

CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

AY: 2025 - 2026

Date of Policy	August 2021
Date of last review	August 2025
Date of next review	August 2026
Lead Member of Staff	Principal & Head of Wellbeing



Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy (2025-2026)

Introduction

The health, safety, and well-being of all children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in the school. Children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, or disability. They have a right to be safe in their school. Protecting children is everyone's responsibility at the school and this includes reporting any act committed by a parent, guardian, or any other person to a child enrolled in the school which results in neglect, physical or emotional injury, or sexual harm.

All staff have a duty will report any suspected or disclosed issues of child protection to the designated Child Protection Officer (CPO). If the threat is immediate or ongoing it will be reported to the appropriate local safeguarding authorities as set in place by the UAE.

Process Overview

The school has detailed procedures describing the Child Protection and Safeguarding Practices. These procedures and systems provide clear step-by-step guidance on what to do in different circumstances and roles and responsibilities are clarified. Systems for recording information and dealing with complaints are also detailed to ensure implementation and compliance.

Safeguarding is a term that is broader than 'child protection' and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

This guideline has been developed to ensure that all staff in the school follow the necessary procedures regarding a child protection issue. It aims to:

- Raise awareness and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse
- Ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues.
- Inform all parties of the correct procedures to use in the case of a child protection issue.

This guideline is an overarching introduction to the detailed Child Protection and



Safeguarding document with supporting appendices and tools

This policy applies to all staff, management, and visitors to the school. The policy binds Vernus International School to offer protection:

- Where the school management provides services or activities directly under the supervision or management of school staff, the school's arrangements for child protection will apply.
- Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the school management should seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard and protect children and there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

Our commitment

The school adopts an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of its responsibility for pastoral care. The school hopes that children and parents will feel free to talk about any concerns and will see VIS as a safe place when there are difficulties. Children's worries and fears will be taken seriously, and children are encouraged to seek help from members of staff. Our school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse, and which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly about childcare and parenting skills.
- Ensure every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other referral agencies.
- Support parents by providing information for increased awareness and appropriate action.
- Operate safer recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers who will work with children.

Our principles

Safeguarding arrangements in our school are underpinned by two key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all staff, governors, and volunteers should play their full part in keeping children safe.



- A child-centered approach: a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

Our Policy

The policy aims to **prevent** abuse, e.g., a positive, and safe school atmosphere, secure teaching, and pastoral guidance given to students, staff, and parents. Where abuse is discovered, the policy is there to **protect** by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns; and offering **support** to students and school staff and to children who may have been abused; and form **partnerships** by working with parents to ensure appropriate communications and actions are undertaken.

There are 6 main elements to our policy, which are described in the following sections:

- The types of abuse that are covered by the policy
- The signs of abuse that staff and volunteers should look out for
- Roles and responsibilities for safeguarding
- Expectations of staff and volunteers about safeguarding, and the procedures and processes that should be followed, including the support provided to children
- How the school will ensure that all staff and volunteers are appropriately trained and checked for their suitability to work within the school.
- How the policy will be managed and have its delivery overseen.

Through the implementation of this policy, we will ensure that our school provides a safe environment for children to learn develop, and thrive.

Types of Abuse

1.1 What is child abuse?

Child abuse is when a parent or caregiver, whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm, or risk of serious harm to a child. There are many forms of child maltreatment, including neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse and exploitation.

1.2 Children who may require early help

Staff and volunteers working within the school should be alert to the potential need for early help for children. Staff and volunteers should consider following the procedures identified for initiating early help for a child who:

- is disabled
- has specific additional mental needs
- has special educational needs
- is a young carer



- is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behavior
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult health, domestic violence
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect

1.3 How to report any concerns

Clear procedures for reporting any concerns are given to all staff in the school. This is done as part of the staff induction training. All child protection and/or safeguarding concerns should be reported to the Child Protection Officer immediately.

1.4 Types of Child Abuse

1.4.1 Emotional abuse

This abuse is found in all types of other abuse: neglect, physical, and sexual. Emotional abuse involves behavior, that significantly impairs the child's self-esteem, sense of security, and feeling of love. It may include, but is not limited to:

- telling a child that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate or threatening to have a child taken into care
- telling a child that they are not wanted
- it also includes inconsistent parenting The impact may include, but is not limited to:
 - the child's mental health, behavior, and self-esteem
 - Underlying emotional abuse may be more significant than more visible forms of abuse in terms of its impact on the child
 - long-term consequences for social development

Detailed definition: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the



exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

1.4.2 Neglect

This is the most common form of abuse. Many children suffer from a lack of emotional development and/or a lack of supervision. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, health, or developmental needs which is likely to result in significant harm to the child's health or development.

It may include, but is not limited to, **a failure to**: provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter

- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- respond to a child's basic emotional needs The impact may include, but is not limited to:
 - the child's mental health, behavior, and self-esteem
 - Underlying emotional abuse may be more significant than more visible forms of abuse in terms of its impact on the child's
 - long-term consequences for social development

1.4.3 Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

The impact may include, but is not limited to:

- linked to aggressive behavior in children
- emotional and behavioral problems
- can lead to violence in adolescence and adulthood
- can lead to long-term neurological damage
- physical injuries and emotional damage
- death
- physical abuse of children often co-exists with domestic violence



1.4.4 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact or non-contact activities:

- involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, or watching sexual activities online such as pornographic materials,
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or
- normalizing nudity and naked behavior such as being undressed
- explicit verbal and/or written language content including dirty jokes
- exposure, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse and exploitation (including via the internet).
- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

1.4.5 Bullying

Bullying is also abusive and will include at least one, if not two, three, or all four, of the defined categories of abuse (refer to the school's anti-bullying policy)

2 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

All staff, volunteers, and governors have responsibility for the following: Being aware of the VIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and ensuring these procedures are followed:

- Listening to, and seeking out, the views, wishes, and feelings of children and young people
 - Knowing who the school's designated teacher and governor for child protection are
 - Being alert to the signs of abuse and their need to refer any concerns to the designated teacher
 - Ensuring that their child protection training is up to date, and taking place at least every three years
 - Sharing information and working together to provide children and young people with the help they need
 - Supporting students who have been abused by his/her child protection plan
- Governors and school leadership are responsible for:**
- Ensuring that VIS has a designated staff representative for child protection and that they have access to appropriate training



- Ensuring that VIS has a nominated governor for child protection and safeguarding and that they have access to appropriate training
- Ensuring all staff receive the appropriate training, and keep it up to date
- Managing security within the school and reviewing it annually
- Ensuring that important policies, such as those for behavior and bullying, are kept up to date
- Keeping up to date all child records
- Have an overview of the number of safeguarding and child protection referrals
- Having in place effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs for individual children and families
- Ensuring staff and volunteers undergo appropriate checks before accessing the school
- Ensuring that the curriculum makes the best use of pastoral provision to cover safeguarding issues with children
- Making this policy available to parents and carers as appropriate
- Taking leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements



Ensuring that our staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role

- Ensuring all staff are given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarization with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare
- Ensuring all staff have regular reviews of their practice to ensure they improve over time
- Creating a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and in the school's development
- Ensuring all records are kept up to date and secure and kept separately from the main student file in a locked location.

Specific responsibilities of the school doctor/nurse and Head of Wellbeing

- The school Doctor/Nurse or Head of Wellbeing may be requested to provide physical treatment and emotional support after a child has been abused
- The doctor or nurse may be required to conduct an examination if there are physical injuries and write an initial report about the child's physical and emotional condition
- The doctor/ nurse and/ or Head of Wellbeing can provide positive encouragement to the child, and liaise with family members to determine how best to promote the child's safety both at school and at home.
- Child abuse can leave deep emotional scars and the Head of Wellbeing should recognize these and help develop a rehabilitation plan in liaison with the DCPO and other appropriate staff in the case team.
- In some cases, the child may have to take medication because of the abuse. The school doctor or nurse should ensure that all standards and procedures for administering medications in the school setting are met.

Specific responsibilities of the HR department and Security

When recruiting any member of the teaching staff or support staff with access to children, all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure compliance as far as possible with the following:

- Provision of an up-to-date police 'good conduct' letter and/or criminal records check
 - That two or more references are taken up from previous employers with follow-up questions about the applicant's compliance with any child protection procedures
 - A declaration signed by the prospective employee on any application form and/or contract that s/he has not been convicted or undergoing court or disciplinary



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proceedings for any offense involving child abuse and/or a breach in exercising a duty of care for children

- The Security staff undertake to be vigilant and adhere to the procedures governing access, detailed record-keeping, provision of a visitor's pass to be worn for ease of identification, and monitoring of visitors to the school

The designated lead person is: the **Principal**

Name & Email: **Ms. Jacqueline Smith** (principal@visdubai.com)

The deputy designated person: **Head of Wellbeing**

Name & Email: **Ms. Fariha Rasheed** (fariha@visdubai.com)

3 Safeguarding Processes and Procedures

The school will deliver its responsibilities for identifying and acting on early help needs, safeguarding, and child protection in line with the policies and procedures identified above.

Referring to Child Protection Officer

At VIS, we have a clear procedure for reporting. All concerns should be passed to the child protection officer (Head of Well-being) in the first instance, otherwise, the Principal. If neither is available, then the Head of Elementary and Head of KG should be made aware, otherwise any other member of SLT.

The child protection officer should ensure they have spoken to the family about their concerns and proposed actions unless doing so would place the child at risk. If a child makes a disclosure or presents with an injury advice must be sought immediately before the child returns home and as soon as the school becomes aware of this. Essential information for making a referral includes:

- Full names and dates of birth for the child and other members of the family
- Address and daytime phone numbers for the parents, including mobile
- The child's address and phone number
- Whereabouts of the child (and siblings)
- Child and family's ethnic origin
- Child and family's main language
- Actions were taken and people contacted
- Special needs of the child, including the need for an accredited interpreter, accredited sign language interpreter, or other language support
- A clear indication of the family's knowledge of the referral and whether they have consented to the sharing of confidential information



- The details of the person making the referral. Other information that may be essential:
- Addresses of wider family members
- Previous addresses of the family
- Schools and nurseries attended by the child and others in the household
- Name, address & phone number of the Family Doctor
- Any other medical history
- Details of other children who may be in contact with the alleged abuser
- Details of other practitioners involved with the family
- The child's legal status and anyone not already mentioned who has parental responsibility
- History of previous concerns

Recruitment of staff and Volunteers

The school will ensure that Safer Recruitment practices are always followed. Every interview panel will have at least one member who has a current certificate in Safer Recruitment. We will check on the identity of candidates, follow up references with referees, and scrutinize applications for gaps in employment. We will ensure that safeguarding considerations are at the center of each stage of the recruitment process.

We will ensure that all staff are aware of government guidance on safer recruitment and that its recommendations are followed. Guidance on the use of new technology is particularly important. This includes advice on the safe use of mobile phones and guidance on personal and professional boundaries in emailing, messaging, and social networking environments. This is covered in our Child Protection and Safeguarding training done by all staff at least annually.

The pre-recruitment checks will comply with the Federal Laws of the UAE and ensure only safe and vetted staff can be employed by the school.

Dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers who work with children

Where any member of the school team or any volunteer has concerns that a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to vulnerable groups, including children, they must **make a referral to the Principal only**. They must not discuss this with any other member of staff and must not discuss this with their line manager as this could prejudice any investigation.



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Training for all staff to raise awareness and increase understanding

Every year all staff (including non-teachers and volunteers) must undertake the Child Protection and Safeguarding training.

This is recorded and logged. All staff are clear on how to report anything of concern to the principal immediately.

Training will ensure staff are able to:

- To recognize how to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral



Be on the lookout for signs in children who appear to exhibit one or more of the following traits:

- Disinterest
 - Poor/reduced academic performance
 - Sad/unhappy
 - Abusive/violent (physically and verbally)
 - Hyperactive/easily excited
 - Frequently ill
 - School avoidance
 - Inattentive
 - Disruptive
 - Extremes of behavior: either overly talkative or withdrawn/inhibited
- To ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child protection policy, especially new staff who may work with different educational establishments.
 - To ensure all new staff attend induction training covering child protection and can recognize and report any concerns immediately they arise.
 - To be able to keep detailed, accurate, and secure written records of referrals/concerns;

Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop

We recognize that because of the day-to-day contact with students, VIS staff are well-placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. We therefore establish a safe environment where students feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to. This can happen during form time, in student council meetings, during break or lunchtime, or elsewhere during the school day, for example, and possibly with any member of staff. We are thoroughly committed to teaching all our students about risks and emphasize learning about how to minimize risk.

Our school recognizes that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world positively. This school may be the only stable, secure, and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Whilst at school, their behavior may still be challenging and defiant, and there may even be moves to consider suspension or exclusion from school.

It is also recognized that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach so that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

VIS will endeavor to support students through:



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- The curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation;
- The school ethos, promotes a positive, supportive, and secure environment, and gives all students and adults a sense of being respected and valued
The implementation of school behavior management policies.
- A consistent approach, which recognizes and separates the course of behavior from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting.
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the students and their families.
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child's interest to do so
- The development and support of responsible and knowledgeable staff trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.
- Social impairment, and/or emotional and behavioral problems will be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

Steps currently taken by the school to ensure Student safety:

- Security personnel (male)
- All LSAs in KG and lower elementary classes are females, for upper elementary classes, if required preference will be given to male LSAs
- Guided use of the internet at school
- Separate toilets for males and female and age groups
- Constant monitoring of school corridors by staff and Student Council
- Use of Restroom and Clinic pass during classroom instruction
- Designated staff for restroom duty
- Permission slips to leave school early after school
- Students must leave for home supervised by parents. If grade 5 students are leaving by themselves, parents must sign the acknowledgment.

Anti-bullying

VIS holds an anti-bullying, Kindness, and Tolerance awareness campaign to raise student's awareness of bullying issues and how to tackle them effectively.

If any student/member of staff/parent/carer has a concern about bullying, they should report it to: the Head of Wellbeing **or any SLT member.**

E-Safety

We are thoroughly committed to improving students' e-safety awareness at VIS. A copy of this policy is contained in the ICT User Policy.



At least annually we hold e-safety awareness embedded into ICT lessons and further guidance is given on the BYOD policy. Students are continually taught about how to behave responsibly as online users. This is done in a variety of ways depending on the issue. If a student, parent/carer, or member of staff has a concern relating to e-safety students are encouraged to report it.

Management of the Policy

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. All staff is clear about the need to record, and report concerns about a child or children within our school. The Designated Persons are responsible for such records and for deciding at what point these records should be passed over to other agencies. Child Protection records are held separately from a child's school file and in secure storage.

The Governing Body will oversee the policy, ensure its implementation, and review its content on an annual basis.

The principal will report on safeguarding activity and progress within the school to the governing body annually.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least once a year by the Head of Wellbeing, the Principal, and the School Governing Board.



Appendix – 1

DEFINITION OF SAFEGUARDING TIERS

Tier – 1	Serious case which has been referred to an outside agency and/or student/family are receiving support from an external source. Weekly monitoring is in place by the school, and we are actively working with the family.
Tier - 2	Serious concern which requires weekly monitoring in school.
Tier – 3	Tier 3 Low/Mid-level ongoing concern, monitored by the Section Heads.
For future reference (not official category)	For future reference (not official category) Case was historic (we can download students 1 tier per year) or case is new and not deemed significant enough to be categorized as Tier 3. This could be due to lack of information at the time of categorizing. All information stays on the students file.



Appendix – 2

General Points	Don't Say
Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).	Why didn't you tell anyone before?
Keep Calm	I can't believe it!
Look at the child directly	Are you sure this is true?
Be Honest	Why? How? When? Who? Where?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the child you will need to let someone else know – don't promise confidentiality. • A useful distinction to make when explaining this to pupils is between privacy and confidentiality: you cannot promise to keep a conversation private, but confidentiality means only informing the people who need to know in order to help the pupil. 	Never make false promises.
Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never make statements such as 'I am shocked, don't tell anyone else.'
Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never ask leading questions and try to record what the child says verbatim 	
Helpful things you may say or show	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand what you are saying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again, reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for telling me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's not your fault. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the appropriate senior member of staff or agency.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will help you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.



Appendix – 3

WHAT TO DO ON DISCLOSURE

Stay calm

(Don't over-react, however shocked you may be)



Listen, hear, and believe

(Listen carefully, take it seriously)



Give time for the person to say what they want

(Don't make assumptions and don't offer alternative explanations, ask questions beginning with Tell me about...Explain...Describe... Avoid 'who, what, when, where' questions)



Reassure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling.

(Do not promise confidentiality; explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed)



Record in writing as near verbatim as possible and as soon as possible on a Disclosure Form

(Use the child's own words, make your record as soon as possible after the event, so that you don't forget anything, and include information about what action was taken afterwards)



Report to the DSO (Child Safeguarding Officer)



INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE AGENCIES



Appendix – 4

Important Information for Child Safeguarding Departments in Dubai

Dubai Foundation for Women and Children (DFWAC)

The first licensed non-profit shelter in the UAE for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, child abuse, and human trafficking. It was established in July 2007 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to offer victims immediate protection and support services by international human rights obligations. The Foundation provides a helpline, emergency shelter, and support services to women and children victims. DFWAC aims to protect physically, sexually, and emotionally abused women and children, prevent ongoing abuse and the escalation of violence, and promote social awareness through education and outreach.

DFWAC provides:

- Case management
- Medical care
- Psychological support
- Counselling
- Legal, consular, and immigration assistance
- Helpline 800 111 or email help@dfwac.ae
- Website – www.dfwac.ae

Dubai Police Human Rights Department

24/7 Duty Officer 056 6862121



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Latifa Hospital Child Welfare Unit

Tel: 04 2193000

Fax: 04 3241717

PO Box 4115 Dubai, UAE

Working Hours: 24 Hours

Community Development Authority (Centre)

Any child in Dubai who needs help, protection from abuse, or advice can pick up the phone and dial 800-988 any time.

Four social workers and psychologists at the Child Protection Centre in Al Barsha are on standby to assist residents under 18 years of age to ensure their rights are protected and upheld. The recently opened center under the Community Development Authority (CDA) is part of CDA's comprehensive strategy to make Dubai the most secure and ideal environment for children to live in. It is tasked with rehabilitating, providing counseling, visiting, and assisting children in need.

Al Ameen Reporting (Dubai & Federal Police)

The Al Ameen Service officially launched in September 2003. Using this service, the people of Dubai can communicate confidentially with the authorities to keep abreast of development .in Dubai and on issues that concern them www.alameen.ae/en/

Child Protection Unit in UAE:

- Government of Dubai's
Website: <https://www.cda.gov.ae/en/socialcare/childrenandyouth/Pages/ChildProtectionCentre.aspx>
- Ministry of Education's Child Protection Unit for the whole
UAE: <https://www.moe.gov.ae/En/ImportantLinks/Forms/Pages/ChildProtectionUnit.aspx>

Toll-free numbers for Child Protection Unit are as follows:

CDA Hotline: 800988

MOE Child Protection Unit: 80051115

Emails IDs:

MOE Child Protection Unit: CPU@moe.gov.ae

CDA: child@cda.gov.ae

Forms Link:

Interna Form Link (created by me):  [Health & Safety Incident Investigation Form \(2022-2023\).pdf](#)

