



RAFFLES WORLD ACADEMY

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Our Guiding Statements

Our Vision:

Providing world-class education

Our Mission:

To empower students with a holistic, rigorous and international education for success in an ever-changing world

Our Philosophy:

- To be recognized by the success of our students in achieving their personal goals
- To make student development the centre of all school decisions
- To aspire to the highest internationally recognized performance standards
- To build and celebrate a culture based on internationalism
- To enable the staff to become life-long learners through the development of their professional practice

Core Values:

Achievement | Collaboration | Integrity | Innovation | Respect | Responsibility |

Our Motto:

Towards Excellence

RWA Acronym

Rise Wonder Achieve

Introduction

The health, safety and well-being of all our children is of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school.

Protecting children is everyone's responsibility at our school and this includes reporting any act committed by a parent, guardian or any other person, to a child enrolled in the school which results in neglect, physical or emotional injury or sexual harm.

All staff have a duty and will report any suspected or disclosed issues of child protection to the designated child protection officer (DCPO)/child protection team. If the threat is immediate or ongoing it will be reported to the appropriate local safeguarding authorities as set in place by the UAE.

Purpose

The safeguarding of children and young people from harm is the highest priority here at RWA. 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 the knowledge on what to do in the event of suspected abuse. This policy defines abuse, outlines signs of abuse and explains the procedures for investigating and reporting suspected cases.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour and well-being policies.



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Definition of 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. These acts include situations where there is neglect, emotional, physical or sexual harm. (Refer to categories of abuse section)

Aims

This policy ensures that all staff in our school can follow the necessary procedures with regard to a child protection issue.

It aims:

- To raise awareness and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse;
- To ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues;
- To inform all parties of the correct procedures to use in the case of a child protection issue.

When to be concerned

Staff should be concerned if a student:

- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps/scrapes normally associated with the child's activities
- Regularly has unexplained injuries
- Frequently has injuries even when apparently reasonable explanations are given
- Offers confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude
- Indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been harmed.

*It is vital to highlight at this point that children with **special educational needs and disabilities**, including communication or behaviour difficulties, have a higher risk of bullying, neglect and abuse than others. Often, they are not identified or looked at as at-risk when it comes to indicators of possible abuse owing to mood, injury or behaviour being attributed to the pre-existing condition rather than signals for safeguarding. Staff specifically involved with children with SEND are to be alert to these factors.*

Dealing with disclosure

If a student discloses that he or she has been harmed 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 that it might not be possible to keep
- Not promise confidentiality, as it might be necessary to refer the case to the appropriate authority
- 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



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- Not criticise the perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.

Procedures

When a child reports abuse, the teacher will inform the designated child protection officer (DCPO) within 48 hours. The teacher should also inform the DCPO as soon as possible if there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring. The DCPO will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident. At this stage he/she will:

- Interview staff members as necessary and document information relative to the case.
- Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school.

The DCPO will then form a school-based response team to address the report. The response team may include the school doctor, nurse, counsellor, teacher, and other individuals as the DCPO 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.

Based on acquired information, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions that may take place are:

- Discussions between the child and the DCPO in order to gain more information.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counsellor, or administrator.
- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counselling.
- Consultation with local authorities.

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

- The DCPO will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The DCPO will provide the child's teachers with ongoing support, and provide strategies for the teacher to use.
- The DCPO will maintain contact with outside therapists, in order to update the therapist about the progress of the child in school, and to keep the school informed about the progress of the therapy.
- The School Principal refers the case to local authorities for further action.

Responsibilities of the whole school staff

- There is a named person(s) in our school who is the DCPO. This is normally the principal but they may delegate this responsibility in some circumstances.
- All members of the school staff have a responsibility to identify and report suspected abuse and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the students in the school. In doing so, they should seek advice and support as necessary from the DCPO.
- **All staff** are expected to attend regular and relevant professional development sessions.
- All staff are 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 behaviour.
- All staff are expected to be aware of symptoms of abuse, report concerns to DCPO as appropriate and keep clear, dated, factual and confidential records of child protection concerns.



Specific responsibilities of the school doctor/nurse and counsellor:

- The school Doctor/Nurse or Counsellor may be requested to provide physical treatment and emotional support after a child has been abused
- The doctor or nurse may be required to conduct an examination if there are physical injuries and write an initial report about the child's physical and emotional condition
- The doctor/ nurse and/ or counsellor can provide positive encouragement to the child, liaise with family members determine how best to promote the child's safety both at school and at home.
- Child abuse can leave deep emotional scars and the School Doctor or Nurse should recognize these and help develop a rehabilitation plan in liaison with the DCPO and other appropriate staff in the case team.
- In some cases, the child may have to take medication as a result of the abuse. The school doctor or nurse should ensure that all standards and procedures for administering medications in the school setting are met.

Specific responsibilities of the HR department and Security

- When recruiting any member of the teaching staff or support staff with access to children, all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure compliance as far as possible with the following:
 - Provision of an up-to-date police 'good conduct' letter and/or criminal records check
 - That two or more references are taken up from previous employers with follow-up questions with regard to the applicant's compliance with any child protection procedures
 - 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
- The Security staff 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 monitoring of visitors to the school

Roles and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and visitors to RWA.

The staff at RWA have a responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of our students. All staff must report any suspected incidents of child abuse to any one of the following persons who are DCPO's for all child protection issues here at RWA:

- Senior management (principal, vice principal & head of primary, head of secondary, deputy heads of primary and secondary)
- The school doctor
- The school counsellors

The DCPO's will: Follow the agreed procedures (refer to what to do on disclosure section later)

- Know how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse
- Provide advice and support to staff
- Maintain relevant records of incident reports
- Keep all information confidentially and safe in a locked cabinet
- Know when and how to submit a referral to outside agencies



Relevant legislation or authorities

This Policy is underpinned by the fundamental principle of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 of which the United Arab Emirates (UAE) ratified on the 3rd January, 1997 along with the UAE local laws (the Emirates Human Rights Association have launched a Federal Law, the Child Rights Law, which is to be established December, 2014).

School Commitment-Recruitment, Training and Selection

The school safer recruitment procedures will be followed for all staff employed by the school. All staff (both teaching and non-teaching), including volunteers who apply to work at the school, will be subject to a rigorous recruitment process to ensure, as far as possible, their suitability to work with children and eligibility to work in the UAE. At least, two references will be taken up and they will be required to give evidence of their qualifications. At least one person on an interviewing panel must have completed safer recruitment training (e.g. NSPCC Safer Recruitment or similar course/ qualification).

Staff will be provided with a copy of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and code of behaviour and will be required to sign a document certifying that they have read it and agree to abide by its contents.

All these policies are applicable when students go on trips away from school. At least one male and one female will be present to support students.

Framework

Child protection is the responsibility of all staff and especially those working with children. The designated senior person for child protection at RWA is the principal and in his/her absence the relevant head of section is in charge of child protection/ safeguarding matters. Heads of section are designated persons (DPs) within their own Section. The principal will be assisted by each head of section including the deputy heads and the school counsellor(s).

The principal and heads of section will disseminate policy and provide INSET training for all staff. Staff should discuss any concerns regarding child protection with the relevant Head of Section. The head of section will then consult with the school counsellor and the principal who will advise on the monitoring of children and the making of referrals to the appropriate organisations.

The Principal is responsible for reporting issues related to this policy to the CEO/ Board. Board members will not be given specific details relating to child protection situations.

Allegations against staff or the principal

Teachers who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the Principal. **If the principal is absent, the allegation should be passed to the chief executive officer (CEO).** If the allegation is against the principal, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the CEO without notifying the principal first.

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

PHYSICAL ABUSE:

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.

- Unexplained injuries or burns (particularly if they are recurrent)
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries



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- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression towards others
- Self-destructive tendencies

EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behavior and development of the child. This includes conveying to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved.

- Physical/mental/emotional developmental lags
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive
- Over reaction to mistakes
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour (eg, rocking, thumb sucking etc)
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-mutilation
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

SEXUAL ABUSE:

Where a child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) – including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated the behaviour.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, language, behaviours
- Loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressive behaviours such as thumb sucking, needing previously discarded cuddly toys
- Becoming withdrawn, isolated
- Inability to focus
- Reluctance to go home
- Bed-wetting
- Drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'extra good'
- Over-reacting to criticism
- Have outbursts of anger/irritability

NEGLECT:

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



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- 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

WHAT TO DO ON DISCLOSURE

Stay calm

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



Listen, hear and believe

(Listen carefully, take it seriously)



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 on a Disclosure Form

(Use the child's own words, make your record as soon as possible after the event, so that you don't forget anything, and include information about what action was taken afterwards)



Report to the DCP

INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE AGENCIES

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. It was established in July, 2007 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to offer victims immediate protection and support services in accordance with international human rights obligations. The Foundation provides a helpline, emergency shelter, and support services to women and children victims. 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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- Case management
- Medical care
- Psychological support
- Counselling
- Legal, consular and immigration assistance
- Helpline 800 111 or email help@dfwac.ae
- Website – www.dfwac.ae

Dubai Police Human Rights Department

24/7 Duty Officer 056 6862121

 <p>Major Shahein Dubai Police Human Rights Department</p> <p>04 6082608 Work +971 506355377 Mobile almazmi@dubaipolice.gov.ae</p>	 <p>Miss Fatma Albloshi Dubai Police (Child & Women... Head of Awareness & Educati...</p> <p>+971 46082602 Work +971 508400058 Mobile f.murad@dubaipolice.gov.ae http://www.dubaipolice.gov.ae</p>
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Latifa Hospital Child Welfare Unit

Tel: 04 2193000

Fax: 04 3241717

PO Box 4115 Dubai, UAE

Working Hours: 24 Hours

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 centre 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. It is tasked with rehabilitating, providing counselling, visiting and assisting children in need.

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 development in Dubai and on issues that concern them www.alameen.ae/en/

Policy Review

This policy is to be reviewed annually, though any deficiencies or weaknesses in children protection arrangements will be remedied without delay. The principal and CEO (on behalf of the Board) will undertake an annual review of the school's child protection/ safeguarding policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

Date of last review: June 2024