ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL (PVT.) DUBAI
P.O. Box: 6680, Dubai – UAE – Phone: 04-3377503/04-3371099, Fax: 04-3345644

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

I. Introduction

At ELPS, the CHILD Protection Policy supports the school's 'Guiding Principles' with the belief that every child has the right to enjoy a full and productive life within our school environment. The administration at ELPS has a goal of supporting students to grow and build friendships, and have security and happiness irrespective of their family circumstances or background. Children, parents, and staff have the right to be happy as they pursue hopes, dreams, and goals. We are an outcome oriented school and seek to work with the community, including parents, to develop children who will positively contribute to our society.

II. School Behavioural Policy

English Language School Private (ELPS), Dubai, has clear policies regarding behaviour management, curricula, and staff expectations for the protection of our students. At ELPS, the guiding principle of our school is to promote a safe and supportive school community for our students.

i. Our school utilizes a Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) meant to both reinforce positive expectations and to reduce negative behaviour.

ii. All staff members have a duty to report any suspected or disclosed issues of child protection to the Child Protection Officer (DCPO)/Student Learning Team at ELPS. If the threat is immediate or ongoing, then it will be reported to the School's administration with immediate effect and if required to the appropriate local safeguarding authorities put in place by the UAE Government.

iii. Every ELPS staff member is expected to protect, act responsibly, and maintain professionalism at all times. The ELPS administration believes in maintaining the standards of our community and respecting the cultural values of the UAE.

iv. We have a unified Behavioural, SEN, and ESL department where students can always 'drop-in' and ask questions about topics which they feel are important in their lives and makes them feel secure in the School.

v. Students will be given access to hotline numbers available in Dubai where they can ask questions about events that may not be happening in the school environment but are directly impacting their school environment in terms of attitude, grade changes, or behavioral problems. As always, ELPS reserves the right to request an outside referral if the child in question is having learning or social challenges at school.

vi. We recognize that our community and students are impacted by the social media. Therefore, parents are asked to regularly monitor their children while online and to partner with the school

to prevent issues of bullying. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social in the sense of community and cyber safety and cyber bullying.

Our Child Protection Policy is in line with the UAE National Agenda regarding developing leadership and policies and also follows the current UAE laws including the 2016 Federal Law #3 which is focused on expanding child protection in the UAE. Every child in the UAE, whether a resident or a tourist, has the right to live safely at home and at school and be protected from all forms of abuse and bullying.

III. Responsibility of ELPS Staff

The staff is expected to model and promote accepted social behavior within the framework of Arabic culture and Islamic values, respect and support students' diversity within the school's actions and structures. Expectations include:

a. positive, caring and respectful student-peer relationships
b. Student-staff relationships, staff-parent, and staff-peer relationships.

The ELPS Staff has the following responsibilities in terms of Child Protection:

a) Provide a safe and secure environment
b) Protect the student's ongoing safety and wellbeing
c) Purposefully direct resources and focus decision-making towards policies which protect and encourage students
d) Promote the cultural and spiritual identity of a student while maintaining their connection to their family or community
e) Positively deal and implement expected codes of behavior in dealing with Child Protection issues.
f) Pledge to abide by UAE laws and report any allegations or disclosures of physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect to the designated Child Protection Officers (CPO)
g) Practice prevention with procedures to address child protection concerns including outside referrals to doctors or therapists licensed by the DHA and recognized by the KHDA.
h) Professionally include integrating child protection issues into the curriculum

HR Department

Recruitment and hiring procedures of any member of the teaching staff or support staff with access to children shall include the following steps;

a) Provision of an up-to-date police 'good conduct' letter and/or criminal records check by the KHDA
b) Ask previous employers questions with regard to the applicant's compliance with any Child Protection procedures
c) A declaration signed by the prospective employee on any application form and/or contract that s/he has not been convicted or undergoing court or disciplinary proceedings for any offence involving child abuse and/or breach in exercising a duty of care for children and
d) Ask the applicant regarding the importance of following Child Protection Guidelines and be given a copy of the policies.
e) An undertaking (attached in Appendix C) is signed by all staff members and maintained in staff files.

Administration Responsibilities

The Principal and Heads of Section will disseminate policy and provide a framework for training for all staff by the CPO and ensure that training and guidance is provided to the new/untrained staff members in the induction week of each new school year.

Staff should discuss any concerns regarding Child Protection with the relevant Head of Section and the CPO. All procedures found in the Child Protection Policy should be clearly communicated and any change in policy is highlighted at staff meetings.

The Head of Section and the Head of Department will then consult with the School Counselors and the Principal who will advise on the monitoring of children and the make referrals to the appropriate organizations.

The Principal is responsible for reporting issues related to this policy to the School Owner/CEO/ Board. Board members will not be given specific details relating to child protection situations but they will be kept updated by the principal regarding any episodes.

In some cases, administration may be involved in the incident in terms of reporting or because parents are having difficulty accepting the situation. If the principal or vice principal is reporting, then the CPO will investigate and work with the other administrator or owner if needed to reduce bias in the reporting system. A Student Support Learning team is needed to conduct investigations. If an HOD or HOS is reporting, then the principal and the CPO will work together to handle the case. In all situations, the goal will be to protect the concerned student to ensure that documentation is maintained for the episode(s) and the proper authorities are notified.

The Security staffs undertake to be vigilant and adhere to the procedures governing the access, detailed record-keeping, provision of a Visitor's Pass to be worn for ease of identification, and ongoing monitoring of visitors to the school and restriction of access of visitors.

IV. Staff Training

Our staff is one of our key assets and we provide regular training on several topics. Staff Training programs will be on ongoing and include teachers, assistants, administration, and contracted shadow/tutor supports who may have contact with students on a daily basis. The Student Learning Support Department will train staff yearly on how to recognize students who may need protection.

Staff should be concerned if a student:

i. Has sudden injuries which are not typical of the bruises and scrapes normally associated with the child 's activities
ii. frequently has unexplained injuries
iii. has physical conditions or bruises even though apparently reasonable explanations are given
iv. has repeated story changes
v. confused thoughts, or conflicting explanations about how recent injuries were sustained

vi. shows changes in behavior, performance or attitude
vii. participates in explicit and/or inappropriate behavior to his or her age
viii. discloses an experience in which he or she may have been harmed or seen someone else harm

Again, abuse can take many forms and staff needs to be aware of the problem. In all cases, staff should avoid commenting and follow procedure regarding abuse.

Class teachers will, in most cases, be the first person to raise a concern and therefore need ongoing continuing education and straightforward policies. Teachers are expected to collate detailed, accurate and secure written records of concerns and liaise with the designated Child Protection Officer (CPO).

The School Doctor and Nurses are to be trained with updates yearly regarding child abuse and are to work with CPOs. The Doctor and the Nurse will follow all UAE laws and ensure that any relevant information obtained in the course of their duty is communicated to the CPOs. These may include types of injuries, attendance and frequency to the Sick Bay.

The School Academic Counselors and administration also need yearly update to report changes in grades, transitional goals, or other areas from students who may be facing challenges.

The Behavioral Department, including SEN and ESL shall serve as the CPOs of the school and will be responsible for training the staff and administration about updates.

V. Steps to be followed

If any student shares any information that is covered in our Child protection Policy, especially regarding forms of abuse, to any employee at ELPS, than that the following actions have to be taken:

i. The informed employee is required to act within one working day and notify, in writing, both administration and the Child Protection Officer (s). Notification will include:
    a. The name of the student,
    b. The date of the original notification from the student, and
    c. Pertinent details of the topic discussed.

A completed notification form or an email sent to the school server, and received, shall be considered notification. Texts, including personal WhatsApp, and verbal exchanges, on the other hand, are not considered notification unless supported with a school email.

ii. The CPO (s) includes the members of the Student Learning Department; the Director, the SEN Supervisor, and the Behavioral Support Officer. The CPOS have been assigned to help student take the appropriate intervention when they require support.
iii. The assigned CPO shall consult with the School Principal and/or the Director; document evidence and record any intervention and work collaboratively with community organizations, and other agencies in accordance with UAE law. The CPO may report to the Vice Principal if the Principal is not available.
iv. The CPO will then form a school-based support team to address the report. The support team may include the school doctor, nurse, counselor, teacher, and other individuals as the CPO sees

fit. In all cases, follow up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained.

v. If abuse is suspected by the Student Support Team based on documented evidence, then a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions may take place baed on the discussions between the child and the CPO.

vi. In-class observations of the child by the CPO shall be conducted at least twice in different classes. Meetings will be scheduled by the CPO with the family to present the school's concerns and to document the episode.

vii. The administration at ELPS reserves the right to refer the student and family to external professional counseling at the parent's expense. The Dubai emergency hotline number will be posted all over the school in case the student or the parents want to initiate consultation with local authorities.

viii. Subsequent to a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect, the following actions may take place:

   a. The CPO will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate and provide strategies for the teacher to use.
   b. The CPO will maintain contact with outside therapists, with the goal of updating the therapist about the progress of the child in school, and to keep the school informed about the progress of the therapy.
   c. The School Principal will refer the case to local authorities for further action

ix. If abuse is documentable and the child is considered in danger, then the student will be taken to the school clinic and evaluated while the episode is documented by the CPO. After the student is in the clinic, then the administration, VP or Principal, will be notified and the documentation will be reviewed and approved.

x. Finally, hotline and social service authorities will be contacted by the CPO, the Principal, and/or the Vice Principal.

Summary of Procedure to be followed:

Students who report a concern include referral to an outside specialist. If a student discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

a) Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
b) Report to administration in writing concerning the details
c) Accept what is being said and do not be judgmental
d) Allow the student to talk freely and encourage them to follow-up and notify the CPO
e) Avoid questions/coaxing and just let the student talk while providing information on services in Dubai.
f) Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told
g) Do not promise confidentiality but offer discretion and that there ways to get help
h) The staff member should first document, email, and note the name/room of the student, the time, the date, and the most pertinent details. Please remember the school will need these details and they are required by UAE law.
i) Next, the employee should go directly to the Child Protection Officer or administration.

j) Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour
k) Note pertinent details including the words used by the child.
l) Note position of any bruising or other injuries you have noted or been shown. If you have not been shown, then have the student see the School Doctor or nurse.
m) Record statements and observations, rather than interpretations or assumptions.
n) Place details in writing either on the notification form or on an email.
o) School recognized support agencies shall be maintained by the Student Support Learning team and posted around the school.
p) Dubai child protection phone numbers shall be posted in administration, behavior department, the school clinic, and other critical areas of the school.

VI. Child Protection and the Curriculum

The school curriculum is an important tool in the protection of children. We aim to ensure that curriculum addresses safety, intervention and negotiation skills, and higher order thought development with questioning skills. Child protection is multi curricular and shall be addressed in all subjects across all year levels. In addition, teachers are urged to promote cyber safety and to teach or support actions and knowledge that counter harassment, aggression, violence, and bullying. Some potential class discussion topics include, improving peer and family relationships, providing information about all aspects of risk, understanding strategies for self-protection, recognizing social boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate in a multicultural society, and community and cultural standards of acceptable behavior between students.

VII. What does this policy means for our students?

Students can expect to know that their safety and welfare are important and addressed at the school. Students should feel that they can pursue their own goals and be provided with strategies on how to protect themselves in the use of Social Media sites. In short, students should feel they are safe to learn, grow, and explore at the school.

Special Education Needs (Disabilities) (SEND) students may require additional safety directions and support due to their individualized needs and the need to be included in the classroom. The SEN(D) supervisor and the Behavioral support person will work together to promote integration of all students into the classroom regardless of physical, social, academic, or learning need. The school administration and behavioural department staff reserves the right to request an outside referral to verify SEN(D) needs in all cases.

A. Appendix A

Definitions

I.	Child Abuse	Child abuse refers to any act committed by a parent, guardian or by any other person to a child under the age of 18, which results in injury to the child. These acts include situations where there is neglect, emotional, physical or sexual harm. Child abuse is global and can occur in any cultural, ethnic, income, or other group. Child abuse can be physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual. It can also result from neglect. Abuse can result in serious injury to the child and possibly even death.
II.	Neglect	Neglect is a broad category with cultural variances. Child neglect is defined as a type of maltreatment related to the failure to provide needed, age-appropriate care. Generally, neglect is often viewed as a form of maltreatment over a long period of time but it can also be episodic and of a shorter duration. Neglect can include nutritional neglect, failure to provide medical care, or not providing protection from physical or social danger.
III.	Abuse	Abuse means maltreatment of a person, both physically as well as psychologically, and neglect means the failure to give proper care to a person, both in terms of physical and or psychological. Physical can include unexplained injuries/bruises; improbable or evasive excuses, untreated injuries; fear of treatment or medical help, fear of physical contact, fear of going home, over aggressive or defensive tendencies, fear of removing clothes, bites, lashes, facial injuries. Abuse may also be psychological involving intentional mental cruelty meant to cause psychological suffering and duress. There is also the potential of Sexual Abuse which involves exploitation of a child by involvement in sexual activities without informed consent or understanding, or that violate social taboos or family roles.
IV.	Emotional and Psychological Abuse	"Any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth." The effects of emotional abuse impact children for a lifetime.
V.	Potential Abuse	Potential Abuse and assessed risk- situations where children may not have been abused but where social and medical assessments indicate a high degree of risk. ELPS have trained staff that can identify risk and they will notify administration of children who are considered at risk.
VI.	Bullying	Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power and where one student intends to harm or harass the other student because they are perceived as more powerful. In addition, the behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have lasting emotional or physical damage. Again, bullying is preventable and stems from intentional insults, emotional intimidation, or physically hurting someone.
VII.	Cyber Bullying	Cyber bullying is the use of cell phones; instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone. Again, ELPS has a zero- tolerance policy for

	cyber bullying. Cyber bullying includes the internet and involves any electronic technology, in particular, text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, including WhatsApp, or the posting of embarrassing pictures, videos, websites or fake profiles used to hurt, threaten, blackmail, or lower the self-esteem a child. Cyber Bullying is a global problem requiring the cooperation of school staff, the UAE, the community, parents, and students. As an aside, deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent except in some formats like WhatsApp where deletion can be done quickly after the harm is done.
VIII. Risk factors	Risk factors can increase the likelihood that child abuse may occur. Any combination of individual, relational, community and societal factors can contribute to the increased risk factors that contribute to child maltreatment and abuse. Children are not responsible for the harm inflicted upon them, but there are individual characteristics that can increase risk. In all cases, risk factors are contributing to the potential of risk and should not be confused with the cause of the abuse.

B. Appendix B

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School Disclosure of Suspected Abuse Documentation Form

Name of Person Making Allegation/Disclosure and role (Teacher/Admin/CPO/Staff)
_____

If student disclosure, Time and Date of disclosure to staff person by Student
_____

If not disclosure but observation, then time and date of observation:
_____

Is this a first report?

□ **Yes** □ **No**

If No, please attach copies of prior documentation including emails.

Student Name: _____

Year/Room: _____

Parent(s) Name and Contact Details: _____

Nature of Disclosure: (Continue on separate sheet as required, recording as close to verbatim as possible)

_____

_____

_____

CPO investigation begun: Date and Time:

_____

Were parents notified and a meeting set up?

□ **Yes** □ **No**

Suggested Actions: _____

_____

Date Principal/Vice Principal/Student Team notified by email: _____

Signature & Name of person reporting incident:_____

Signature & Name of CPO investigating:

_____

Date & Time:

_____

C. Appendix C
Undertaking

To whom it may concern,

I hereby declare that I have read and fully understood the Child Protection Policy of the English Language School (Pvt) Dubai.

I further declare that I shall adhere to and abide by all the protocols mentioned therein as part of my duty and cooperate with the School Management in all matters concerning child safety and security.

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Department: _____

Signature: _____