COGNITA

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

Please note: all policy and procedures are subject to local law and practice

September 2022

Contents

1   Safeguarding in our school

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

1.1 Our aims and responsibilities
Our commitment is to safeguard and promote the welfare, physical and mental health, and safety of our pupils by creating and maintaining an open, safe, caring and supportive atmosphere. This includes:
- Proactively teaching pupils about safeguarding;
- Ensuring that systems and procedures are in place to protect pupils; and
- Acting in the best interests of the child.

All staff have the following responsibilities **whilst always adhering to the laws and procedures of the UAE:**
- Contribute to providing a safe environment in which all children can learn and flourish;
- Know what to do if a child tells you that he or she is being abused or neglected;
- Know what to do if you are concerned about the behaviour or conduct of an adult in the school;
- Manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality;
- Refer any safeguarding concern about children to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy DSL;
- Refer any safeguarding concern about adults to the Principal, or in their absence the Regional Safeguarding Advisor/Head of Human Resources/Managing Director
- Refer any safeguarding concerns about the Principal to the Managing Director
- Be aware of Early Help processes and our role in it; and identify children who may benefit from Early Help.

1.2 Definition of safeguarding
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:
- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's physical and/or mental health, or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

In our school, safeguarding is
everyone's responsibility

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child, taking into consideration the views and wishes of the child **whilst always adhering to the laws and procedures of the UAE.**

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

1.3 Who this policy applies to
This policy applies to all pupils in the school, including those in the early years.

This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, residential, pastoral, support, peripatetic, contract staff and ancillary staff, agency/supply staff, volunteers, non-school based Cognita staff and any other adults working at the school. All references in this document to "staff" or "members of staff" should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned, unless otherwise stated. This also applies to adults in the early years phase of the school. Throughout the document, the term DSL is used for the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

This Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct apply to all pupils and adults in the school, including when being educated off-site and undertaking an educational visit. They also apply to students who are on an exchange and being hosted by the school.

1.4   Inter-agency working
The school is committed to inter-agency working in order to secure the best levels of safeguarding for all of its pupils. The school may work with Statutory Child Protection Services (SCPS), the Police, the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

1.5   Definitions and terminology
'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18
'DSL' refers to the school's named Designated Safeguarding Lead
'ECMS' refers to Electronic Case Management System e.g. CPOMS or Wellbeing Manager
'MD' refers to the Managing Director (Middle East)
'HHR' refers to the Head of Human Resources
'RSL' refers to Regional Safeguarding Lead
'KDHA' refers to the Knowledge and Human Development Authority
'SCPS' Statutory Child Protection Services, included but not limited to MOI Child Protection Centre, MOE Child Protection Unit, Community Development Authority, EWAA Shelter for Women and Children, Dubai Foundation for Women and Children

1.6   Related documentation

Our policy and approach to safeguarding and child protection is based on the best practice advice from the UK, this is informed by the documentation listed below but always ensuring that the policy is matched to the context of the UAE.

UK National documents:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (Sep 2022)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2020)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act (July 2018)
- What do to if you are worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners (departmental advice) (March 2015)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2021)
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges (2021)

Our work must always also adhere and respect the laws and procedures of the UAE:
Federal law No. 3 regarding child protection often referred to as 'Wadeema's Law'. As a result of the law the MOI Child Protection Centre and MOE Child Protection Unit have been created. These provide a referral process for child abuse and will intervene when children are at risk.

Local Safeguarding Guidelines/Child Protection Procedures:
UAE Ministry of Interior (MOI)
http://www.moi-cpc.ae/en/default.aspx
UAE Ministry of Education (MOE)
https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/justice-safety-and-the-law/children-safety

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Digital Safety Policy

- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct and ICT Acceptable Use Policy

The policies listed below to be created and approved for the UAE this academic year 2022-2023
- Exclusion Policy
- Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy

1.7   Safer recruitment
      Our school prioritises embedding a culture of safer recruitment as part of our strategy for preventing harm to children. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who work with children are always followed (see Safer Recruitment Policy).

1.8   Policy review
      This policy is reviewed and updated annually, drawing on feedback from staff, and is published to all staff and volunteers. A summary version, included in the appendix below, is placed on the school website.

1.9   Information sharing
      Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. School staff should, therefore, be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the school Safeguarding team. This includes the sharing of information with SCPS without parental consent where there is good reason to do so, i.e. the risk of harm to the child will be increased.

2   Key safeguarding facts

The safety and wellbeing of our pupils is our number one priority		
We operate within a culture of openness and recognise and accept that abuse can happen in any organisation	*Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility*	*We are a 'sharing organisation'* *All concerns should be reported*

3   Key people and contacts

School contacts	
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Martin Cole
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL)	Asma Ahmad
Any other staff trained to DSL level	Ian Wallace

		Aislinn McCabe Dr Katherine Morris
Inclusion Lead		Aislinn McCabe
Mental Health Lead		Asma Ahmad
Principal		Ian Wallace

Cognita (proprietor) contacts	
Regional Safeguarding Lead	Lizzie Varley Lizzie.Varley@cognita.com
Managing Director (ME)	David Baldwin David.baldwin@cognita.com
General Counsel	Jayne Pinchbeck Jayne.pinchbeck@cognita.com

Authority Contacts	
CHILD PROTECTION SECTION, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY; offering confidentiality and advice	800988 Website: www.cda.gov.ae
The CHILD PROTECTION CENTRE, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ; offering a child abuse reporting system, confidentiality and advice	116111 Website: www.moi-cpc.ae
THE CHILD PROTECTION UNIT, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION offering a child abuse reporting system, confidentiality and advice	80085 Website:CPU@moe.gov.ae
AL AMEEN SERVICE ; offering confidential communication between the public and the State Security Service in Dubai	800-4-888
KDHA - Knowledge and Human Development Authority	Afra Al Qamzi +971 (4) 3643672 afra.alqamzi@khda.gov.ae
Latifa Hospital Child Welfare Unit	Tel: 04 219 3000 PO Box 4115 Dubai, UAE
Local Police Emergency	911
Local Police non-emergency	Al Barsha Station 04609 6299

Major Shahein
Dubai Police
Human Rights Department

04 6082608 Work
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almazmi@dubaipolice.gov.ae

Miss Fatma Albloshi
Dubai Police (Child & Women...
Head of Awareness & Educati...

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+971 508400058 Mobile
f.murad@dubaipolice.gov.ae
http://www.dubaipolice.gov.ae

Note: The Cognita Regional Safeguarding Lead (ME) is a role which supports the development of effective safeguarding practice within the Cognita family of schools and is not intended to replace, in any way, referral and reporting requirements in the UAE

4 Types of abuse

The term 'abuse' is often used as an umbrella term. All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Abuse and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse

Physical abuse	Emotional abuse	Sexual abuse	Neglect

The following definitions of abuse are taken from WTSC (2020), which is UK government guidance. However, staff should always adhere to the laws and procedures of the UAE.

4.1 Abuse
Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by one adult or a group of adults, or by another child or a group of children.

4.2 Physical abuse
Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Signs of physical abuse can include:
- injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen;
- respiratory problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning;
- untreated or inadequately treated injuries;
- bruising which looks like hand or finger marks or caused by an implement;
- cigarette burns, human bites; or
- scarring, scalds and burns.

4.3 Emotional abuse
Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

4.4 Domestic abuse
Emotional abuse often occurs when the child sees or hears domestic abuse occurring in the home. The definition of domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or identity. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional. Exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Signs of emotional abuse tend to be behavioural rather than physical (see below).

4.5 Sexual abuse
Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex), or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education called child on child abuse and is explored below.

Signs of sexual abuse displayed by children may include:
- pregnancy
- sexually transmitted infection/diseases;
- pain/itching/bleeding/bruising/discharge to the genital area/anus/mouth;
- urinary infections;
- difficulty walking or sitting or standing;
- persistent sore throats; or
- stomach ache.

4.6 Neglect
Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs of possible neglect include:
- the child seems underweight or is very small for their age, or their weight deteriorates;
- the child seems very overweight for their age;
- they are poorly clothed, with inadequate protection from the weather;
- they are often absent from school for no apparent reason; or persistently arrive late: or
- they are regularly left alone, or in charge of younger brothers or sisters.

4.7 Child on child abuse
All staff must be alert to possible indicators of safeguarding concerns which may indicate child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- sharing of nudes/semi nudes imagery/videos, previously referred to as 'sexting';
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals; and 'upskirting'
- See separate section of this document on child on child abuse below
       4.8   Honour Based Abuse (HBA)

HBA includes all incidents which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the community and/or the family, and commonly involve practices such as FGM, forced marriage and/or breast flattening. If staff have a concern that a child may be at risk of Honour Based Abuse, they should alert their DSL immediately. The DSL will respond to suspected HBA following the laws and procedures of the UAE, whilst also considering cultural sensitivities.

4.9   Behavioural signs of abuse and neglect
        If a child is being abused, their behaviour may change in a number of ways. For example, they may:
        • behave aggressively or be disruptive, act out, demand attention and require more discipline than other children;
        • become angry or disinterested and/or show little creativity;
        • seem frightened of certain adults;
        • become sad, withdrawn or depressed;
        • have trouble sleeping;
        • become sexually active at a young age;
        • exhibit inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age or sexualised behaviour in their play with other children;
        • refuse to change for gym or participate in physical activities;
        • develop eating disorders;
        • self-harm and/or express suicidal ideation;
        • refuse to attend school or run away from home;
        • lack confidence or have low self-esteem; or
        • use drugs or alcohol as a coping strategy

4.10   Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health
        Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that all staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

        All staff should also be aware that deteriorating emotional wellbeing and escalation of mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that there is a safeguarding concern, for example, a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, bullying/cyberbullying or exploitation. Please note, however, that only appropriately trained health professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.

        Staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following this policy and speaking to the DSL.

        Whilst all children should be protected, it is important that staff recognise that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm (including online harm). For example, this vulnerable group includes, but is not limited to: those students of determination, young carers, those with identity difficulties and those living in homes characterised by domestic abuse and/or parental acrimony.

4.11   Students of determination
        Students of determination are statistically more vulnerable to child abuse, including child on child abuse. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These include:
        • assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
        • assumptions that pupils of determination can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
        • communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these challenges.

4.12   Signs of abuse or neglect manifested by the parents or other responsible adult
        • places unrealistic expectations on the child, i.e. demands a level of academic or physical performance of which they are not capable;
        • offers conflicting or unconvincing explanation of any injuries to the child;

- delays seeking medical treatment for the child's mental/physical health
- appears indifferent to, is emotionally unavailable, or overtly rejects, the child;
- denies existence of or blames the child for the child's behaviours at home or at school;
- sees and describes the child as entirely worthless, burdensome or in another negative light;
- refuses offers of support to meet the child's needs;
- refuses to consent to referrals to external agencies to meet their child's needs/does not engage as expected

4.13 Grooming

Grooming is the process by which an individual prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for abuse of this child. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know. Groomers may be of any gender or identity or sexual orientation. They could be of any age, including another young person. Many children and young people do not understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse. The signs that a child is being groomed are not always obvious. Groomers will also go to great lengths not to be identified.

Children may:
- be very secretive, including about what they are doing online;
- have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- go to unusual places to meet friends;
- have new things such as clothes or mobile phones that they can't or won't explain;
- have access to drugs and alcohol;
- go missing from home or school;
- display behavioural changes;
- have sexual health issues; or
- present as suicidal, self/harming, feeling depressed, unworthy.

In older children, signs of grooming can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour, but you may notice unexplained changes in behaviour or personality, or inappropriate sexual behaviour for their age.

4.14 Signs of grooming and/or online abuse

A child may be experiencing abuse online if they:
- spend lots, much more, or much less time online, texting, gaming or using social media;
- are withdrawn, upset or outraged after using the internet or texting;
- are secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone; and/or
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- have more than one phone

4.15 Signs of grooming manifested by sex offenders

It is important to remember that not all sex offenders will exhibit the signs listed below and if an individual exhibits some or all of these signs, it does not mean that they are a sex offender:
- Overly affectionate behaviour with a child;
- Affording special attention or preferential treatment to a child;
- Excessive time spent alone with a child outside of the classroom/school;
- Frequently spending time with a child in private or isolated areas;
- Transporting a child to or from the school;
- Making friends with a child's parents and visiting their home;
- Acting as a particular child's confidante;
- Giving small gifts, money, toys, cards, letters to a child;

- Using texts, telephone calls, e-mails or social networking sites to inappropriately communicate with a child; and/or
- Flirtatious behaviour or making suggestive remarks or comments of a sexual nature around a child.

4.16 Modus operandi of grooming
- Target vulnerable victim: Perpetrators target victims who are vulnerable, isolated, insecure and/or have greater emotional needs.
- Gain victim's trust: Offenders may allow a child to do something (e.g. eat ice cream, stay up late, view pornography) which is not normally permitted by the child's parents or the school in order to foster secrecy.
- Gain the trust of others: Institutional offenders are often popular with children and parents, successfully grooming not only the victim but also other members of the victim's family and the community at large.
- Filling a need/becoming more important to the child: This can involve giving gifts, rewards, additional help or advice, favouritism, special attention and/or opportunities for special trips or outings.
- Isolating the child: The perpetrator may encourage dependency and subtly undermine the victim's other relationships with friends or family members.
- Sexualising the relationship: This can involve playful touches, tickling and hugs. It may involve adult jokes and innuendo or talking as if adults, for example about marital problems or conflicts.
- Maintaining control and secrecy: Offenders may use their professional position to make a child believe that they have no choice but to submit to the offender.

4.17 Contextual Safeguarding
Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

The contextual safeguarding approach says that child protection systems need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse beyond their front doors. This also includes the risk of abuse occurring in or outside of school.

4.18 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
CSE is a form of child sexual abuse (see above) and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

For more information, see the UK guidance <u>Child Sexual Exploitation: Guide for Practitioners</u> However, in any response, consideration and respect will be given to the laws in the UAE.

4.19 <u>Children Missing in Education</u>
All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement. It may indicate mental health difficulties, risk of illegal substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's unauthorised absence procedures and seek advice form the KDHA if needed.

5 Stages of child protection

The school will always work cooperatively with external services **and adhere to the laws and procedures of the UAE.**

The diagram opposite outlines the hierarchy of approaches.

| Child suffering or likely to suffer significant harm |
| Early help |
| Pastoral support |
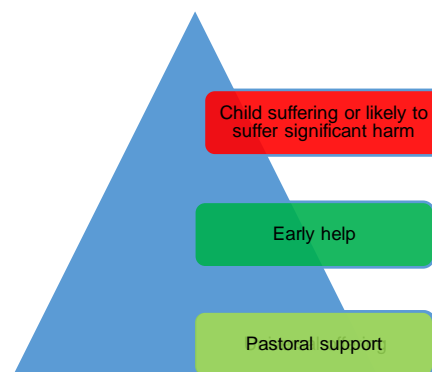
Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, after due consideration, a referral may be needed to the authorties by the DSL

5.1   Early Help
If early help is appropriate, the DSL or DDSL will generally lead on liaising with the parents, and other agencies as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in any assessment of need. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to statutory services, if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting significantly worse.

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan);
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is experiencing identity difficulties

5.2   Children known to Statutory Child Protection Services (SCPS)
Children may need support and interventions due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health. Where children have SCPS involvement, this should inform school decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by authorities).

5.3   Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
The SCPS, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a responsibility to investigate if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote

the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment, including all forms of abuse and neglect. Should an investigation occur, then the school's involvement and any action may be determined on the advice given by the investigating agency.

5.4   What to do if you have a concern about a child in the school

If in doubt or you have any concerns about the safety and welfare of a child	➔	Input/Record a concern	➔	Discuss the content of the of your concern with the DSL or Deputy DSL	➔	Maintain confidentiality
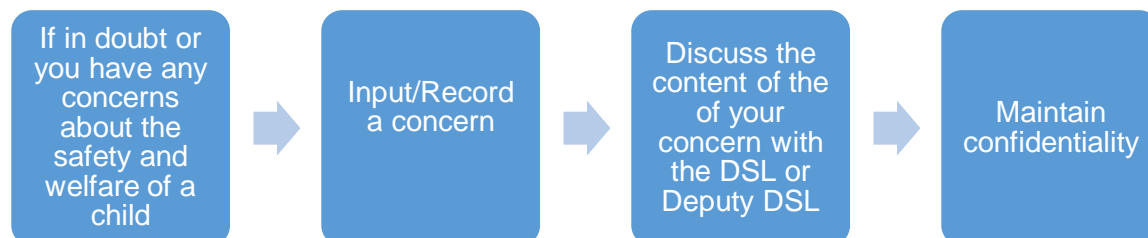
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All staff should know what to do when a child discloses abuse to them, they have concerns about a child's welfare, or when children or staff raise concerns about a pupil to them.

If a child tells a member of staff that they know about or have been a victim of abuse or neglect the member of staff should:

- Listen carefully and allow the child to speak freely and remain calm. Do not interrupt the child or be afraid of silences. Recognise that there are many barriers to a child making a disclosure.
- Provide reassuring nods and words such as, "I am so sorry this has happened", "You are doing the right thing in talking to me". Avoid saying things like, "I wish you had told me about this earlier" or "I cannot believe what I am hearing".
- Questioning of the child about what they are saying should not be extensive, as the authorities may lead on any investigation. However, a context around what the child has said should always be sought prior to any referral being made to SCPS. This referral should be done by the DSL or DDSL, depending on who obtained the initial disclosure i.e. if a member of teaching staff receives a disclosure or has a concern, the DSL should then also speak to the child, either to corroborate the child's account or to gain further context.
- Limit questioning to the minimum necessary for clarification using What, When, How and Where, but avoid leading questions such as, "Has this happened to your siblings?" Do not use questions beginning with Why as this can apportion feelings of guilt within a child.
- If the child discloses abuse, it is appropriate to ask whether any other adults were present and observed the abuse, and ask what did they do.
- Use language that is appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child, allowing for their individual need.
- Tell the child what will happen next. The child may want to accompany you to see the DSL, otherwise let the child know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day.

Staff should understand the difficulties children may have in approaching them and the need to build trusted relationships. Staff should be aware that the first approach/disclosure from a child may not be the only incident that has happened. It is appropriate therefore, to ask the child whether something like this has ever happened to them before.

5.5 Recording

Staff should make a written record of any conversation with the child as soon as possible. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing by the DSL. Records of incidents must include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

If a disclosure of abuse has been made by the child, staff should immediately discuss the concerns verbally with the DSL, Deputy DSL or Principal prior to writing up the record so that immediate action can be considered. If the DSL is not available then this should not delay appropriate action being taken and staff should speak to the DDSL, Principal or, failing that, another member of the SLT/Regional Safeguarding Lead.

Staff recording disclosures should <u>use the specific words</u> that the child used (e.g., if referring to parts of their body), indicating these by using "speech marks/inverted commas".

If DSL's are unsure to whether a situation meets the threshold for a referral to SCPS or Police, Principals should be made aware and offer appropriate advice and guidance.

The RSL should give approval prior to a referral being made by the DSL or DDSL to SCPS.

The MD **must** give approval prior to a referral being made by the Principal to the Police.

<u>Photos</u>

If a child discloses physical abuse, self-harms or attempts to take their life, staff should **never** take photos of children's injuries.

<u>5.6 Making referrals to the SCPS/Police/other agencies</u>

If a child is thought to be at risk of harm

When a child is thought to be at risk of harm or is likely to be at risk of harm (see above), <u>after full consideration</u>, a referral should be made to SCPS, or the Police if a criminal act is thought to have occurred. The referral will be made by the DSL (SCPS) or the Principal (Police), after approval from the regional office. The RSL is required to approve all SCPS referrals. The MD is required to approve all Police referrals. The school does **not** require parental consent for referrals to be made to the authorities. Consent to do this must **not** be obtained from the parents if to gain consent would put the child's safety at risk or to do so could jeopardise any investigation by partner agencies. See above re ensuring that a context is gathered prior to making any referral to external agencies.

If a child has unmet needs

When a child is not considered at risk of harm, but still has unmet needs that could mean they require Early Help intervention, a referral may still be needed to SCPS in some instances. These concerns should be discussed with the parents and any subsequent referral made transparently with the parent's knowledge unless to do so would place the child at heightened risk.

Confidentiality

Whilst it is always important to take into consideration the wishes and feelings of a child, staff should never guarantee confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them about something serious, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. They should guarantee that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know and that they will pass on information in confidence only to the people who must be told in order to ensure their safety.

5.5   <u>Passing on safeguarding records when a child leaves the school</u>
Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse. KSCIE (2022) emphasises the need for fuller pastoral information to be passed on about students for whom there has a been a

safeguarding concern, as a lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

If we have concerns about a child's safety, we have a duty to notify the relevant authorities. However, we should not share safeguarding information with a new school, until we have notified the authorities and obtained guidance from the authorities on whether we can share the safeguarding information with the new school.

Upon approval from the authorities, we may need to share the safeguarding information with the new school. However, the child's place at the new school should be confirmed and the child should be enrolled at the school before the information is shared.

6   Whistleblowing

All adults have a responsibility to report any concerns about poor or unsafe practice, including in relation to the care and protection of a pupil or pupils. If a member of staff believes that best practice in this area is not being adhered to or that practice may put a pupil or pupils at risk, they should first attempt to resolve their concern at school level and:

If the situation is not resolved, or safeguarding concern relates to the Principal, staff should:

> Report the concern to the Cognita Managing Director , the Head of HR or the Regional Safeguarding Lead

Staff are strongly encouraged to reach out at an early stage.

[Please see the 'key people and contacts' page in this document for the contact details of the above people within Cognita.]

Concerns raised under this Whistleblowing Policy are distinct from concerns or allegations about an adult's suitability to work with or have access to children.

No member of staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine concern about unsafe practice, if they do so in good faith and follow the whistleblowing procedures.

7   The role of the Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Principal is accountable for the Safeguarding of all children and adults within the school. They are to ensure the Designated Safegurading Lead (DSL) has the necessary resources to complete their role effectively. The Principal will offer advice and guidance for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and is responsible for managing any referrals to the Police.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the senior member of staff responsible for leading safeguarding in the school (including online safety). The DSL <u>must</u> be a member of the school leadership team (SLT). The DSL takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in the school and their job description explicitly reflects this.

7.1   Deputy DSL
The school can appoint a number of Deputy DSLs. Their role is to support the DSL in their safeguarding role. Whilst the *activities* of the DSL can be delegated to DDSLs, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection must remain with the DSL, and this lead responsibility must not be

delegated. The Deputy DSLs are trained to the same level as the DSL and their duties of the Deputy DSLs are reflected explicitly in their job descriptions.

7.2   Inter-agency working
The DSL and Deputy DSLs liaise with authorities and work in partnership with other agencies in the best interests of children in the school.

7.3   Support for DSL
The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in inter-agency meetings, and/or to support other staff to do so, and to contribute to the assessment of children. There are 4 key elements to the DSL role. They will:

- Manage referrals
- Work with others
- Train staff in relation to safeguarding
- Raise awareness of safeguarding within the school staff group

7.4   Manage referrals (DSL)
The DSL, after discussion and approval has been had with the Principal and Regional Safeguarding Lead, has responsibility to:
- refer cases of suspected abuse to the SCPS as required;
- refer children to external mental health agencies/signpost parents when there are concerns about a child's emotional wellbeing and/or mental health, in collaboration with the school Mental Health Lead.
- Follow up and escalate referrals as needed, and make re-referrals if the child's situation does not improve

7.5   Manage referrals (Principal)
The Principal, after discussion and approval from the Managing Director, has the responsibility to:
- refer, after full considerations in the most serious of cases where a crime has been committed, to the Police
- liaise with the RSL and/or MD to inform him/her of any ongoing Police investigations;

7.6   Work with others
The DSL is expected to:
- act as a point of contact with the SCPS;
- as required, liaise with the Principal and authorities (in relation to allegations against adults)
- liaise with staff (especially pastoral support staff, Mental Health Leads, school nurses, IT technicians, and SENCOs) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) when deciding whether to make a referral to any authority
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances

7.7   Training
The DSL (and any deputies) should undergo advanced training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. This training must be updated **at least every two years**.

- The DSL must undertake Online Safety training on an annual and ongoing basis.
- The DSL must undertake Safer Recruitment training every 2 years.
- In addition to the formal training set out above, the DSLs knowledge and skills should be refreshed via informal updates (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and

at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention;

- have a working knowledge of referral arrangements to the SCPS; understand how the SCPS conducts an investigation where information is available; and be able to attend and contribute to any joint meetings effectively when required to do so;

- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, especially new, part time staff, and/or agency staff;

- are alert to those who require protection, Students of Determination, and young carers;

- learn how to maintain high aspirations for vulnerable children, promoting their educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues experienced by them and the potential impact on their attendance, engagement and achievement

- understand how to support teaching staff to feel confident to provide additional academic support/reasonable adjustments for vulnerable children who need or have needed intervention from the SCPS, recognising the lasting impact on educational outcomes, even when authorities have ceased involvement

- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations in the UAE

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school, and with other agencies, organisations and practitioners

- are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;

- understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the responsibility to prevent radicalisation and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;

- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school;

- can recognise the additional risks that Students of Determination face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support pupils of determination to stay safe online;

- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and

- encourage a culture of listening to children, having an understanding of their views and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school may put in place to protect them.

7.8   Raise awareness
The DSL should:

- ensure the school's safeguarding and child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately;

- ensure that online safety training is provided as part of regular staff updates

- ensure the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the proprietor regarding this;

- ensure the summary version of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals to the SCPS or the Police about suspected abuse or neglect may be made, and the role of the school in this;

- help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school leadership staff. Their role could include ensuring that the school, and their staff, know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.

7.9   Availability
During term time the DSL (or a Deputy) will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the DSL (or Deputy) will normally be available in person, the Principal will define what "available" means and whether in exceptional circumstances availability via work phone and/or Microsoft Teams. It is the responsibility of the Principal and DSL to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

8   Responsibilities of the proprietor

Cognita is the proprietor of the school. As proprietor, Cognita will comply with all duties under legislation and will always take into account statutory guidance, ensuring that all policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with the law at the time.

It is the responsibility of the proprietor to:
- Ensure that all staff having contact with children read Part One of KCSIE and this is suitably adapted for the UAE context;
- Ensure that all staff follow the requirements of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure;
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities, as set out in Part One of KCSIE;
- Designate a senior board member to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements;
- Ensure that all safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the SCPS
- Ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare;
- Ensure that each school works in line with local inter-agency procedures;
- Ensure that the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is updated annually and a summary version is made available via the school website;
- Provide a Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy;
- Ensure that all responsibilities regarding Children Missing from Education are followed,
- Instruct schools to hold more than one contact number for each child;
- Ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction
- Recognise the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing concerns on a daily basis;
- Ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to keep children safe online; and
- Ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety.

The proprietor ensures than an annual review of safeguarding arrangements is conducted. This includes a written report which is presented to the Cognita Board.

Members of the proprietorial team working in a governance and oversight role (e.g. Managing Directors) will undertake DSL level training, induction and training.

9   Induction

At the point of induction, **all** new school employed staff must be provided with, should read and should be trained by the DSL or DDSLs in:
- KCSIE 2022 adapted for the UAE – Part One
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure, including whistleblowing;

- Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of IT Policy (including staff/pupil relationships and communications);
- Digital Safety Policy (including use of social media);
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Behaviour Policy; and

At the point of induction, new staff must be informed of the names and role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies. Likewise, all agency/supply staff must be informed of those with these roles, and of the school processes for raising concerns about children or adults in the school. All new staff must be made aware that they are strongly discouraged from using their personal mobile phone to take images or videos of children, and that they are required to wear a coloured lanyard.

10 Training

10.1 <u>All Staff training</u>

All staff employed in school should receive **annual** safeguarding and child protection training from the DSL via a Safeguarding Refresher presentation, usually at the commencement of the academic year.

This is in addition to their Basic Safeguarding awareness training which must be updated every three years or less.

All staff will also receive safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety, regularly throughout the year, provided by the DSL, in order to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively, for example, learning about the topics in Annex B (KSCIE 2022) or UAE legislation updates and services.

DSLs, DDSLs and Senior Leaders should also undergo Prevent training and FGM training every 3 years via the UK government websites (free training).

Principals must complete Safeguarding training similar to the level of the DSLs every 2 years (through Cognita), and complete the above Prevent and FGM training every 3 years. They should complete Safer Recruitment training every 2 years.

Agency/Supply teaching staff must show evidence of Basic Safeguarding training undertaken within 3 years, <u>prior to attending the school for the first time,</u> and should receive a Safeguarding Induction prior to first contact with children which includes the school's approach to online safety and managing incidents of sexual violence /harassment.

Peripatetic teachers and External After School Activity providers must show evidence of having undertaken Basic Safeguarding training within the last 3 years prior to attending the school for the first time and should receive a Safeguarding Induction prior to first contact with children which includes the school's approach to online safety and managing incidents of sexual violence /harassment.

10.2 <u>Third-party contractors</u>
It is good practice for those employed as third-party contractors who work regularly in school with the opportunity for contact with pupils to have Basic Safeguarding training, at a level appropriate to their role. This training should be ideally arranged by their employers, not the school.

10. 3   Teaching Children about safeguarding

The school is committed to proactively teaching children about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of our approach to offering a broad and balanced curriculum. Through ongoing work with the children, we aim to build resilience so that every child knows that we are a 'telling school' and that speaking up about any concern is valued and actively promoted. This includes raising a concern about themselves or about another.

Safeguarding is taught in the following way:

Throughout the School there is a culture of listening and encouraging the pupil voice.
Safeguarding is taught as part of the within the curriculum including:

- How to keep ourselves safe
- Who is here to help us and what to do if we are not sure
- Online safety
- Consent
- Emotional wellbeing toolkit
- Worry boxes and wellbeing stations

Sex and Relationships education: The school follows the Science British Curriculum and will teach all Biology objectives that include Sex and Relationships within Science/Biology. Parents are encouraged to speak with an appropriate member of the school if they wish to have further clarification on the content and delivery methods of this topic.

We actively promote the view that children should feel able to raise any concerns that they may have. This includes when they have a concern about a friend or peer. We take the following measures to ensure that children know how to raise a concern:

Form teachers will all have worry boxes and pupils are encouraged and praised when raising concerns about anyone around them.

11   Online Safety

11.1   Technology

Technology often provides the platform that may facilitate harm. All staff should be aware of the unique risks associated with online safety, and that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. DSLs are responsible for overseeing online safety in schools and should raise awareness in the staff group accordingly, including but not limited to, cyber-bullying, child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation. The school will protect and educate the school community in their use of technology and has mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident, where appropriate.

11.2   Areas of risk

There are four main areas of risk:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material.
Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users.
Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of (or causes) harm; for example, the making, sending and receiving of explicit images, or online bullying.
Commercial: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

More information around teaching online safety, can be found here

Pupils at the School will be strongly discouraged to access personal mobile devices during school time, all School devices will have appropriate software/filtering to ensure effective and safe use.

All staff should understand their role in preventing, identifying and responding to harm caused by its use. Additional information to support schools to keep their children safe online (including when they are online at home) is provided in Annex D of KCSIE (2022). Whilst it is essential that schools ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place, they should be careful that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regard to online teaching and safeguarding. Many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G).

All staff should also be familiar with the school's Digital Safety Policy, which sets out the school's approach to online safety in further detail. Technology, and risks and harms related to it evolve and changes rapidly. The school will carry out an annual review of their approach to online safety, supported by an <u>annual risk assessment</u> that considers and reflects the risks their children face.

11.3 <u>Sharing of any imagery</u> that may be considered pornographic/indecent is considered illegal, and therefore causes the greatest complexity for schools (amongst other agencies) when responding. It also presents a range of risks which need careful management.

11.4   <u>What types of incidents are covered by this policy?</u>
A child creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer (also under the age of 18).
A child shares sexual imagery created by another child with a peer (also under the age of 18) or; in addition, taking a person's photo without his/her consent is an invasion of privacy, and thus punishable by law.

11.5   <u>Disclosure</u>
All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in their school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. All members of staff (including non-teaching staff) should be aware of how to recognise and refer any disclosure of incidents. This will be covered within staff training. Disclosure about can happen in a variety of ways. The child affected may inform a class teacher, the DSL in school, or any member of the school staff. They may report through an existing reporting structure, or a friend or parent may inform someone in school or a colleague, or inform the police directly. Any direct disclosure by a child should be taken <u>very seriously</u>. A child who discloses they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that disclosure in school is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves.

11.6   <u>Handling incidents</u>
All incidents should be responded to in line with this policy. When an incident involving comes to a member of staff's attention:
- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible;
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff;
- The DSL will follow the procedures and guidance set out in this guidance
- There should be interviews with the children involved (if appropriate, seek advice);
- Parents of each child should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the child at greater risk of harm and jeopardise Police/SCPS investigation; and
- At any point in the process, after full consideration with the Regional team, if there is a concern that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to SCPS and/or the Police immediately.

13   Child on child abuse

All staff should be alert to the risk of child-on-child abuse and understand their role in preventing, identifying and responding to it. All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in their

school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. Staff should know that children are capable of abusing their peers, and that abuse can occur in intimate personal relationships between peers. They should never dismiss abusive behaviour as a normal part of growing up, 'banter' or 'just having a laugh', and should not develop high thresholds before taking action. Abuse is abuse and child on child abuse must be taken as seriously as abuse by adult.

13.1   What is child on child abuse?
Child on child abuse is any form of abuse perpetrated by a child towards another child. It can take many different forms, including, but not limited to:

*   serious bullying (including cyber-bullying)
*   relationship abuse
*   domestic violence
*   child sexual exploitation
*   youth and serious youth violence
*   'upskirting', harmful sexual behaviour
*   gender-based violence
*   causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
*   sexual violence (such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
*   sexual harassment (including sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse)
*   consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (previously known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);

Staff should be aware that there may be multiple perpetrators and/or victims, and not consider that only one child abuses another in isolation.

13.2   What role does gender play?
Children of all gender identities can both perpetrate and be the victim of child on child abuse, but this often manifests itself differently; some may seem to be at greater risk of sexual assault and/or exploitation, whereas others seem to be at greater risk of physical gang-related violence and serious youth violence.

13.3   When does behaviour become abusive?
It can be difficult to distinguish between abusive behaviour, which should be dealt with in accordance with the procedure set out below, and behaviour which does not constitute abuse, such as low-level bullying or cyber bullying (where the school's Anti-Bullying Policy should be followed) or age-appropriate sexual experimentation with the norms of sexual development.

Factors which may indicate that behaviour is abusive include:
*   where it is repeated over time and/or where the perpetrator (s) intended to cause serious harm;
*   where there is an element of coercion or pre-planning; and
*   where there is an imbalance of power, for example, as a result of age, size, social status or wealth.
This list is not exhaustive, and staff should always use their professional judgment and discuss any concerns with the DSL, who in turn should seek guidance from the RSL.

13.4   How can I identify victims of child-on-child abuse?
Identifying child on child abuse can be achieved by being alert to children's well-being and to general signs of abuse. Signs that a child(ren) may be suffering from child-on-child abuse overlap with those relating to other types of abuse – see indicators of abuse, earlier in this document.

Signs can include:

- failing to attend school, disengaging from classes or struggling to carry out school related tasks to the standard you would ordinarily expect
- physical injuries
- having difficulties with their mental health and/or emotional wellbeing
- becoming withdrawn, shy, experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety, panic attacks, suffering from nightmares or lack of sleep or sleeping too much
- drugs and/or alcohol use
- changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not appropriate for the child's age including sexualised behaviours
- change in health status/needs

This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these signs does not necessarily indicate abuse.

13.5 Are some children particularly vulnerable to abusing or being abused by their peers?

Any child can be affected by child-on-child abuse and staff should be alert to signs of such abuse amongst all children. Research suggests that:

- child on child abuse is more prevalent amongst children aged 10 and older, although it also affects younger children, including by way of harmful sexual behaviour.
- children who are particularly vulnerable to abuse or to abusing others include those who have (i) witnessed or experienced abuse or violence themselves; (ii) suffered from the loss of a close family member or friend; or (iii) experienced considerable disruption in their lives.
- Students of Determination and those with identity issue are particularly vulnerable to both abuse and child on child abuse.

13.6 How prevalent is child on child abuse?

Recent research suggests that child on child abuse is one of the most common forms of abuse affecting children *in the UK*. All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in their school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. Staff should therefore assume that child on child abuse is occurring and act accordingly.

13.7 What should I do if I suspect either that a child(ren) may be being abused, or that a child(ren) may be abusing others?

If a member of staff thinks for whatever reason that a child(ren) may be at risk of abuse from another child or young person, or a group of perpetrators, or that a child(ren) may be abusing others, the member of staff should report their concern **verbally** to the DSL **without delay** in accordance with this policy, recording their concern after this.

The DSL will discuss the concerns with the Principal and safeguarding colleagues. If a child(ren), whether they are the alleged victim or perpetrator is in immediate danger, or at risk of harm, contact may be made with the SCPS. In certain serious cases, a referral to SCPS and/or the Police may need to be made after discussion with the Regional team.

13.8 How will the DSL respond to concerns of child on child abuse?

In some situations, a child will make a direct disclosure of child-on-child abuse, or their peers may report something has occurred. Alternatively, a staff member may raise a concern having witnessed or been told about an incident. The DSL will discuss the behaviour with the member of staff raising the concern and will in all situations, take any immediate steps to ensure the safety of the victim(s) or any other child(ren) including the perpetrator.

Where the DSL considers or suspects that the behaviour might constitute abuse, the case will be discussed with the Principal. Where appropriate, the Regional Safeguarding Lead may be contacted. Where a case is deemed serious enough to refer to authorities, the Managing Director is the only person who has the authority to approve a referral of an incident to SCPS and/or the Police.

Any response should be decided in consultation with the appropriate regional team member (SCPS and/or Police if appropriate) and should:

- investigate the incident and the wider context and assess and mitigate the risk posed by the perpetrator(s) to the victim(s) and to other children (a written Risk Assessment will be completed after initial practical steps are completed);
- Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case and potentially starts the process of liaising the Child Protection Unit and the Police, the alleged perpetrator(s) should be removed from any classes they share with the victim. The school should also carefully consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) a reasonable distance apart on school premises (including during any before or after school-based activities) and on transport to and from the school, where appropriate. These actions are in the best interests of all children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s).
- consider that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the children involved;
- treat all children (whether perpetrator or victim) as being at risk - while the perpetrator may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, s/he may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves;
- take into account the complexity of child-on-child abuse and of children's experiences and consider the interplay between power, choice and consent. While children may appear to be making choices, if those choices are limited, they are not consenting;
- take appropriate action in respect of the perpetrator – any action should address the abuse, the causes of it, attitudes underlying it and the support that may be needed if the perpetrator is at risk. Factors to consider include: the risk the perpetrator(s) poses and will continue to pose to other children, their own unmet needs, the severity of the abuse and the causes of it.
- Disciplinary action may be appropriate, including

(a) to ensure that the perpetrator takes responsibility for and realises the seriousness of his or her behaviour;
(b) to demonstrate to the perpetrator and others that abuse can never be tolerated; and
(c) to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim and other children in the school. Permanent exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim(s) and other children in the school;

- Provide on-going support to victim(s) through

(a) ensuring their immediate safety;
(b) responding promptly and appropriately to the abuse;
(c) assessing and addressing any unmet needs;
(d) following the procedures set out in this Safeguarding Policy (including where the child is in need of early help or statutory intervention);
(e) monitoring the child's wellbeing closely and ensuring that s/he receives on-going support from all relevant staff members within the school;
(f) engaging with the child's parents and any external agencies to ensure that the child's needs are met in the long-term; and

- consider the lessons that can be learnt from the abuse and put in place measures to reduce the risk of such abuse recurring. This may include, for example: gender and equalities work, work around school safety, security and supervision, awareness raising for staff, students and parents about a particular form of abuse, training for staff on handling certain types of incidents or abuse.

13.9   How does the school raise awareness of, and reduce the risk, of child-on-child abuse?
Staff are trained on the nature, prevalence and effect of child-on-child abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it. The school actively seeks to prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by educating students and staff, challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse, encouraging a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the school community, and responding to all cases of child-on-child abuse and any cases of bullying or cyber-bullying promptly and appropriately.

Children are educated about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via PSHCE. They are told what to do if they witness or are victims of such abuse, the effect that it can have on the victims and the possible reasons for it, including vulnerability of the perpetrator. They are informed about the school's approach to such issues, including its zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of bullying and child on child abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment (see below).

14   Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children

Child on child abuse can include two specific forms, known as Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment. Any response to these should fall within, and be consistent with, the school's wider approach to child-on-child abuse (see above) whether the concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school premises, and or online.

The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child.

14.1   Sexual Violence includes sexual offences which fall under the Penal Code; Federal Law No. 3 of 1987, as amended.

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

All staff should be aware of the indicators which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include;

- increased absence from school
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or
- signs of assault or unexplained injuries

Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation

14.2   Sexual Harassment refers to 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature'.

This can occur *online* (including, but not limited to non-consensual sharing of images, making sexual comments on social media) and *offline* (including but not limited to making sexual comments, sexual taunting or 'jokes', and physical contact, for example, brushing against someone deliberately or interfering with their clothes).

14.3   Who perpetrates sexual violence and/or harassment

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can:

- occur between any two children, or a group of children against one individual or group;
- be perpetrated by a child of any age against a child of any age;
- include behaviours that exist on an often-progressive continuum and may overlap;
- be online and offline (physical or verbal)
- can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers

Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. Students of Determination are potentially more vulnerable, and there may be barriers in recognising abuse in this group of children.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can happen anywhere, and all staff working in the school are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', assume that it is happening, and act accordingly. All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in their school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.

14.4   Handling incidents involving sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

There are four likely scenarios that schools will need to manage:
- internally

For example, for one-off incidents of sexual harassment, the school may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or that referrals need not be made to SCPS. The school may decide that it would be more appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising their behaviour policy and by providing pastoral support. Whatever the response, it should be underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions must be recorded.

- those requiring Early Help

In line with the above, the school may decide that the children involved do not require referral to SCPS but may benefit from early help and/or support from external services. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

- those where SCPS may need to be informed and involved

Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, schools should refer the case to the Regional Safeguarding Lead and/or Managing Director. The regional team may decide to seek advice from the KDHA, and/or make a referral to SCPS. At the point of any referral schools will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of Regional Safeguarding Lead and/or Managing Director.

Schools should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of an investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school.

- those where a criminal offence is likely to have occurred and the Police will be needed

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is a consideration of all the factors by the DSL alongside the Principal and the Regional Safeguarding Lead and/or Managing Director. The wishes of the child should also be considered, and also the parents if/when they are made aware (assuming they are not involved). Schools will generally inform parents or carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing a parent or carer is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, it will be especially important that the school is supporting the child in any decision they take. This could be with the support and advice of the KDHA, SCPS and any appropriate specialist agencies.

A referral to the Police has to be approved by the Managing Director.

Please ensure that adherence and respect are given to all laws and practice in the UAE.

14.5   Our approach to Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

In this school we will:

- not accept or tolerate sexual violence and sexual harassment
- not downplay or consider that these types of behaviours are 'banter', an 'inevitable part of growing up' or hold the view that 'boys will be boys', knowing that to do so may normalise inappropriate behaviours may create an unsafe culture where children feel less able to come forward with concerns
- encourage early intervention to avoid potential escalation
- challenge inappropriate physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts
- challenge inappropriate verbal behaviour, such as making sexist comments, innuendo or taunting
- embed training and education on these issues within a strong pastoral system
- adopt a planned and sequenced RSE programme across the whole curriculum including age-appropriate content – may include consent, gender roles, stereotyping and equality, healthy relationships, and power imbalances in relationships
- develop and encourage forums that enable children to talk about issues openly
- have clear and accessible systems in place for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously
- act in the best interests of all children involved, reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression by staff that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment.
- manage any disclosure, either from the child who has suffered abuse or from other children, giving the victim(s) as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will however need to be balanced with the school's duty and responsibilities to protect them and other children
- carry out a risk and needs assessment for children affected by sexual violence or sexual harassment, including both the victim and alleged perpetrator- this may be informed by risk assessments completed by external services
- engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there has been a report of sexual violence (in the case of sexual harassment this might not be necessary or proportional and should be considered on a case-by-case basis). The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk.

14.6   Upskirting
'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks

(with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Anyone of any gender identity or sexual orientation can be a victim.

15 Signposting to further information

Annex B of KCSIE contains further guidance on a range of specific safeguarding issues, some of which are above. This section must be read by all staff that work directly with children. Any person that has a concern about a child within the school must follow the procedures outlined within this document, taken into consideration alongside and respecting the laws and procedures in the UAE.

Annex B of KCSIE contains useful learning about the following issues:

- Child abduction
- Children with family members in prison
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- County lines (UK)
- Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism (UK)
- Cybercrime
- Domestic abuse
- Homelessness
- Honour-based abuse
- Preventing radicalisation
- Child on child abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools

The next part of the policy now will explain two situations:
1. Concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to as 'low level concerns'; and

2. Allegations that may meet the 'harms threshold'. This part of the policy is about managing behaviour that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in the school

16 Part One - Low Level Concern Policy (including self-reporting)

The safety and wellbeing of children in our school is dependent on the vigilance of all our staff and their prompt communication to the DSL or Principal of any concerns, no matter how small, about any conduct by an adult which causes you to doubt that adult's suitability to work with or have access to children. All references in this section to "adult" should be interpreted as meaning any adult (defined above), staff members, agency staff, contractors, and visitors, unless otherwise stated. The school is conscious of its duty of care to pupils and will always act, including if alerted to the possibility of abuse arising from situations or persons outside the school setting.

The notification and prompt handling of all concerns about adults, including those raised by individuals about themselves, is fundamental to safeguarding children. It helps to identify and prevent abuse and to protect adults against misunderstandings or misinterpretations. It also encourages openness, trust and transparency and it clarifies expected behaviours. Those raising concerns or reporting allegations in good faith will always be supported, and adults in respect of whom concerns or allegations have been raised will not suffer any detriment unless the concern or allegation is found to be substantiated.

> **We are a 'telling' organisation**
> If you are concerned about the behaviour or actions of any adult…
> speak to the DSL or Principal

<div style="background:#1f6fc4;color:white;text-align:center;">You can also talk to your Consultant Safeguarding Advisor, your Managing Director or your Head of HR</div>

16.1   Code of Conduct

All staff must behave responsibly and professionally in all dealings with children and specifically with pupils for whom they have a duty of care. All staff must follow the procedures set out in our 'Staff Code of Conduct including Acceptable Use Policy'. Staff should always avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and all members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Staff should note that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over and in a position of trust to touch a child in a sexual way or have a sexual relationship with a child, even if the relationship is consensual. A position of trust could arise even if the member of staff does not teach the child.

The use of mobile phones in the UAE context is ubiquitous. We strongly discourage all staff from using personal mobile phones for work related tasks, including the capturing of images and videos of children. However, on the rare occasion a photo and/or video is captured for specific work-related tasks, it is required that this will be deleted from the device within 48 hours. Staff should refer to the Low-Level Concern procedures below, and where there is any ambiguity surrounding a staff member and their use of devices around children, this should be immediately reported to the DSL and/or Principal.

16.2   Low Level Concerns (including self-reporting)

The overarching aim of the school's Low Level Concern Policy is to facilitate a culture in which the clear values and expected behaviours which are set out in our Code of Conduct are lived, constantly monitored, and reinforced by all staff. In particular, the intention of this policy is to:

- maintain a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which staff are confident and clear about expected behaviours of themselves and their colleagues, the delineation of boundaries and reporting lines;
- ensure staff feel empowered to raise any low-level concern, whether about their own or a colleague's behaviour, where that behaviour might be construed as falling short of the standards set out in our Code of Conduct; and
- provide for responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised – maintaining on the one hand confidence that concerns when raised will be handled promptly and effectively whilst, on the other hand, protecting staff from false allegations or misunderstandings.

16.3   What is a low level concern, including those that are self-reports?

Self-reporting	Low level concerns about an adult
From time to time an individual may find him/herself in a situation which might appear compromising to others or which could be misconstrued. Equally, an individual may for whatever reason have behaved in a manner which on reflection he/she considers falls below the standard set out in the Code of Conduct, falls below the expected professional standards, or breaches this policy. Self-reporting in these circumstances is encouraged as it demonstrates both awareness of the expected behavioural	From time to time an individual may notice behaviour, statements, or actions in others which leave them concerned. These are behaviour or actions which fall short of a formal allegation of abuse. These tend to be behaviours which indicate that our Code of Conduct has not been met. Any such concerns can be dealt with as a low-level concern.

standards and self-awareness as to the individual's own actions or how they could be perceived. As such, the school sees self-reporting as an important means of maintaining a culture where everyone aspires to the highest standards of conduct and behaviour.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for an allegation (see below). A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

• is inconsistent with the staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
• does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the Regional Safeguarding Lead

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

• being over friendly with children;
• having favourites;
• engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or, • using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

A Self-Report also falls under our Low-Level Concerns Policy and can be as described above.

Where a staff member wishes to work outside out of their contract with Cognita, they should first seek agreement with their Principal and a written confirmation placed in their employee file.

16.4   What should I do if I have one?
Where a low-level concern (including self-reports) exists, it should be reported to the DSL or to the Principal as soon as reasonably possible in the same day as the incident (where the concern relates to a particular incident). If they are unavailable, the staff member should contact their Head of HR or their Managing Director or their Regional Safeguarding Advisor. There should be no delay.

Where a low-level concern relates to a person employed by a supply agency or a contractor to work in the school, that concern should be shared with the DSL and/or Principal. Their employer should be notified about the concern, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

16.5   How will my low-level concern be handled (including a self-report)?
The DSL will discuss all low-level concerns s/he receives with the Principal on the same day as the concern was raised, and vice versa. The Principal will, in the first instance, satisfy him/herself that it is a low-level concern and should not be reclassified as an *allegation* and dealt with under the appropriate 'allegations' procedure (outlined later in this document). The circumstances in which a low-level concern might be reclassified as an allegation are where:

• the threshold is met for an allegation (see below);
• there is a pattern of low-level concerns which collectively amount to an allegation; or
• there is other information which, when taken into account, leads to an allegation.

Where the Principal is in any doubt whatsoever, advice will be sought from the Regional Safeguarding Lead or the Regional HR Lead.

Having established that the concern is low level, the DSL or Principal as appropriate will discuss it with the individual who has raised it and will take any other steps to investigate it as necessary. Most low-level concerns by their very nature are likely to be minor and will be dealt with by means of management guidance, training, etc. The person to which the low level concern relates must be informed of any concern raised about them once all risk has been identified and assessed. The person who has raised the low level concern about their colleague will remain anonymous.

16.6   What records will be kept?
Where a low-level concern has been communicated, or a Self-Report raised by an individual about themselves, a confidential record will be kept in a central file which logs all low-level concerns and will be retained until the staff member reaches normal pension age or 10 years after if longer. This is necessary to enable any patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the school should decide on a course of action, usually through its disciplinary procedures.

No record will be made of the concern on the individual's personnel file unless either:

- the concern (or group of concerns) has been reclassified as an allegation; or
- the concern (or group of concerns) is sufficiently serious to result in formal action under the school's grievance, capability or disciplinary procedure.

16. 7   References

Low Level concerns should not be included in references unless they relate to issues which would normally be included in a reference, for example, misconduct or poor performance. It follows that a Low-Level concern which relates exclusively to safeguarding (and not to misconduct or poor performance) should not be referred to in a reference. However, where a low-level concern (or group of concerns) has met the allegations threshold for referral to the Regional team and found to be substantiated, it should be referred to in a reference (see below).

17   Part Two- Allegations Policy

The purpose of this section of the policy is to outline how allegations against adults will be handled.

17. 1   What is an allegation?
Allegations represent situations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm to children if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity. This policy applies to all adults in the school if it is alleged that they have met one of the following four statements, often referred to as '**harm tests'**:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children.
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (potential transfer of risk)

An allegation may be triggered by one specific incident or by a pattern of behaviour by the adult, or Low Level concerns which when considered *collectively* amount to an allegation.

17.2   What should I do if I have an allegation?

Allegations about staff, agency staff, contractors, visitors, or volunteers	If the allegation is about the Principal, it must be referred to the Cognita

should be reported to the Principal **immediately**.

The Principal will inform the Cognita Managing Director, Head of HR and Regional Safeguarding Lead. In certain situations the SCPS/ Police may be involved.

The adult to whom the concern or allegation relates must not be informed at this early stage.

Managing Director, Head of HR and Regional Safeguarding Lead without informing the Principal.

17.3   Duties as an employer and an employee

This policy relates to members of staff, contractors, visitors and volunteers who are currently working in any school, regardless of whether the school is where the alleged abuse took place. This policy also refers to agency staff/supply staff. In some circumstances, schools will have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them, where its disciplinary procedures do not fully apply, for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency or business. Whilst schools are not the employer of supply teachers, they should ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances should a school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and reporting to the authorities as needed.

Decisions will need to be made in discussion with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation. Agencies should be fully involved and co-operate in any enquiries from the school or the Police (if involved in the most serious cases).

The school will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the Police as part of the referral process.

Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school, are under the supervision, direction and control of the school when working in the school. The allegations management meeting should address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account by the school during the investigation. When using an agency, schools should inform the agency of its process for managing allegations. This should include inviting the agency's human resource manager or equivalent to meetings and keeping them up to date with information about its policies.

Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching should be referred to the KDHA, as should historical allegations.

Cognita has a duty of care to all employees. Cognita will provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended.

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and, at the same time, supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

17.4   Dealing with an allegation

The procedures for dealing with allegations need to be applied with common sense and judgement.

Many cases may well either not meet the criteria set out above, or may do so without warranting consideration of either a Police investigation or enquiries by the SCPS.

Some rare allegations, after full consideration by the Principal and Safeguarding colleagues, will be so serious they may require immediate intervention by the SCPS and/or the Police.

Initial actions

Before contacting the Police or SCPS (known hereafter as the authorities), Principals, <u>after first liaising with the Head of HR, Managing Director and Regional Safeguarding Lead,</u> *may* need to gather some initial information to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation. Unless agreed, the person to which the allegation has been made will not be informed or interviewed at this stage, so as not to jeopardise potential evidence gathering by the authorities if they become involved. If, after the initial gathering of information it is decided by the above group of colleagues that the concerns do not meet threshold for an allegation, the Principal will manage the situation under the Low Level Concerns policy.

If, after the initial information gathering stage, it is decided by the above group that the concerns amount to an 'allegation' and not a 'low level concern', it may be decided that the Principal is required to contact the authorities. This will depend on the circumstances, for example if the person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children, or where there is clear evidence of a possible criminal offence.

Contacting the authorities

The purpose of an initial discussion with the authorities is for the Principal to discuss the nature, content and context of the allegation.

The Principal will **not** inform the accused person until the authorities have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the accused. The Principal should only inform the accused person about the allegation after consulting the authorities and actions have been decided. It is extremely important that the Principal provides the accused with as much information as possible at that time.

Where it is clear that an investigation by the authorities is unnecessary, the options open to the school depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegation and the evidence and information available. This will range from taking no further action, to dismissal, or a decision not to use the person's services in future. Suspension should not be the default position: an individual should be suspended only if there is no reasonable alternative (see guidance on suspension, below).

Internal school investigations

In some cases, further enquiries will be needed to enable a decision about how to proceed. If so, the Principal, in collaboration with the Managing Director, Head of HR and Regional Safeguarding Lead will discuss how, and by whom the investigation will be undertaken. In straightforward cases, an internal school investigation will be agreed upon and should normally be undertaken by a senior member of school staff such as the DSL. Where necessary, due to lack of resource, or the nature or complexity of the allegation, the allegation will require an independent investigator. An independent investigator will be appointed by the above group. The independent investigator may be an employee (Principal/DSL) at another Cognita school, the Regional Safeguarding Lead, or an appointed individual external to Cognita.

Where a safeguarding concern or allegation triggers another procedure, such as grievance or disciplinary, that procedure shall only be followed once the immediate safeguarding concern or allegation has been fully investigated.

17.5   Suspension of an employee

Cognita will consider carefully whether the circumstances of a case warrant a person being suspended from contact with children at the school or whether alternative arrangements can be put in place until the allegation or concern is resolved. All options to avoid suspension will be considered prior to taking that step.

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person should be evaluated and managed in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations. In some rare cases, this will require the Principal to consider suspending the accused until the case is resolved. Suspension should not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported: all options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step. If the Principal is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the teacher's family, those concerns should be reported to the authorities as required, taking into the considerations outlined above. However, suspension is highly unlikely to be justified on the basis of such concerns alone.

Within Cognita, suspension requires the authorisation of the Managing Director. Our group policy is for the MD to hold a conversation with the Principal, Head of HR and Regional Safeguarding Lead (hereafter referred to as the 'group') to reach a rounded decision about whether suspension is the correct course of action.

Suspension will be considered only in a case where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school are at risk of harm or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person should not be suspended automatically: the above group will consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children at the school or until the allegation is resolved.

The above group will also consider whether the result that would be achieved by immediate suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements. In many cases an investigation can be resolved quickly and without the need for suspension. If the authorities have no objections to the member of staff continuing to work during the investigation, the group will aim to be as inventive as possible to avoid suspension.

Based on assessment of risk, the following alternatives will be considered by the group before suspending a member of staff:

- redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned;
- providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children;
- redeploying to alternative work in the school so the individual does not have unsupervised access to children;
- moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the member of staff, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted; or
- temporarily redeploying the member of staff to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative Cognita school.

These alternatives allow time for an informed decision regarding the suspension and possibly reduce the initial impact of the allegation. This will, however, depend upon the nature of the allegation. The group will consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unsubstantiated or maliciously intended.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the rationale and justification for such a course of action should be agreed and recorded by the Principal in their Allegation records. This should also include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected.

Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation will be dispatched within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. Cognita will make clear to the suspended employee where they can obtain support. The person will be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within the organisation and will be given their contact details.

Where the initial evaluation concludes that there *should* be enquiries by the authorities, the Principal should canvass their views about whether the accused member of staff needs to be suspended from contact with children in order to inform the school consideration of suspension. The authority's involvement does not make it mandatory to suspend a member of staff; this decision will be taken on a case-by-case basis having undertaken a risk assessment.

In cases where the KHDA or other competent authority in the UAE requires the immediate suspension of employment of an individual who works at the school, and / or the withdrawal of the approvals to enable them to live and work in the UAE, immediate action will be taken by the school to comply with these requirements.

17.6   Support for employees
Cognita has a duty of care to their employees. Cognita will act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations process. Support for the accused individual is vital to fulfilling this duty. Individuals will be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the authorities. They will be given access to an employee support service, provided by Cognita.

The Head of HR, after discussion with the group about who would be most suitable, will appoint a named representative to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual. Particular care needs to be taken when employees are suspended to ensure that they are kept informed of both the progress of their case and current work-related issues. Social contact with colleagues and friends should not be prevented unless there is evidence to suggest that such contact is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence, or would jeopardise any investigation.

Parents or carers of the child or children involved will be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. However, where it has been decided that the authorities need to be involved, the Principal will not do so until the authorities have agreed what information can be disclosed to the parents or carers. Parents or carers will also be kept informed of the progress of the case and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed, but the parents or carers of the child may be told the outcome in confidence.

Parents and carers will also be made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers whilst investigations are ongoing. If parents or carers wish to apply to the court to have reporting restrictions removed, they will be told to seek legal advice.

In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, the authorities, in collaboration with the school, will consider what support the child or children involved may need.

17.7   Timescales
It is in everyone's interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible and ensure consistency with a fair and thorough investigation. All allegations will be investigated as a priority to avoid any delay. The time taken to investigate and resolve individual cases depends on a variety of factors, including the nature, seriousness and complexity of the allegation.

For cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious, it is aimed that they will be resolved within one week.

17.8   Confidentiality
When an allegation is made, the school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The Principal will take advice from the 'group' in conjunction with the Cognita Communication Department (and authorities) to agree the following:
• who needs to know and, importantly, exactly what information can be shared;
• how to manage speculation, leaks and gossip;
• what, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation; and
• how to manage press interest if, and when, it should arise.

17.9   Oversight and monitoring
The Principal will monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process. Reviews should be conducted at fortnightly or monthly intervals, depending on the complexity of the case.

The Principal should request from the authorities who will be responsible for:
• liaising with the Principal
• taking part in the initial evaluation of information;
• subsequently reviewing the progress of those cases in which there is an investigation by the authorities; and
• sharing information on completion of the investigation or any prosecution.

If an investigation is required, the authorities should also *ideally* set a target date for reviewing the progress of the investigation and provide the school with information about whether they intend to: charge the individual; continue to investigate; or close the investigation. Wherever possible, that review should take place no later than four weeks after the initial discussion with the Principal. Dates for subsequent reviews, ideally at fortnightly intervals, should be set at the meeting if the investigation continues.

17.10   Information sharing
In the initial evaluation of the case, the school and authorities involved will share all relevant information they have about the person who is the subject of the allegation, and about the alleged victim.

Where the authorities are involved, wherever possible, Cognita will ask them to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the employer disciplinary process. This will be done as their investigation proceeds and will enable the authorities to share relevant information without delay at the conclusion of their investigation or any court case.

The authorities should adopt a similar procedure when making enquiries to determine whether the child or children named in the allegation are in need of protection or services, so that any information obtained in the course of those enquiries which is relevant to a disciplinary case can be passed to the employer without delay.

17.11   Following a criminal investigation or a prosecution
The authorities should inform the Principal immediately when a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial is complete, or if it is decided to close an investigation without charge, or not to continue to prosecute the case after the person has been charged. In those circumstances, the Principal should discuss with the group whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed. The information provided by the authorities should inform

that decision. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case and the consideration will need to be given as to the result of the investigation undertaken by the authorities or the trial, as well as the different standard of proof required in disciplinary and criminal proceedings.

17.12   Outcome of an allegation
The following definitions will be used when determining the outcome of an allegation where an internal investigation has been completed:

- Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
- Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;
- False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
- Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence;
- Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

17.13   On conclusion of a case
Following consultation with any appropriate agencies, Cognita may make referrals to the appropriate authorities and/or regulatory bodies, which may include the police, TRA and DBS.

Where it is decided on the conclusion of a case that a person who has been suspended can return to work, the group will consider how best to facilitate that. Most people will benefit from some help and support to return to work after a stressful experience. Depending on the individual's circumstances, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. The group will also consider how the person's contact with the child or children who made the allegation can best be managed if they are still a pupil at the school.

17.14   Malicious or unsubstantiated allegations
If an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated or malicious, the Principal may need to contact the authorities to determine whether the child concerned is in need of services or may have been abused by someone else. If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Principal and proprietor will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil or staff member who made it; or whether the authorities should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person responsible, even if he or she were not a pupil. This decision will depend on the circumstances.

17.15   Learning lessons
At the conclusion of a case in which an allegation is substantiated, the group will review the circumstances of the case to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future. This will include issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff, the duration of the suspension and whether suspension was justified. Lessons will also be learnt from the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. The group will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

17.16   Resignations and 'settlement agreements'
If the accused person resigns, or ceases to provide their services, this will not prevent an allegation being followed up. Cognita will follow the KHDA's guidance and may make referrals to authorities and/or regulatory bodies, which may include the police, TRA and DBS.
If the accused person resigns or their services cease to be used and the criteria are met, it will not be appropriate to reach a settlement/compromise agreement. If a settlement/compromise agreement is agreed, the terms of that agreement must not prevent the proprietor from making a referral to the KHDA, or as advised by the KHDA.

It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate

with the process. Wherever possible, the accused will be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it. However, the process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence, and reaching a judgement about whether it can be substantiated on the basis of all the information available, will continue even if that cannot be done or the accused does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete, but it is important to reach and record a conclusion wherever possible.

'Settlement agreements' (sometimes referred to as compromise agreements), by which a person agrees to resign if the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, should not be used in cases of refusal to cooperate or resignation before the person's notice period expires. Such an agreement will not prevent a thorough investigation by the authorities where that is appropriate.

17.17   Record keeping
Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious will be removed from personnel records. However, for all other allegations, it is important that a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on the confidential personnel file of the accused. The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference, where appropriate. The record will be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation, if that is longer.

17.18   References
Cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious will not be included in employer references. A history of repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious will also not be included in any reference.

18   Letting School premises

Schools have a duty to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe when allowing outside organisations to use their facilities. If the activity is being run by the school, or overseen by the school, then this policy and the school's procedures apply.

If not, then the school should seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed). Should the organisation wishing to use the school premises not have any safeguarding polices or procedures in place, then the organisation should not be allowed to let the facilities. The school should also ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e., lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

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