Policy

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Policy Number:	W019
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Supersedes:	3.0
Approved By:	SLT

Contents

Appendices

1. Purpose and Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all within the Wesgreen community, including students, parents and staff. This policy intends to promote a safe environment regarding protecting children from incidences relating to abuse whilst setting a procedure to record any concerns or disclosures. GEMS Wesgreen International School will continuously promote and respect the rights, feelings and wishes of all students within its care. We will ensure recruiting, training and supervising of all employed and voluntary staff to ensure best practices within the Safeguarding Policy are adhered to protect and safeguard all students within its care.

2. Relevant UAE Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance

This policy is guided by local legislation including Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on students' rights (Wadeema's Law); Cabinet Resolution No. (52) Of 2018 Governing the Executive Regulations of Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Rights Law (Wadeema); Department for Health, School Health Guidelines for Private Schools 2011; The UAE School Inspection Framework 2016; Executive Council Resolution

No. (2) of 2017 Regulating Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai; Abu Dhabi Education Council Private Schools Policy and Guidance Manual 2014; Abu Dhabi Education Council Organising Regulations of Private Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi The Chairman of the Executive Council Resolution No. (26) of 2013; Law No. (26) of 2015 on the Organization of Dubai Data Publication and Sharing; and Federal Law No. 5 of 2012 on Combatting Cybercrimes; The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf Secretariat-General GCC Human Rights Declaration – reiterating rights of children and the protection of children within the GCC (see Articles 3, 14, 18, 19 and 23); Ministerial Decision No. 368/2014 on the Implementing Regulation of Federal Law No 1/2012 on Children of Unknown Kinship; Federal Decree Law No. 10/2019 On the Protection from Domestic Violence – covers correction of behaviours harmful to the family, woman and child within the UAE; Federal Decree Law No. 15 of 2020 Amending Certain Provisions of Federal Law No. 3 of 1987.

We understand that in different Emirate regions and the other countries we operate in, the subtlety of legal interpretation may exist. Throughout our safeguarding policy, in addition to the UAE legislation below, we have broadly accepted the principles and ethos of UK safeguarding legislation, as we believe this to be some of the most robust legislation internationally.

3. Core Safeguarding Policy Principles

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance;
- Safer children make more successful learners;
- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, or religion have equal rights to protection;
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm;
- All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child;
- Students, parents and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Core Safeguarding Team are designated position holders that lead students, parents and staff on safeguarding and child protection. The Core Safeguarding Team consists of:

The Principal: The Principal ensures that staff, volunteers, and students understand and implement the policy to safeguard students and that all aspects are delivered effectively.

Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL): A member of the school's Core Safeguarding Team who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in the school.

Deputy Designated Safeguard Lead (DDSL): A member of the school's Core Safeguarding Team who supports the DDSL and takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in the school in the absence of the DSL.

Additional Core Safeguarding Team Members

- Head of Schools for each building
- Heads of Years in the Early Years School and Primary
- Counsellors in each building

A further breakdown of key members on the Core Safeguarding Team can be found in Appendix 1. In addition to the Core Safeguarding team, safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone including peers, parents, class teachers, and wider school staff members.

5. Types of possible safeguarding issues

i. **Unwanted touch and behaviours:** Unwanted touch and behaviours occurs when a child is coerced or persuaded to participate in indecent activities. It doesn't have to be physical and can also happen online. Symptoms may include clinginess and crying that is not appropriate for their age. They may have other symptoms such as dry skin, sore throat, wetting and soiling.

ii. **Physical abuse:** Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a child or causing injury. Possible signs of physical abuse can include unexplained injuries/bruises; untreated injuries; fear of visiting the nurse when in pain; fear of going home; crying during the home time; flinching when being touched; bites, lashes, bruises, scratches on non-common areas such as the face, behind ears, throat, neck, shoulder, mouth, and around eyes.

iii. **Emotional abuse:** It is sometimes called psychological abuse and can cause children serious harm. Emotional abuse signs can include thumb sucking, problems with expressive language, withdrawal, aggressive, perfectionism, not communicating, and excessive fear of disapproval.

iv. **Neglect:** It can be dangerous and can cause long-term harm. Possible signs of neglect include tiredness, sleeping in class, hunger, stomach pain, absence, low self-esteem, untreated medical problems, stealing, poor personal hygiene, and dirty and untidy appearance.

v. **Online abuse:** All should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will occur concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Children can also abuse their peers online, this can take of the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images to those who do not want to receive such content. For more information on how to deal with online abuse, please refer to the E-Safety Policy.

If you are experiencing, see or suspect any of the above it should be reported to the DSL, DDSL or a member of the Core Safeguarding Team for further investigation and appropriate support for yourself or someone you are concerned about.

6. Attendance / Students Missing from Education

We recognise that students should attend class regularly and be on time for lessons to make the most of their educational opportunities. Students' attendance is closely monitored, and action is taken where concerns are raised; whether learning is online, blended or physically at school. When a student has ten consecutive school days of an unexplained absence, and the school has taken all reasonable steps to establish the whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to the DSL in order to provide further support within a safeguarding capacity.

7. If Students, Parents or Staff Suspect a Student Is At Risk Of Harm

Staff within Wesgreen are trained annually on the reporting procedures when they suspect a student at risk of harm. Parents and students are encouraged to reach out to a member of the Core Safeguarding Team if they feel they are at risk of harm or suspect a peer may be at risk. The appropriate procedures will be followed to support the concerned person(s).

8. Behavior Management

Wesgreen has a specific Behaviour Management Policy that is reviewed and ratified by the school SLT/Governors annually. GEMS does not recognise restrictive physical intervention as a means to manage behaviour under any circumstances. There may be cases in the school when students find difficulty adjusting within a specific period of time which might lead to behaviour incidents. These behaviour incidents might put themselves, others or the environment in danger. In case that child's behaviour becomes a safeguarding concern and all the behaviour management techniques do not work, then the student should be removed from the environment and the relevant MLT/ SLT member to be contacted to support the situation. Depending on the situation, parents might be notified and students may be sent home, they may be put on temporary in-school or at home suspension, under no circumstances should the student be allowed to return to the classroom if they still pose a risk to themselves, others, or property. In the event that the behaviour is ongoing despite correct behaviour management plans being in place, additional support in the form of a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) or Shadow Teacher may be requested by the school. In the event that an LSA is required, the student may not attend school in the absence of the LSA.

9. Complaints And Allegations

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a student or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a student who initially does not reach the child protection action threshold. When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures will be followed. A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Staff members who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and be kept informed of its progress.

10. Notifying Parents

The school would typically try to discuss any concerns with the parents. This is to be handled sensitively, and we will contact the parent if there is a concern, suspicion or disclosure. If the school believes notification could be risky or worsen the concern, the school will refer them to UAE agencies, children's social care and the police. The student and parents will always be told that a referral is being made unless doing so would increase the child's risk or create undue delay.

11. Support For Students, Families And Staff Involved In A Child Protection Issue

Child abuse is distressing for the child and families who become involved. The DSL will act as a central point of contact, offering details of helplines, counselling or other external support avenues where necessary, seeking advice and guidance from GEMS SSC as appropriate.

12. Photography and Images

Most people who take photographs or videos of children have entirely legitimate reasons and no harmful intent. Parents, students and staff are reminded not to take pictures or video of others without prior consent (Federal Law No. 5 of 2012 on Combatting Cybercrimes).

13. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

During an investigation of a student welfare concern, proper sharing guidance will be followed.
Safeguarding and child protection records will be maintained independently from the student's school file on the Core Safeguarding Team's online secure confidential reporting system.

14. On-site security and off-site activities

Parents are requested to present their yellow lanyards with their children's ID cards upon collection. External visitors to the school are required to sign in and are issued an ID badge. All visitors are expected to observe the health and safety regulations to ensure students are kept safe. Where possible and practical, contractors will be engaged before or after regular school hours.
Where extended school activities are provided/managed by the school, or students go off-site our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures will apply. This includes determining risk assessment, including prior research, communication, site visits, alternative provision, and staffing to make sure children are safe at all times.

15. Online Safety

Inappropriate online activities including but not limited to online harassment, bullying, sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, inappropriate/indecent webcam filming and photography by students, others' images will be treated as seriously as any other form of abuse as-well bullying types and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures from the Anti-Bullying Policy. Students are continuously provided with guidance to strengthen the skills needed to use communication technology safely. As part of ongoing PSHE, ICT, other lessons and presentations, children will be made aware of online/virtual safety within the curriculum. Online communication between staff and students should not happen other than to coordinate an aspect of education. All communications should be made on school devices through GEMS approved mail servers. All communications should be available on request to the SLT team of the specific school. For more information on online safety please make reference to the E-Safety Policy.
Relevant legislation and Policies include: Law No. (26) Of 2015 on the Organization of Dubai Data

Publication and Sharing; Federal Law No. 5 of 2012 on Combatting Cybercrimes; Remote Learning User Agreement; E-safety Policy & Behaviour Management Policy.

16. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually and shared with students, parents and staff during induction, training and termly Safeguarding updates.

Date of next review: June 2023

Appendix 1 - Core Safeguarding Team

CHILD SAFEGUARDING CORE TEAM 2022-2023

J. Foley
Executive Vice Principal
Designated
Safeguard Lead (DSL)

S. Burman
Deputy Designated Safeguard
Lead (DDSL)

R. Wolmarans
Deputy Designated Safeguard
Lead (DDSL)

Child safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff; however, these are the designated members of staff to immediately contact should there be any concerns related to the safety and wellbeing of any student.

GEMS EDUCATION

SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

A. Alexis – Olubuyide
Head of Primary School

R. Jethiji
Head of Secondary Boys

D. Devereux
Assistant Head of
Secondary Boys

M. Wright
Assistant Head of Primary
School

M. Awais
Head of Department - ICT

A. D'Souza
Secondary Girls Counsellor

L. Fourie
Secondary Boys Counsellor

E. Hamdan
Arabic Coordinator

W. Mahmoud
Arabic SENCO