## Student Protection Policy for Future Leaders International School – Rabdan

### Introduction

At Future Leaders International School - Rabdan (FLIS-Rabdan), the safety and well-being of our students are our highest priorities. This Student Protection Policy is designed to ensure that all students are protected from harm and maltreatment, in line with UAE federal laws and guidelines from the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of all school community members, including the principal, Child Protection Coordinator (CPC), staff, parents, visitors, and volunteers, as well as the procedures for reporting and handling any suspected cases of student maltreatment.

### Purpose

- Protection of Students: Ensure that all students under the care of FLIS-R are safeguarded against all forms of maltreatment, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, and cyberbullying.
- Identify and support students who may be at risk of harm, ensuring compliance with relevant UAE laws, including Wadeema's Law (Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 Concerning Child Rights) and other applicable regulations.
- Emphasize that all staff, volunteers, and visitors are mandated reporters, responsible for reporting any suspected cases of maltreatment.
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each member of the school community in the prevention, identification, and response to student maltreatment.
- Provide clear procedures for reporting and responding to concerns of student maltreatment, ensuring a prompt and effective response.

## What are different types of child abuse?

- **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional, and /or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or childcare provider failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation, or lack of supervision.

- **Physical**

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behavior.

- **Emotional**

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may cause children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.

- **Sexual**

  Sexual abuse: forcing/enticing a child to take part in sexual activity.

- **Bullying**

Repeated physical, social, or verbal aggression exercised by students who feel they are in a position of power against other students who are perceived weaker or powerless, to achieve specific gains or draw attention, in a way that hurts the student physically and/or emotionally. Bullying can be committed by groups or individuals, in online (cyberbullying) or offline settings. • Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Online bullying can follow the bullied student wherever they go via social networks and mobile phones and has a wider reach than bullying in the real world

## Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Principal:**
- Ensure the implementation and compliance of this policy within the school. The principal is the primary guardian of student welfare during school hours and activities.
- Oversee the safety and well-being of students at all times, including during extracurricular activities, transportation, and off-campus events.
- Take immediate action upon suspicion or report of student maltreatment, including suspending implicated staff or volunteers and notifying the CPC.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are trained in recognizing and reporting signs of maltreatment, as well as understanding their roles in student protection.
- Organize regular meetings with parents to educate them on the student protection policy, their roles, and how they can support their child's safety.

2. **Child Protection Coordinator (CPC):**
- Serve as the main contact for all child protection concerns, ensuring all reports are handled promptly and in accordance with the policy.

- Oversee the management of all reported cases, including documentation, reporting to ADEK's Child Protection Unit (CPU), and liaising with other authorities like the Family Care Authority (FCA).
- In cases of imminent danger, the CPC is responsible for immediately contacting the police (999) and ensuring the safety of the student.
- Provide continuous support to the student and their family throughout the investigation and resolution process, and ensure that the student's educational experience is minimally disrupted.
- Lead training initiatives for staff, volunteers, and parents, ensuring that the entire school community is aware of the signs of maltreatment and the procedures for reporting.

**3. School Staff:**
- Ensure the protection and welfare of students during all school activities. Be vigilant in recognizing signs of maltreatment and take immediate action when necessary.
- Report any suspicion or knowledge of student maltreatment to the CPC without delay. All reports should be made in good faith, with the understanding that the safety of the student is paramount.
- Attend all required training sessions on student protection and safeguarding. Understand the procedures for reporting concerns and the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

**4. Parents:**
- Work collaboratively with the school in promoting the safety and well-being of all students. Respond promptly to any communication from the school regarding your child's behavior or safety.
- Notify the school of any concerns regarding changes in your child's behavior or well-being. Engage actively in meetings and discussions related to student protection.
- Attend all scheduled parent meetings with the educational institution to stay informed about your child's progress, school policies, and any relevant safety updates.
- Ensure that your child practices safe online behavior, particularly during homework and online learning sessions. Report any concerns related to cyberbullying or inappropriate online interactions to the school.

**5. Visitors & Volunteers:**
- All visitors and volunteers must read, understand, and sign an acknowledgment of the school's student protection policy before interacting with students.
- Follow all school guidelines regarding appropriate behavior around students. Immediately report any suspicious or inappropriate behavior to the CPC or school administration.
- Participate in any required induction or training sessions on student protection and safeguarding provided by the school.

# Contact and Personal Privacy

There are occasions when it is appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. When physical contact is made with students this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one student in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different student.

The following guidelines will assist staff with a decision-making protocol in circumstances that require physical contact:

Physical contact should never be secretive or casual, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff or volunteer sees an action by other staff members that could be misinterpreted or is felt to be inappropriate, the incident and circumstances should be reported.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with a student or students, is likely to raise questions, unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example, in relation to students with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review.

Where feasible, staff should seek the student's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe, and take note of the student's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact which is acceptable to the student for the minimum time necessary.

There may be occasions when a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive, or subject to misinterpretation.

Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance should seek further advice from the Senior Administrative Team.

Some staff, for example those who teach PE or games will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a student so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument, or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the student's agreement. Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the students.

Students are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes, going to the bathroom and/or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision to safeguard students, satisfy health and safety considerations, and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the students concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

## One to One Situations and Meetings with students

Staff working in one-to-one situations with students is more vulnerable to allegation. Staff must recognize this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and students are met. Meetings should be held in a public or otherwise openly viewed space. As appropriate, individual meetings that may compromise the staff member or may be misinterpreted should take place in the presence of another faculty member or senior leadership.

## Behavior Management and Physical Intervention

All students have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is prohibited in all schools according to ADEK's expectation and, as such, staff should never touch a child in an aggressive way. Staff must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a student. This includes both physical and emotional humiliation. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is not acceptable in any situation. Shouting aggressively is not acceptable in any situation.

Deliberately frightening students by overweening physical presence is not acceptable in any situation. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a student from injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behavior prejudicial to good order, and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment

## Procedures for Reporting Suspected Cases of Maltreatment

1. **Emergency Concern: Student in Imminent Danger**

- The concern is detected or disclosed by staff.
- Staff must inform the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) or any other person representing him/her immediately.
- The CPC or their representative will inform the Principal and the police for immediate intervention.

- The CPC will complete and submit the Safety Concern Form on the digital safety concern portal.

2. **Student Protection Concern Occurred Outside of the Educational Institution's Supervision**

- The concern is detected or disclosed by staff.
- Staff must notify the CPC or any other person representing him/her.
- The CPC or their representative will fill out the Safety Concern Form on the digital safety concern portal.

3. **Student Protection Concern Occurred Within the Educational Institution's Supervision**

- The concern is detected or disclosed by staff.
- Staff must notify the CPC or any other person representing him/her.
- The CPC or their representative will fill out the Safety Concern Form on the digital safety concern portal.
- Once the Safety Concern Form is submitted, the portal will automatically send a copy of the report to ADEK's Child Protection Unit (CPU) to officially follow up on the case.
4. **Internal Review and Follow-up:**

- The CPC, along with the Child Protection Team (CPT), will monitor the progress of each case, ensuring that the student receives the necessary support and that the situation is resolved.
- The CPC will conduct follow-up meetings with the student, their family, and any other involved parties to ensure ongoing safety and well-being.

5. **Confidentiality:**

- All reports and case details are to be treated as highly confidential. Information will only be shared with authorized individuals and relevant authorities as required.
- The identities of the student, the alleged perpetrator, and the reporter will be protected throughout the investigation and any subsequent actions.


## Training and Awareness

- The CPC and CPT members must undergo ADEK-mandated training on child protection, safeguarding, and case management. This training is designed to equip them with the skills necessary to handle sensitive situations effectively.

- All school staff, volunteers, and relevant visitors will receive mandatory training on student protection policies, recognizing signs of maltreatment, and proper reporting procedures.
- Parents will be invited to participate in educational sessions where they can learn about the school's student protection policies, their role in safeguarding, and how to support their children both at home and in school.
- Age-appropriate programs will be implemented to teach students about personal safety, recognizing inappropriate behavior, and how to report concerns. These programs will be integrated into the school's curriculum and supported by trained counselors and teachers.

## Contact Information for Reporting

- Emergency Services: Abu Dhabi Police: 999
- Family Care Authority (FCA): 800444, icm@adfca.gov.ae
- ADEK Child Protection Unit (CPU): 80085, cpu@moe.gov.ae
- Safety Concern Portal: https://daasafetyconcern.abudhabi/ https://daasafetyconcern.abudhabi/

### Monitoring and Review

- The Principal, CPC, and CPT are responsible for continuously monitoring the implementation of this policy and ensuring that all procedures are followed correctly.
- This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure compliance with updated legal requirements and best practices in student protection. Updates to the policy will be communicated to all stakeholders, including staff, parents, and students.

### Student Protection Team (CPT)

- CPC
- Principal
- HOD
- School Nurse
- OHS
- Inclusion Teacher

Documenting Abuse Incidents


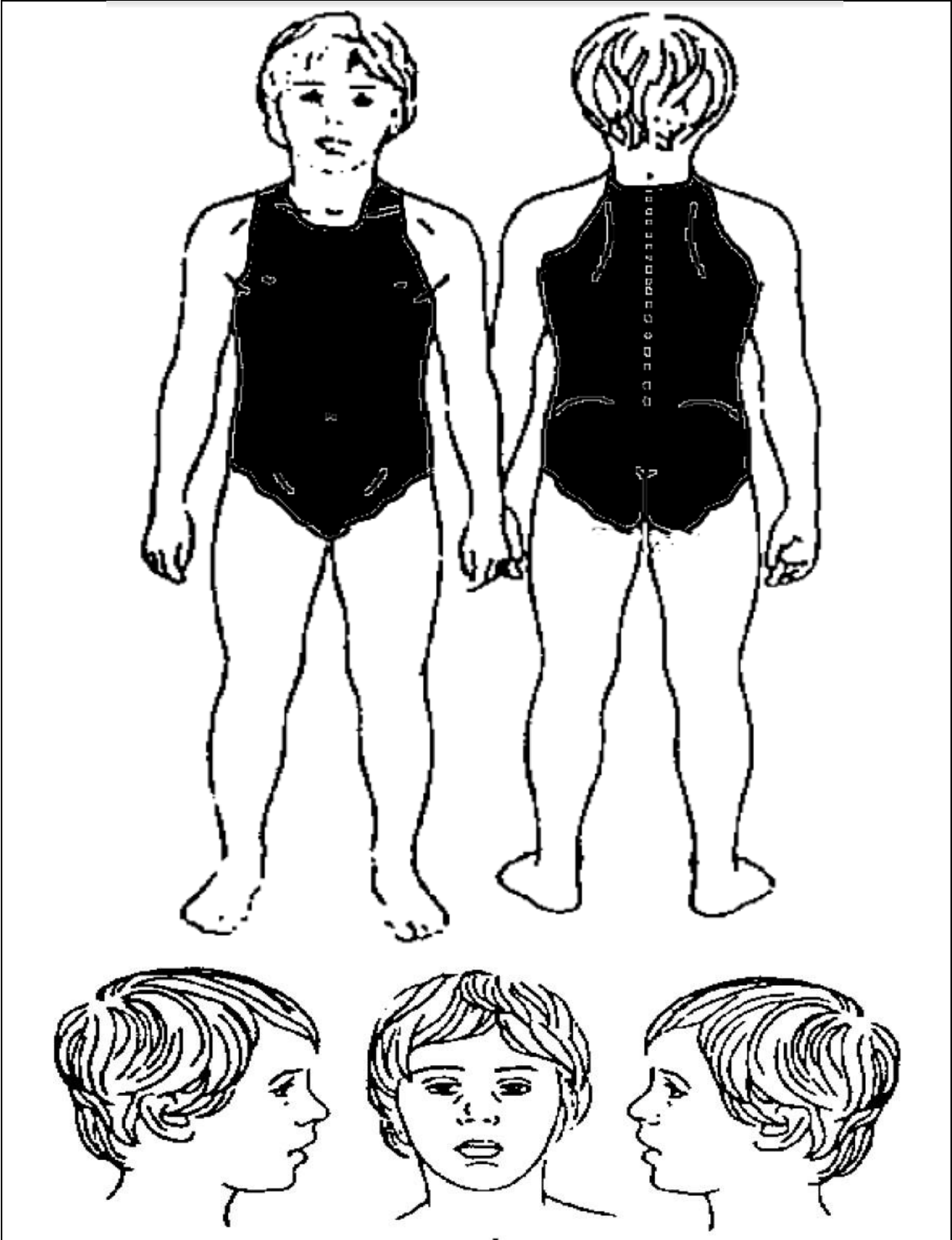Child's Name: _____

Age:_____Class:_____Date of Disclosure:_____

Child's EXACT WORDS describing the incident:

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Questions & Answers:

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Teacher's/ CPC observations on the child's behavior/body language while talking about the incident

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Teacher/ CPC name                          Signature:

| **Signed (**reporting adult**):** |
|---|
| **Date:** |