EIS Child Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction and Policy Statement

This Child Safeguarding Policy is established by Elite International School (EIS) to ensure a safe, supportive, and protective educational environment for all students. This policy is a mandatory internal document, developed in direct compliance with the requirements set forth by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the State of Qatar, specifically the Student Protection and Care Policy in Private Schools and Kindergartens (First Edition 2025-2026).

EIS is committed to the highest standards of child protection. We believe that the best interest of the student is a top priority in all decisions and practices. We are dedicated to protecting students from all forms of abuse, violence, bullying, and neglect, and to fostering a culture of vigilance, prevention, and prompt response.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled at EIS, all school employees (including teaching, and administrativestaff), volunteers, contractors, and any other individuals who interact with students or have responsibilities within the school environment, both on and off school premises (e.g., during school trips, online learning, or school-related activities).

3. Core Principles of Student Safeguarding

The school's safeguarding practices are guided by the following principles, as mandated by the Ministry of Education:

Principle	Description
Best Interest of the Student	The student's well-being and safety are the paramount consideration in all decisions and actions.
Comprehensive Safety	Protecting students from any form of abuse, bullying, or digital violence.
Justice and Non-Discrimination	Providing equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of gender, nationality, or background.
Right to Expression	Ensuring students have the right to express their opinions freely and participate in matters affecting their educational lives.
Shared Responsibility	The ethical and professional commitment to protect students is a collective duty of all staff, parents, and the community.
Privacy and Confidentiality	Protecting students' personal information and preventing its misuse, while adhering to strict information-sharing protocols when necessary for protection.
Care for Vulnerable Groups	Providing additional protection and care for students with chronic health conditions, who may face higher risks.
Digital Safety	Creating a safe digital environment that protects students from internet risks and cyberbullying.
Accountability and Transparency	Openness in policy disclosures and clear accountability for all protection and care practices.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Student Protection and Care Officer (SPCO)

The social worker will be the central point of contact for all safeguarding concerns.

Responsibility	Details
Reporting	Receiving and recording all concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse, neglect, or bullying.
Investigation	Initiating and coordinating the administrative investigation process in accordance with Ministry guidelines.
Training	Ensuring all staff receive regular, mandatory training on safeguarding procedures, recognition of abuse, and reporting protocols.

4.2 All School Staff (Employees, Volunteers, Contractors)

- All staff have a shared responsibility for student protection and must:
- Read, understand, and adhere to this policy and the Ministry's guidelines.
- Be vigilant in recognizing signs of abuse, neglect, or bullying (physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect).
- Report any concerns immediately to the SPCO, even if the concern is based on suspicion or is an indirect disclosure.
- Maintain professional boundaries with students at all times (see Section 5.4).
- Ensure that all visitors are monitored and comply with school safeguarding procedures.

4.3 Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring their children attend school regularly, in compliance with the Compulsory Education Law (ages 6-18).
- Providing information and data necessary for the protection and care of their children.
- Collaborating with the school to address any concerns related to their child's safety or well-being.

5. Procedures for Prevention and Protection

5.1 Preventing Abuse and Bullying (Including Peer-on-Peer Abuse)

The school implements the following preventative measures:

- Education: Regular awareness programs for students, parents, and teachers on recognizing and reporting abusive behaviors.
- Anti-Bullying Programs: Implementing and promoting anti-bullying and conflict resolution programs to foster mutual respect. Peer-on-Peer Abuse, including bullying, sexual violence, and sexual harassment, is taken as seriously as abuse by adults and must be addressed IMMEDIATELY. Staff must avoid language that may create a "blame" culture and must make it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable.
- Reporting Systems: Establishing clear, easy-to-understand, and accessible systems (e.g., anonymous reporting boxes, dedicated email, direct access to the SPCO) that enable students to report abuse or violence without fear.
- Risk Assessment: Conducting regular risk assessments of the school environment and activities.

5.2 Protection of Vulnerable Students

Students with chronic health conditions will receive additional support. Staff must be aware that these students may be at a higher risk of abuse and may face barriers to reporting. Support plans will be established to ensure their safety and well-being. The school will also give special consideration to children who are:

- Affected by known parental substance misuse.
- Vulnerable to being bullied.

5.3 Digital Safety and Technology Use

The school maintains a comprehensive policy on cyber safety and the use of mobile technology:

- Safe Digital Environment: Providing a safe digital learning environment and strictly prohibiting cyberbullying and all forms of electronic content abuse.
- Monitoring and Filtering: Implementing filtering and monitoring systems to safeguard the school community from harmful internet content.

- Mobile Technology: Clear rules for the use of mobile phones and personal technology by both students and staff.
- Photography and Multimedia: Strict compliance with Qatari regulations on the use of photography and multimedia, adhering to privacy and defamation laws.

5.4 Maintaining Professional Boundaries and Code of Ethical Practice

All staff must adhere to strict guidelines regarding electronic and personal relationships with students to prevent abuse of trust. This includes:

- Professional Conduct: All staff must behave professionally at all times, ensuring their conduct is exemplary and compliant with legal obligations.
- Communication: All communication with students must be professional, transparent, and conducted through official school channels.
- Abuse of Trust: Staff must recognize the power imbalance between themselves and students and ensure that power and authority are never misused.
- Personal Relationships: Staff must avoid all forms of personal, non-professional electronic relationships with students (e.g., social media connections, private messaging).
- Physical Contact: Staff should exercise caution with physical contact and, where necessary (e.g., first aid), ask the child's permission before proceeding.
- Cultural Sensitivity: All staff must be mindful of the laws of Qatar and the culturally acceptable standards of practice and always abide by these.

6. Procedures for Reporting and Response

6.1 Reporting a Concern

Any staff member who has a concern or receives a disclosure of abuse, neglect, or bullying must immediately report it to the Student Protection and Care Officer (SPCO) using the school's designated reporting form (e.g., a "Concern for a Student’s Safety and Well-Being" form).

Type of Concern	Action Required
Immediate Danger/Severe Harm	The SPCO must report immediately to the administration who will contact the competent authorities.
Disclosure of Abuse	The SPCO must use professional skills to encourage the student to share concerns, ensuring the student feels safe. Staff should NOT ask leading questions or interrogate the child.
Allegation Against a Peer	Must be dealt with immediately. The SPCO will follow the school's behavior code of conduct and procedures, considering the chronological and developmental ages of all involved.
Concern about Staff	Concerns about a colleague should be reported to the administration.

6.2 Administrative Investigation and Record Keeping

Administrative Investigation: The school's internal complaints committee will immediately initiate an administrative investigation for all reported cases of abuse or neglect.
Documentation: Detailed and accurate records of all cases, actions taken, and communications must be documented securely and confidentially, separate from the main student file. These records are essential for accountability and ongoing risk management.
Referral: Cases of a criminal nature must be referred to official bodies only after obtaining prior approval from the Ministry of Education.

6.3 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Strict procedures for protecting confidentiality must be maintained.
Information sharing is permitted only when necessary to ensure the safety and protection of the student.
Paper forms containing protected information must be stored securely.
Parental consent for information sharing should be sought unless the student consents to sharing, or if sharing is necessary to protect the student from harm.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored and regularly reviewed by the Senior Management Team and the Managing Director. It will be updated periodically, at least every three years, or as required by the Ministry of Education, to ensure its continued effectiveness and relevance.
The review process will include:
Data collection and feedback from students, staff, and parents (e.g., surveys, focus groups).
Review by a working group to assess if the policy is achieving its intended goals.
Implementation of changes as approved by the school administration and in consultation with the Ministry.

Acceptance and Acknowledgement:

All staff members are required to sign an acknowledgement form confirming they have read, understood, and agree to comply with EIS Child Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy.