

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY**Effective Date:** 01-04- 2025**Review Date:** 01-04-2027**1. AIM**

- Provide a safe and welcoming learning environment that promotes the welfare of all students and ensures they are respected and valued.
- Offer clear directions to staff and stakeholders regarding expected codes of behavior in safeguarding matters.
- Demonstrate the school's commitment to developing good practices and sound procedures, ensuring safeguarding concerns are handled sensitively, professionally, and in ways that support the child's needs.

2. MAIN PRINCIPLES

- Children thrive in a safe, welcoming environment conducive to learning.
- Child safety and protection are of paramount importance at GEMS United Indian School.
- All staff share responsibility for safeguarding and promoting student wellbeing.
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), following this policy's guidelines.
- The policy will be reviewed biennially or earlier if incidents, legislation, or guidance necessitate a review.

3. DEFINITIONS

- **Child Protection:** Measures to protect children identified as suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm due to abuse or neglect.
- **Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare:** Protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing health or developmental impairment, ensuring safe and nurturing care, and enabling children to achieve optimum life chances.
- **Staff:** All school personnel, full-time, part-time, paid, or voluntary.

- **Child:** Any young person under 18 years of age.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

The school ensures that the DSL:

- Are members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Are appropriately trained; the Deputy DSL is trained to the same level and assumes full DSL responsibilities during long-term absence.
- Other SLT members have also received DSL training.
- Act as a source of support and expertise for the school community.
- Are alert to the specific needs of vulnerable students, including those with special educational needs (SEN).
- Keep detailed, secure records of concerns reported by staff or disclosed by children.
- Refer suspected neglect or abuse to children's social care or police in consultation with GEMS Corporate Office.
- Ensure student information is passed to a new school if a child leaves, including informing social workers/counsellors.

4.2 School Principal

- Implement and ensure adherence to safeguarding and child protection policies.
- Allocate resources enabling the DSL to carry out their role effectively.
- Encourage staff to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice, ensuring sensitivity.
- Address child safety and welfare through the curriculum.
- Ensure policies align with UAE regulations and are reviewed annually.
- Ensure safer recruitment procedures, including appropriate checks, are followed.
- Plan targeted and refresher training for all staff, with DSL refresher training every two years.

- Make all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) aware of child protection arrangements.
- Ensure staff understand and follow the Staff Code of Conduct

4.3 Class Teachers

- Often the first to raise concerns.
- Maintain detailed, accurate, confidential records and liaise with safeguarding staff.
- Ensure timely handover of information to designated safeguarding officers.

4.4 School Nurse

- Communicate relevant health information to the DSL.
- Record types, frequency, and severity of injuries and attendance concerns.

4.5 Whole School Staff

- Identify and report suspected abuse; ensure student safety and wellbeing.
- Provide a safe and caring environment fostering confidence to express ideas, feelings, and opinions.
- Treat all students with respect within an agreed framework of behavior.
- Be aware of signs and symptoms of abuse.
- Report concerns to the DSL and maintain clear, dated, factual, and confidential records.
- Follow all safeguarding guidelines, practices, and policies of the school, GEMS, and UAE law.
- Report suspected abuse to the UAE Police when required.

5. INTIMATE CARE

- Children should be toilet trained and able to manage personal hygiene independently before starting school.
- Staff support students in achieving autonomy, encouraging independence in washing, toileting, and self-care.

- Individual Intimate Care Plans (ICPs) are developed where necessary, including risk assessments for safety.
- Student welfare, dignity, and privacy are prioritized.
- Staff communicate procedures clearly to students and ensure the minimum number of staff is involved.

6. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEN/D)

- Recognize these students are more vulnerable to abuse/exploitation.
- No concern should be dismissed as a symptom of SEN/disability (communication, toileting, understanding right/wrong, physical appearance, attachment).
- Staff remain vigilant to their needs and provide extra pastoral support via Heads of Section, Vice Principal, Counsellor, Teachers, and Inclusion Department.
- Address safeguarding considering communication barriers, peer isolation, and vulnerability to bullying.

7. CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (ATTENDANCE)

- Attendance is closely monitored to ensure wellbeing and access to learning opportunities.
- After **5 consecutive unexplained school days**, the school will refer the case to the GEMS Head of Safeguarding and log it in the Phoenix HSE online reporting system.
- Reasonable steps may include phone calls, emails/SMS to parents, and contacting other schools where siblings are enrolled.

8. CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

8.1 Recognizing Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** Hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning/scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe adverse effects; may include conveying worthlessness, neglect, or serious bullying.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Forcing or enticing a child to engage in sexual activity.

- **Neglect:** Persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical or psychological needs, impairing health or development.
- **Bullying:** Zero tolerance; managed through anti-bullying procedures, PSHE curriculum, and, if serious, child protection procedures.

8.2 Taking Action

- Report concerns to the DSL immediately. Do not start your own investigation.
- Share information **only on a need-to-know basis**.
- Complete a record of concern. Seek support if distressed.



8.3 Recording a Disclosure

- Make brief notes immediately after disclosure.
- Record date, time, location, non-verbal behavior, and exact words.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

- Treat all pupil information discreetly and confidentially.
- If unsure about sharing information, consult Principal/DSL.
- Never guarantee confidentiality regarding safeguarding concerns.

- Comply with statutory reporting requirements to DSL, police, or child protection authorities.

10. RECORDS & MONITORING

- Concerns and disclosures must be recorded and passed to DSL immediately.
- DSL, in consultation with Principal, decides on action and monitoring.
- Records are securely stored.
- Relevant information is transferred to the next school.

11. STAFF TRAINING

- All staff receive safeguarding training as part of CPD.
- Updates are provided whenever policy changes.
- DSLs receive refresher training every two years.

12. SAFER RECRUITMENT

- All applicants' complete forms, provide references, and evidence of identity/qualifications.
- Criminal record checks conducted as appropriate.
- Induction includes child protection policy orientation.
- All staff sign receipt of policy

14. E-SAFETY

- Internet access is safe, filtered, and age appropriate.
- Students are educated on responsible use of technology.
- Cyberbullying is treated as seriously as other bullying.
- Digital Leader and ICT team manage e-safety.

GEMS United Indian School is committed to safeguarding all students and providing a safe, inclusive learning environment, in line with ADEK regulations and best practices.

References:

- DAA Child Protection Committee. (2024). *Handling Student Maltreatment Concerns within Educational Institutions.*
- Cabinet Decision No. (52) of 2018 Regarding the Executive Regulations of Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 Regarding Child Rights (Wadeema)
- Federal Decree Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema)

**K. George Mathew****Principal /CEO**