



CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

AIM:

- To provide a safe & welcoming learning environment, promote welfare of all students and make the school a place where all students are respected and valued.
- To provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with safeguarding issues.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment to the continued development of good practices and sound procedures so that safeguarding concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the child.
- To integrate cyber safeguarding issues into the curriculum

MAIN PRINCIPLES:

- Children thrive in a safe and welcoming environment thus making it conducive to learning.
- Child safety and protection are given paramount importance at GEMS New Millennium School.
- It is the responsibility of all staff of the school to safeguard and promote student wellbeing & welfare.
- All pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate and adequate support from the senior management of the school who will follow the guidelines detailed in this policy while doing so.
- The policy will be reviewed annually, unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an earlier date of review.

DEFINITIONS:

Child protection is the process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. It involves measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse and neglect

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing the impairment of their health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective and nurturing care and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, in either a **paid or voluntary** capacity.

EDUCATION

PO Box 391740, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
+971 (0)4 445 2900 +971 (0)4 453 4256
gemsnms-alkhail.com



gemseducation.com
linkedin.com/company/gems-education
gemsnms.alkhail
@gemsnms_alkhail



Child refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

Key Staff:

Principal & Allegation Manager	Ms. Fatima Martin Email: fatima.m_nms@gemsedu.com
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) & Deputy Allegation Manager	Ms. Christine De Noronha (Vice Principal) Email: christine.n_nms@gemsedu.com
Deputy DSLs	Ms. Michelle Verghese (DDSL - Kindergarten) Email: michelle.v_nms@gemsedu.com Ms. Sweta Chakravarty (DDSL - Grades 1-12) Email: sweta.c_nms@gemsedu.com Ms. Shalini Fernandes (DDSL - SEND) Email: shalini.f_nms@gemsedu.com
Safeguarding Officers	Preetam Shetty (MSO) Flavia Crasto (HR Officer) Dr Noor Mohammed (School Doctor)

THE SCHOOL HAS ENSURED THAT THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL) AND DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING LEADS:

- Are members of the Senior Leadership Team
- Are appropriately trained. The Deputy DSLs are trained to the same level as the DSL and in the absence of DSL carry out the functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of students. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputies will assume all of the functions listed.
- Other SLT members have also received DSL training
- Act as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- Are alert to the specific needs of vulnerable students, including those with special educational needs and other vulnerabilities.
- Keep detailed records of all concerns when noted and reported by staff or when disclosed by a child, ensuring that such records are stored securely and reported onward.
- Refer cases of suspected neglect and/or abuse to children's social care or police in accordance with this guidance and local procedure (in consultation with GEMS Corporate Office)
- Ensure that when a child leaves the school, their information is passed to their new school and the child's social worker/counsellor is informed.





- Develop effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
- Ensure that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood this policy (Appendix 2).
- Ensure that the child protection policy is updated annually; keep a record of staff attendance at child protection trainings.
- Make this policy as well as the GEMS safeguarding and child protection statement freely available as a link or PDF document on the school website for easy access for parents and is annually reviewed and updated.

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

- Ensure that the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- Allocate sufficient resources to enable the DSL to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- Ensure that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively
- Ensure that child's safety and welfare is addressed through the curriculum.
- See to it that Child Protection Policy and Procedures that are in line with the regulations of the government of UAE, reviewed annually and made available to parents.
- Safer recruitment procedures that include the requirement for appropriate checks are being followed.
- Plan Targeted Trainings to ensure all staff receive child protection training, as well as subsequent refresher trainings. The DSL should receive refresher training at two-yearly intervals
- Arrange for all staff including temporary staff and volunteers to be made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection.
- Ensure that the staff are aware of the Staff Code of Conduct and practice the same (Appendix 1).

HOMEROOM TEACHERS

- Homeroom teachers will, in most cases, be the first person to raise a concern. They will collate detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and liaise with the designated safeguarding staff. They will ensure that any safeguarding concern that may occur is recorded on the GEMS Safeguarding platform, Guard, before they leave the school premises.





SCHOOL NURSE

- It is the role of the school nurse to ensure that relevant information obtained in the course of their duties is communicated to the designated teacher. Types of injuries, attendance and frequency are recorded.

WHOLE SCHOOL STAFF

- All school staff have a responsibility to identify and report suspected abuse and to ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils in their school. In doing so, they should seek advice and support as necessary from the Principal/DSL.
- Staff are expected to provide a safe and caring environment in which children can develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings and opinions.
- Children must be treated with respect within a framework of agreed and understood behaviour.

All school staff are expected to:

- Be aware of signs and symptoms of abuse
- Report concerns to the DSL as appropriate
- Keep clear, dated, factual and confidential records of safeguarding concerns.
- Follow all guidelines, practice and policy relating to safeguarding as laid down by the school, GEMS School Support Centre or UAE Law.
- The school also has a duty under UAE Law to report any abuse or suspected abuse to the Police.

INTIMATE CARE

Before starting school, the child should be toilet trained and be able to carry out the following independently:

1. Tell an adult when they require the toilet.
2. Pull down/ pull up clothing in order to go to the toilet.
3. Wipe/ clean themselves after toileting.
4. Where applicable, make use of the handheld toilet hose.
5. Wash and dry hands thoroughly.

* Diaper-pants/ nappies are not allowed.

- Students are supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities.
- Staff encourage each student to do as much for themselves as they can. This may mean, for example, giving the student responsibility for washing themselves.





- Individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for particular students as appropriate to suit their circumstances. These plans will include full risk assessment to address issues such as moving and handling, personal safety of the student and the staff.
- All students who require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times; the students' welfare and dignity are of paramount importance.
- The student is aware of each procedure that is carried out and the reasons for it.
- Each student's right to privacy is respected. Careful consideration is given to each student's situation to determine how many staff might need to be present when a student needs help with intimate care.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Our school understands that children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities can be more vulnerable to exploitation/abuse and are required to have enhanced access to support systems.

They may be isolated / feel isolated from their peers and find it difficult to express their concerns.

No concern should be overlooked or passed off as a symptom of SEN or disability, including:

- Communication
- Toileting
- Understanding right and wrong
- Physical appearance
- Unusual or overly physical attachment to staff members or peers.

Staff must be vigilant to the needs and concerns of these children who are among the most vulnerable. Additional barriers can exist when recognizing abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

- Children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication barriers (including EAL needs) and difficulties in overcoming these barriers
- Are at a higher risk of peer group isolation
- Extra pastoral support is provided by Heads of Sections, Vice Principal, Well-being Counsellor, Teachers and Inclusion Dept. for children with SEN and disabilities.





Ways to address the safeguarding needs of students of determination

Issue	Approach
Inability to express feelings	Use feelings chart as a barometer. Begin class or morning with discussion of how the student feels.
Difficulty making decisions.	Use social stories to teach the strategies to solve problems and provide sample problems so the students can try it.
Lack of cooperation with others (anyone at a danger of peer rejection).	Structure learning projects to maximize use of cooperative activities and solutions. Reduce competitive activities.
Heightened interpersonal conflict.	Teach conflict resolution and peer mediation skills.
Changes in behaviour	Child Protection team (HOSs, Teachers, Inclusion Team, Well-being Counsellor – whoever interacts with the student) increases one on one interaction with the student to provide opportunities for communication.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (ATTENDANCE)

NMS recognizes that regular attendance and punctuality at school is important to the well-being and safety of all of our students and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them at school.

Attendance is monitored closely and action is taken where concerns are raised.

The attendance policy that is reviewed regularly by the school leaders and Governors monitor the impact of the policy in securing good attendance and punctuality.

Where a student has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all *reasonable steps** have been taken by the school to establish the whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to the GEMS Head of Safeguarding and ensure this is recorded on the Phoenix HSE online reporting system.

**reasonable steps* may include:

Telephone calls to all known contacts

Emails & SMS to parents

Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered.





CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

RECOGNIZING ABUSE

Abuse and neglect are recognized as forms of maltreatment. There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Physical abuse involving hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only for meeting the needs of another person. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities.

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.

Bullying is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. NMS follows zero tolerance to any form of bullying.

All incidents of bullying should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the anti-bullying procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in the personal, social and health education curriculum. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Principal and the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

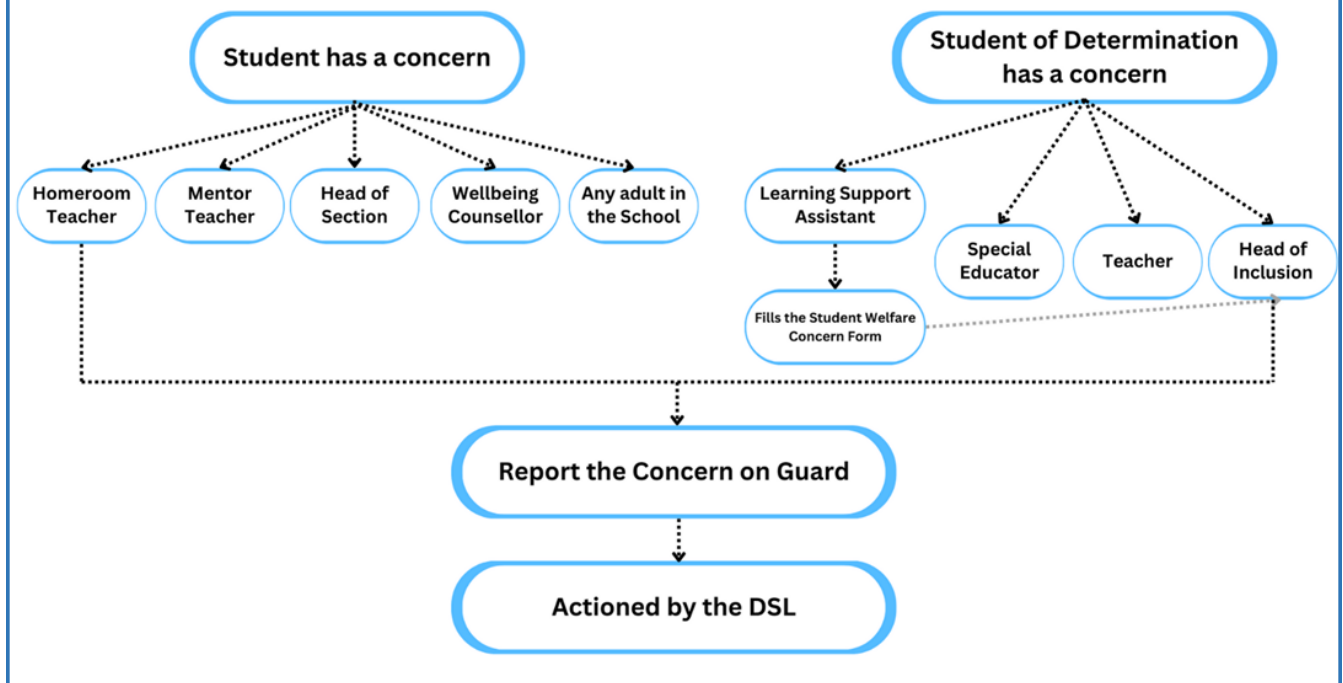


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Process for Students to Report Safeguarding Concerns (Student Disclosure)



INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE

A child who is being abused and/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

EDUCATION



- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

It is very important that you report your concerns – you do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.

DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE OR ALLEGATION BY A CHILD OR ANOTHER PERSON:

Children in school may feel safe and secure enough to make a disclosure of past abuse or an allegation of current abuse or neglect to a member of staff whom they feel they can trust. A disclosure of this kind can arise at any time and may have been anticipated by staff or equally be unexpected. In these situations, school staff should:

- Demonstrate that they are willing to listen to what the child has to say
- Be prepared to listen impartially to the child, giving appropriate support, but without introducing their own opinions or judgement
- Be aware of documenting requirements
- Remember that they are working as part of a team, and must never make an unconditional promise of confidentiality to a child
- Record any concerns on Guard without undue delay and report to the DSL or the Deputy
- Be aware that what the child has to say may be uncomfortable or distressing to them, and make clear to them that they may seek support, help or advice for themselves if required.

If a disclosure or allegation is made by any other person (parent, family member, another professional, etc.) regarding a safeguarding or child protection issue, the same principles regarding documenting and evidence will apply. Adults should be offered the opportunity to make a written statement, which should be signed and dated by them, and by any witness(es) to the statement.

This should be uploaded to the specific concern on Guard.

The school’s Allegation Manager or Deputy Allegation Manager must be notified immediately of any allegation or disclosure that calls into question the competence or suitability of another professional person (whether or not they are an employee of GEMS Education.) Such information must be treated as being strictly confidential. Verbal notifications of this kind that are made to the Allegation Manager or Deputy Allegation Manager must also be reported electronically through the Guard case management platform. Allegations Manager must notify school HR for all Allegations as per the Employee Disciplinary Policy.





Key points to remember for taking action are:

- Record your concern on Guard before you leave the school premises.
- If the DSL is not around, ensure the information is shared with the most senior person in the school that day
- 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.

If you suspect that a child is at risk for harm:

There will be occasions when you suspect that a child may be at serious risk, but you have no 'real' evidence. The child's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre or you may have noticed other physical but inconclusive signs. In these circumstances, you should try to give the child the opportunity to talk. The signs you have noticed may be due to a variety of factors and it is fine to ask the child if they are alright or if you can help in any way.

Start recording these early concerns. If, following your conversation, you remain concerned, you should discuss your concerns with the designated person.

Notifying Parents:

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL 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, then advice will first be sought from the child protection officer at the GEMS corporate office.

Support for pupils and staff

The Principal will make all reasonable attempts to protect and otherwise support pupils who have disclosed information about possible child abuse incidents. Dealing with a disclosure from a child is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff concerned should consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will act as a central point of contact, offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support where necessary, seeking advice and guidance from GEMS Corporate Office as appropriate.





Confidentiality

Members of staff have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities.

Staff and volunteers are expected:

- To treat information they receive about pupils in a discreet and confidential manner.
- If they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them, seek advice from the Principal/DSL - who will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.
- To be cautious when passing information to others about a pupil.
- Never guarantee confidentiality about a safeguarding concern (including parents / carers or pupils), or promise to keep a secret.
- In accordance with statutory requirements, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and may require further referral to and subsequent investigation by appropriate authorities.

Records & Monitoring

Well-kept records are essential to good Safeguarding practice. Concerns and disclosures should be recorded without delay on Guard by the member of staff who receives. The DSL, in consultation with the Principal will then decide on further action and any appropriate monitoring programme for the pupil.

When pupils with records on Guard pass on to their next school, the DSL is responsible for transferring information judged to be relevant to the child's next school.

Staff Training

All staff receive Safeguarding training as part of the CPD programme. Staff are informed of any changes subsequently made.

Safeguarding & The Curriculum (Empowering Students to keep themselves safe)

The school curriculum is important in the protection of children. We aim to ensure that curriculum (Moral Studies - curriculum based on the PSHE curriculum, Commonsense Curriculum), hidden curriculum (values and ethos propagated in the school), school Assemblies meet the following objectives

- Developing pupil self-esteem;
- Developing communication skills;
- Informing about all aspects of risk, including on-line safety;
- Developing strategies for self-protection
- Developing a sense of the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour

- Developing non-abusive behaviour between pupils and adults.





Safer Recruitment

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff. Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- Complete an application form
- Provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children. In the absence of a reference, a Risk Assessment is filled in
- Provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- Be checked through the Criminal Records Bureau as appropriate to their role
- Be interviewed.
- All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarization with the school's child protection policy.
- All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection policy (see: appendix 3).

E-Safety

Most of our children use devices such as mobile phones and computers at some time for entertainment, communication and education. They could be exposed to harm during the use of devices. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. The school's Ed-tech policy explains how we try to keep children safe in school. The purpose of Internet use is to raise educational standards and to promote student achievement. Internet access is an entitlement for students who show a responsible and mature approach to its use. The school has a Digital leader who manages E safety with a team of ICT personnel.

- NMS provides students with safe and secure Internet access as part of their learning experience.
- The school's Internet access is designed exclusively for student use and includes filtering age appropriate material for the student.
- Students are taught what is acceptable as per the rules and are given clear objectives for Internet use.
- They are given clear guidance on how to deal with inappropriate internet content and are educated on the responsible and safe use of the Internet and other technologies.
- We ensure that the use of Internet derived materials by staff and by students complies with copyright law, students are made aware of plagiarism and issues relating to work research being undertaken for coursework.

- E-Safety rules are shared with students and students are informed that the network and Internet use is monitored by firewall.





- Any stray cases of cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

Transport Safety

The school transport operates in two emirates – Dubai & Sharjah

Procedures and policies laid down by respective road transport authorities are followed by the school. The school transport provider has a separate office with central monitoring system installed and designated staff (both onsite and online) to supervise and manage bus operations. Following practices are in place to ensure safety of children while on board:

1. All buses are equipped with GPS tracking devices. These devices enable live tracking of vehicles and students' movements on real time basis.
2. All buses are fitted with scanners. Students are issued with bar coded ID cards and the boarding/de-boarding is captured on real-time basis
3. All buses are installed with video surveillance system (CCTVs).
4. Bus driver and attendant check the empty bus to ensure no child is left behind and the risk is completely eliminated through the display of the 'No Passenger Board'
5. The exact location of the bus is monitored live on the control room screen located in the corporate office of the transport provider, from the beginning to the end of the journey.
6. In case of any traffic or delay, all parents are updated via SMS informing them about the delay
7. When students reach their destination, they are escorted by the attendants to ensure their safety while crossing the streets.
8. The drivers and attendants of the buses that are used by the students of determination are made aware of any behaviours that the children might display during the journey and what needs to be done in such a case





Please see Appendices below:

APPENDIX 1

CODE OF ETHICAL PRACTICE FOR SCHOOL STAFF AT NMS:

All school staff are valued members of the school community. Everyone is expected to set and maintain the highest standards for their own performance, to work as part of a team and to be an excellent role model for our children.

All school staff should:

- read and understand all of the school's safeguarding and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, physical contact, e-safety plans and information-sharing
- ask the child's permission before doing anything for them which is of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing, etc.
- treat all children with respect and make adjustments to meet individual needs
- involve children in decision-making which affects them
- encourage positive and safe behaviour among children
- be a good listener
- be alert to changes in child's behaviour
- recognize that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- maintain appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoiding the use of sexualized or derogatory language
- be aware/sensitive that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of neglect and or abuse.
- place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations
- demonstrate a clear understanding of and commitment to non-discriminatory practice
- be alert to, and report appropriately, any behaviour that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm
- encourage all children to reach their full potential.
- never condone inappropriate behaviour by children or staff
- take responsibility for their own continuing professional development
- refrain from any action that would bring the school into disrepute
- value themselves and seek appropriate support for any issue that may have an adverse effect on their professional practice.

Staff name _____

Signature _____
Date _____
EDUCATION



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مدرسة جيمس نيو ميلينيوم الخليل
GEMS New Millennium School
AL KHAIL



PO Box 391740, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
+971 (0)4 445 2900 +971 (0)4 453 4256
gemsnms-alkhail.com



gemseducation.com
linkedin.com/company/gems-education
gemsnms.alkhail
@gemsnms_alkhail



APPENDIX 2

CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Name:

Date of joining school:

Post:

Date of induction:

Name and designation of staff member responsible for induction:

I confirm that I have received and read the School Child Protection Policy.

I have been made aware of my duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

The procedure for reporting concerns about a child has been explained to me.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Please sign and return this form to the designated senior person:



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THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S
INTERNATIONAL AWARD





APPENDIX 3

Photographic Consent Form (For students under 18 years of age)

At the NMS we take the issue of child safety very seriously, and this includes the use of images of students. We ask that parents/legal guardians consent to the school taking and using photographs and images of their children by signing the media NOC form.

MEDIA NOC

I, Parent/Legal Guardian, of _____ confirm that I have read and accept these Terms and Conditions in full.

Use of image/recordings. The School may wish to develop on-line classroom viewing for parents and prospective parents, film classes for teacher professional development materials, or include student images/footage in advertising/promotion materials. The School would not compensate the Parents for the Student for the use of such images/footage and the Parents' consent, if provided, is irrevocable.

Please write YES here _____ if you provide your consent.

Parent/Guardian Name:

Signature:

Dated:





APPENDIX 4

Student Welfare Concern Form - for Students of Determination

To be filled by LSAs and submitted to the Head of Inclusion

If you suspect the child may be suffering abuse or neglect, or you have received a disclosure of abuse from a child, or you have heard about an allegation of abuse, you must complete the child protection record of concern form instead, and hand it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Child's full name: _____

Date of this record: _____

Why are you concerned about this child?

What have you observed and when?

What have you heard and when?

What have you been told and when?

Have you spoken to the child? Yes No





Have you spoken to anyone else about your concern? Yes No

Who?

Is this the first time you have been concerned about this child? Yes No

Further details:

Class

Class teacher

Your name and designation

Signature

Last reviewed - April 2024.

