive learning environment. The school asserts its complete commitment to ensure the welfare, safety and respect for all children, without discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, gender, origin, religious doctrine, social standing or disability.

Protecting and enhancing our students' welfare is the collective responsibility of everyone at the school; every person who interacts with students and their family has a role to play. To effectively honor this responsibility, every person interacting with a child must ensure that the welfare, wellbeing and best interests of the child operate as the primary and guiding focus of all dealings with the child.

Purpose

We aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of our children in school, which directly aligns and corresponds with the following UAE laws and requirements:

- UAE Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on Children's Rights (Wadeema's Law)
- UAE Federal Law No. 3 and No. 7 of 1987 on Penal Code
- National Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in Educational Institutions in the United Arab Emirates (September 2022)
- The Professional Codes of Conduct for Workers in the General Education Sector published by the Ministry of Education, September 2022

ISCKC has an assigned leader to take the overall responsibility for safeguarding children and all that is related to the child's rights and protection. This leader shall liaise with the corresponding and relevant local bodies, if and when necessary.
The school:

- Adheres to the guidelines set forth by the ADEK DAA Child Protection Committee (2024) on Handling Student Maltreatment Concerns, ensuring compliance with reporting and management of abuse cases within the school.
- Commits to regularly assess the effectiveness of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and ensures that any necessary revisions and improvements are made.
- Follows a safe and confidential reporting and archiving system for cases of potential or suspected child abuse.
- Provides training to all school personnel on maintaining confidentiality, securing information, understanding reporting procedures, and fulfilling their responsibility to report any actual or suspected abuse or violence involving a student.

- Ensures that all relevant staff members working for the school attend and/or complete all training programs related to Child Protection.
- Endeavors to detect cases of abuse early, identify risk factors, and develop appropriate plans and programs for supporting students by enhancing the competence of child protection professionals through early intervention and awareness campaigns.
- Raises awareness among students about their rights and the importance of reporting any abuse or suspected abuse they or their peers may experience or witness.
- Provides students with a student-friendly version of the protection policy to ensure they fully understand their rights and how to report concerns when necessary.
- Promotes the principle of tolerance among all members of the school community.
- Establishes rules and regulations to protect vulnerable students and ensures that any violations, whether committed by parents, students, or staff members, will result in appropriate accountability and consequences.
- Ensures equal rights for the care, protection, and safety of all students while under school supervision, regardless of background or circumstances.
- Takes all necessary measures to safeguard children against substance abuse, including the use of narcotic, intoxicating, and stimulant substances, as well as preventing child involvement in their production or trafficking.
- Promotes and informs staff about the Professional Codes of Conduct for workers in the General Education Sector published by the Ministry of Education, September 2022.
- During the academic year, the school will provide an awareness session for parents and students to understand the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that both parties are fully informed about their roles in protecting students and reporting concerns.

Reporting of Concerns of Maltreatment within the School

In accordance with ADEK's Child Protection guidelines and Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 (Wadeema's Law), all school staff, including any person who has direct or indirect contact with students, are legally mandated to report any suspected or alleged cases of student

maltreatment—whether occurring inside or outside the school—directly to the ADEK Child Protection Unit (CPU) within 24 hours of suspicion. Additionally, all concerns of student maltreatment disclosed in school, regardless of where the incident took place, must be reported immediately to the appointed Child Protection Committee (CPT) or a designated representative. The school will ensure that all staff are trained and fully aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding student welfare.

Child Protection Team

ISCKC has appointed a Child Protection Team (CPT) and a Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) responsible for safeguarding children and ensuring the protection of their rights. The CPC, who is trained by ADEK, shall coordinate with relevant local authorities when necessary.
The school is committed to maintaining an effective policy that ensures the health and safety of all students. The CPT consists of the school director, the school social worker, and four middle managers, whose appointments are reported to ADEK annually. If the CPC is unavailable, the school director or any CPT member will assume responsibility for carrying out the required duties.
All concerns regarding student maltreatment, whether occurring inside or outside the school, must be immediately reported to the school administration.
If any school staff member, including volunteers, receives an allegation or has a concern that a student may have been maltreated, is being maltreated, or is at risk of maltreatment, they must report the matter immediately to the school administration. This includes concerns of maltreatment occurring both inside and outside the school premises.
Emergency cases, where the student is in imminent danger, shall be reported without delay by the CPC to the Police (999) and the school Director. The Child Protection Officer should also fill out the DAA Safety Concern Form (https://daasafetyconcern.abudhabi/).
NOTE: Child Protection Officer should register on the DAA portal to be able to fill out the form).

Emergency Reporting and Child Protection Contacts

If an incident takes place, the school commits to report the incident within 24 hours of it taking place. The below are the usual routes to report an incident:

Abu Dhabi Police: 999

Family Care Authority (FCA): 800444 icm@adfca.gov.ae

MoE Child Protection Unit (CPU): 80085 cpu@moe.gov.ae

Hiring and Monitoring of Staff

a) Recruitment Policy

Our recruitment policy requires the following:

- All staff members recruited by the school must undergo a police vetting process in their home country or any other country where they have previously resided. This ensures they are appropriate and suitable candidates for working with children.
- Additionally, three references from previous employers are required to further confirm their suitability for a school environment.
- Employees must never resort to corporal punishment, use inappropriate language, or address a student in an insulting or humiliating manner.
- Upon joining the school, all new and returning faculty and staff are expected to read, understand, and sign the Student Protection policy.

b) Staff training

The school ensures that there is an effective Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for the provision of health and safety throughout the school. At the beginning of the academic year, the school will issue the updated policy to ensure that stakeholders are fully informed about the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies at the school.

In line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding training is carried out annually during the induction training of all new members of staff.

All teachers and administrative staff are obliged to complete a mandatory “Child Protection Policies Course,” on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is a digital platform that provides all employees with easy, up-to-date access to a wide range of learning opportunities (https://spdi-vle.sabis.net). Online courses cover a variety of technical, behavioral, and functional topics.
The course is developed and tailored to meet the needs of the region. The course features eight modules. Each module is followed by an assessment, which needs to be passed to proceed to the following module.
The eight modules are:

- A Child Protection Guide - Cue Cards
- Abuse and Neglect
- Allegations Against an Adult Connected to the School
- Appendix - Types and Signs of Abuse and Neglect
- Disclosure of Abuse and Neglect
- Guidelines on Child Protection
- Main Elements to School Safeguarding
- Thresholds for Intervention

In addition, the school will conduct training and awareness workshops periodically designed to ensure our students are fully aware of all things related to their welfare and safety.

Roles and Responsibilities

The key duties and core principles of all staff member of ISCKC are as below:
They must be vigilant at all times and aware of any signs of abuse and neglect: physical, emotional, sexual, and/or neglect and deprivation.
They must be aware of the key figures of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Committee.
They are fully aware that any unusual behavior they observe, inside or outside the classroom, is to be immediately reported to the concerned committee member. The concerned school's Child Protection and Safeguarding committee member should be alerted immediately in case a sign of abuse or neglect is detected.
Observations will be recorded either in the SABIS School Management System (SSMS)

The school has an official policy in place against bullying/cyber-bullying and misuse of social media.

a) Director /Deputy Director

The Director is the head of the school hierarchy and oversees all school operations. He/She holds scheduled meetings with all members of the administrative team and ensures compliance with the Child Protection Policy, which is published and implemented throughout the school. Prioritizing student protection, the Director maintains constant oversight of students and takes immediate action in cases of suspected maltreatment or abuse, ensuring that all information is kept strictly confidential. Any staff member suspected of maltreating a student is suspended immediately until the suspicion is fully adjudicated.

The Director ensures that students and staff clearly understand how, where, and to whom they can report safety concerns without fear of punishment. Moreover, safeguarding and student protection training is provided to all staff, with each member signing an acknowledgment of their participation. Additionally, orientation sessions are conducted for parents to educate them about child protection policies and reporting procedures.

The Director reports any serious concerns regarding individual students to the Regional Office, which supports the school in determining the most effective course of action when needed.

b) Child Protection Coordinator (CPC)

The CPC is responsible for safeguarding student well-being. Trained by ADEK, the CPC handles concerns related to maltreatment and coordinates with local authorities when necessary. If unavailable, the school director or another Child Protection Team (CPT) member will take over. In emergencies, the CPC must report immediate dangers to the police and the school director. The CPC ensures that the school environment remains safe and that student rights are upheld.

c) Academic Quality Controllers (AQCs)

AQCs engage with students both formally and informally, attend classes, and meet with parents. They conduct advising sessions and may also organize sessions to enhance students' awareness of personal safety and well-being. These sessions

provide guidance on reporting violations and seeking help when needed.

Any concerns regarding students are reported to the school director daily, with details of meetings with students and/or parents documented in the SSMS. AQCs also communicate any concerns to the relevant Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) within the school.

At the beginning of the academic year, orientation sessions are conducted for parents to familiarize them with the SABIS system, rules, and regulations, as well as to educate them on child protection policies and reporting procedures.

d) Teachers

Teachers are the first point of reference in observing any behavioural concerns within the classroom. Teachers must communicate their concerns to the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) or the Child Protection Team (CPT) at the school, following the Child protection Policy reporting protocol. It is crucial that all information regarding any incidents or concerns is kept confidential. Teachers are required to fill the Child Protection Incident Report Form (Appendix 2) to document their observation ad concerns accurately.

e) Supervisors

School supervisors are usually the first point of reference in observing any concerns outside the classroom. Supervisors observe and advise students on a daily basis and are therefore aware of behavioral changes. Supervisors must communicate their concerns to the concerned CPC or CPT member in the school and by filling out the Child Protection Incident Report Form.

f) SABIS® Student Life Organization (SLO) and Student Life Coordinator (SLC)

The SABIS® Student Life Organization® (SLO®) is an integral part of the SABIS® Educational System and plays a vital role in the school community. Emphasizing the acquisition of life skills through real-life experiences, the SABIS® SLO® is a student-led society that empowers students to take responsibility for various aspects of school life, including Academics, Discipline, Social Responsibility, Activities, and Wellness. By providing opportunities for emotional, social, and moral growth, the SABIS® SLO® helps students develop their academic, managerial, organizational,

innovation, and leadership skills through a variety of academic and non-academic activities.

The Student Life Coordinator (SLC) works alongside students and is available for both formal and informal meetings with them in the SLO® regularly. The SLC also plays a key role in educating students about personal safety and well-being by explaining what actions they can take to report any violations and seek help when needed. To further support this, the SLC and student leaders can conduct awareness sessions and presentations to inform students about their rights, protective measures, and reporting procedures.

Students are strongly encouraged to share their concerns with a member of staff they feel comfortable talking to. Any staff member, including the Student Life Coordinator (SLC), who becomes aware of or suspects any form of maltreatment or violation must immediately report the incident to the designated Child Protection Team (CPT) or Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and reporting procedures.

g) School Medical Team

The school medical team meets with students who require medical attention throughout the school day. If the school nurse observes any signs of maltreatment, they must immediately report the concern to the Child Protection Team (CPT) or the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC).

h) Parents

Parents play a crucial role in ensuring their children's safety, well-being, and rights are upheld both at home and in school. They are responsible for educating their children about personal safety, appropriate boundaries, and how to report any concerns regarding maltreatment. Parents must cooperate with the director and school staff by responding to all inquiries related to their child's behavior and academic performance while also considering feedback and guidance from educators. Attending scheduled parent meetings is essential to staying informed about their child's progress and the school's child protection efforts.

Additionally, parents should communicate any concerns, observations, or changes in their child's behaviour to the school director, administration, or relevant school staff

to ensure early intervention and appropriate support. They also play a key role in promoting safe online practices, particularly during distance learning and homework, by monitoring their child's digital activities and ensuring a secure online environment.

Complaints About School Staff

- All accusations or complaints involving school staff, including third-party employees (e.g., cafeteria, transportation, and housekeeping staff), must be reported directly to the School Director.
- If an incident of abuse by a staff member is suspected or has occurred, the School Director must be informed immediately. A detailed report will be documented to capture all critical information regarding the suspected incident.
- Any investigation into a child protection issue will include both the School Director and the Regional Director to ensure a thorough and impartial process.
- Any staff member accused of student maltreatment will be temporarily suspended until the investigation is concluded.
- An internal investigation will be conducted to determine whether the staff member is fit to remain employed at the school. All evidence will be carefully collected to ensure an impartial and fair outcome.
- If the internal investigation confirms misconduct (including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse), the school will notify the relevant authorities and any concerned governmental entities. Steps will be taken to terminate the employee's contract, and the individual will be prevented from future employment within the UAE.

When to Get Involved

a) Identifying Child Abuse

Child abuse includes physical, emotional, or sexual harm, maltreatment, exploitation, or neglect of a child under the age of 18 by another person. It is essential that all staff members can recognize signs of abuse or neglect, such as:

- Injuries inconsistent with typical accidents (e.g., bruises, burns, or marks caused by hitting, shaking, or slapping).
- Verbal abuse, including shouting, threats, insults, humiliation, or intimidation.
- Signs of neglect, such as feeling unsafe, isolated, or unwanted.
- Exposure to or coercion into sexual acts, including inappropriate touching, viewing pornography, or any form of sexual exploitation.
- Lack of basic necessities, such as adequate food or shelter.
- Neglect in areas such as emotional support, medical care, hygiene, or education.

General Signs and Symptoms

- Depression and anxiety
- Feelings of shame and guilt
- Fearfulness
- Unexplained bruising
- Substance abuse or addiction
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Aggressive behaviour
- Impulsivity
- Sleep disturbances (e.g., persistent tiredness, bedwetting, nightmares)
- Decline in academic performance or disengagement from activities
- Signs of an eating disorder

b) Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse and Exploitation involves forcing or enticing a student to take part in sexual activity or exposure to sexual content. It may include actions that involve physical contact and non-contact activities, such as viewing or producing pornographic material, watching sexual activities, sexual hinting, sexual conversation, exposure to sexual content/material, or encouraging students to behave in sexually inappropriate ways (in person or online).
Signs of sexual abuse to be vigilant for:

- Unusual behaviour that could be general or of a sexual nature
- Unwilling to get changed for P.E. lessons

- Inappropriate sexual behaviour that could be questionable in relation to the child's age
- Sexually transmitted diseases/infections
- Any physical clues that would suggest harm to the genital or anal areas – such as pain, bruising, bleeding, or itching
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Discomfort of the genitals or anal areas when walking or sitting

c) Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a student's basic physical, emotional, and psychological needs, leading to serious harm to their health or development. It occurs when a parent or guardian fails to take necessary actions to care for a child, including but not limited to:

- Providing adequate food, clothing, and shelter
- Protecting the child from physical harm or danger
- Ensuring proper caregiving and supervision
- Providing necessary healthcare and medical treatment
- Ensuring access to education and regular school attendance
- Maintaining personal hygiene
- Signs of Neglect to Watch For:
- Poor personal hygiene
- Untreated medical conditions
- Difficulty forming social relationships with peers
- Social withdrawal, isolation, or detachment
- Stealing
- Signs of hunger (underweight or overweight)
- Substance abuse (alcohol or illegal drugs)
- Frequent lateness or unexplained absences
- Self-harm
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing

d) Physical Abuse and Corporal Punishment

Physical abuse refers to the deliberate infliction of physical injury on a student or the intentional neglect of preventing such harm. This includes, but is not limited to:

Hitting, shaking, or throwing

Poisoning or giving unprescribed drugs to control behaviour or cause harm

Burning, scalding, or suffocating

- Drowning or confinement
- Corporal punishment is the use of physical punishment by a teacher, guardian, or any adult in authority as a form of discipline. It is considered a form of physical abuse.
- Signs to watch for:
- Unexplained bruises or injuries
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Repeated abdominal pain
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Scars, marks, or burns (including cigarette burns)
- Fear of returning home or contacting caregivers/parents
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Unusually passive behaviour
- Repeatedly running away from home
- Human bite marks
- Broken bones

e) Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse (also known as psychological abuse) is the persistent mistreatment of a student, leading to severe and lasting negative effects on their emotional development. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Making a student feel worthless, unloved, or inadequate
- Causing fear, intimidation, or feelings of danger
- Exploiting or corrupting a student

- Bullying or persistent criticism
- Emotional abuse is often present in all forms of mistreatment, though it can also occur in isolation.
- Signs of Emotional Abuse to Watch For:
- Excessive tiredness
- Fear of new situations
- Low self-esteem
- High levels of anxiety
- Unusually passive or aggressive behaviour
- Delayed speech development
- Inappropriate emotional responses to situations
- Running away
- Lying
- Neurotic behaviours (e.g., sulking, hair twisting, rocking)
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm
- Delayed emotional development

f) Cyber-Bullying and Cyber Harassment

Cyber Bullying and Cyber Harassment, like other forms of bullying and harassment, imply a relationship where an individual has some influence or advantage that is used improperly over another person or persons, where the victim(s) is subjected to a disadvantage or detriment, and where the behavior is unwarranted and unwelcome to the victim. Cyberbullying occurs when technology is used to convey the bullying message to the victim, and/or to those around the victim. Mobile phones are the preferred medium for these acts, and the proliferation of apps such as WhatsApp as well as app based social media platforms make it increasingly easy to spread negative messages further than was possible before. In addition, secondary perpetrators can readily forward and share the negative material, resulting in its rapid and widespread dissemination. The message may be viewed multiple times by a larger and more diverse audience – it could be sent to the victim's parents, siblings, teachers,

neighbors, and broader social groups. The UAE's Child Rights Law (Federal Law No. 3 of 2016) affirms that all children have the right to education and basic protection in the UAE. Defamation, which is often at the core of cyberbullying, is a criminal offence in the UAE. Article 138 of the Penal Code stipulates that a punishment of jail and a fine (determined at the discretion of the judge) "shall be inflicted on any person who publishes through any means of publicity news, pictures or comments pertaining to the secrets of people's private or familial lives even if the same is true." The school is committed to raising awareness of the need for E-Safety in a technologically advancing world. The practice and education within the school aims to inform children, staff and parents of the need for safety regarding content, contact and conduct when accessing the internet, social media, or other forms of e-communication.

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