

# KUWAIT AMERICAN SCHOOL

## Child Protection Policy

### **Background**

The Kuwait American School firmly advocates that Child Abuse, in any form, is not acceptable and fully supports the 1991 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) with particular reference to Article 19 which reads:

*'State Parties shall take all opportunities legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has care of the child.'*

\*Kuwait legislated for Child Protection in 2015 ensuring that children are protected against abuse, torture and negligence, and so joined the UNCRC.

The Kuwait National Child Protection (KNCPP) program together with the National Committee for Child Protection(NCCP) hold the vision to achieve, health, and psychological and social stability for children in the State of Kuwait.

A SCAN team (Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect) of Consultant Pediatricians, Nursing representatives, Child Clinical Psychologists, Social Workers, Law Enforcement Officials and other Specialities were created to support the mandated reports of child abuse.

### **Types of Child Abuse**

KAS recognizes 5 types of Child Abuse defined as:

**Physical** – The non accidental physical injury of a child.  
(The most visible and widely recognized form)

**Neglect** – The failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for the child's basic needs.

**Sexual** – The exploitation of a child for sexual gratification of an adult or older child.

**Emotional** – Physiologically destructive behavior, by act or omission, inflicted upon a child.

**Bullying/ Cyber Bullying** – The intentional hurt to a child by another child/ adult in person or 'on-line' through social networks.

*\*See appendices for indicators*

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse – Highly Confidential**

- **All KAS teaching and nursing staff** are to report suspected child abuse to the Sector Coordinator and/or School Counselor who, in turn, will inform the Principal.
- The role of the reporter is to report – not to intervene.
- Confidentiality is paramount.
- Appropriate action will be taken firstly by the Sector Coordinator/ School Counselor, Principal and Director who will inform the SCAN team where further action is required. A standardized and confidential Ministry of Health 'Child Abuse and Neglect Case Notification' form is used to report to the SCAN team.
- The school's Designated Safeguarding named officer is the School Counselor.

### **How does KAS safeguard all students**

- We create safe environments for children and young adults through robust practices that include anti-bullying programs and positive learning atmospheres.
- We ensure that adults who work in the school do not pose known risk to children.
- We make sure that staff are trained , know how to respond to concerns, and keep up to date with policy and practice.
- We teach children and young people about staying safe.
- We maintain an environment where children feel confident to approach any member of staff if they have a worry or problem.
- We inform parents of our policy and position on Child Abuse.

Safeguarding children's welfare and safety is of paramount importance to our school. All staff partake in training with regards to safeguarding and child protection.

## **The place of Living Values Education, Life Skills and Etiquette.**

Living Values Education is founded on the principles outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. One of Living Values Education's main strengths is the firm premise that all children must feel LVRUS – Loved, Valued, Respected, Understood and Safe. This philosophy drives all that we do for the children in our care.

By providing a Safe environment, the school practically demonstrates what Bullying and Abuse means in all its forms as appropriate for the age, gender and cultural profile of the child. Anti-Bullying and Negative influences are openly discussed with lessons that empower the child to stay in their self respect, report any issue that hurts them and to build techniques to keep safe.

The importance of being 'Understood' is embedded by providing a listening ear in a safe and confidential space to offload and seek practical advice of how to respond to any unwanted behaviors towards them, conflicting choices from peers and unwelcome advances.

Empowering the children to manage and navigate their own life choices is 'taught' through the school's values programs, assemblies, Kelso Choices, etiquette and staff modeling. One particular feature of modeling is the welcome to each student and parent, at the gate each morning, by all senior staff, with a smile and keen eye to the safety, respect and welfare of all.

### **Understanding Your Own Position**

It is essential that 'reporters' in school first understand their own position on what is termed 'Child Abuse' so as to avoid allowing personal beliefs or biases to influence one's vision.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Considerations are necessary in a school that represents over 20 different cultures and nationalities. Each family will have customs that may resonate with your own beliefs whereas other customs may not. For example: cultural approaches to discipline, sleeping arrangements and bathroom procedures.

In order to work with people with various cultural identities in a way that promotes respect and dignity, it is important to:

- Recognise that your own pre-existing beliefs and bias remain neutral.
- Resist the temptation to classify or 'label' persons based on cultural preconceptions.

Above all – the protection of the child is paramount.

## Appendices

KAS recognizes 5 forms of Child Abuse and understands that indicators tend to appear over time.

### ***Physical Indicators***

- Unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, black eyes.
- Fading bruises or other marks noticeable after absence from school.
- Seems frightened of parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home.
- Shrinks at the approach of adults. May show fear of returning home.
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver.

### ***Neglect Indicators***

- Poor hygiene (unclean, unkempt), inappropriate clothing for the weather, unmet emotional or mental health needs.
- Frequent unexcused absences from school.
- Tells that there is no-one at home
- Poor overall supervision

### ***Sexual Indicators***

- Difficulty sitting or walking
- Pain itching in private area
- Inappropriate play activities
- Advanced adult knowledge
- Sudden fear of people, places, specific activity. Runs away

### ***Emotional Indicators***

- Does not attain significant development milestones
- Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, feeling frightened.
- Severe symptoms of self destructive behavior eg self harming
- Overly compliant
- Attention seeking or Socially withdrawn. Has witnessed abuse
- Tendency to model negative behaviors

### ***Bullying/ Cyber Bullying Indicators***

- Verbal abuse by name calling and gossiping to a child, usually when alone, in person or on line.
- Child feeling 'threatened', 'scared', 'ignored' or 'left out'.
- A feeling of being manipulated.
- Withdrawal and anxiety due to non-verbal abuse such as hand signs or texts
- Excluding child from friendly 'on-line' activities.

