



## STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

### 1. Introduction

It is every student's right to learn in a safe, inclusive, and supportive educational environment that upholds, cares for, respects, and protects their dignity, wellbeing, and individual rights. This policy sets out Merryland International School's obligation to establish and maintain effective student protection measures that promote inclusion, equality, respect, and the safeguarding of all students regardless of their background, abilities, or personal circumstances. The policy focuses on the prevention of student maltreatment, discrimination, neglect, and abuse, as well as the appropriate handling and reporting of any concerns related to student welfare and protection.

### 2. Purpose

- Protect students under the supervision of Merryland International School from all acts and omissions constituting maltreatment.
- Identify and support students who are at risk of harm, as enforced by the UAE Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights, Federal Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law, Federal Law No. (5) of 1983 Concerning Nurseries, Federal Law No. (18) of 2020 Concerning Private Education, Executive Council Chairman Decision No. (26) of 2013 Regarding the Regulation of Private Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and other relevant UAE laws.
- Emphasize that all staff of Merryland International School are mandated reporters of cases of alleged and/or suspected maltreatment of students inside and outside the school.
- Define roles and responsibilities of principal, staff, and parents of students of Merryland International School for responding to alleged and/or suspected cases of student maltreatment.
- Ensure that the school is responsible for the care and protection of all students and coordinate actions to safeguard them.

### 3. Definitions

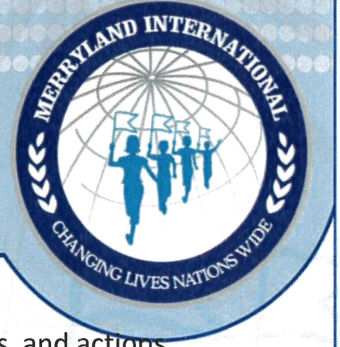
Child	Any resident of the UAE under 18 years of age.
Child Protection Coordinator	A Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) is an appointed staff member at the educational institution who is professionally trained and equipped with skills to act upon child protection concerns that arise within their institution and is the key contact for staff and authorities where a concern is identified within the institution. They should also be the point of contact for the institution to respond to emergencies, report to the CPU and other authorities involved, liaise with parents, and provide on-going support to the child.

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Child Protection Unit	A Child Protection Unit (CPU) is the organizational unit at ADEK aimed at developing and implementing student protection mechanisms and measures for educational institutions under its regulatory jurisdiction, in line with Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights and bylaws. It is responsible for receiving and assessing student maltreatment concerns, in line with the procedures detailed in this document.
Child Protection Specialist	A Child Protection Specialist (CPS) is the ADEK-appointed person authorized and charged by the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department/Ministry of Community Development and ADEK to preserve the rights of the child and protect the child within the limits of the CPS's powers, in accordance with Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights and bylaws
Educational Institution	Any learning, care, and/or educational entity (nurseries, private schools, specialist provision institutions, charter schools) – that is under the regulatory jurisdiction of ADEK.
Mandated Reporter	A person who is required by law (under Article 42 of Federal Law No. 3) to report student maltreatment concerns related to students to the Child Protection Specialist. This includes all staff members in Merryland International School, or any adult on institution premises or outside the institution premises from which the student requests assistance in notifying the authorities (e.g., Family Care Authority, the Police, MoI-CPC, and ADEK) about their suffering or any other student's suffering.
Parent	The person legally liable for a child or entrusted with their care, defined as the custodian of the child as per the Federal Decree Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema's Law).
Safeguarding	Protecting students from all risk of harm, including maltreatment and other types of risks that impact their overall health and development, wellbeing, and safety.
School day	The educational institution's operating hours including time spent by the student in school buses to and from the school and in extracurricular school activities.
Staff	An individual employed by a school on a remunerated contractual basis regardless of employment mode (internal, external/third-party, etc.).
Student	A resident who is enrolled in an educational institution in Abu Dhabi.
Student Maltreatment	Synonymous with child maltreatment, refers to abuse (physical, emotional, and sexual), and includes neglect, exploitation, bullying, and cyber bullying of a student.



Student Protection	Synonymous with child protection, all measures, steps, and actions that must be taken to prevent, protect, and support students from risk of maltreatment while they are under the supervision of the educational institution.
Supervision	The state of being responsible, having the duty of care, and keeping watch over an individual in the interest of their and others' security while utilizing its systems and taking part in all activities organized by the school, inside or outside its premises, including travelling to and from the school using its transportation, and moving between and waiting for activities.
Invited Visitor	An individual visiting the educational institution on a temporary basis to interact with students (e.g., a speaker, career fair representative, etc.).
Volunteer	An individual engaged by a educational institution on a non-remunerated basis to interact with students (e.g., parent chaperones, etc.)

#### 4. Acronyms

ADEK	Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge
CPC	Child Protection Coordinator
CPS	Child Protection Specialist
CPT	Child Protection Team
CPU	Child Protection Unit
FCA	Family Care Authority
MoE	UAE Ministry of Education
Moi-CPC	UAE Ministry of Interior – Child Protection Centre

#### 5. Types of Student Maltreatment

Physical Abuse	An intentional physical act which results in, has a high likelihood of resulting in, or poses a threat of resulting in immediate and/or long-term physical injury or harm to the student's health, survival, and development.
Emotional Abuse	An act, whether consistent or inconsistent, used to make a student feel unloved, worthless, and of no value and integrity, interfering with the student's positive mental and emotional development.



Sexual Abuse	Involvement of a student in sexual activity that they may or may not fully comprehend, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Student sexual abuse is evidenced by the activity between an adult and a student, or between a student and another student, who by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. The intent of the activity is to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.
Neglect	Failure of a parent or any adult supervising a student to provide for the basic needs and rights of a student towards their physical safety, development, and wellbeing, which may lead to a failure to thrive in the context of the resources reasonably available to the parent and causes or has a high probability of causing significant harm to the student's health and/or physical, social, educational, mental, spiritual, or moral integrity.
Exploitation	Use of the student in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, student labour and exploitation of students in prostitution or involvement of the student in gangs, militia or military. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where there is abuse of power by a youth, adult, or group who may coerce, manipulate, or deceive a student into sexual activity by physical contact and/or use of technology for monetary, social, or political profits.</li><li>• Economic exploitation is the use of a student who is below the minimum age of labour in the workplace or related activities for the benefit of others through the production, distribution, and consumption of goods or of a particular service delivered by the student.</li></ul>
Bullying	Repeated physical, social, or verbal aggression exercised by students who feel they are in a position of power against other students who are perceived weaker or powerless, to achieve specific gains or draw attention, in a way that hurts the student physically and/or emotionally. Bullying can be committed by groups or individuals, in online (cyber bullying) or offline settings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cyber bullying is bullying that takes place online. Online bullying can follow the bullied student wherever they go via social networks and mobile phones and has a wider reach than bullying in the real world.</li></ul>

*The guide on Handling Student Maltreatment Concerns within Educational Institutions (ECA, 2024) provides a full list of signs for identifying all types of maltreatment. The National Policy for the Prevention of Bullying in Educational Institutions (MoE, n.d.) provides a complete framework for bullying and cyber bullying.*



## 6. Principles

1. Best interests and safety of the student shall be a primary consideration in all actions taken to safeguard their wellbeing.
2. It is the responsibility of Merryland International School – the principal and all staff – to recognize, respond to, and manage student protection risk and impact to the best of their ability.
3. All mandated reporters and school staff and volunteers are responsible and accountable for ensuring student protection measures are in place and applied and upheld.
4. All mandated reporters and school staff and volunteers will be protected and shall not be hindered or penalized in any manner for carrying out their responsibilities to report and safeguard students from all forms of maltreatment.
5. All students have the right to be:
  - a. Heard and express their voice/opinion and participate in select decision-making processes in Merryland International School (to be determined by school staff).
  - b. Treated with dignity and respect.
  - c. Treated with fairness and justice.
  - d. Supported by an advocate and provided with necessary support when required.
  - e. Safe, protected from harm, and aware of what constitutes risk and harm.
6. Zero tolerance of all forms of maltreatment is to be implemented and upheld in all actions and environments pertaining to students.

## 7. Policy

### 1. Legal Obligations and Rights

- 1.1 This policy was developed in line with federal student protection and related regulations and policies (see “References” section).
- 1.2 Merryland International School will comply with the provisions of this policy. This policy will be published on the school website.
- 1.3 Merryland International School will comply with the guide on Handling Student Maltreatment Concerns within Educational Institutions (ECA, 2024) for the management of abuse-related offenses that are reported within and/or occurring within the school.



1.4 Merryland International School will ensure that the student protection policy has been communicated, understood, and agreed to by all institutional stakeholders (board members, staff and volunteers, parents, and students). Students will receive a student-friendly version of the student protection policy, and their assent will be obtained when any student protection concerns are raised.

1.5 Merryland International School and its principal are guardians of the rights of students to not be exposed to maltreatment. The principal acts as the guardian of all students while they are under the school's supervision and will take responsibilities that fall under this role.

1.6 All students have equal rights for care, protection, and safety in Merryland International School. The school will be fully responsible for the care, protection, and safety of students while students are under its supervision.

## 2. Reporting of Concerns of Maltreatment

2.1 Staff of Merryland International School – including any person who, in the performance of their duties, has regular or temporary contact with students and who provides services to students or the school – are mandated by Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights to report all cases of alleged and/or suspected maltreatment (conducted by any alleged/suspected perpetrator inside or outside of the school) directly to the ADEK Child Protection Unit (CPU) within 24 hours upon suspicion. Staff will follow the procedures outlined in Figure 1. Safety Concern Referrals in Abu Dhabi educational institutions and the guide on Handling Student Maltreatment Concerns within Educational Institutions (ECA, 2024).

2.2 All concerns of student maltreatment disclosed in Merryland International School, whether the maltreatment took place inside or outside of the institution, will be notified to the CPC or any other person representing him/her.

2.3 All cases of bullying will be handled in accordance with the procedures defined in the National Policy for the Prevention of Bullying in Educational Institutions by the MoE . Exceptions related to bullying cases include severe bullying (cases of bullying that have or risk having a significant physical and emotional impact on the student would be considered as maltreatment), which will be handled according to the procedures defined in this policy.

2.4 Merryland International School will appoint Child Protection Coordinators (CPCs) and a Child Protection Team (CPT), and these appointments will be reported to ADEK annually.



1. The CPC will undergo ADEK-mandated CPC training and will be a senior member of staff who has experience working with students at educational risk.
2. The CPT will undergo any ADEK-mandated training as announced and would include 3-5 members consisting of the counsellor and/or social worker as well as relevant members of the senior leadership team, any of whom may or may not take on the role of the CPC and a delegate will be always be nominated in case the CPC is unavailable/unable to perform their duties.
- 2.5 If any staff of Merryland International School, including volunteers, receives an allegation or has a concern that a student may have been maltreated, is being maltreated, or is at risk of maltreatment as defined in the Definitions (Types of Maltreatment) section, they shall report the matter to the CPC, or any other person representing him/her or any other member of the CPT immediately. This includes concerns of maltreatment taking place inside or outside of the educational institution's premises.
- 2.6 In case the reporter is unable to reach the CPC, or any other person representing him/her, or other members of the CPT, or it is not in the best interest of the student to inform the CPC or the team, then they will inform the CPU at ADEK and/or the FCA directly by filling out the Safety Concern Form online on the digital safety concern portal.
- 2.7 Emergency cases, where the student is in imminent danger, will be reported without delay by the CPC to the Police (999) and the Principal, with a copy of the Safety Concern Form online on the digital safety concern portal.
- 2.8 Emergency cases are detailed in the guide on Handling Student Maltreatment Concerns within Educational Institutions (ECA, 2024).

#### **How will maltreatment concerns identified in Merryland International School be handled?**

Below are the procedures for identifying and reporting student maltreatment concerns.

Once a concern of student maltreatment (incl. severe bullying) is raised in the school, this should be reported directly to the CPC, or any other person representing him/her (all staff in the educational institution will be trained on identifying maltreatment – in line with the operational definitions of the different types of maltreatment included in this document).

Emergency concerns, where the student is in imminent danger, should be reported immediately to the Police and the Principal.

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For maltreatment concerns which occurred outside of the supervision of Merryland International School, the CPC, or any other person representing him/her if the CPC is not present, should then fill the Safety Concern Form online on the digital safety concern portal.

The Safety Concern Form will automatically be shared with the ADEK CPU, the FCA and the MoI CPC. FCA will review the case and follow the required procedures for case management.

Maltreatment concerns which occurred under supervision of Merryland International School, the staff should inform the CPC or any other person representing him/her if the CPC is not present. The CPC should then complete the Safety Concern Form on the digital safety concern portal.

Once submitted, a copy of the Safety Concern Form will then be automatically shared with the FCA, the ADEK CPU and the MoI CPC. The ADEK CPU will review the information first before referring to the FCA for case management, who will take the necessary procedures for follow-up on the cases after receiving the report.

It is important to note that the ADEK CPU reserves the right to conduct or to designate qualified institutional personnel to conduct the initial safety and risk assessment before reporting the concern to the FCA.

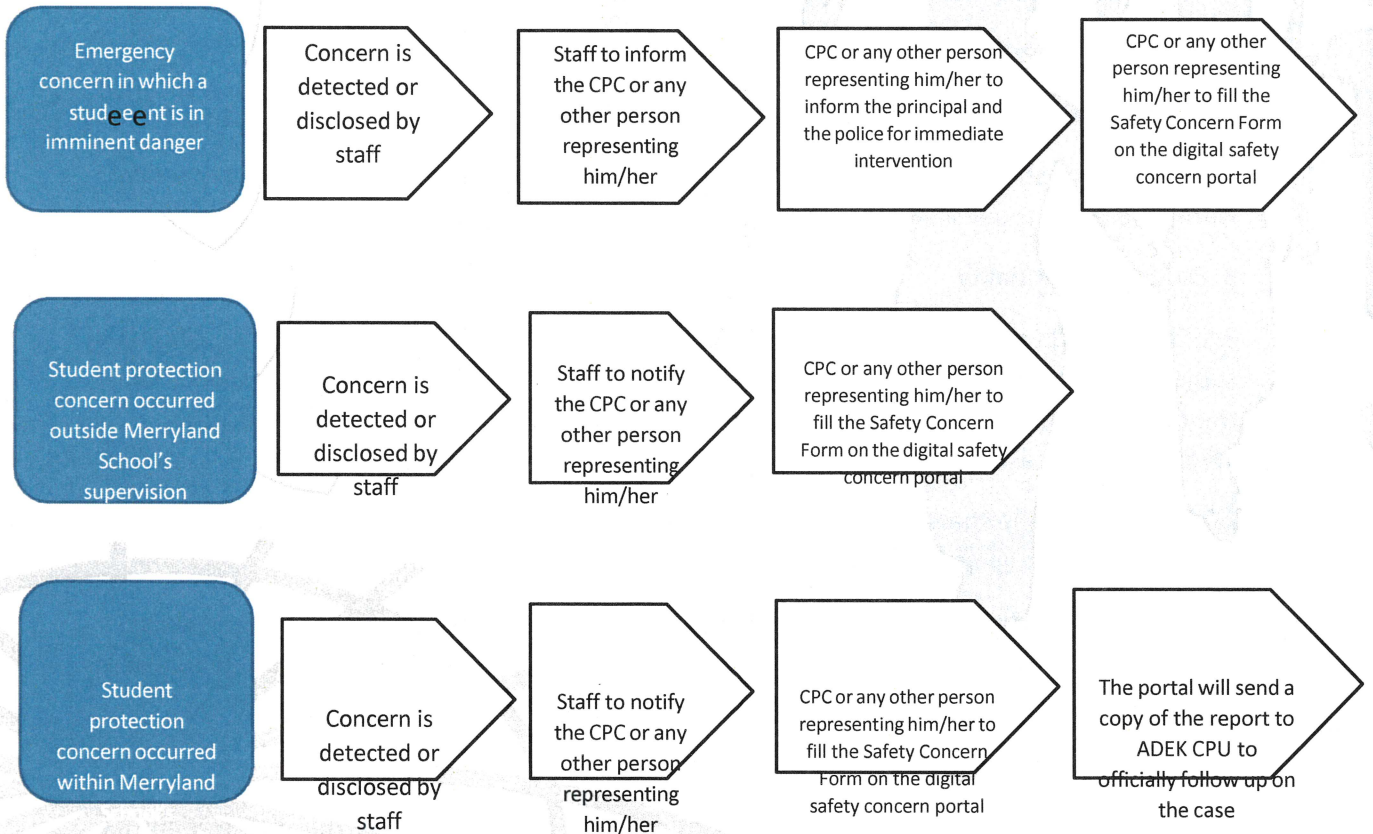
If the ADEK CPU refers the concern to the FCA, the concern would then be managed by the CPS at the FCA. The ADEK CPU should still provide administrative support (e.g., sharing relevant information) to enable the FCA to conduct the needed assessments and other activities related to case management.

If the ADEK CPU does not report the case to the FCA, the concern is returned to Merryland International School with the justification, and the school is asked to collect additional information before submitting another Safety Concern Form. In all situations, the ADEK CPU would ensure that the concern gets logged and responded to.

Figure 1. Safety Concern Referrals in Abu Dhabi Educational Institutions summarizes how maltreatment concerns should be handled in cases where the alleged maltreatment occurred both inside and outside of the supervision of the educational institution.



Figure 1. Safety Concern Referrals in Abu Dhabi Educational Institutions



1. After submitting the safety concern form on the digital safety concern portal, a copy of the report is automatically shared with FCA, ADEK CPU and MoI CPC
2. For cases occurring within educational institution's supervision, the ADEK CPU will review the information first before referring to FCA for case management. The ADEK CPU will take the necessary procedures to follow-up on the cases after receiving the report.



**Relevant contact details are as follows:**

- Abu Dhabi Police: 999
- Family Care Authority (FCA): 800444 [icm@adfca.gov.ae](mailto:icm@adfca.gov.ae)
- MoE Child Protection Unit (CPU)\*: 80085 [cpu@moe.gov.ae](mailto:cpu@moe.gov.ae)
- Safety Concern Portal: <https://daasafetyconcern.abudhabi/>

\*Educational institutions should contact the MoE CPU, which is the hotline for all reporting from where the request will be redirected to the ADEK CPU.

**3. Data Confidentiality**

3.1 Case reports and student data will be strictly confidential. The identities of the student subject to alleged and/or suspected maltreatment, the alleged/suspected perpetrator, and the person reporting the alleged/suspected case will be kept confidential by all parties involved in the case.

3.2 The data will be shared only with authorized individuals from the ADEK CPU and the FCA, within investigative teams, and the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department.

3.3 Authorized individuals will be strictly prohibited from discussing active or closed cases with the media, any third parties or other staff, and/or unauthorized ADEK staff, with the exception of investigative and judicial authorities and within the legal responsibilities

**4. Training**

4.1 The CPC and CPT will complete all student protection policy and safeguarding training as mandated by ADEK, including an affidavit attesting to upholding the highest ethical standards and code of conduct in the management of cases.

4.2 All staff in Merryland International School will complete any ADEK-mandated student protection policy and safeguarding training sessions and sign off that they have received training and understand their responsibilities.

4.3 Volunteers will receive proper induction and training on student protection policy and safeguarding measures. All invited visitors will also be required to attest to having read and understood the school's student protection policy.

4.4 Any staff providing counselling, support, advocacy, or being in close personal contact with students will receive continuous training in student protection and safeguarding and be properly supervised by the principal.



## 5. Vetting, Hiring, and Monitoring of Educational Institution Staff, Volunteers, and Invited Visitors

5.1 Staff, volunteers, and invited visitors will be properly vetted and screened prior to working in or accessing any locations where students are present. This includes criminal record checks from countries from which the applicant is being hired.

5.2 The principal will take full responsibility and accountability for all persons working in Merryland International School and ensure their suitability and compliance with all student protection and safeguarding requirements. This includes preventing any person from working with students if they pose a risk to students' safety and wellbeing.

5.3 The principal will ensure continuous monitoring of all staff and immediately report alleged inappropriate conduct or suspected actions that may result in harm or risk of harm to a student.

## 6. Acceptable Adult Behaviours

6.1 Staff and volunteers will respect and protect the rights of all students and take no actions that may put the student at risk of maltreatment.

6.2 Staff and volunteers will not undertake any inappropriate behaviours towards the student and/or in the presence of the student.

6.3 Staff and volunteers will be required to report any incidents of inappropriate behaviours against students.

6.4 Serious allegations of sexual misconduct by staff, volunteers, and/or invited visitors will be directly reported to the Police and FCA and the concerned staff/volunteer/invited visitor will be immediately removed from the school's premises.

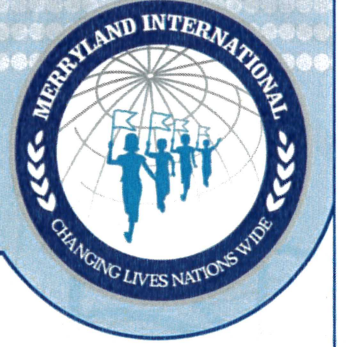
## 7. Student Protection Learning Resources

7.1 Age-appropriate student protection learning resources will be developed/procured and distributed to students to support their knowledge and ability to understand personal safety and wellbeing and what actions they can take to report any violations and seek help.

7.2 Student protection learning resources will be taught in the classroom and in counselling sessions and include any media (story books, activity books, illustrations, posters, reading content, etc.) that can be discussed either individually or within a group setting.

7.3 Student protection will be taught by trained staff who are skilled in understanding student protection and student development.

7.4 All content will identify easy-to-use references on where to seek assistance if needed.



## 8. Policy Dissemination and Review

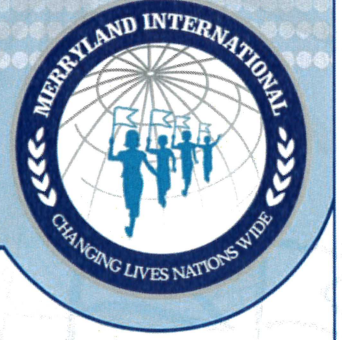
8.1 The student protection policy will be available publicly and on Merryland International School's website and disseminated annually to parents, institutional board members, staff, and volunteers, along with a student-friendly version.

8.2 All student protection policies, guidelines, safeguarding measures, and procedures will be reviewed yearly and updated.

## 9. Roles and Responsibilities

### 9.1. Principal:

- Comply with the provisions of this policy.
- Ensure Merryland International School publishes and posts this policy to protect students from maltreatment.
- Ensure that procedures to prevent situations that could lead to the maltreatment of students are in place and understood by all school staff.
- Ensure the oversight of students at all times while under the supervision of the school.
- 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 maltreatment.
- Ensure that students know how, where, and to whom to safely report their concerns about alleged and/or suspected maltreatment without fear of retribution or punishment.
- Ensure that staff, volunteers, and students are aware of how, where, and to whom they can safely report their concerns about the potential exposure of any student to alleged and/or suspected maltreatment without fear of retribution or punishment.
- Include the views and recommendations from students and parents regarding safety and protection reporting within the school.
- Immediately report any case of alleged and/or suspected maltreatment of students as stated by this policy.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers targeted for student protection training fully attend and participate in all training sessions and sign off on safeguarding training and student protection training.
- Conduct orientation sessions for parents upon student registration or enrolment 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.



- Maintain students' records in compliance with Policy 35 (Records) and ensure confidentiality of open and closed cases in accordance with the guidelines.
- Immediately suspend any staff who is suspected of an offense involving student maltreatment on a temporary basis until the suspicion is adjudicated.
- Ensure that students have a safe and confidential opportunity to report any concerns they may have in regarding their rights to safety and wellbeing.
- Ensure the vetting, hiring, and monitoring of all staff, volunteers, and invited visitors according to this policy and relevant safeguarding measures.

#### 9.2 All Staff and Volunteers of Educational Institutions:

- Report immediately an alleged and/or suspected case of maltreatment upon discovery.
- Care for students at all times while under the school's supervision.
- Understand this policy to address alleged and/or suspected student maltreatment cases.
- Attend and participate in mandated student protection and safeguarding training.

#### 9.3 Parents:

- Cooperate with the principal and staff, answer all inquiries related to the student's behaviour, academic performance, and respond to their feedback and guidance.
- Attend all scheduled parent meetings with the educational institution.
- Communicate any concerns, observations, or changes in the student's behaviour to the principal, board members, and/or to the concerned institutional staff.
- Support the school in ensuring safe online practices during distance learning and homework.

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## References

- Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA). (2024). Handling Student Maltreatment Concerns within Educational Institutions.
- Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA). (2024). Student Protection Policy for Educational Institutions.
- Executive Council Chairman Decision No. (26) of 2013 Regarding the Regulation of Private Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- Federal Decree Law No. (11) of 1972 Concerning Compulsory Education.
- Federal Decree Law No. (9) of 1976 Concerning Juvenile Delinquents and Vagrants.
- Federal Decree Law No. (35) of 1992 Concerning the Criminal Procedural Law.
- Federal Decree Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema's Law).
- Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 Concerning Private Education.
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law.
- Federal Decree Law No. (51) of 2022 Concerning the Regulation of Nurseries.
- Ministry of Education. National Policy for the Prevention of Bullying in Educational Institutions (MoE, n.d.).
- UNCRC. (1991). The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Official Supporting Document:

ADEK\_School\_Student Protection Policy\_v.1.0 2024 (January)  
Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi (ADEK)

## Approval and Implementation

This policy was approved by the school's governing body and will be reviewed every year. All staff, volunteers, and parents are informed of this policy and their responsibilities under it.

Principal

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*Reviewed on 25 May 2026*

*Merryland International School is an outstanding, ISO 9001-certified, British Curriculum K-12 school located in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. providing high quality education to pupils of more than 40 nationalities. Merryland has been a pioneer in education for the last four decades remaining true to its motto 'Changing lives...Nations wide'.*