

# Newton British School Muraikh

*An International community of learners striving for excellence and celebrating success*



## Child Protection Policy 2023-24

### Aims:

The aims of this **Child Protection Policy** is to ensure that students, parents and staff are aware of the procedure to be followed in the event of a child protection issue arising within the school.

### Objectives:

To ensure that the students of Newton British School Muraikh (NBS) are protected from experiencing significant harm to the best of our abilities.

### Principles of Child Protection:

- 1) The welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- 2) A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents, carers and families.
- 3) Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.

### What counts as a Child Protection concern?

The types of significant harm students may experience are physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

- **Physical Abuse** is that which results in actual physical harm from an interaction such as severe physical punishment, beating, hitting, slapping, punching or others.
- **Emotional abuse** happens when a child's needs for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Examples include being shouted at, being critical of and having inappropriate expectations of a child.
- **Sexual abuse** is when a child is used by another person for their own or someone else's gratification.
- **Neglect** can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and/or medical care.

The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.

**Note:** NBS respects the culture and customs of Qatar. It also recognises the limitations in addressing child protection issues while governed by Qatari law and support systems. The school shall be guided by the advice of the Supreme Education Council in all serious cases of abuse.

### Prevention:

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Students are encouraged to speak to their class teacher or the school counsellor if they are experiencing or in fear of experiencing any form of abuse.

If parents are concerned for the wellbeing of their children they can also make an appointment to speak with a School Counsellor.

## **Confidentiality:**

If a student tells a teacher something in confidence the child must be made aware that if the subject is serious and raises cause for concern, then the teacher is obliged to report it to their year leader and potentially senior management. Staff should not promise to keep secrets.

Other information shared by students in confidence should be kept as such and not spread amongst staff.

## **When a student discloses abuse to a member of staff:**

- If a student tells their teacher that they have experienced a form of abuse either in or outside of the school, the class teacher should record the information immediately, citing the exact words used by the child. The teacher should not question the child but simply let them tell their story.
- This recorded information should then be passed to the Year Leader or in the case of EYFS, the Co-ordinator.
- The DSL can be consulted by relevant co-ordinators to help assess the information given.
- If the allegation is of serious concern or if there are two previous recordings from the same child raising similar concerns; the information needs to be passed to either the relevant coordinators.
- If the student has other siblings in the school, their records should also be considered to help build a broader picture.
- The DSL along with the relevant coordinator must bring the information to the Principal if the situation warrants it.
- A decision will be made by Principal regarding the action to be taken.
- Each case will be reviewed on its own merit, prior to contacting the student's parents.
- It will be the decision of the CEO whether to contact the Supreme Education Council or if necessary the Police to help find a resolution to the problem.

## **Record keeping:**

Allegations of harm made by students will be recorded by staff and kept in the locked pupils Child Protection File maintained by the Principal. The student's school file will be alerted that there is further information in the Child Protection File but this information can only be accessed by the Designated Child Protection Person or Principal.

The Designated Child Protection Person at NBS Muraikh is Mr James Harrigan and the Assistant Designated Child Protection Officer is Ms. Marwa (Arabic Coordinator).

## **Domestic abuse and the impact on children:**



Although a child may not be physically abused, they can experience significant harm in other forms. A child can experience emotional abuse by overhearing or witnessing adults fighting. This can have a huge emotional and psychological impact on a child.

Children love and look up to their parent's; when their loved ones shout at one another this impacts the child's stability. It affects their self-esteem, their self-confidence, they may become aggressive, have temper tantrums. Some children internalise their worries and become reclusive or turn to self-harming or develop eating disorders. The most common behaviours linked to hostile home environments are anger, anxieties and depression in children.

If a student discloses a volatile home environment the staff member should:

- Listen carefully and let the child tell you what happened in his/her own time.
- Don't use probing or leading questions that lead by assumptions. Use short open-ended questions that the child can expand on.
- Reassure the student that he/she is not to blame for what happened (or is happening).
- Let the child know he/she is very brave to tell you about it. They will feel better for simply talking.
- Try to stay calm and not let the child see if you are shocked.

A teacher's role in a situation like this is to help the child keep themselves from experiencing harm. The teacher can recommend that the student remove themselves from the situation to the best of their ability. Suggest going to their bedroom to play or to put on some music. Remind the child that the situation at home is not their fault, the child is not to blame but neither can they fix the situation.

### **Understanding changing behaviours:**

Sometimes a parent or teacher will notice a change in a child's behaviour. The child may become more withdrawn in class, they may appear tearful. The child may be rude, or aggressive. A change in a child's behaviour at home or in school may indicate that something is upsetting them. This could be something in school such as bullying or something at home such as a parent travelling overseas.

Ask the child if everything is alright. It is helpful when parents and teachers communicate to see if there is an explanation for the changes in the child. Open communication between home and school will often allow a quicker solution to the problem.

There are occasions when children are aggressive in school. Some children, particularly in early years may hit out at other students. If the child is hit at home, they will think that it is ok to hit too. This behaviour must be addressed immediately, teaching the child that it is not ok to hit or to harass another child.

### **Children missing from education:**

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It is in every child's best interest that they attend school every day. Allowing a child to miss school is depriving them of a better education. Every effort should be made by staff to communicate with parents where the child's attendance in school is less than satisfactory.

## **Safe mental health for staff:**

It can be extremely upsetting to hear a student disclose that they have been hurt by someone. It is very important to write this information down and pass it on. The class teacher has then done all they can do. The school counsellor is available to speak with the Class Teacher/Year Leader should they wish to talk through the situation.

***Next Review date: May 2024.***

## **References:**

Every child matters, UK document 2003.

Working Together to Safeguard Children, UK document 2013.