

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

POLICY INFORMATION	
Policy Owner	Heads of Counselors
Applicable To	Parents – Students - Staff
Last Updated	2024
Next Review Date	2028

Policy Review and Amendment

The Lebanese School Qatar reserves the right to review, amend, or update this policy at any time to ensure alignment with school needs, applicable regulations, accreditation requirements, and best educational practices. Any approved revisions shall take effect from the date of publication unless otherwise specified.

1. INTRODUCTION & AIMS

Transportation to and from school is a service that LSQ provides to its students. It is the students' right to enjoy a safe ride on the school bus free from intimidation, harassment, and danger. Any violation of this right will result in jeopardizing this privilege and might pose a risk on the driver's concentration and hence the students' safety.

2. CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT

Appropriate behavior of adults towards children, and of children towards other children:

- Treat all children equally and with respect. Do not discriminate based on age, gender, nationality, class, visual appearance, language ability, physical or mental disability or any other factor that may distinguish them from others. Do not show preferential treatment.
- Report any incident or concern where a child may be at risk of harm.
- Ensure that confidential information relating to children and their families is not shared anywhere with anyone without full informed consent.
- Be aware of and always recognize the power balance between an adult and a child and behave in a child friendly way.

3. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse is any act done or neglected to be done, which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of a safe and healthy development.

Types of abuse

There are four major types of abuse:

- **Physical Abuse:** Actual or potential physical harm by another person (adult or child). This may involve hitting, shaking, pushing, burning or other physical acts.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts the child's emotional development negatively. This includes restriction of movement, degrading treatment, humiliation, bullying (including cyber bullying), threats, discrimination, ridicule or any other non- physical forms of treatment.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. Sexual abuse also encompasses the involvement of children in the viewing or production of sexual images, witnessing sexual activities and the encouragement of children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect:** Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs - which can result in serious impairment in their overall healthy development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as well as provide them with their basic needs (nutrition, shelter, and safety).

4. REPORTING INCIDENTS OF CHILD ABUSE

Any of the four types of abuse could be internal or external: internal is when the alleged perpetrator is a fellow LSQ staff member and external is when the alleged perpetrator is someone in the child's community, i.e. caregiver, family member, neighbor etc....

Who to Report to?

In the event where staff members become suspicious of or aware of such a case, the following steps should be followed:

- The staff member will report his/her suspicions to the head of section.
- The HOS will inform the superintendent and together they will discuss the case with the school counselor.
- The counselor will evaluate the child's safety / exposure to ongoing abuse.
- In the case of external abuse, the superintendent will call Child Protection Services (Aman Center) and local authorities (external).

LSQ Response to Internal Abuse

The school is committed to its legal and moral obligation to safeguard the safety of every student. When notified about an internal case of abuse, the school will strive to take the following steps:

- The school will conduct a formal investigation aided by the comprehensive network of security cameras around the school.
- Staff member will be suspended from duty.
- The school will follow legal considerations.

5. REPORTING ABUSE - GUIDELINES

(Direct Observation / Disclosure from a witness / Direct Disclosure from the child)

- Ensure safety of the child.
- Record information and document hard copy reports of concern (See Appendix 1). Information to include in the report are:
 - Child's name, address, DOB, gender, and grade.
 - Parents names, address, home phone and workplace
 - Nature and extent of suspected abuse
 - Information of previous injuries or background data
 - Identity of alleged abuser (if known)
- Do not decide whether incident deserves investigation, always report incident.
- Do not talk about it to other as accusations could put the child/staff at risk.

6. RESPONDING TO DIRECT DISCLOSURE FROM THE CHILD

- Listen and respond in a calm and supportive manner.
- Do not lead with questions. Just listen, let the child explain in his/her own words.
- Do not pressure for a great amount of detail.
- Do not make judgmental or negative comments about the abuser, as it is often someone the child loves.
- Do not make any promises.
- Offer reassurance that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing by reporting the abuse to you.
- Inform the child that the school adopts a child protection policy, which requires us to report cases of abuse to help students and provide them with the protection needed.

Child Protection Policy

- Ensure physical safety and psychological wellbeing. Stay with the child and make sure they are in a safe place. Refer directly to the counselor and inform HOS.
- Report exactly what the child has said. Be careful to avoid any inferences you may have made.
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure information is only shared with the individuals who need to know (counselor and HOS).

7. PREVENTION

- ProtectEd classes - teaching students about safety
- Providing staff with Child Protection handbook
- Establishing Child Protection Team consisting of Counselors, Nurses, HOS

APPENDIX 1

Suspected Child Abuse / Neglect Form

Information about the child:

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Grade:

Name of Parent/Caregiver:

Home Phone:

Address:

Work Phone:

Does the child have any siblings? If yes, please provide details.

(Name, gender, attending school, grade...)

Yes

No

Does the child need medical care?

Yes

No

Note any concerns regarding incident/unusual behavior:

Name of individual reporting abuse:

Position:

Date: