

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The safeguarding of children and young people from harm is our highest priority. Our students have a right to feel safe and protected from significant physical and emotional harm both inside and outside of school. This policy is a crucial part of promoting the welfare of our students; it is designed to inform our staff regarding the signs of child abuse and to equip them with the knowledge on what to do in the event of suspected abuse. This policy defines abuse, outlines signs of abuse and explains the procedures for investigating and reporting suspected cases.

What is child abuse and neglect?

Child abuse covers a wide variety of issues. At a basic level, child abuse is an action or lack of action by the parent, guardian or custodian seriously endangering child's physical or mental health. Sexual abuse, physical abuse or allowing a child to commit a sex offense are all examples of child abuse or neglect.

Child neglect results from the inability, refusal, or neglect of parent, guardian, or custodian to supply a child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or supervision.

Possible common child abuse:

Neglect – The persistent or severe neglect of a child which results in impairment of health.

Physical Abuse – Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering

Sexual – Actual or likely exploitation of a child by involvement in sexual activities

Emotional – Actual or likely severe adverse effects on the emotional and behavioral development of a child by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection.

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

Bullying – Any persistent and uninvited behavior which insults, hurts or intimidates someone (includes cyber bullying).

Signs of possible abuse include: (These are not exhaustive or necessarily indicative of abuse).

Neglect – Constant hunger or tiredness; frequent lateness or absence, poor personal hygiene, untreated medical problems; running away, stealing, low self-esteem.

Physical – Unexplained injuries/bruises; improbable or evasive excuses, untreated injuries; fear of treatment or medical help, fear of physical contact, fear of going home, over aggressive or defensive tendencies, fear of removing clothes, bites, lashes, facial injuries.

Sexual – Tendency to cling, tendency to cry, genital itching, acting 'like a baby', distrust of familiar adults, wetting and/or soiling, fear of undressing, depression, fearful/panic attacks.

Emotional – Physical, emotional, developmental delay; over-reaction to mistakes; tearful, fear of losing, fear of parents being contacted, stealing, thumb-sucking, rocking, anxiety etc.

Child protection policy at Knowledgeum Academy:

Knowledgeum academy has zero tolerance against child abuse of any nature.

Staff should be concerned if a student:

- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with the child's activities.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Frequently has injuries even when apparently reasonable explanations are given.
- Offers confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behavior, performance or attitude.
- Indulges in sexual behavior which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age.
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been harmed.

All School Staff will:

- Report a suspected case of abuse and/or neglect upon immediate discovery
- Supervise students at all times while in school's care.
- Understand this policy to address suspected or alleged student abuse or neglect cases.
- Attend and participate in mandated student protection trainings.

Child Protection Team Will:

- Implement the child protection policy and procedures.
- Encourage good practice by promoting and championing the child protection policy and procedures.
- Monitor and review the child protection policy and procedures to ensure they remain current and fit for purpose.
- Regularly report to the Management/Committee.
- Raise awareness of the Code of Conduct for working with children to parents/guardian, adults and children.
- Challenge behavior which breaches the Code of Conduct.
- Keep abreast of developments in the field of child protection by liaising with the Child Protection Officer, attending relevant trainings or events.
- Organize appropriate training for all adults working/volunteering with children in the school.
- Establish and maintain contact with local statutory agencies including the police and social services.
- Respond appropriately to disclosures or concerns which relate to the well-being of a child.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and actions taken.

- Where required liaise with the Child Protection Officer and/or statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.

Principal will:

- Comply with the provisions of this policy.
- Publish a Child Protection and Safeguarding policy to protect students from any abuse and neglect provided it meets the minimum requirements of what is included in this policy and does not contradict any of its provisions.
- Ensure that procedures to prevent situations that could lead to the abuse or neglect of students are in place and understood by all school staff and leaders.
- Ensure the supervision of students at all times while in School's care.
- Ensure that there is priority emphasis within the school on the protection of the students and for taking immediate actions when there is suspicion of cases of student abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that students can safely report their concerns about abuse and/or neglect without fear of retribution or punishment.
- Ensure that staff and others can safely report their concerns about the potential exposure of any student to abuse and/or neglect without fear of retribution or punishment.
- Gain views from students and parents regarding security and protection within the school.
- Immediately report any case of potential abuse and/or neglect of students as stated by this policy.
- Ensure that all staff and administrators targeted for student protection training, have fully attended and participated in all training sessions.
- Conduct Orientation sessions for parents/guardians upon student registration or enrollment and at the start of every school year to promote this policy and to inform them of their roles and responsibilities, and their rights and duties.
- Immediately suspend any staff member who is suspected of an offence involving student abuse and/or neglect on a temporary basis until the suspicion is adjudicated.

Parents/Legal Guardians will:

- Cooperate with the school administration and staff, answer all inquiries related to the student's behavior, academic performance and respond to their feedback and guidance.
- Attend all scheduled school parent meetings.
- Communicate any concerns, observations, or changes in their child's behavior to the school administration or to the concerned school staff.

Recording Disclosure:

When a pupil has made a disclosure, the member of staff should:

- Make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation;
 - Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court;
 - Record the date, time, place, and any noticeable non-verbal behavior and the words used by the child;
 - Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injuries;
 - Record statements and observations, rather than interpretations or assumptions.

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 afterward)



Report to the Child Protection Team Lead & to the principal

Child protection Team

Ms. Manaswini (Psychology faculty/ counsellor)

Ms. Anusha

Ms. Anesha

Ms. Deepa

Activities at Knowledgeum Academy

1. Child abuse – awareness program for students once a term.
2. Child abuse and Law of land – awareness workshop for all faculty twice in a year.

3. POSCO Act – awareness workshop for all faculty once in a year.
4. Child abuse and neglect awareness program for parents once in a year.

Procedure and Action:

In case of an incident of child abuse where any of the academy staff is involved,

1. Immediate suspension and enquiry.
2. Police/competent government authority will be informed for further procedure.
3. If convicted, dismissed from the Academy.

If a student is involved,

1. Counselling sessions as directed by the child protection team.
2. Counselling session for parents.
3. Depending on the nature of the incident, further action as per the government guidelines.
4. Suspension or dismissal from the academy, if there is a threat or fear for any other student at the academy.

Reference

<https://www.cityschool.ae/child-protection-policy/>

<https://www.writinglaw.com/laws-related-to-child-abuse-in-india/>

<https://faqs.in.gov/hc/en-us/articles/115005051327-Who-is-required-to-report-child-abuse-or-neglect->