



The National Evangelical School in Nabatieh

# Child Protection Policy

2025 - 2026

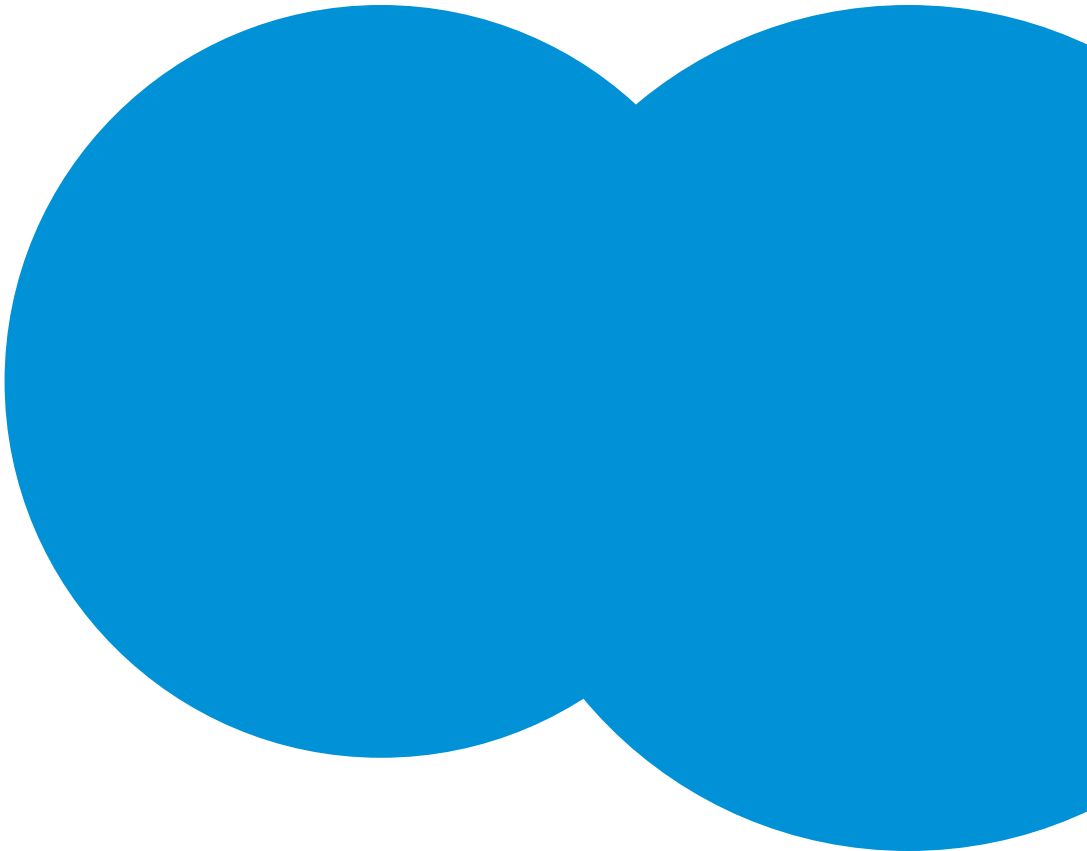
Policy and guidelines on protecting children in school from abuse, violence, exploitation, bullying, and other forms of abuse.



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# INTRODUCTION

## A- Policy Aims and Purpose

This policy aims to provide all staff members, children, and their families with a clear and secure framework for ensuring that all children in the school are protected from harm, both while at school and when away from the school premises.

As a school, NESN believes in supporting all aspects of children and young people’s development, learning, and safeguarding.

Safeguarding encompasses the establishment and implementation of procedures to protect children from deliberate harm; however, it also includes all aspects of pupils' health, safety, and well-being.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- A Dedicated Safeguarding Team is available at all times to support students and employees.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

(Children include everyone under the age of 18)

Essentially, this document is a pledge from all NESN community members to reject violence against children in all its forms and to implement the guidelines and procedures outlined in this policy.

## B- Policy Scope

All students registered at NESN are protected by the policy procedures both on and off school grounds. “School grounds” include all physical property (land, buildings, classrooms, courtyards...), as well as any ground to use for school services or events. Any signs of violence and/or abuse detected in a student will be acted upon according to the outlined procedures to safeguard the well-being of the student.

## C- Legal and Statutory Rights

The NESN child protection policy is in line with Lebanese Law 422/2002, in collaboration with the UNICEF/MOJ (Juvenile Division) Yearly Plan (which is related to the modernization of law covering children in the justice system). These laws and standards stand to protect children from abuse, neglect, and sexual exploitation. Reporting of child abuse is a requirement under Lebanese law.

# CODES OF CONDUCT

## a. Adult - Student

All Employees of NESN must:

- 1. Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- 2. Establish, respect, and maintain appropriate boundaries with all children and families involved in activities or programs delivered by the organization.
- 3. NOT engage in any physical contact with a child that may make the child feel uncomfortable.
- 4. NOT engage in any communication with a child within or outside of job duties that may make the child uncomfortable.
- 5. NOT engage in any behavior that goes against the organization’s Child Protection Policy.
- 6. Ensure that all safeguarding concerns, both minor and serious, are reported as soon as possible.
- 7. NOT conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal or inappropriate behavior – it is the employee’s duty to report the matter to his/her supervisor/designated person or Child Protection Officer, not to investigate.
- 8. Ensure privacy of students’ personal information except in appropriate school-related circumstances, such as meetings with counselors, concerned parents, or school directors.

## b. Student - Student

All students of NESN must:

- 1. Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and show respect to other members of NESN.
- 2. Abide by NESN’s disciplinary policies and procedures that outline all acceptable practices expected from students.
- 3. Help make school a community free of violence, intimidation, bullying, harassment, discrimination, and any form of abuse.
- 4. Report an incident of violence or abuse to a member of staff or school supervisor.
- 5. Restrict physical contact with other students.
- 6. Express all opinions \_ whether spoken or written \_ in a respectful manner. Students should not express any national, racial, or religious intolerance or other discriminatory behavior.

# RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse can take many forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect.

## Parties Involved

Abusive behavior can emerge in many different relationships, including but not limited to parental or caregiver against student, teacher or staff member against student, community member against student, online entity against student, or student against student.

## 1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take the form of, but is not limited to, slapping, pinching, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving, or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns, or fractures.

### Indicators

- A Child’s inability to explain the causes of bruises, burns on the body, or explanations that are vague and inconsistent
- An injury reflecting the shape of the article used (e.g., belt, buckle, electric cord)
- Rope marks on arms, legs, neck, or torso
- Unexplained lacerations or abrasions, or fractures
- A marked delay of injury and seeking medical attention
- Increased fear, guilt, and self-shame
- Parents or caregivers showing little or no interest in the well-being of their child
- Parents or caregivers showing little concern about the treatment and care of the injury to the child

## 2. Verbal/Emotional Abuse

Verbal/Emotional abuse is a chronic attack on a child or young person's self-esteem, emotional, or social development. It can take the form of threatening, hostility, ridiculing, intimidating, or isolating the child or young person.

### Indicators

- Showing a severe or extreme form of anxiety and fear in children
- Children showing signs of depression
- Lack of trust in people
- Feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves
- A parent or caregiver, or worker, constantly criticizing, threatening, or rejecting the child

### 3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is when a child or young person is used by any stronger child, adolescent, or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification, or economic gain. This can take the form of exposing a sexual body part to a child, having a sexual exploitation with the child, fondling the child, rape, or incest.

#### Indicators

- Displaying greater sexual knowledge than normally expected for the child’s age and development
- Use of language
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns (masturbation)
- Inappropriate sexual play with other children or dolls and toys
- Refusal to change into PE clothes
- Fear of bathrooms
- Torn, stained, or bloody clothing, especially underwear
- Bruising, bleeding, swelling, tears, or cuts on the genital or anus
- A fear of being alone with a particular person
- Extremely protective parenting.

### 4. Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide the child with the necessities of life (where such necessities are available) within their own environment. This can be:

Physical Neglect: Failure to provide necessary food, clothing, shelter, and supervision. This is to the extent that a child’s health and development are put at risk, e.g., when the child is left unsupervised and shows a lack of adult guardianship for an extended period of time.

Failure to provide the necessary treatment, or basic medical or mental health treatment to the child.

Emotional Neglect: Failure to provide emotional and psychological care to the child. Use of verbal humiliation, invasion of privacy, threats, or permitting the child to indulge in age-inappropriate activities.

#### Indicators

- Poor hygiene, matted hair, dirty skin, or body odor
- Unattended physical or medical problems
- Being left unsupervised for long periods
- Malnutrition, begging
- Parents are uninterested in the child’s performance
- Child refusing to go home
- Parents unreachable during an emergency



5. Bullying and Peer-on-Peer Abuse

The misuse of power in relationships between two individuals in which one person is repeatedly put down, either verbally, physically, emotionally, sexually, or mentally. Acts may be seen by the perpetrator as being funny, but are determined as abusive if they compromise the well-being of a student. This includes spreading rumors of a sexual nature or sharing sexually inappropriate images of peers. This is considered child abuse, and in many instances could fall under a criminal act, and be reported as such.

Indicators

- Student refusing to attend school
- Student making excuses to avoid attendance
- Displaying depression, anxiety, or fear in and out of the school setting
- Strained or isolated interpersonal relationships at school
- Unexplained marks or bruises

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) stands to ensure the effective implementation of the policy throughout the school. All members will comply with the provisions of this policy.

Members of the child protection committee:

| PERSON              | ROLE  | CONTACT   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Ms. Samah Mahdi     | School Counsellor<br>(Child Protection Officer (CPO)) | samahmahdi@nesn.edu.lb<br>ext 116   |
| Ms. Rola Salameh    | Supervisor of the Intermediate<br>Department          | <a href="mailto:rolasalameh@nesn.edu.lb">rolasalameh@nesn.edu.lb</a><br>ext 143   |
| Mr. Shamoun Assaf   | Supervisor of the Elementary<br>Department            | <a href="mailto:chamounassaf@nesn.edu.lb">chamounassaf@nesn.edu.lb</a><br>ext 133 |
| Mr. Ziad Chami      | Supervisor of the Secondary Department                | <a href="mailto:ziadchami@nesn.edu.lb">ziadchami@nesn.edu.lb</a><br>ext 129       |
| Ms. Soha Sabbah     | School Nurse  | <a href="mailto:sohasabbah@nesn.edu.lb">sohasabbah@nesn.edu.lb</a><br>ext 109     |
| Ms. Amaal Moussa    | Kindergarten Nurse                                    | <a href="mailto:amaalmoussa@nesn.edu.lb">amaalmoussa@nesn.edu.lb</a><br>ext 139   |
| Ms. Najla Rihan     | Kindergarten Supervisor                               | <a href="mailto:najlarihan@nesn.edu.lb">najlarihan@nesn.edu.lb</a><br>ext 140     |
| Ms. Sahar Diab      | Head of the Intermediate and Secondary<br>Department  | <a href="mailto:sahardiab@nesn.edu.lb">sahardiab@nesn.edu.lb</a><br>ext 114       |
| Ms. Sandy Kfoury    | Head of the Elementary Department                     | <a href="mailto:sandykfoury@nesn.edu.lb">sandykfoury@nesn.edu.lb</a><br>ext 113   |
| Ms. Sally Kfoury    | Head of the Preschool Department                      | <a href="mailto:sallykfoury@nesn.edu.lb">sallykfoury@nesn.edu.lb</a><br>ext 112   |
| Mr. Shadi El Hajjar | School Principal                                      | <a href="mailto:principal@nesn.edu.lb">principal@nesn.edu.lb</a><br>ext 111       |

## A- Role of Child Protection Officer (CPO)/ School Counsellor

The Child Protection Officer (CPO) is the assigned officer responsible for handling all witnessed or suspected cases of harm against a child within the school. Each department has its own supervisor and head of department who must report all suspicions or allegations directly to the CPO.

The CPOs’ (school counsellor) responsibilities are as follows:

- Know about the signs and symptoms of child abuse.
- Set regular meetings with the head of departments and teachers to review reported concerns and identify protection concerns.
- Provide abuse awareness and prevention workshops or meetings with students.
- Understand and apply the NESN referral pathway (mentioned below), which includes taking the necessary reporting and informing procedures for cases assessed as imminent risk.
- Document reported concerns and cases of potential.
- Apply confidentiality and data protection procedures with all documents containing information about children, including password-protecting soft copies and storing hard copies in a secure cabinet in a locked room.
- Ensure that the wishes and feelings of children are respected and addressed, especially before any measures are taken, to ensure their protection.
- Respect the confidentiality and privacy of students
- Arrange meetings with parents in cases when harm is detected.
- Allocate time to regularly discuss child protection issues with faculty/staff meetings through workshops.

## B. Role of the School Nurse

- The nurse is in the position to identify signs and symptoms of abuse, including physical and psychological indicators of abuse, as the nurse interacts with children in a private area and may examine them when appropriate. Another nurse should be present in the same room as the student during the examination.
- The nurse should consult with the CPO whenever there are suspicious signs on the child or if they receive a disclosure, thereby abiding by the Referral Procedure.
- The nurse is expected to preserve the privacy of any patient during examination and to protect confidentiality as standard practice entails.
- The nurse may request to provide physical treatment and emotional support in the case of a child abuse report. In some cases, the child may have to take medication as a result of the abuse, in which case the nurse must ensure the right procedures for its administration.

## C. Role of Head of Department/Supervisors

- Encourage good practice by promoting the child protection policy and procedures.
- Be available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff in the relevant department.
- Make referrals to the school's designated counsellor/CPO.
- Attend meetings with parents and CPO in cases when harm is detected.
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- Attend meetings with parents and CPO in cases when harm is detected.



## D. Role of Principal

- Supporting the divisional support team in ensuring the well-being of students
- Meeting regularly with the CPO/Supervisor to stay up to date on CP concerns
- Meeting with CPO and parents when appropriate
- Determining the appropriate actions to be taken in the case of a reported allegation
- Ensuring the supervision of students at all times while in the school's care
- Gaining views from students and parents regarding security and protection within the school
- Immediately suspending any staff member who is suspected of an offence involving student abuse and/or neglect temporarily until the suspicion is adjudicated

# PREVENTION

NESN will ensure that, through awareness and personal and professional conduct, staff and others minimize the risk to children.

## 1. Recruitment and Selection of Employees

- The Administration adheres to strict guidelines in the recruiting process of new staff. The recruitment guidelines will include:
- Embedding a clear and bold statement confirming NESN’s commitment to child protection in all contracts
  - Conducting reference checks
  - Conducting police checks for all full-time, part-time time and long-term contract employees
  - Rejecting inappropriate candidates at the application and interview stages

## 2. Use of Force, Restraint, and Positive Handling

The law forbids a teacher or other members of staff from using any degree of physical contact that is deliberately intended to punish a pupil, or that is primarily intended to cause pain or injury or humiliation.

## 3. Surveillance

- The school is covered by surveillance cameras both internally and externally.
  - School Staff have supervision responsibilities during school hours:
- 
- Staff teachers are fostered to supervise students during all recess and lunch play times every day. The school playground is divided into areas, and each area is monitored by one staff member.
  - Students are instructed to seek the help of a supervising teacher in situations that demand it, including the need for First Aid.
  - Staff on yard supervision approach intruders or unknown people in the yard, or seek assistance from the office.
  - School safeguards have supervision responsibilities for students who remain after school hours.
  - Students who are normally collected from school, but are still at school beyond the normal collection time, will be asked to accompany the duty teacher to the administration office.
  - The duty teacher in charge will then phone the parents. If unable to contact the parents, the duty teacher is to use the emergency contacts identified in the student records, then any known contacts to establish and confirm an arranged time for the child to be collected from school by a maximum time of 4.00 pm.
  - The student/s should remain in the school foyer under the supervision of the school guards until the child is picked up from school.

## 4. Training/Education Programs

Teachers at NESN receive awareness and education programs as a prevention measure to help teachers be aware of child protection and safeguarding, and how to deal with an abused child. Students receive awareness and education programs such as PROTECT ED (for KG2 and KG3), through which students progress through a series of subjects which include: Physical Safety, Personal Safety, Anti-Bullying, Internet and Technology Safety, Emotional Safety, and Healthy Living.

# REFERRAL MECHANISM AND ALLEGATIONS

The prime concern at all stages of child protection procedures must be the interest and safety of the child, which must be paramount. An incident may be handled within the school, which will involve parents, teachers, the counsellor, and other members of the CPC. Outside counselling services and higher authorities will be involved in the case where an incident is child abuse or neglect.

## Step 1: Disclosure/Report

The incident or the suspicion must be immediately reported to the Child Protection Officer (also known as the school counsellor) in the following order: Teacher - supervisor - Head of department - Child Protection Officer. Reports to the CPO must be done in person or over the phone. If an allegation is made or suspected during a time of online, virtual, or home-bound learning, the allegation will be handled with equal concern. The case will be investigated virtually using secure online platforms, and all steps will be followed in the same way as if the concern or allegation were made in person.

## Step 2: Assessment

The CPO will carry out a preliminary investigation within 24 hours by:

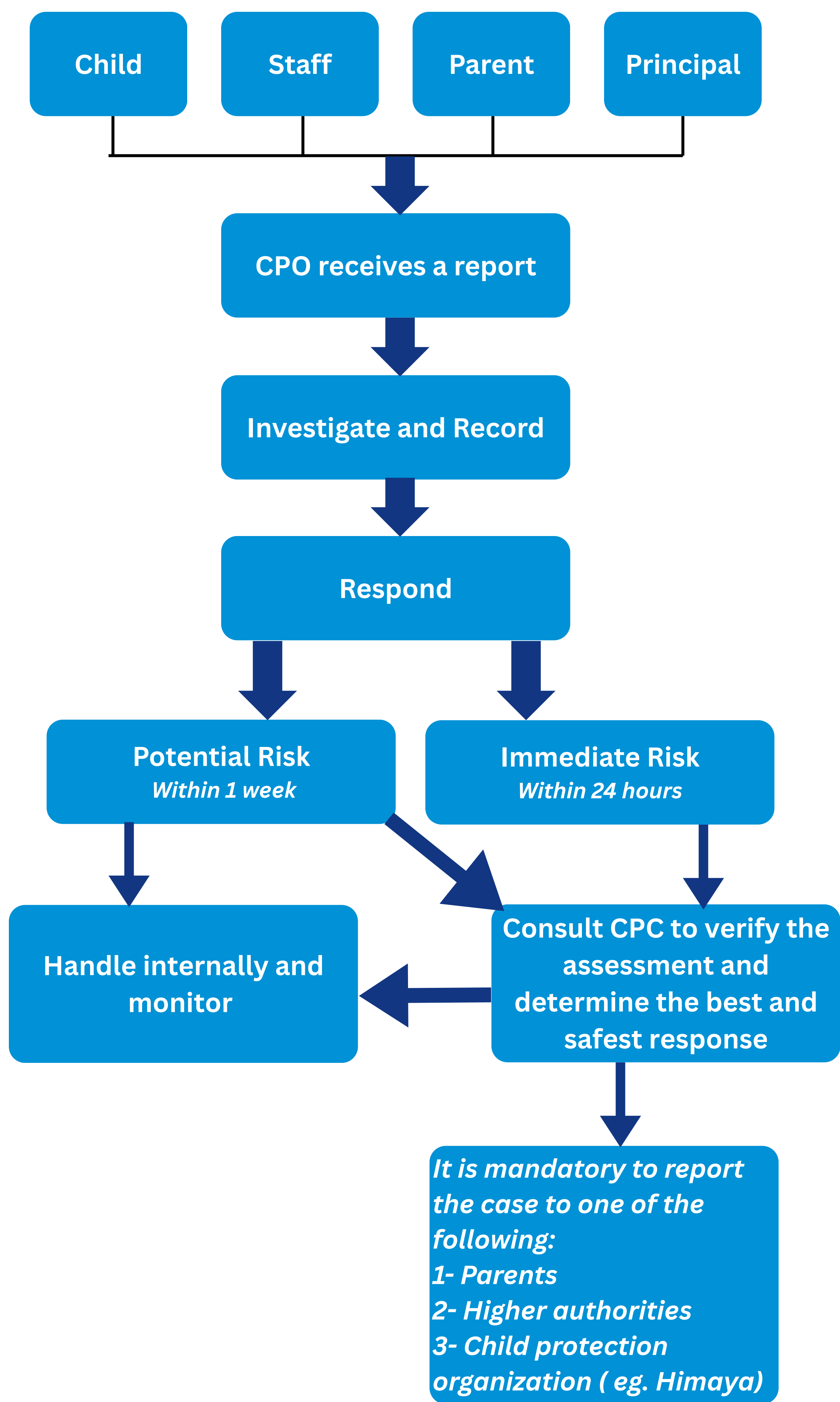
- Gathering information about the reported incident: what happened? Damage caused to the victim of abuse, type of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect). The CPO should ensure that the information about any child remains confidential
- Assessing the severity of the case
- Writing a detailed report of the gathered information

## Step 3: Action plan/Response

The school CPO will report the incident to the relevant members of the CPC (H.O.D. and supervisor, according to the department to which the student belongs, as well as the principal). The CPC will carry out the following procedures:

1. Interrogate the concerned person/s relevant to the case
2. Determine whether the child is at potential (can be handled through supporting children and/ or families) or immediate risk (child can include physical abuse, psychological abuse, self-harm, neglect, or sexual abuse).
3. Inform parents
4. Take the appropriate actions as soon as possible, which may include one or more of the following:
  - Meet with the parents to discuss concerns
  - Deal with the case under the school's internal procedures
  - Dismiss the perpetrator
  - Refer the student or family to psychologists or professional counselling outside of school
  - Discuss with guardian/s the possibilities of raising allegations of abuse against the perpetrator (staff or student) to higher authorities if the complaint involves a criminal offense

# Referral Pathway:





# CATEGORIES OF ALLEGATIONS AND RESPONSES

Allegations of abuse will always be taken seriously and will be investigated before any actions or decisions are taken. It is the ethical duty for all those who observe or doubt a case of abuse to report it to the CPO. In this section, the possible internal responses to allegations of potential risk, differentiated by the source of alleged harm, are outlined.

## A. Student – Student

When inappropriate behavior occurs on school grounds whereby a student has caused harm to another, it will be reported to the department’s supervisor and head of department, who shall then determine the next interventions as per the school organization’s policies, with possible responses including:

- Verbal warnings
- A meeting to be held with the students, parent/guardian(s), CPO, and a member of the administration when appropriate
- written warnings (parent or guardian is requested to sign a pledge, which is kept in the student’s records).
- Counselling
- Suspension or expulsion in some cases

## B. Student – Faculty/Staff

When an allegation is raised against a faculty/staff member, the school administration will be informed and proceed to promptly investigate the evidence available in order to determine the best response.

- Warning
- Suspension
- Dismissal for more serious incidents, a formal investigation should be conducted by the school

## C. Student - Parent

When the source of alleged harm is a parent, the CPO will assess the level of risk, consult with the Principal and/or the CPC, and determine the appropriate courses of action. Possible responses may include counselling, parental guidance, or referrals to behavioral specialists. If contacting the parents will put the child at risk of harm, then the CPO should contact a CP organization.

# CONFIDENTIALITY

The school will keep all child protection records confidential, allowing disclosure only to those who need the information to safeguard and promote the welfare of students. The school will cooperate with the higher authorities or professional counsellors to ensure all the relevant information is shared for the purposes of child protection investigations.

# ONLINE CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICES

## Abuses that occur online

As schools and colleges increasingly work online. It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. Mobile phones, computers, and other digital devices can be a source of fun, entertainment, communication, and education. However, we know that some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children: verbal and emotional abuse, sexual advances, and bullying that occur online are equally considered a threat to our students. Allegations of inappropriate online behavior from any online platform and from any party against our student will be investigated using regular protocol.

## Virtual Learning Teacher Expectations

- On the occasions that school activities must be conducted online, teachers are obliged to communicate with children professionally.
- Teachers are encouraged to have professional boundaries with students. This includes refraining from sending or receiving personal pictures and messages, communicating outside the knowledge of the caregiver about non-educational items, or communicating at inappropriate times outside of school hours.
- Teachers should refrain from virtual 1:1 meetings with students, unless supported by a third-party staff member.
- Virtual classroom recordings will be made.
- Teachers are to be trained on how to block screen sharing, limit individual chats, and mute students who might be attempting to share inappropriate content with other students.
- Teachers are not to leave virtual class sessions unsupervised.
- Students are meant to be present for online classes dressed appropriately and in an appropriate posture (sitting straight in a chair, preferably).
- Students are strongly encouraged to engage in online learning in a public space within their home (not bedroom or bathroom).
- Should a student be found to engage in inappropriate online behaviors, such as the sharing of inappropriate content, online bullying, or other behaviors, they will be disciplined using the current policy.
- If online sessions are disrupted due to technical difficulties, avoid changing platforms. Reschedule the session.
- Taking photos/screenshots of students online for reasons other than educational purposes is not permitted.

## Monitoring Students of Concern

During times of online learning, the supervisor and head of department are responsible for identifying families at risk and students at risk through appropriate observation of student attendance, student performance, peer reporting, or students with previous underlying mental health concerns. All incidents will be reported to the school counsellor/CPO.