

Multinational School



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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1. Policy Statement

We recognise our moral responsibility to create a safe and supportive environment for all students and to safeguard and promote their welfare. We are fully committed to promoting a safe and welcoming environment for all students, where the students feel respected and valued. All staff are trained to understand the best practices related to the protection and safeguarding of all students and appropriate actions to be taken to protect them.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and Board members and are consistent with those of MNS.

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language or religion have equal rights to protection
- Children who are safe and feel safe are better equipped to learn
- This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm at home, in the community, or at school
- If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral will be made to relevant statutory body and public services. Anybody can make a referral – refer to page 26 for how to go about doing this. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, any staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some stage
- Students and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident; new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review

Purpose/Aim

- To provide all staff with the necessary information and training to enable them to meet their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice across the wider network of MNS
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to students, parents and other partners
- To establish a safe environment at school where all students feel safe, cared for, protected and nurtured.

2. Key Personnel

KEY CONTACT WITHIN THE SCHOOL

Safe guarding OFFICER

Ms. Khatoon Abbas (Counsellor): khatoon.abbas@mns-bahrain.com +973 3432 7211

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

Ms. Melook Ali (Counsellor): melook.ali@mns-bahrian.com +973 3343 3104

Ms. Anne-Mari Jansen van Rensburg (Infant School Coordinator): annemari.rensburg@mns-bahrain.com

Ms. Wilmarie Marais (Senior School Teacher): wilmarie.marais@mns-bahrain.com

Ms. Roslin Antony (School Nurse): roslin.antony@mns-bahrain.com Tel: +973 35146939

Ms. Brenda Mitchell (Music Teacher) brenda.mitchell@mns-bahrain.com

Mr. Hasan Alwardi (Arabic Teacher): hasan.alwardi@mns-bahrain.com

VICE PRINCIPAL

Ms. Ola Abu Zaroor: ola.abuzaroor@mns-bahrain.com

KEY CONTACT WITHIN THE LOCAL AREA

The BAHRAIN CHILD PROTECTION CENTRE for confidentiality and advice.

CONTACT NUMBER: 80008001

CHILD HELPLINE CONTACT NUMBER: 998

WEBSITE: www.mlsd.gov.bh

ALTERNATIVE REFERRALS

When members of the school have URGENT and IMMEDIATE concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person during school hours they should make an immediate referral to a member of the Pastoral Care Team or any accessible member of the Senior Leadership Team.

3. Foundation

1. Child-right based approach

A child rights-based approach is an approach which sees each child: 1) As a unique and equally valuable (non-discrimination) human being 2) With the right not only to life and survival, but also to development to his/her fullest potential 3) Offering the best understanding of anyone of his/her own situation and with essential experience to offer 4) Who deserves to have his/her best interests met 5) Through adequate allocation of resources and implementation of all the rights in the CRC.

2. Consultation

Without adequate consultation you are at risk of making inappropriate decisions, implementing ineffective and impractical policies and procedures that are not based on the experience of all stakeholders involved.

In particular, this is about child protection. Without consulting children, themselves, as well as relevant adults in our organisation, we run the risk of producing policies and procedures that children themselves do not understand, cannot access, and which may not necessarily benefit them.

Children have much to contribute through a clear understanding of their own situations and ways in which they can be supported to protect themselves.

It is essential to consult with as many stakeholders as possible in the planning and implementation of our child protection policies and procedures in order to make sure that we have identified and addressed all areas both accurately and comprehensively.

3. Ownership

If all stakeholders do not have a sense of ownership of child protection policies and procedures, then they are unlikely to take responsibility for implementing child protection in their work.



The more people feel they 'own' ideas, policies and procedures, the more sustainable child protection policies and procedures are likely to be.

Without broad ownership across the organisation, child protection becomes too dependent on particular individuals. This runs the risk of child protection being weakened or disappearing when these people leave the organisation.

4. Confidentiality

Failing to keep confidentiality may put people at risk of physical harm and false rumours etc.

People in the organisation (both adults and children) need to be reassured that any sensitive information in their personnel records / any personal information about them is treated with respect.

This means that such information is only accessible to the minimum number of people necessary for the functioning of the organisation and that there is clear guidance on instances when confidentiality should be breached in the best interests of the child's protection. For example, there may be situations where children may ask to not pass on information but we may have to explain that the only way we can help them is by getting others involved.

Difficult decisions may also need to be made in situations where the best interests of one child are at odds with the best interests of many children. For example -

A child may want us to wait before passing on the information because they want to build up the courage to report the incident to the authorities themselves. However, this may be putting other children at risk.

A child may ask us to promise to keep disclosure of abuse secret but this may be putting them and others at risk. As a general child protection guideline, we do not promise silence to children who disclose abuse.

We may need to balance keeping personnel records confidential with sharing concerns with other organisations about a particular person they are interested in recruiting, but who we may have dismissed for inappropriate behaviour with children.

1. Transparency

Transparency combats/breaks through cultures of silence, taboo, secrecy and fear in which child abuse thrives. Transparency and the space and opportunity to talk freely create a preventive and protective environment for children.

Transparency shows that an organisation has nothing to hide and that it is willing to admit to, and learn from mistakes - all of which is a true sign of a learning and accountable organisation. For an organisation

to be accountable, information needs to be properly recorded, signed and dated, clearly marked as either opinion or fact, whether witnessed by anyone else etc.

Transparency is about having a clear and standardised process in place to minimise confusion and rumour.

2. Sensitivity

Sensitivity in discussions around child protection is essential as participants (adults and children) may have personal experience of abuse which could cause them distress.

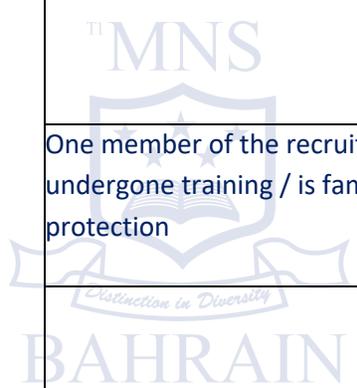
4. Elements of a Child Protection and Policy Procedures.

4.1 Personnel Recruitment

| ELEMENTS | PURPOSE |
|--|--|
| Police check for information of previous convictions or investigations relating to child protection | To ensure that we are not employing a convicted child abuser to work with vulnerable children and to deter convicted child abusers from applying |
| Minimum of 2 references (not family, more than 2 years relationship with candidate): check that the two referees are genuine as well as asking them to provide a reference | To ensure that staff are suitable for the specific position they are applying for in terms of character and skills. This is especially important in situations where police checks are not available |
| Commitment to child protection policy must be a condition of employment | To signal the importance of child protection within the organisation and to hold personnel accountable to upholding standards |



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| Candidate specification included with job description | To ensure that we recruit the best person for the job (above and beyond child protection issues) by assessing applicants according to pre- determined specific essential and desirable skills |
| Successful candidate must sign personal declaration of criminal convictions | To ensure that we are not employing a convicted child abuser to work with vulnerable children and to deter convicted child abusers from applying. This is especially important in situations where police checks are not available |
| Standardised interview process | To ensure that we recruit the best person for the job (above and beyond child protection issues) by assessing applicants according to pre-determining specific essential and desirable skills. To ensure that every recruitment opportunity is used to explore candidates' suitability for a post in relation to child protection issues. To ensure that all candidates are judged on the basis of equal opportunity |
| Attentiveness to suspicious gaps in employment history and use of references to clarify concern | To find out whether there have been previous child protection concerns relating to when the candidate was working for other organisations and whether this might have led to dismissal or frequent changes in jobs; to explore whether periods of absence from employment may be due to e.g. time in custody, and suspicious activity |
| One member of the recruitment panel has undergone training / is familiar with issues of child protection | So that at least one person has specialist knowledge of child protection related questions to ask and warning signs to look out for so that |
| | maximum use is made of a job interview to implement child protection safeguards |



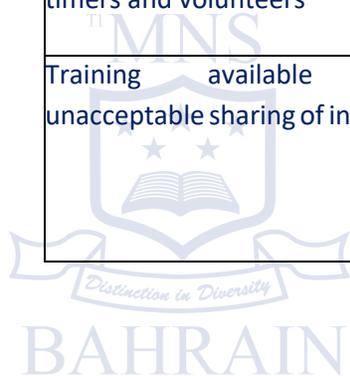
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| Advertisements for job vacancies make reference to the child protection policy and screening | To deter child abusers from applying and to communicate your organisation's seriousness and transparency about child protection issues |
| Candidates who wish to become trustees and volunteers of the organisation are equally bound to sign a statement of commitment to the organisation's child protection policy and undergo training on child protection | To ensure comprehensive protection for children from all personnel who have direct or indirect contact with children through the organisation (not just paid employees) |

4.2 Education and Training

| ELEMENTS | PURPOSE |
|---|---|
| Induction process for all representatives, including child protection policy principles and procedures, learning about, recognising and responding to child abuse | Having a 'child-safe' organisation depends on all personnel associated with the organisation fully understanding the child protection policy and procedures, knowing exactly what to do as part of their ongoing work and also in case of an incident, knowing where to get further advice and support. Personnel must feel confident and comfortable in discussing child protection issues |
| Organisational atmosphere encourages opportunities to question and learn about child protection issues | To overcome taboos related to discussing child abuse in order to create an open and aware culture where secrecy is not allowed to prevail and learning is maximised |



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| Training on behaviour guidelines available for those with direct contact with children | To make sure that guidelines are understood and implemented in practice, giving personnel the opportunity to discuss and work through challenges and to have clear guidance where circumstances may be less clear-cut |
| Orientation given to children themselves on all relevant aspects of the organisation's child protection policy and procedures | To ensure that children know how to protect themselves, what behaviour to expect from personnel and from each other, to know the difference between 'good touch' and 'bad touch' and when and how to speak out if they feel uncomfortable. To open up opportunities for children to input into ongoing implementation and review of child protection policy and procedures |
| New representatives to receive child protection training as soon as possible (within 3 months at the latest) | See induction process above. Training schedules for personnel/timelines and deadlines are important so that child protection remains a priority and does not become side lined by other issues |
| Existing representatives to receive child protection training within designated period of the child protection policy coming into force (3 months) | See above |
| Training should be flexible and accessible for part-timers and volunteers | To respond to the different needs of different personnel |
| Training available on acceptable and unacceptable sharing of information on children | To respect children's right to privacy and confidentiality, and to protect children from those who may use information about them to cause them harm |



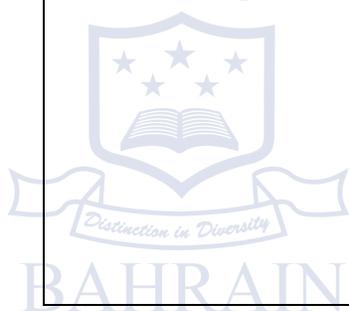
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| Emotional/counselling support available for individuals including children) participating in training/orientation in the case of an emotional reaction to the topics | To support personnel and children to cope with possible emotional effects of discussing issues around child protection, and that there is someone they can speak to if such discussions raise painful issues in relation to their own past |
| Constant re-evaluation and updating of training and education | To ensure that information being given is as up-to-date as possible and that personnel find it relevant to their work, that every opportunity is taken to maximise the quality, effectiveness and impact of training and education |

4.3 Management Structure

| ELEMENTS | PURPOSE |
|--|---|
| Open lines of communication, atmosphere of support and encouragement for reporting, positive environment for giving and receiving feedback | Creating a 'child-safe' organisation depends on having clear structures and an open and aware culture in place to ensure that all personnel and children feel confident and comfortable speaking out and implementing child protection safeguards |
| Designated person to implement the child protection policy | Officially assigning responsibility for child protection issues to one person as part of their job description ensures that child protection is prioritised within the organisation and that it doesn't fall through the gaps |



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| Role of designated child protection person is clearly defined | To ensure that everyone in the organisation is clear about the extent of the roles and responsibilities of the designated person, so that expectations on all sides are clear and that deliverables are monitored |
| Ongoing supervision, monitoring and support for all personnel | To ensure that child protection policies and procedures are understood and being implemented and that any problems or queries are dealt with as soon as they arise |
| Child protection issues are included in regular, formal staff evaluations / appraisals | To provide a two-way forum for discussing areas of concern regarding the individual's part in implementing the organisation's child protection policy and procedures. To assess existing knowledge and to identify further training needs on an individual basis. To provide an opportunity for personnel to input into suggestions for improvement and to feed into overall organisational monitoring of the child protection policy |
| Management should reflect core principles and values, uphold professional approach and demonstrate awareness of abuse | Having a 'child-safe' organisation depends on strong and proactive support for child protection issues from management at all levels. Management should demonstrate leadership in this area and act as role models |
| Disclosure of personal information on children limited to those who need to know | To ensure that there is a system in place for information storage and sharing (both hard copy and electronic) - that does not solely rely on individual practice - that ensures respect for children's right to privacy and confidentiality, and that protects children from those who may use information about them to cause them harm |

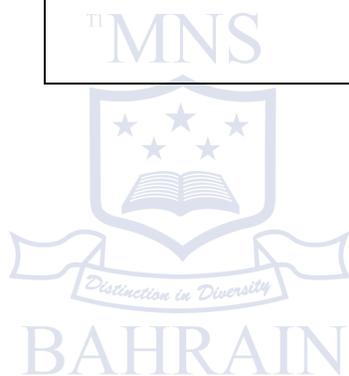


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|---|---|
| <p>The Board of MNS overall responsibility / oversight to ensure implementation</p> | <p>To ensure that management take the issue of child protection seriously and that there is a collective body with which to share responsibility for child protection implementation / that ultimate responsibility for implementing child protection issues does not just rest with one individual</p> |
| <p>Incorporate child protection into regular internal and external programme and organisational evaluations / assessments</p> | <p>Internal assessment monitors the progress of child protection policy implementation against targets agreed. External assessment promotes and ensures objectivity and transparency (which in itself encourages an open and aware culture to prevent abuse) and provides a different / fresh perspective / recommendations for improvement on child protection policies and procedures</p> |



4.4 Behaviour Protocols

| ELEMENTS | PURPOSE |
|---|---|
| Code of Conduct developed as appropriate to the organisation that includes guidelines on appropriate behaviour of personnel towards children. The Code of Conduct should include a statement which encourages personnel to interpret the Code in a spirit of transparency and common sense, with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration | To clarify what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour towards children. To ensure that all personnel understand and abide by behaviours which create a 'child safe environment' that respects children's physical and mental integrity / space / privacy. Behaviour guidelines also allow children to know what behaviour to expect from personnel and from each other, to know the difference between 'good touch' and 'bad touch' and when to speak out if they feel uncomfortable. To avoid potential misunderstandings which may lead to false allegations of child abuse |
| Code of Conduct developed in collaboration with children that includes guidelines on appropriate behaviour of children towards other children | To ensure that children know what behaviour to expect from each other, to know the difference between 'good touch' and 'bad touch' and when to speak out if they feel uncomfortable |
| Display the Codes prominently / make them easily accessible for all organisation representatives and children | To act as a constant reminder and to be a point of easy reference in times of doubt and emergency |
| Representatives to promote copies of the Code in all situations where the organisation is responsible for bringing children into contact with adults | To ensure that children's best interests remain safeguarded even beyond the scope of the immediate project environment: e.g. when children participate in workshops and conferences with adults present, when they travel to events and when they receive visitors from outside organisations etc. |



4.5 Communication about Children

| ELEMENTS | PURPOSE |
|---|--|
| <p>Communication Guidelines developed including the essentials and as many desirables as possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire permission of child / guardian / fundraising / awareness (informed consent) as much as possible • Let people give their own accounts as much as possible rather than others speaking on their behalf; highlight ability of people to take responsibility and action for themselves • Accurate and balanced portrayal of children, with emphasis on dignity and as much reference as possible to their social, cultural and economic environment • Balanced portrayal even in cases of ‘victimhood’ (recommended use of ‘before’ and ‘after’ images / stories) • Accurate representation of children: avoid manipulation or sensationalising text and images, emphasis on dignity • Establish system of signed consent for use of organisation’s visual materials by outside individuals / organisations with ramifications for misconduct • Avoid degrading, victimising or shaming language and images, making inaccurate generalisations, discrimination of any kind, taking pictures out of context (try to provide informative caption) | <p>To clarify what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate use of communications (images, stories, case studies, personal information) in relation to children</p> <p>To ensure that all personnel understand and abide by guidelines which create a ‘child safe environment’ that respects children’s physical and mental integrity, privacy and dignity and that protects children from those who may use information about them to cause them harm</p> <p>To promote a culture that portrays children accurately, emphasising their role as actors in their own development and that of their peers and communities whilst also acknowledging their vulnerability</p> |



4.6 Reporting and Reaction Protocol

| ELEMENTS | PURPOSE |
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| Guiding principle of the best interests of the child | To act as a constant reminder in situations where difficult decisions need to be made, especially in countries where there are limited infrastructures in place that the reporting and reaction protocols remain child-focused and child-centered at all times, above and beyond the demands of bureaucracy. |
| <p>Standardised process clearly outlined and made available to all representatives and children to include reporting and storing information</p> <p>Develop and make available a standardised reporting form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant contact details for child protection services, police, emergency medical help and helplines readily available and easily accessible to representatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that everyone in the organisation is working to the same standards • To ensure that sensitive information that emerges through the reporting and reaction process is kept confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis |



4.7 Ramification of Misconduct

| ELEMENTS | PURPOSE |
|---|--|
| In the case of an allegation by a named individual from a verifiable source, the accused individual to be suspended (on full pay if relevant) pending outcome of an independent investigation | To ensure that the child in question / children in the project in general are protected from further harm |
| Outline disciplinary and other steps which may include reporting to the police | To ensure that child protection is taken seriously and ramifications are standardised as part of institutional practice and made clear as part of terms and conditions of employment / association with the organisation |
| Adverse determination from an investigation should be open to challenge through an appeals process | To ensure that justice is fully adhered to |



5. Roles and Responsibilities of the Safe Guarding Care Officer

- Takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in the school
- Is appropriately trained and updates their knowledge and skills to keep up with any developments relevant to their role
- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- Provides advice and support to the staff
- Encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- Is alert to the specific needs all children
- Maintains relevant records of incidents confidentially and safely in a locked cabinet
- Refers cases of suspected abuse to Child Protection Centre, or the Police as appropriate
- Attends child protection conferences
- Is an active member of the school Health and Safety Committee
- Ensures that all staff are trained in child protection and safeguarding
- Ensures that all staff have signed to indicate that they have read and understood the child protection and safeguarding policy
- Ensures that the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated annually, working with the whole school community
- Makes the child protection and safeguarding policy available publicly, i.e. on the school's website
- Ensures parents are aware of the school's role in safeguarding

Other staff responsibility

All members of the school staff have a responsibility to identify and report suspected abuse and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the students in the school. In doing so, they should seek advice and support as necessary from the PCO.

All staff are expected to attend regular and relevant professional development sessions.

All staff are expected to provide a safe and caring environment in which children can develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings and opinions. Children should be treated with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behaviour.

Specific responsibilities of the School Nurse and Counsellor

The school Nurse or Counsellor may be requested to provide physical treatment and emotional support after a child has been abused.

The Nurse may be required to conduct an examination if there are physical injuries and write an initial report about the child's physical and emotional condition.

The Nurse and/or Counsellor can provide positive encouragement to the child, liaise with family members determine how best to promote the child's safety both at school and at

home.

Child abuse can leave deep emotional scars and the School Nurse should recognise these and help develop a rehabilitation plan in liaison with the PCO and other appropriate staff in the case team.

In some cases, the child may have to take medication as a result of the abuse. The School Nurse should ensure that all standards and procedures for administering medications in the school setting are met.

Guidelines for Good practice and Code of conduct for staff

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards students, we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. This includes -

- Treating all students with respect
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among students
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in students' behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect and exploitation
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Reading and understanding the school's child protection policy, staff behaviour policy (code of conduct) and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, e-safety, safer recruitment etc.
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between students
- Referring all concerns about a students' safety and welfare to the PCO or, if necessary, to higher authorities at school
- Following the school's rules with regard to communication and relationships with students, including via social media

Safer recruitment procedure

When recruiting a new member all reasonable steps are taken to ensure compliance with the following:

- Background check of the applicant
- Reference check from at least two previous employers
- For the volunteers and other visitors to school, the school security staff to be vigilant and follow all procedures governing the access, keeping records of all visitors, providing a visitor pass to be worn by all visitors for ease of identification and monitoring

Early Help

The school recognises that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. All school staff are trained to notice any concerns about children which may help to identify that they would benefit from early help.

- Identify situations in which children and/or their families would benefit from early help
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help; and provide targeted early help service to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, developing an action plan that will focus on activity to improve the child's outcomes.

Attendance

The school understands that attendance at school is important to the well-being of all our students and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them at school. Attendance is monitored closely. Our attendance policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by our SLT.

Whistle blowing if staff have concerns about a colleague

Staff are expected to report all concerns about poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues – to their Head of School, Vice Principal to facilitate an early intervention in order to maintain appropriate boundaries and a safe culture that protects children and reduces the risk of serious abuse in school.

Allegations against staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen. A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to students and we must act on every allegation. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.

All allegations against staff should be reported to their Head of School who in turn will raise to the higher authorities in school.

Staff training

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern. New staff who will have direct contact with children and volunteers will receive an explanation during their induction which will include:

- The school's child protection and safeguarding policy
- Signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
- Responding to disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child
- Reporting and recording arrangements
- Details of the PCO

All staff will receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training.

Behaviour Management

Our behaviour policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the SLT. This policy is transparent to staff, parents and students.

Record keeping

The school will maintain safeguarding (including early help) and child protection records.

- Keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to relevant agencies immediately;
- Ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations;
- Ensure all relevant child protection records are sent to the receiving school, college or other education establishment when a student moves.

Where possible and without interpretation, the exact words spoken by the child or parent/carer will be recorded. Records will be signed, dated and timed by the member of staff making the record.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the student, family and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child/parent to keep secrets.

Extended school and off-site arrangements

All extended and off site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. When our students attend outbound learning activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

Where after school activities are provided by and managed by the school, the school's child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on the school site, the school will check that those organisations have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

Photography and images

To protect students, the school -

- Seeks consent of the parents (for photographs to be taken or published)
- Ensure students are appropriately dressed
- Encourage students to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

Bullying

Our Anti bullying policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the SLT. This policy is shared with staff, parents and students.

Bullying can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's well-being.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. All students and parents receive a copy of the procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals.

Online Safety

Refer to MNS Online Safety Policy

The school's **online safety policy** explains how we try to keep students safe in school and protect and educate students in the safe use of technology. Cyberbullying by students will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

Serious incidents may be managed in line with our child protection procedures. All staff receive online safety training by Ms. Khatoon Abbas and Ms. Melook Ali.

Child protection procedures:

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our students are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

BAHRAIN

It is very important that staff report all of their concerns, however minor or insignificant they may think they are – they do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.

Signs and Symptoms

There are primarily four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.

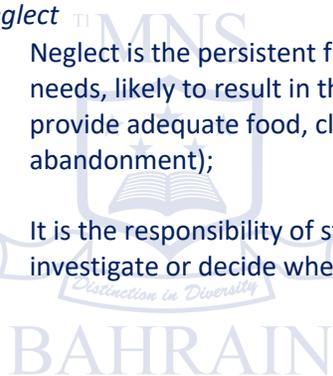
Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact and /or including assault. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.



A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school or arrive late
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol and/or
- Display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age and/or stage of development
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends' or adults recently acquainted with the child's family

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw and each small piece of information will help the PCO to decide how to proceed.

Taking Action

Any child in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here'.

Key points for staff to remember when taking action are:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child
- Report your concern to the PCO as quickly as possible
- Do not start your own investigation
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only, do not discuss the issue with

- colleagues, friends or family
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief

During their conversations with students, staff will:

- Allow them to speak freely
- Remain calm and not overreact
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions
- At an appropriate time tell the student that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on
- Tell the student what will happen next
- Let them know that someone (either you or another named person, e.g., the PCO) will come to see them before the end of the day
- Report verbally to the PCO
- Write up their conversation as soon as possible
- Seek support if they feel distressed or need to debrief

Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a student with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the PCO will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will be sought first.

Making a referral to the Child Protection Centre

The PCO will escalate it to the higher authorities, who will then make a referral to the Child Protection Centre, and the police, if it is believed that a student is suffering or is at risk of suffering harm.

The student (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child or create undue delay.

In deciding the most appropriate response, relevant considerations will include:

- The nature and extent of the inappropriate/abusive behaviours. In respect of sexual abuse, it is necessary to distinguish between normal childhood sexual development and experimentation; and sexually inappropriate or aggressive behaviour
- The context of the abusive behaviours
- The child/young person's development, family and social circumstances
- The need for services, specifically focusing on the child/young person's harmful behaviour as well as other significant needs; and/or
- The risks to self and others, including other children in the school, household, extended

family, peer group and wider social network. The school is committed to participating in plans both to provide students who are at risk from other children and those students who may present a risk to other children with appropriate services to address any concerns and, wherever possible, to facilitate ongoing access to education in school for all children concerned, subject to appropriate risk assessments and risk management plans.

Staff reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff should ordinarily follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, any staff member can refer their concerns directly to the Child Protection Centre, or the police if:

- The situation is an emergency and the PCO, the Heads of School, Principal and Vice Principal and/or the Board members are all unavailable
- They are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the student's safety, or
- For any other reason they make a judgement that a direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

However, staff should inform the PCO at the earliest opportunity that they have done so unless in their judgement doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child.

Process for review and development

The Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is reviewed every year to ensure that it is an accurate reflection of current practices at the school. The provision is monitored, and information record of students are updated and reviewed. School leadership team is consulted during the review.

SAFE SCHOOL

All adults on campus (including teaching staff) must wear ID badges and/ or visitors' passes.

It is essential that the high standards of concern and professional responsibility adopted with regard to alleged child abuse by parents be similarly displayed when members of staff are accused of abuse.

Only authorised agencies may investigate child abuse allegations (Currently, in Bahrain this would mean the Police only). Whilst it is permissible to ask the child/children simple, non-leading questions to ascertain the facts of the allegation, formal interviews and the taking of statements are not.

If for any reasons it is decided that a referral is not appropriate, at all times it will be necessary to address matters in accordance with the school's complaints/disciplinary

procedures.

USE OF THE SCHOOL PREMISES BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Where another body provides services or activities separately, using the school premises, MNS will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection.

POLICY REVIEW

The School's Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy.

The Leadership Team is also responsible for ensuring that the list of key contacts on the cover sheet is kept up to date.



6. Appendix A – Categories of Abuse

PHYSICAL ABUSE:

- Is actual or attempted physical injury to a child where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
- Unexplained injuries or burns (particularly if they are recurrent)
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression towards others
- Self-destructive tendencies

EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

- Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child. This includes conveying to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved.
- Physical/mental/emotional developmental lags
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive
- Over reaction to mistakes
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour (e.g., rocking, thumb sucking etc.)
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-mutilation
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

SEXUAL ABUSE:

Where a child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) – including organised networks. This

definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated the behaviour.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, language, behaviours
- Loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressive behaviours such as thumb sucking, needing previously discarded cuddly toys
- Becoming withdrawn, isolated
- Inability to focus
- Reluctance to go home
- Bed-wetting
- Drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'extra good'
- Over-reacting to criticism
- Have outbursts of anger/irritability

NEGLECT:

Refers to persistent or deliberate failure to meet a child's physical or psychological needs e.g. a failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, failure to protect a child or failure to provide adequate medical care. It may also involve neglect or failure to give adequate response to a child's emotional needs.

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor peer relationships
- Stealing



7. Appendix B – What to do on Disclosure

Stay calm (Don't over-react, however shocked you may be)



Listen, hear and believe (Listen carefully, take it seriously)



Give time for the person to say what they want (Don't make assumptions and don't offer alternative explanations, ask questions beginning with "Tell me about...Explain...Describe...". Avoid 'who, what, when, where' questions)



Reassure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling. (Do not promise confidentiality; explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed)



Record in writing as near verbatim as possible and as soon as possible on a Disclosure Form (Use the child's own words, make your record as soon as possible after the event, so that you don't forget anything, and include information about what action was taken afterwards)



Report to the PCO



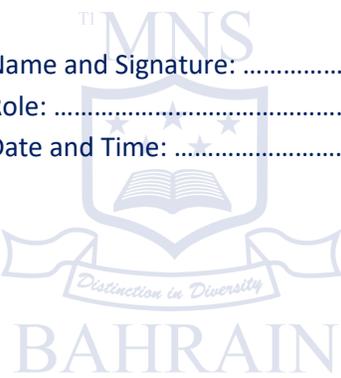
8. Appendix C – Disclosure of Abuse Form

Name of Person Making Allegation/Disclosure:

Time and Date:

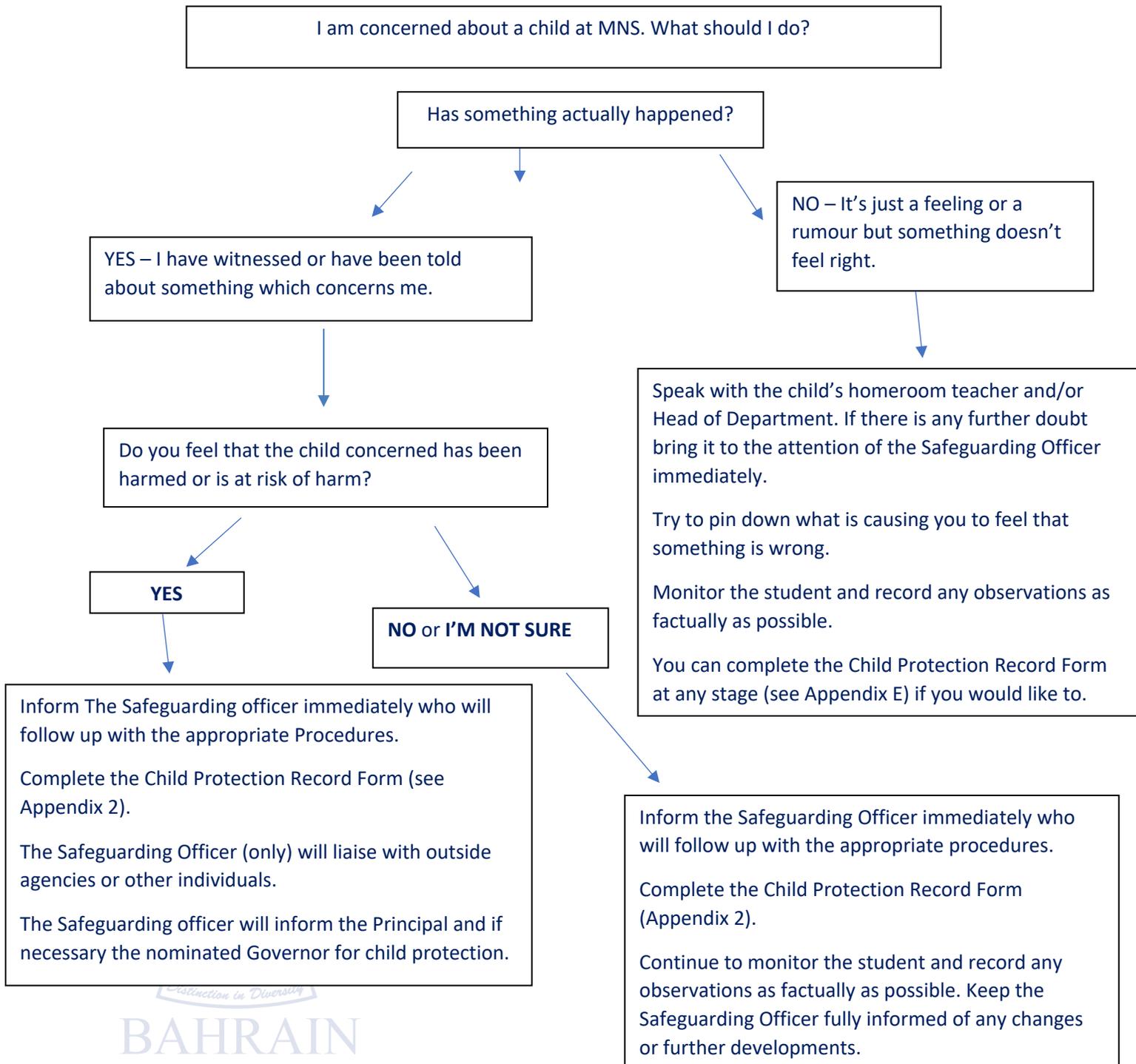
Parent(s) Name and Contact Details:

Nature of Disclosure: (Continue on separate sheet as required, recording as close to verbatim as possible)

The logo for MNS Bahrain features a shield with an open book and three stars, with the motto 'Distinction in Diversity' on a banner below. The text 'THE MNS' is above the shield and 'BAHRAIN' is below it.
Name and Signature:
Role:
Date and Time:

9. Appendix D – Organisational Action Plan

How a member of staff should respond to a child protection concern.



10. Appendix E – Child Protection Form Letter (member of staff or other adult)

This form should be completed within 24 hours of the incident/concern/disclosure and given to the Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer or the Principal. It is important that only factual, neutral information is recorded. Please avoid opinion, suspicion and subjective statements.

Details of the incident, concern or disclosure, who dealt with it, observations or circumstances, description of physical/behavioural indicators and any statements made by the child/young person. Times, dates and factual information only please.

Details of anyone else involved; conversations held with anyone else; witnesses e.g., parent, teacher or support staff member or other children/young people. Times, dates and factual information only please.

Referral to designated person. Was this concern passed to Head of Department, Principal, and Safeguarding Officer? Was there any discussion or advice given that should be recorded? Times dates and factual information only please.

Completed by member of staff or other person who has raised the child protection concern.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____



11. Appendix F – Child Protection Record Form (Safeguarding Officer or Principal)

This form should be completed by the designated Safeguarding Officer or Principal. It is important that only factual/neutral information is recorded. Please avoid opinion, suspicion and subjective statements.

Details of any discussions between other parties, including Principal or Safeguarding Officer (if they are not the one completing this form), and further information received or recorded that may relate to this case.

Decision on the next steps. If the next decision is to involve outside agencies give reasons why. Similarly, if the decision is not to involve outside agencies give reasons why. Details of any follow up actions, monitoring, counselling and support.

Signed & dated by Safeguarding Officer or Principal

Signature _____ Date _____

In the case of a complaint against a member of staff, form must be signed by both

Signature _____ Date _____



11.1 Cyberbullying – a serious matter

- Employers / their representatives have a duty of care to protect everyone in the community from cyberbullying, and failure to “take reasonable care” will be considered negligence.
- In situations where the school/workplace authority or individual employees know or realize that children/employees/others may be harmed, the duty of care can be extended beyond normal school or working hours.
- Employers / their representatives should effectively communicate to their stakeholders that engaging in cyberbullying can have serious consequences including an individual being the subject of a police criminal investigation.

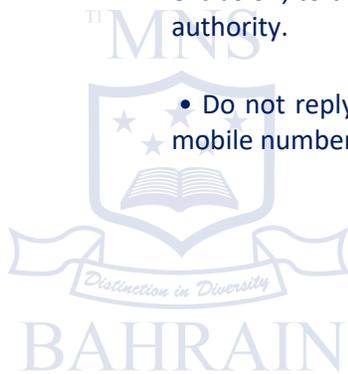
11.2 School / workplace cyberbullying policies:

Each year, individual students/employees/relevant others should sign an "Acceptable Use Policy" regarding the proper use of all available technologies in the school/workplace.

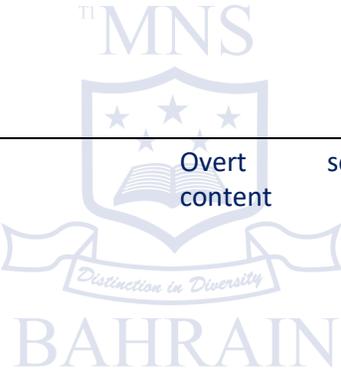
11.3 Recommended strategies for individuals to respond to instances of cyberbullying:

The following general strategies are recommended for helping victims of cyberbullying:

- Report all cyberbullying or hostile behaviour in cyberspace, including intentional exclusion, to the appropriate parent, trusted adult, line manager, or school / workplace authority.
- Do not reply to further messages / posts from the bully and, if possible, block their mobile number or email address.



11.4 Summary of direct-action options when responding to cyberbullying in school or T1 MNS workplaces

| <i>Where the cyberbullying contains</i> | <i>then the action to be taken may include</i> | <i>and responsibility for such action lies with the</i> |
|---|---|---|
| Bullying | <p>(If committed by a student)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with parents • Suspending / performing other actions (as per school and / or system policy) • Counselling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRINCIPAL / DELEGATE OF THE PRINCIPLE who can decide to notify the school principal / school leadership team. (depending on the severity of the incident (s)) |
| | <p>(If implemented by employees)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate care policy • Initiate the process of anti-discrimination, harassment and bullying policies. • Counselling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRINCIPAL (for school employees) Who informs the school leadership team /management committee executive (advising the principal as appropriate), who in turn can choose to inform the Board of T1 MNS (depending on the severity of the incident). • Board (MNS employee) |
| | <p>(Unless committed by a student / employee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to the safeguarding committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRINCIPAL (for offenses at school) which notifies the School Leadership Team / Board Members (if necessary, advice given to the principal) who in turn may decide to notify the Board (depending on the severity of the incident / incidents) • Board (for T1 MNS related crimes) |
|  <p>Overt sexual content</p> | <p>(If committed by a student)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact child protection authorities • Contact parents • Suspend/take other actions (according to school and/or system policy) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRINCIPAL which notifies the School Leadership Team / Board Members (if necessary, advice given to the principal) who in turn may decide to notify the Board (depending on the severity of the |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling | incident / incidents) |
| | <p>(If committed by an employee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Committee and Behavioural committee • Counselling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRINCIPAL which notifies the School Leadership Team / Board Members (if necessary, advice given to the principal) who in turn may decide to notify the Board (depending on the severity of the incident / incidents) |
| | <p>(If committed by other than a student / employee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the lead of the safeguarding committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRINCIPAL (for offenses at school) which notifies the School Leadership Team / Board Members (if necessary, advice given to the principal) who in turn may decide to notify the Board (depending on the severity of the incident / incidents) |
| <p>Threats to life / sexual assault / child protection offences / other criminal activity</p>  | <p>(If Committed by a student)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the police (mandatory) • Contact child Protection authorities • Contact parents • Suspending / performing other actions <p>(as per school and / or system policy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRINCIPAL which notifies the School Leadership Team / Board Members (if necessary, advice given to the principal) who in turn may decide to notify the Board (depending on the severity of the incident / incidents)... who then steps back and allows Police investigation to run its course ... who then considers school / system response according to policy should the Police investigation find no case to answer |
| | <p>(If Committed by an employee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the police (mandatory) • Initiate care police • Counselling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRINCIPAL (for school employees) ...which notifies the School Leadership Team / Board Members (if necessary, advice given to the principal) who in turn may decide to notify the Board (depending on the severity of the incident / incidents) ... who then steps |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | | back and allows Police investigation to run its course ... who then considers school / system response according to policy should the Police investigation find no case to answer |
| | <p>(If Committed by other than a student / employee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the police (mandatory) | <p>PRINCIPAL (for offenses at school) which notifies the School Leadership Team / Board Members (if necessary, advice given to the principal) who in turn may decide to notify the Board (depending on the severity of the incident / incidents) ... who then steps back and allows Police investigation to run its course</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">NOTE</p> <p>If the school/workplace authority or individual employee knows or realizes that children/employees/others are being cyberbullied outside of normal school/working hours, the duty of care can be extended to these times (from a legal and ethical point of view), and May require direct action or escalation to solve the problem.</p> | | |

