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PHILIPPINE-EMIRATES PRIVATE SCHOOL L.L.C.

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

1. Policy Statement

The Philippine Emirates Private School (PEPS) is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all students, free from all forms of harm, abuse, and neglect. This Child Protection Policy is established in accordance with the National Child Protection Policy in Educational Institutions in the United Arab Emirates issued by the Ministry of Education of UAE.

2. Policy Statement

PEPS is committed to:

- **Protecting the welfare and safety of all students** regardless of their ethnicity, gender, origin, religious beliefs, social standing, or disability.
- **Creating a positive, enjoyable, and respectful learning environment** free from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- **Empowering students to understand their rights and responsibilities** regarding their safety and well-being.
- **Providing clear and accessible reporting mechanisms** for students, staff, and parents to report any concerns about child safety.
- **Ensuring that all staff members are trained and equipped** to identify, report, and respond to suspected child abuse and neglect.
- **Working collaboratively with relevant authorities** to investigate and address cases of child abuse and neglect.

3. Scope Policy

This policy applies to all staff members, students, parents, and visitors of PEPS. It covers all school activities, both on and off-campus, including field trips, extracurricular activities, and online interactions.

4. Principles



- ✓ The best interests of the child are paramount.
- ✓ All children have the right to be safe and protected.
- ✓ All concerns about child safety will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.
- ✓ Confidentiality will be maintained to the greatest extent possible.
- ✓ Open communication and collaboration are essential for promoting child safety.

5. Definitions

- **Child:** Any person under the age of 18 years.
- **Child abuse:** Any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful behavior that results in, or has the potential to result in, harm to a child.
- **Neglect:** The failure to provide for a child's basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing, medical care, education, and supervision.
- **Bullying:** Repeated, unreasonable behavior directed towards a more vulnerable person, intended to upset, intimidate, or control them.
- **Reporting:** Bringing any concerns about child safety to the attention of a designated person within the school or relevant authorities.

6. Types of Child Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** Any intentional act that causes physical harm to a child, including hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, biting, or using weapons.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Repeated behaviors that harm a child's emotional well-being, such as humiliation, belittling, threatening, isolating, or withholding affection.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any sexual contact or behavior with a minor, including touching, fondling, intercourse, or exposure to inappropriate sexual material.
- **Neglect:** The failure to provide for a child's basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing, medical care, education, and supervision.
- **Bullying:** Repeated, unreasonable behavior directed towards a more vulnerable person, intended to upset, intimidate, or control them.

7. Visible Signs

👉 It is important to note that not all children who are abused will exhibit visible signs. However, some potential signs of abuse may include:

- **Physical:** Bruises, cuts, burns, fractures, unexplained injuries, poor hygiene, changes in weight or appetite.





- **Emotional:** Withdrawal, depression, anxiety, anger, bedwetting, nightmares, difficulty concentrating, changes in eating or sleeping habits.
- **Behavioral:** Aggressive behavior, self-harm, running away, substance abuse, risky sexual behavior.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

- **School Administration:**
 - Develop and implement the Child Protection Policy and procedures.
 - Ensure all staff members are trained on child protection and safeguarding procedures.
 - Establish and maintain a Child Protection Committee responsible for overseeing the implementation of the policy.
 - Provide clear and accessible reporting mechanisms for students, staff, and parents.
 - Investigate all reported concerns about child safety promptly and thoroughly.
 - Collaborate with relevant authorities, including the Ministry of Education (UAE) and the Department of Education and Knowledge, as needed.
- **Staff Members:**
 - Familiarize themselves with this Child Protection Policy and procedures.
 - Report any concerns about child safety immediately to the designated person within the school.
 - Create a safe and supportive environment for students.
 - Maintain appropriate boundaries with students and avoid any behavior that could be construed as abusive.
 - Attend child protection training as required by the school.
- **Students:**
 - Understand their rights and responsibilities regarding their safety and well-being.
 - Report any concerns about their safety or the safety of others to a trusted adult.
 - Treat others with respect and avoid bullying or any other behavior that could harm others.
- **Parents:**
 - Familiarize themselves with this Child Protection Policy.
 - Discuss child safety with their children and encourage them to report any concerns.
 - Support the school's efforts to promote child safety.





- Report any concerns about child safety to the school administration.

9. Reporting Procedures

⊕ Internal Reporting:

- Any staff member who suspects child abuse or neglect:
 - Must immediately report the concern to the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) or school principal.
 - Should not attempt to investigate the concern themselves.
 - May provide emotional support to the child but should avoid discussing the suspected abuse in detail.
- Students or parents who suspect child abuse or neglect:
 - Can report the concern directly to the DCPO, school principal, or any trusted staff member.
 - May also use the School Welfare Concern Form to report their concerns.

⊕ External Reporting:

- The DCPO or school principal will report the concern to the relevant authorities based on the nature and severity of the alleged abuse or neglect.
- Potential external reporting channels include:
 - Ministry of Education (UAE) Child Protection Unit: 80085
 - Department of Education (Philippines) Child Protection Unit: +632 636 1654
 - Local law enforcement authorities
 - Social services agencies
- The school will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by external authorities.

⊕ Mandatory Reporting:

- All staff members at PEPS are mandated reporters. This means they are legally obligated to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the relevant authorities, regardless of the source of the information or whether the child or their family consents to the report.
- Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Any concerns about child safety, including suspected abuse, neglect, or bullying, should be reported immediately to the following individuals:

Designation	Name	Contact Information
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Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO)	Jenalyn T. Senatin	
School Principal	Gina R. Señora	
Ministry of Education (UAE) Child Protection Unit		80085

10. Investigation Process

Upon receiving a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, PEPS will follow a thorough and sensitive investigation process to ensure the safety and well-being of the child while upholding the rights of all individuals involved. The process will be conducted in accordance with UAE and Philippine laws and regulations, and may involve the following steps:

- **Initial Assessment:**

- The Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) or school principal will conduct an initial assessment to gather information and determine the level of risk to the child. This may involve:
 - Reviewing the reported concerns and any available evidence.
 - Interviewing the reporting individual to gather details about the alleged abuse or neglect.
 - Conducting a preliminary assessment of the child's safety and well-being.
 - Consulting with relevant professionals, such as school counselors, social workers, or medical professionals, if necessary.

- **Information Gathering:**

Based on the initial assessment, the DCPO may initiate a more in-depth investigation to gather additional information. This may involve:

- **Interviews:**

- The child, in a safe and age-appropriate manner, with their consent and the presence of a trusted adult when possible.
- Parents or guardians, unless there are concerns about their safety or the child's safety in their presence.
- Other witnesses or individuals who may have relevant information.

- **Record Review:**

- School records, such as attendance, disciplinary records, and academic performance.





- Medical records, with parental consent.
- Social service records, if applicable.

- **Home Visit:**

- Conducted with the consent of the parents or guardians and in accordance with cultural sensitivities.
- Aims to observe the child's living environment and assess their safety and well-being.

- **Consultation and Collaboration:**

Throughout the investigation, the DCPO may consult with various professionals and agencies to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach. This may include:

- Social services agencies
- Law enforcement authorities
- Medical professionals
- Mental health professionals
- Child protection specialists

- **Decision-Making:**

Based on the gathered information and consultations, the DCPO will make a decision about the next steps. This may involve:

- Taking no further action if the concerns are unsubstantiated.
- Implementing a safety plan to protect the child from further harm, in collaboration with relevant authorities and the child's family.
- Referring the case to social services or law enforcement for further investigation and potential intervention.
- Providing support services to the child and their family, such as counseling, therapy, or parenting programs.

11. Action Response Procedure

Following the investigation process, PEPS will implement appropriate action responses based on the nature and severity of the alleged abuse or neglect, as well as the needs of the child and their family. These responses may be implemented in collaboration with relevant authorities and support services.

- **Child Protection:**

- **Immediate action will be taken to ensure the child's safety if they are at risk of**





further harm. This may involve:

- Removing the child from a harmful environment, in collaboration with social services and law enforcement.
- Implementing a safety plan to protect the child within their current environment.
- Providing the child with access to emergency shelter or foster care, if necessary.
- **Support Services:**
The school will connect the child and their family with appropriate support services to address the identified needs and promote healing. This may include:
 - **Individual or family therapy** to address the emotional and psychological impacts of abuse or neglect.
 - **Parenting programs** to equip parents or guardians with positive parenting skills.
 - **Medical or healthcare services** to address any physical injuries or health concerns.
 - **Educational support services** to help the child cope with any academic challenges.
- **School Community Support:**
The school will provide support and resources to other students and staff members who may be affected by the situation. This may include:
 - **Counseling services** to help individuals cope with emotional distress.
 - **Information sessions** to raise awareness about child abuse and neglect and available support resources.
 - **Review and reinforcement of school policies and procedures** to prevent similar incidents in the future.
- **Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation:**
 - The school will monitor the child's safety and well-being throughout the intervention process and adjust the action plan as needed.
 - The school will also evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented responses and make adjustments to the Child Protection Policy and procedures based on learnings and best practices.

12. Consequences of Violations

- **Staff Members:**
 - **Disciplinary Action:** Up to and including termination of employment, depending on the severity of the violation.



- **Reporting to Authorities:** Referral to relevant authorities, such as licensing boards or law enforcement, for potential further investigation and legal action.
- **Civil or Criminal Liability:** Depending on the nature of the violation, individuals may face civil lawsuits or criminal charges.
- **Suspects:**
 - **Reporting to Authorities:** Depending on the nature and severity of the alleged abuse, PEPS will report the concern to the relevant authorities, such as the Ministry of Education (UAE) Child Protection Unit or the Department of Education (Philippines) Child Protection Unit, and potentially law enforcement.
 - **Legal Action:** Depending on the findings of the investigation and legal proceedings, the suspected individual may face various legal consequences, including:
 - Criminal charges and potential incarceration
 - Civil lawsuits and financial penalties
 - Loss of professional licenses or certifications
 - Restrictions on contact with children

13. Disclosures and Confidentiality

⊕ Disclosure:

PEPS recognizes the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment where students feel comfortable disclosing concerns about abuse or neglect. The school encourages open communication and empowers students to speak up if they or someone they know is experiencing harm.

• Who to Disclose To:

Students can disclose concerns about abuse or neglect to any trusted adult at PEPS, including:

- Teachers
- Counselors
- School administrators
- Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO)

Disclosing to any staff member will trigger the mandatory reporting process, ensuring the concern reaches the appropriate individuals for investigation and action.

• Disclosing Anonymously:

While PEPS encourage students to disclose their identity to facilitate a thorough investigation





and support, anonymous reporting options are also available. These may include:

- Anonymous reporting hotline: If available, the school may provide a confidential hotline number for students to report concerns anonymously.
- Suggestion boxes: Secure suggestion boxes placed strategically throughout the school can allow students to submit anonymous written reports.

- **Importance of Disclosure:**

PEPS understand that disclosing abuse or neglect can be difficult, but it is crucial to ensure the safety and well-being of the child. The school assures students that all disclosures will be taken seriously and handled with sensitivity and confidentiality.

Confidentiality

PEPS maintains a strong commitment to protecting the confidentiality of all information related to reported concerns about child safety. However, there are legal and ethical obligations to share information in certain situations:

- When there is a risk of imminent harm to a child.
- To investigate alleged abuse or neglect.
- To comply with a court order or other legal requirement.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of other individuals.

Information will only be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know, such as the DCPO, school administration, relevant authorities, and medical professionals involved in the investigation and support process.

- **Student Confidentiality:**

PEPS strives to maintain the confidentiality of students who disclose abuse or neglect to the greatest extent possible. However, the school may need to share some information with parents or guardians, unless there are concerns about their safety or the child's safety in their presence. Students will be informed about the extent of confidentiality limitations before proceeding with the disclosure process.

- **Staff Confidentiality:**

The identities of staff members who report suspected abuse or neglect will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with legal requirements and the investigation process.

- **Importance of Transparency:**

PEPS recognize the importance of transparency while balancing confidentiality concerns. The





school will strive to keep students, parents, and staff informed about the investigation process and next steps, to the extent possible and permitted by law.

14. Training and Awareness

⊕ Staff Training:

- Mandatory Child Protection Training: All staff members undergo mandatory training upon hire and at regular intervals. This training equips them with the knowledge and skills to:
 - Identify signs of abuse and neglect in students.
 - Respond appropriately to disclosures, including active listening, avoiding judgment, and reporting concerns effectively.
 - Uphold PEPS' Child Protection Policy and procedures.
 - Promote a culture of safeguarding through positive interactions with students and open communication channels.
- Specialized Training: Additional training opportunities are offered on specific topics like online safety, cultural competency in child protection, and supporting children who have experienced trauma.
- Ongoing Support and Learning: Regular updates, discussions, and professional development opportunities ensure staff stay informed about best practices and emerging issues in child protection.

⊕ Student Awareness Programs:

- Age-appropriate workshops and activities: Tailored to different age groups, these sessions educate students about their rights, different forms of abuse, and how to seek help if they or someone they know is experiencing harm.
- Interactive learning methods: Engaging activities like role-playing scenarios and discussions empower students to recognize potential dangers, build confidence in speaking up, and identify trusted adults to confide in.
- Integration into curriculum: Child safety concepts can be woven into various subjects, fostering understanding and promoting a culture of respect and open communication within the school environment.

⊕ Parental and Community Engagement:

- Information sessions and workshops: Parents and guardians are invited to attend workshops to learn about child protection, identify signs of abuse, and understand their role in supporting





their children's well-being.

- Collaboration with community resources: PEPS actively collaborates with local authorities, child protection agencies, and mental health professionals to share resources, raise awareness, and ensure coordinated efforts in safeguarding children.
- Communication channels: Regular newsletters, website updates, and open forums create a platform for ongoing communication and information sharing with the broader school community.

12. Document Review and Approval

Function	Signature	Designation	Date	Signature
Final Approval		School Principal	August 14, 2023	
Document Review		Admin Director	August 14, 2023	
Document Note		Compliance Officer	August 14, 2023	
Document Producer		Social Worker	August 14, 2023	



School Welfare Concern Form

Date:

MM-DD-YYYY





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Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Relationship to student:	(Teacher, Parent, Staff, etc.)
Submitted by:	Full Name

STUDENT INFORMATION	
Name:	
Grade Level and Section:	
Homeroom Teacher:	

Please check mark on the space provided all that apply and provide details in the space provided.

Tick Box	Category	Concern Details
	Physical Appearance or Health	(e.g., frequent absences, unusual weight loss/gain, hygiene issues, injuries)
	Emotional Wellbeing	(e.g., changes in mood or behavior, withdrawal, anxiety, depression)
	Academic Performance	(e.g., sudden decline in grades, difficulty concentrating, lack of motivation)
	Social Interaction	(e.g., isolation, bullying, conflict with peers)
	Home Environment	(e.g., concerns about neglect, abuse, or family conflict)
	Others – Please specify	

Additional Information:

Please provide any additional information that may be helpful in understanding the student's situation.

Confidentiality:

All information provided in this form will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible, consistent with legal and reporting obligations.

Please submit this form to the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) or school principal.

Contact Information:

- DCPO Name: _____
- DCPO Email: _____
- Principal Name: _____
- Principal Email: _____

Thank you for your concern and cooperation in ensuring the safety and well-being of our students.





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