



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (Whole School)

WRITTEN/LAST REVIEWED BY: JB and CPCs
RATIFIED BY: SLT

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IMPLEMENTED: September 2015
DUE FOR REVIEW: August 2025 or sooner if
there is a change in legislation

OUR VISION: LEADERSHIP THROUGH EDUCATION: CARE, CHALLENGE AND INSPIRE

Modern English School Cairo (MES Cairo) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all members of our community and especially for our students. Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy outlines the standards and practices adopted by the school to meet this aim. This policy reflects Article 3.1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: 'in all actions concerning children...the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration' and applies to all staff, school visitors, members of the Board and volunteers working with/for the school.

For the purpose of this policy, please see the key terminology below:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

- MES Cairo will ensure that that welfare of children is given paramount consideration when developing and delivering all school activities
- All children, regardless of age, gender identity, ability, culture, language, religion and race have equal rights to protection
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest that a child is at risk of harm in accordance with this guidance
- All students and staff are to have access to appropriate support from CPCs and Senior Leadership Team members who will follow this policy guidance

POLICY AIMS

- To provide all staff with the necessary information and training to enable them to meet their responsibilities to promote and safeguard the well-being of children
- To ensure consistent good practice across the school, in accordance with standards and practices which reflect Egyptian, UK and USA legislation
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding children
- To establish an ethos where students feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are always listened to
- Ensuring all students and staff know where there is someone they can approach if they need to in the school

POLICY PRACTICALITIES

- At least two members of both SSLT and PSLT are to hold current certification (trained in the last two academic years)
- Nomination of three Child Protection Coordinators (CPCs) in both Primary and Secondary who have direct access to SLT at all times and who also hold current certification (trained in the last two academic years)
- Compulsory annual training for all employees via Educare as designed by SLT
- Annual training delivered by CPCs for all staff in the sentiment of this policy and its practical implementation
- Any identified deficiencies or shortcomings in this policy will be immediately addressed
- The SLT and Board of Directors will review this policy and associated procedures and their efficient implementation annually
- The school extends a firm commitment to practising safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- Activities and opportunities for PSHE and HRCF are included in the curriculum, which equip students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse. Wellbeing, enrichment days and assemblies can be used as the key means of delivery
- The school pledges to notify the relevant authorities (including the Independent Safeguarding Authority in the UK and the State Licensing Board and relevant State Agency in the USA) immediately in the event of any member of staff whose relationship with the school ceases because they are deemed unsuitable to work with children.

THE MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CPCs

In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff the CPCs are:

- To oversee the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, ensuring they are followed effectively and consistently
- To be the first point of contact for parents, students, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters of safeguarding, child protection and the welfare of students and staff
- To act upon and coordinate responses to child protection concerns, and decide with the School Director, Managing Director and Chairman of the Board what action should be taken
- To manage allegations of abuse against staff members and ensuring that proper investigations are conducted
- To ensure all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are followed, updated and reviewed regularly
- To maintain accurate and confidential records of safeguarding concerns, ensuring that all information is stored securely and shared only with those who need to know

- To coordinate regular safeguarding training, providing guidance and support on identifying and responding to safeguarding issues and to ensure all staff including visitors, administrative and facilities are aware of the procedures and protocols for safeguarding and the welfare of students
- To provide support to vulnerable students, helping to monitor their well-being
- To liaise and develop effective links with the local authorities if required.

SAFER RECRUITMENT AND TRUSTED ADULTS

All adults employed by the school are considered appropriate for the position they hold. The school operates safe recruitment procedures, including the following:

- In Egypt, the Department of Education with the Department of State Security, completes criminal reference checks on non-Egyptian nationals before issuing a work visa.
- Newly recruited teachers must provide original evidence of relevant teaching credentials as well as a current police clearance which is no more than 12 months old
- Professional references are sought and referees are asked to declare the suitability of the colleagues to work with children; at the point of offering a prospective colleague a contract at least one reference ought to be verified via telephone call by a relevant member of SLT
- Teachers renewing their contracts have their credentials 'on file'; any activity involving security services in Egypt or abroad is to be reported to SLT. Police clearance may be sought at any time
- Locally-hired, non-teaching colleagues are vetted by national security services at the point of employment. At least 5% of colleagues are randomly checked annually; all transportation personnel undergo annual toxicology checks.

As 'trusted adults' all employees are expected to act appropriately in the company of children and not place themselves in situations that may be misunderstood or misinterpreted. It is in the interests of children and colleagues for classroom windows to remain uncovered (except in the event of a 'Safe and Sound Procedure'); classroom doors are to remain open when an adult is talking alone with a child. If a child insists on privacy for a meeting with an adult, with the door closed, the adult should insist that a third person (chosen by the child), and preferably another adult, join the conversation.

All staff are to participate in an annual review of this policy and to be notified of any updates in a timely fashion. All staff are to be informed of who the CPCs are.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

For the purposes of interpreting this policy, the following definitions of specific types of abuse have been adopted by MES Cairo.

Child Physical Abuse: Physical abuse occurs when a person causes physical injury to a child from behaviour such as hitting, choking, shaking, kicking or burning OR when there is perceived to be a substantial risk of physical or psychological harm. The abuse may result from physical discipline which is not appropriate for the child or from a person who is unable to control his or her anger and misdirects it towards the child. Children who live in homes where punishment is often physical may not always realise that they are being abused. Signs of physical abuse include unexplained, repeated or excessive bruises, broken bones, black eyes or other injuries. Abused children may have long absences from school or may wear clothing inappropriate for the weather in an attempt to cover up injuries. They may be afraid to go home or to be on their own with another person.

Child Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is behaviour that makes the child feel unloved and unwanted. It can include things like bullying, belittling, insulting, threatening, isolating, exploiting and ignoring. Emotional abuse can consist of either a pattern of such behaviours or extreme examples in isolation. Emotionally abused children may seem unusually unattached to their parent(s) and/or others. They may exhibit physical or emotional developmental delays or show extremes in behaviour. These children may also either regress to childlike behaviour or may exhibit unusual maturity, such as providing caretaking for other children.

Child Sexual Exploitation/Abuse: Sexual abuse involves sexual acts or behaviour involving the exploitation of children. Sexual activity between children can constitute sexual abuse when there is a difference in age, developmental levels and/or maturity; it includes when one child coerces another into participating in a sexual act. Behaviours can include fondling, digital or penile penetration, genital contact, oral sex and indecent exposure. Sexual abuse can also include non-penetrative acts or actual physical contact, such as: forcing, tricking, bribing, threatening or pressuring a child into sexual awareness. Involving children in prostitution or pornography would also be considered child sexual abuse. Incidents involving incest or sexual behaviour among family members are a common type of sexual abuse. Children who are sexually abused may show symptoms such as difficulty walking or sitting, torn or bloody underwear, nightmares, bedwetting, inappropriate knowledge of sex or inappropriate sexual behaviours, or anxiety. Children who are sexually abused are also at a much higher risk of contracting an STD or getting pregnant.

Child Neglect: Neglect occurs when a parent/caregiver fails to provide for a child's most basic needs. These can include food, clothing, housing, education, medical care or supervision. Emotional neglect may include permitting the child to use drugs or alcohol or participate in other maladaptive or dangerous behaviour, allowing the child to witness domestic violence, refusing to obtain needed psychological care for the child or failing to provide the necessary nurturing for the child. A child who is chronically neglected may be frequently absent from school, may have poor hygiene or clothing that is inappropriate for the weather or may beg or steal food or money. There may also be an obvious need for dental or medical care that is going unchecked. The child may be unsupervised for long periods of time or may be out getting into trouble and no one seems to notice.

Educational Neglect: Where a parent/s, or nominated caregiver, neglects their duty to provide a child with access to mandatory education. This includes preventing a child's access to school for any reason as well ignoring determined attendance requirements (85%).

Medical Neglect: The failure of the responsible adult/s to provide adequate health and hygiene care for a child, including appropriate treatment of evident medical conditions. Medical neglect also includes inappropriate treatment and/or mismanagement of treatment, over-medication, and administration of inappropriate medication without evidence of authorisation from a licensed medical practitioner.

SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of include:

Bullying and Cyberbullying: Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidences of fighting, arguing, or disagreements between individuals of equivalent power and authority does not constitute bullying. Cyberbullying is bullying with the use of digital technologies. It can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It is repeated behaviour, aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those who are targeted.

Child Coercion (Extremism) and Radicalisation: Promoting ideas which are radically different to, and perhaps in contradiction with, the school's undying principles and those of the wider community.

Child on Child Abuse: Child on child abuse can be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, disability or other differences. It can result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim. Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g. significant disruption in their own lives, exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse, educational under-achievement. It should be recognised that peer abuse is harmful to both the perpetrator (who is a child) and the victim.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

Child Trafficking: Child victims of trafficking are recruited, transported, transferred, harboured or received for the purpose of exploitation. They may be forced to work in sweatshops, on construction sites or in houses as domestic servants; on the streets as child beggars, in wars as child soldiers, on farms, in travelling sales crews or in restaurants and hotels.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): Professionals and communities need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM or having already suffered FGM. Local safeguarding procedures should be activated if there is suspicion that FGM may be going to/ has been practised.

Harassment: Behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their: identity, race, culture or ethnic origin, religion, physical characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, marital, parenting or economic status, age, ability or disability. It offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. It may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour or a single act directed randomly or towards the same person(s) and can be intentional or unintentional.

Inappropriate Photo Sharing: Sending or posting of inappropriate images, videos or live streams online by students. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline.

Mental Health: All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff 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.

Online Abuse: Use of the internet, mobile phone or other form of information and communications technology (ICT) to bully, threaten, harass, groom, sexually abuse or sexually exploit a child. The school's online safety policy is set out in its Google Workspace for Education Policy. The school's approach to online safety is coordinated by the Google Co-ordinators. Online safety is included in the curriculum at all levels and information is provided to parents/carers. Mechanisms are in place to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate.

Teenage Relationship Abuse: Broadly includes any of the types of abuse outlined above, but where the child victim is perhaps unaware that they are being mistreated because of their perceived consent/endorsement of the relationship.

SAFEGUARDING LDD OR OTHER VULNERABLE STUDENTS

Students with SEND and disabilities are particularly vulnerable and in some cases additional barriers may exist for them in communicating their concerns. Staff should be particularly vigilant in this regard. Other vulnerable students include: those who have mental health needs; students who are being drawn into anti-social behaviour; students with family circumstances presenting challenges for the child.

EARLY HELP

Early Help is a proactive safeguarding strategy, aimed at identifying and addressing concerns about a student's welfare at the earliest opportunity. By providing support at the first signs of difficulty, Early Help supports to prevent issues from escalating into more serious safeguarding concerns. This approach involves working collaboratively with families, professionals, and external agencies to assess needs, provide tailored interventions, and ensure students and families receive the right support.

MISSING CHILD PROCEDURES

All staff are informed of the separate procedures to be used for searching for, and if necessary, reporting any students missing from Modern English School Cairo. The procedure includes the requirement to record any incident, the action taken and the reasons given by the student for being missing.

THE USE OF 'REASONABLE FORCE' (POSITIVE HANDLING)

The use of 'reasonable force' or positive handling refers to the use of physical intervention by trained staff to prevent harm or protect a child in situations where they pose a risk to themselves or others. It is important that any physical intervention is proportionate, necessary, and used only as a last resort when other de-escalation strategies have failed. The use of reasonable force must always be in the best interest of the child, and any incidents should be recorded and reviewed to ensure transparency and accountability in safeguarding practices.

CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to child protection that recognises the influence of environments outside the family, such as peer groups, schools, clubs, and online spaces, on a student's safety and wellbeing. It extends traditional safeguarding practices by addressing risks that students may face in these wider contexts, rather than focusing solely on family dynamics. The assessment of students should consider the broader social and environmental factors that can contribute to a student's safety and/or welfare.

MES CAIRO PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

Egypt is making progress in its protection of children, reforming legislation and providing some services for the most vulnerable children. Resources are stretched, however. There remains limited provision for referral beyond the school and limited opportunity for children to seek assistance in the wider community. It is therefore quite likely that students will turn to school personnel, and/or that school colleagues will identify concerns before self-referral.

Initial response guidelines for the MES Cairo colleague

Notification of abuse or neglect is required when, 'a person suspects on reasonable grounds that a child has been, is being, and/or is perceived to be at substantial risk of being abused or neglected'.

Anyone aware of such a situation MUST report it to a member of PSLT, SSLT, the School Director or one of the school's CPCs as a matter of urgency and certainly within 48 hours of acknowledging their suspicion or awareness of abuse. Reporting and subsequent actions must be kept confidential.

There are three scenarios to consider, each with its own protocol:

- 1) Staff member suspects abuse by observing unusual behaviour or injury first hand
- 2) Student self-refers to a staff member
- 3) A third party shares concerns with a member of staff

Whistleblowing

Staff have a duty to report concerns that a child is at risk of abuse, is being, or has been abused to the CPCs or School Director. This is because the interests of the child are paramount. However, fear of reprisal is a real issue for staff in reporting abuse by colleagues. Protection is provided against victimisation for persons who, acting in good faith, raise concerns about a wide variety of malpractices in the best interest of students.

When establishing the validity of any cause for concern, care will be taken to:

- Protect the whistleblower
- Avoid alerting anyone about whom a concern has been raised
- Avoid alerting other colleagues who may warn the subject of the concern
- Record the information
- Keep all records secure and confidential.

Management of referrals by CPCs and SLT

The CPCs maintain a confidential register of all initial referrals; this register is to be kept in a secure location known to the CPCs and SLT. Referrals will be archived at 24 months if 'cold'; records to be destroyed 24 months following student's graduation. CPC referrals concerning N/E transfers from other schools will be sought reactively, not proactively. It is the CPCs responsibility to read every referral they receive, to check the report for adequate detail and to discuss the situation it refers to with the relevant member of SLT.

Information in a referral will be shared on a 'need to know basis'. The CPC and SLT will decide what further action is required within 24 hours of receiving the report. The action agreed upon may be to monitor the child. In the event of self-referral, the child is to be spoken to by an appropriate adult before the end of the next school day as promised.

A decision will be made by the CPC and SLT member, in consultation with a member of the BOD (preferably the Chairman or Managing Director) regarding the involvement of parents, caregivers and/or external authorities. Under no circumstances is a parent/caregiver/external authority to be informed of any instance of abuse or suspected abuse of a child without the express approval of an authorised member of the BOD.

If the suspected offender is a teacher/employee/volunteer the following protocol is to be observed:

STAGE ONE:

- 1) The suspected abuse is reported to the CPC and the School Director (if the CPC is the subject of the allegation the report should be made directly to the School Director; if the School Director is the subject of the allegation the CPC should report it to another member of SLT).
- 2) The Managing Director and Chairman of the Board are to be informed – they will notify the child's parents of the situation.
- 3) Restrictions will be placed on the accused adult's access to the child, and possibly to all children

STAGE TWO:

- 1) At least 2 members of SLT meet with the teacher/employee/volunteer concerned – their response to the allegations is discussed with notes taken by either member of SLT in attendance. The notes should feature the names of all present and the time and date of the meeting. The accused colleague is to authenticate the notes as accurate with his/her signature and the date. If the accused colleague does not regard the notes as an accurate representation of the meeting he/she may provide an alternative summary of their recollection/interpretation to be regarded as appendix to the notes taken by the SLT member
- 2) The teacher is to be isolated from the school, with no access allowed to the school, pending investigation
- 3) The Chairman of the Board will determine an appropriate outcome

If the suspected offender is a student at MES Cairo the following protocol is to be observed:

STAGE ONE:

- 1) The suspected abuse is reported to the CPC and the School Director
- 2) The Managing Director and Chairman of the Board are to be informed – they will notify parents of the situation (both the parents of the accused and the parents of the alleged victim, if that alleged victim is a child)
- 3) Restrictions will be placed on the accused student's access to the alleged victim at school, and possibly to all children

STAGE TWO:

- 1) At least 2 members of SLT meet with the student accused of abusing another person – their response to the allegations is to be discussed with notes taken by either member of SLT in attendance. The notes should feature the names of all present and the time and date of the meeting. The student accused of abuse is to authenticate the notes as accurate with his/her signature and the date. If the accused student does not regard the notes as an accurate representation of the meeting he/she may provide an alternative summary of their recollection/interpretation to be regarded as appendix to the notes taken by the SLT member
- 2) The accused student is to be isolated from the school, with no access allowed to the school, pending investigation
- 3) The Chairman of the Board will determine an appropriate outcome

APPENDIX

1. PROCEDURE FOR CONFIRMED CASE OF CHILD ABUSE

The CPC, relevant member/s of SLT including the COB and/or MD are to approve any of the following actions.

- 1.1 Ensure the physical and emotional safety of the child – if the child faces danger by returning to the family alternative living arrangements should be sought where possible.
- 1.2 Assess and provide appropriate medical care
- 1.3 Consult with School Doctor and School Psychologist, if appropriate
- 1.4 Parent meeting arranged
- 1.5 All adults involved are to commit to an agreed Plan of Action of support and counselling
- 1.6 If any agreed condition is not followed to the satisfaction of the psychologist and/or doctor, the school, or the family, the case will be reviewed to see whether the child is fit to return to an academic environment and whether external agencies* should be notified

*Note that in the absence of social services in Egypt, external agencies may be reputable religious authorities, influential community members or the police.

2. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

This policy has been written to reflect obligatory practices enforced by The Egyptian Authorities as well as agreed practices expected of schools regulated by UK and USA authorities. In particular, the following legislature was consulted:

Egyptian Laws and Regulations:

- Article 80 of the Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt 2014

Department for Education, England:

- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2024 update
- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2023
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (Updated November 2024)
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Safeguarding 2024
- 'Prevent Duty' Guidance 2023

USA Federal Guidelines:

- 'School Safety Laws'
- 'Title IV Civil Rights Act of 1964'
- 'Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972'
- 'Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973'
- 'Americans with Disabilities Act 1990'

3. PANDEMIC PROCEDURES

MES Cairo is committed to providing a safe environment for students during any pandemic restrictions. Staff are trained to continue to follow the communication channels defined in this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report concerns about children and adults without delay in accordance with usual procedures. The school supports students' wellbeing through ongoing development of the academic and pastoral curriculum to meet the challenges posed by a pandemic.



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Your Wellbeing is our Priority

If you hear or see something that concerns you, please speak
to a member of our Child Protection Team

5. MES CAIRO SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION FLOWCHART

