Ras Al Khaimah American Academy				
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Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

RAKAA is concerned about the welfare and safety of all its students and works to create an ethos in which students feel secure and listened to. We ensure that the implementation of the Child Protection Policy is successful through proper recording of incidents and responding appropriately for any incident reports. Our Policy is created in accordance with the Wadeema's Law (Federal Law No.3 of 2016) which aims to protect children against all forms of negligence, physical and psychological abuse. We ensure to stay alert to any signs of abuse and neglect and to follow the procedure so that the students will receive the best support, care, and protection.

https://www.khda.gov.ae/CMS/WebParts/TextEditor/Documents/Children_Law_English.pdf

Policy Principles and Aims

- To ensure that students' wellbeing is being taken care of and supported.
- To ensure that all students regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, and educational needs have equal rights for protection.
- To properly guide all staff on how they should act according to the Code of Conduct and in performing their duty of care and child protection role.
- To make explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures so that child protection concerns, and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that supports the needs of the child.
- To integrate Child Protection issues into the curriculum.
- To ensure alignment of this policy to other related policies such as online safety, behavior, discipline, and anti - bullying.
- To ensure that all staff are fully aware of their equal responsibility and act accordingly if they think that a child is at risk at home, school, and community.

DEFINITION of TERMS: The following terms are defined based on the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children DfES 2006':

- **Neglect –** This kind of abuse is characterized by failing to care properly which might result to unhealthy physiological state such as tiredness, frequent lateness or absence from school, poor hygiene, persistent medical problem, low-self-esteem, emotional problem such as feeling of isolation and depression.

- **Physical Abuse** - Actual or physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering such as unexplained injuries/bruises; improbable or evasive excuses, untreated injuries; fear of treatment or medical help, fear of physical contact, fear of going home, over aggressive, or defensive tendencies, fear of removing clothes, bites, lashes, facial injuries.

- **Sexual Abuse** – Actual or exploitation of a child by involvement in sexual activities without informed consent or understanding, or that violate social taboos or family roles. It can be manifested as follows: tendency to cling, tendency to cry, genital itching, acting 'like a baby', distrust of familiar adults, wetting and/or soiling, fear of undressing, throat infections, depression, fearful/panic attacks, in hospital environment, multiple illnesses/similar symptoms in family, unexplained death of siblings.

- **Potential abuse** – situations where children may not have been abused but where social and medical assessments indicate a high degree of risk that they might be abused in the future, including situations where another child in the household has been abused, or where there is a known abuser.

- **Bullying** – refers to any acts that create physical and psychological harm to someone. This included cyber bullying of any electronic means which intends to insult, hurt, or intimidate someone.

As stated ***in*** *FRAMEWORK 'Working Together Under the Children Act, 1989'* all schools in the UAE are required to adhere strictly to the procedures for protecting students from abuse. All UAE schools are expected to have proper and appropriate procedures to respond to any risk or abuse which also includes staff as well whether he/she is suspected of abuse or accused.

In accordance with the DfES Circular 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2006), school staff have the following responsibilities:

- Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.
- Designated Safeguarding Staff are responsible for coordinating action within the school.
- All staff will undergo annual training about child protection and safeguarding emphasizing their specific duty of care role
- Schools should have procedures, of which all staff are aware, for handling suspected cases of abuse of students, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The overall Chair of Child Protection & Duty of Care Team is the Principal.
Designated Staff supporting the Protection & Care of Students

Nominated from School Board – Dr. Aaesha Saeed Almesafri

The Quality Assurance/ Facility Manager, Head of Student Support/Inclusion/School Counselor, HOSs and school clinic staff-nurse and doctor are the designated staff wherein colleagues can report to them any concerns they may have regarding students' welfare.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Committee

Child Protection Officer- Ms. Georgina Couram **–** Principal

Co- Child Protection Officers: Dr. Maria Monce -Head of Student Support/Inclusion/ Counselor

Ms. Mona Ibrahim- Quality Assurance/Facility Manager

Members:

Ms. Mayada AlJouboory- Head of Section for Middle and High School -Designated Safeguarding Lead (Middle & High School)

Ms. Karlinke Booysen- Head of Section of KG and Elementary -Designated Safeguarding Lead for KG & Elementary

Dr. Vinaya Prasad- School Doctor

Ms. Remya Roy -School Nurse

Ms. Jeena Oomen- School Nurse

Mr. Ibrahim Elghandour- Social Worker for Boys Section -Designated Safeguarding lead - Boys Section

Ms. Maha Alkalashy – Social Worker for Girls Section – Designated Safeguarding lead – Girls Section

Mr. Sultan Alzaabi- Supervisor-Boys Section

The respective roles are as follows:

- To ensure all staff are familiar with school guidelines for identifying and reporting abuse, including allegations of abuse against staff.
- To ensure that the Child Protection and Safeguarding is being implemented efficiently and effectively in the school.
- To ensure that the child protection reporting procedure has been disseminated clearly to all staff.
- To be accountable for coordinating and liaising with external agencies such as the MOE_CPU any child protection issues that needs further action and intervention.
- To ensure that parents are aware of the school's role in safeguarding and protecting the students against abuse and neglect.
- To ensure that all staff have read, understood, and signed the updated Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

- To be able to refer any suspected abuse or neglect to the proper UAE authority such as MOE-CPU or Police as deemed appropriate.
- To be able to further enhance and keep up to date about safeguarding and child protection knowledge by attending seminars, workshops, and conferences.

***In consultation with the designated staff member, employees will assist in enquiring into allegations of child abuse*:**

- To follow the recommendations provided by the Child Protection Officer;
- To be aware of the 'Every Child Matters Document' and the 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' documents (See further reading at end of policy)
- To monitor and follow up on staff on their child protection/duty of care issues generally;
- To monitor the attendance and development of children who have given cause for concern;
- To complete CP records and send onto new schools (where relevant);
- To secure and maintain in strict confidentiality records of child protection issues.
- To ensure that the class teacher kept records of detailed concern if in case he/she is the first person whose concern was raised. Immediately, she must liaise and provide the records to the designated child protection and safeguarding team.

The School Nurse & Doctor

Their role is crucial as they are the ones who can provide relevant information about any child protection issues to which they have to communicate directly to the Principal. Types of injuries, attendance and frequency are recorded by the school nurse and retained in a secure file in the clinic.

The Responsibilities of the whole School Staff

- All school staff have a responsibility to identify, and report suspected abuse and to ensure the safety and well- being of the students in the school. In doing so they should seek advice and support as necessary from the Principal/Designated Safeguarding lead -Head of Student Support/HOS.

- All staff should provide a secure and safe educational learning environment to the students where they feel supported, and they are capable of building their self-confidence through constant encouragement from the teachers. Students feel that they are respected, and they know that if they voice their feelings and opinions, the staff are willing to listen.

- All school staff are expected to:

  - Be aware of signs and symptoms of abuse
  - Report concerns to the Designated Staff Member as appropriate
  - Keep records of child protection issues confidentially

- Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.

APPOINTMENT OF STAFF

In appointing the staff, the school considers and observes the guidance about safeguarding:

- The potential candidate will be notified and will clearly be specified in the documentation that the child protection and duty of care is the utmost priority in the school and a thorough background check will be done before appointment is confirmed.
- A reference check from the previous employer will be sought to ensure the suitability of the potential candidate to work with children.
- A thorough interview will be conducted to check any gaps in the employment history of the candidate.
- Ensure that staff already living in RAK or the UAE when applying for posts, will be asked to supply a certificate of good conduct or similar from the police.

All Staff and helpers who have recently moved to UAE, will be asked to produce a certificate of good conduct (or national equivalent)-Police Clearance Certificates from the authorities representing the countries from which they have recently moved.

Complaints Committee

A Complaint Committee is created which comprises the Principal, Vice Principal and HR Manager to investigate any inappropriate behavior done by the staff to the students or staff to another colleague. Minutes of meeting will be recorded and available for review and reference.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

If a child, or parent, makes a complaint of abuse against a member of staff, the person receiving the complaint must take it seriously and immediately inform the Principal.

Any member of staff who has reason to suspect that a student may have been abused by another member of staff, either at school or elsewhere, must immediately inform the Principal. Any concern should be recorded and if possible, to include a note from a witness of incident or allegation. HR & The Vice Principal are immediately informed.

The Complaint Committee headed by the Principal will investigate the allegations where all information of the incident will be taken into consideration. The Committee will assess if the allegation is necessary to be referred to the School Board for further action and full investigation of the case following the Child Protection Procedure.

If the allegation constitutes a serious criminal offence, it will be necessary to contact HR including the School Board before informing the member of staff. However, if the offense is decided not necessary to be referred to the School Board, an internal investigation will be conducted. If the concerns are about the Principal, the School Board must be contacted directly.

STAFF CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

As specified in the '*Principles for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings*', staff should consider the following guidelines to minimize the risk of accusation being made against them due to their daily contact with students:

- They should always display appropriate behavior. As much as possible they should exemplify a role model behavior towards the students.
- They should work with good intention, transparency, and sincerity with students particularly when they are working with individual students.
- They should not allow students to visit their place of residence, share their personal contact numbers or email address.
- They should take advice from their immediate supervisor if any incident happens that may raise concern
- They should keep records of any incidents and of the decision and agreed action taken and should informed the Principal or any of the Child Protection and Safeguarding team

Staff are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them. This is stipulated in the Staff Handbook.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

- Any member of staff concerned about a child must inform any of the following designated staff: Head of Student Support, the HOS, The School Doctor and or Nurse immediately.
- The staff should record the information regarding the concerns on the same day in a clear, precise, and accurate observations.
- The Child Protection and Safeguarding team will consult the Principal to decide where the concern should be referred to the School Board and if so, it will be done without prior discussion with the parents.
- A written report of the concerns should be made available within 48hours if a referral is made to the School Board.
- Students who are identified as at risk will be monitored particularly attendance and personal development.

- The Principal will inform the SBL if a student who are at risk decides to transfer and all records will be prepared for the receiving school.

Staff Reporting Procedures Directly to External Agencies

Ordinarily, the members of the school follow the procedure of reporting stated in this policy, however, any staff members can report directly to proper authorities in case of the following:

- During emergency wherein the Child Protection Officer and other Safeguarding leads are unavailable.
- He/she believes that is the best thing to do to ensure the safety of the student.

However, at the earliest possible opportunities, the staff should report the case to the Principal, Child Protection Officer or to any Safeguarding Lead team unless by doing so will increase the risk of the student.

Ways of Reporting to MOE-CPU

- **Via Telephone- 042176666**
- **Via Email - CPU@moe.gov.ae**
- **Via Link through the MOE website - https://cutt.us/ChildProtection**

When to be concerned

Staff should be concerned if a student:

- has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's activities;
- regularly has unexplained injuries;
- frequently has injuries, even when reasonable explanations are given;
- offers confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained;
- exhibits significant changes in behavior, performance, or attitude;
- indulges in sexual behavior which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age;

- discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed such as bullying-verbal or emotional.

If a student discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

✓ listen but should not display shock or disbelief;
✓ accept what is being said;
✓ allow the child to talk freely;
✓ give assurance to the child but should not promise confidentiality as it might be necessary to report the case to the Child Protection Officer
✓ Calm the student and let her/him know that what happened is not his/her fault;
✓ stress that it was the right thing to tell;
✓ listen, rather than ask direct questions;
✓ ask open questions rather than leading questions;
✓ not criticize the perpetrator;
✓ report the incident to the Child Protection and Safeguarding team

RECORDING DISCLOSURE

The member of staff should do the following if a student will make a disclosure:

- record the incident and original notes should be kept just in case they are needed by a court;
- all verbal and non-verbal behavior should be recorded including time and place;
- draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury;
- record statements and observations, rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Support for students and staff

The Principal will make all reasonable attempts to protect and otherwise support students who have disclosed information about possible child abuse incidents. Dealing with a disclosure from a child is likely to be a stressful experience. Likewise, the member of staff

should seek support from the Principal if she/he has any concern and discuss it with the Principal.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Staff members who have access to confidential information about students are expected to:

- ❖ be discreet and treat the information confidentially;
- ❖ discuss the information to the Child Protection and Safeguarding team if they have doubts of sharing the information;
- ❖ be careful when divulging information to others about a student.

RECORDS and MONITORING

Well -kept records are essential to good Child Protection practice.

Concerns and disclosures should be recorded in writing by the member of staff who receives them and passed to the Designated staff member-Nurse/Doctor/Head Student Support/HOSs, without delay. The Child Protection and Safeguarding team will discuss with the Principal about further action, monitoring, and intervention program for the student. Records and filing system will be kept in the clinic and/or the Office of the School Counselor. If the student decides to transfer to another school, all the filing records will be prepared if they are judged to be relevant to the child's profile.

STAFF TRAINING

All staff receive Health and Safety Training as part of the CPD program. Staff are informed of any changes subsequently made to the policy and updated of any circulars from MOH and or the MOE.

New staff have Induction training that includes orientation and explanation about child protection and safeguarding policy, eSafety policy and other related policies concerning the welfare of the students. All the policies are to be signed by all staff to ensure that they know their responsibility in safeguarding and protecting the welfare of the students.

CHILD PROTECTION AND THE CURRICULUM

The school curriculum is important in the protection of children. We aim to ensure that curriculum development meets the following objectives (these are often met through Moral Education, Homeroom contact and leadership programs. Assemblies also focus on anti-bullying. The Head of student Support has also focused on child protection in developing awareness on anti-bullying in Leadership lessons. The Moral Education class affords additional opportunities to focus on respect for self and others and the importance of having positive relationships. The Year of Tolerance and the messages from the World Government Summit 2019 are shared with all students and parents including staff. To ensure the continuous advocacy of protecting our students in an online learning/blended platform for this academic year, 2020-2021, the Homeroom teachers and ICT teachers conduct Digital Citizenship Skills lessons and Online Safety education, respectively.

Developing Student Self Esteem

- Developing communication skills;
- Informing about all aspects of risk-RAK Police lectures;
- Developing strategies for self-protection;
- Developing a good sense of distinction between appropriate and inappropriate behavior in adults
- Developing non-abusive behavior between students.

What to do if you are told of abuse:

- Stop and listen
- Take notes and keep (verbatim)
- Do not interrupt
- Do not be judgmental
- Promise of confidentiality should not be given outright
- Avoid leading questions/coaxing or pressurizing.
- If she/he has spoken up, take note of any concern of going home
- Verbatim record should be given only to the Child protection and Safeguarding Team
- Discretion should be maintained in the staff room.

- Never think it cannot happen
- Do not work in isolation

What Happens Next

- Member of staff with suspicion/concern/ disclosure informs designated staff member/s
- The Designated staff member gathers information.

Where:

When in need of serious health or immediate welfare attention, the parents will be contacted immediately, and child should be taken to the nearest A&E department.

When allegations are made against a member of staff:

- A full report is made to Complaints Committee.
- A written record will be asked for. It should be signed and dated and given to the Principal and forwarded to HR as a record for the Complaints Committee.
- Staff recommended for suspension pending investigation
- Reference to the School Board is made on all such matter

Attendance

The school recognizes the importance of full attendance to the wellbeing of the students to have a full access of the educational opportunities provided to them. Thus, missing students i.e., having frequent absences (10 or more unexcused absences per term) impact their academic performance. Close monitoring and constant follow-up are done to these students. Reasonable steps will be undertaken such as telephone calls, sending letters home (recorded delivery), contacts with other siblings, friends, and visit at home. If these actions are taken and still the absences persist, the school can seek the help from the MOE-CPU to address this concern.

Good Practices in Helping the Students to be Safe

The UAE School Inspection Framework requires all schools to ensure that all students must be properly educated on how to be safe in and out of school as well as provide guidelines, rules and expectation while engaged in an online learning. Detailed guidelines and strategies are outlined in RAKAA Online Safety Policy.

In RAKAA, students are constantly reminded to act responsibly while doing online activities. Lessons about online safety are incorporated in all subjects to inculcate the importance of online safety education. They are expected to always practice responsible and sensible behavior under any circumstances. Students are taught diligently on various technology risks, strategies to employ and procedures to follow for any bullying or cyber bullying experience.

Through their Moral Education, Digital Citizenship and Leadership lessons, students are taught to become an empowered, independent, and critical thinkers who can respond appropriately and manage to face and overcome risk and imminent danger. The Homeroom teachers act as adult advocates who are willing to listen, encourage and support the students if they feel bothered, anxious, or confused. The school community promotes the ethos of respect among students, teachers, administrative and support staff.

Overview RAKAA SEN and Inclusion Policy

It is the aim of the policy to support, the 5 outcomes of Every Child Matters. It promotes strategies for:

- **Being Healthy**

Various measures are undertaken to ensure that children are supported physically, mentally, and emotionally.

- **Staying Safe**

Providing safe and secure environment, to enable all learners to achieve their full potential.

❖ **Enjoy & Achieve**

- Supporting all children of varied abilities to achieve their full potentials
- Ensuring that children are aware of what constitutes bullying
- Providing opportunities for all students to achieve their full potential regardless of educational need.
- Providing an environment where all students regardless of any physical disability can access the social and educational aspects of school.
- Encouraging and supporting inclusive learning regardless of gender, culture, academic, social, and emotional needs.
- Ensuring students with SEN/EAL have equal opportunities to achieve and reach their potential.

▪ **Making a Positive Contribution**

Where possible involving children in decisions about their future roles in school.

Encouraging positive behavior in the community which shows respect for others.

Providing confidence raising opportunities which enable children to deal positively with life changes and challenge.

▪ **Achieve Economic Well Being**

Providing children with the preparatory life skills to enable independent living and economic well-being.

Along with the 5 outcomes of Every Child Matters, RAKAA believes strongly in the OUR Four Core Values and continuously links these into the teaching and learning in our school.

CORE VALUES

- **Learning extends beyond the classroom**- to inculcate in students a sense of responsibility being a member of a larger community.

- **Academic excellence**- to provide rigorous and challenging experience to our students that will make them totally engaged to excel academically as reflected in their output, self-evaluation, and comprehensive assessment.

- **Students best grow in personal responsibility and self-worth** by providing a caring and safe environment where there is mutual trust, honesty and respect among students and teachers

- **Responsible citizens who respect diversity** – instilling to our students the importance of respect, acceptance, and resiliency of the diverse background of the school community**.**

FURTHER READING-for Staff Guidance

- 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the child
- 1989 The Children's Act
- 1999 Working together to safeguard children
- 2000 Framework for the Need Assessment of Children and their Families
- 2000 National Care Standards
- 2002 Education Act
- 2003 Every Child Matters
- 2003 What to do if you're worried a child is being abused
- 2004 Safeguarding Children in Education

- 2005 Guidance for safe Working practice for the protection of Children and Staff in Educational Settings.
- 2006 Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- 2007 Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education. SYNOPSIS
- 2019 World Government Summit 2019

Related Links:

Wadeema's Law:
https://www.khda.gov.ae/CMS/WebParts/TextEditor/Documents/Children_Law_English.pdf

DISCIPLINE-POLICY.pdf (rakaa.sch.ae)

RAKAA Student Behavior Policy

RAKAA_Anti-Bullying-Policy.pdf (rakaa.sch.ae)

RAKAA Online Safety-Policy

Child-Protection-Procedure-for-Students.pdf (rakaa.sch.ae)

Safeguarding Rights of Children
https://www.tamimi.com/law-update-articles/new-uae-law-safeguarding-rights-of-children/

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