

NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Rationale

- (a) The protection and welfare of children is the responsibility of everyone who interacts with children and young people.
- (b) Ministry of Education acknowledges school safety as a fundamental prerequisite for student health, well-being and academic achievement. Ministry of Education is committed to encourage and create physical environments as well as learning environments where every student is safe, protected, valued and included in order that all students achieve positive outcomes.
- (c) Schools should ensure protection of children in all the activities conducted within and out of the school environment.
- (d) The Republic of the Maldives is a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and this policy reflects obligations with respect to the protection of children as outlined in the convention.

2. Purpose

- (a) The purpose of this policy is to give clear direction and guidance to senior management authorities and personnel in implementing child protection responsibilities and procedures within the school.
- (b) Schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of students. They should create and maintain a safe learning environment for children and young people, and identify child welfare concerns and take action to address them. This policy outlines how school can fulfil their responsibilities related to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

3. Scope

- (a) This policy will apply with immediate effect and covers all schools registered, evaluated and monitored by Ministry of Education.

4. Definitions of Terms

The following are definitions of terms used in this policy.

- (a) **Students and Children:** A person under the age of 18 studying in a school.
- (b) **Principal:** The person who is in charge of the school.
- (c) **School:** All schools and pre-schools as registered evaluated and monitored by Ministry of Education.
- (d) **Abuse:** Any act that may cause emotional, physical and sexual harm to the child. Abuse can be categorized into 4 types. They are emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. A child may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at a time. Children may also be subjected to abuse due to failure to attend to potential sources of harm.
- (e) **Emotional abuse:** Failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure. There may also be acts towards the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, and denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.
- (f) **Physical abuse:** Non-accidental use of physical force against a child which results in harm to the child.
- (g) **Sexual abuse:** Involvement of a child for a sexual purpose.
- (h) **Neglect:** Failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions.
- (i) **Providing protection:** Taking all the possible actions to prevent or attend to any sources of harm to a child.
- (j) **Behaviour Management Policy:** Policy developed by Ministry of Education to promote and maintain positive student behaviour as well as respond to misconduct among students.

5. Responsible Officers and their Responsibilities

The responsible officers for implementing the National Child Protection Policy and their responsibilities are mentioned below.

(a) Responsibilities of Ministry of Education

- i. Ministry of Education is responsible to ensure that all schools comply with the National Child Protection Policy and to provide necessary technical assistance and guidance to schools.
- ii. Ministry of Education must ensure that all schools comply with the National Child Protection Policy. A responsible person will be appointed within Ministry of Education to monitor the implementation of this policy and take necessary actions.
- iii. Educational Supervision and Quality Improvement Division of Ministry of Education should assign and inform schools in writing the responsibilities of liaison officer and deputy liaison officer appointed by schools to implement this policy.

(b) Responsibility of Schools

- i. Protecting children from all forms of abuse, harm and neglect is a responsibility of everyone working in a school.
- ii. Schools must create awareness among all school personnel, students and parents on the National Child Protection Policy.
- iii. Schools must appoint a liaison officer and deputy liaison officer to implement this policy and inform in writing to Education Supervision and Quality Improvement Division of Ministry of Education.
- iv. Schools must include the responsibilities assigned for the liaison officers in their job description.
- v. Protecting children from any form of abuse, harm and neglect is a responsibility the whole school community including all school personnel, parents and students.

(c) Responsibility of Senior Management Team

- i. The senior management (principal, deputy principal, leading teacher, school administrator) is responsible to govern the schools in accordance with the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Children (number: 91/9 and 2014/39).
- ii. To fulfil the responsibility mentioned in (i.) senior management team must:
 - Ensure that the protection of children and the consideration of their safety and welfare are at the core of all school activities.
 - Ensure that schools meet the requirements of the National Child Protection Policy.
 - Create awareness among the school personnel, parents and children about the National Child Protection Policy and the policies developed by schools under the National Child Protection Policy.
 - Ensure arrangements have been made to collect and maintain the necessary records and documentations of all school personnel to ensure that they are fit and proper persons to work with children.
 - Undertake an annual review of all the policies developed by school in relation to child protection including the School Based Child Protection Policy and other policies developed by schools to ensure the safety and welfare of children in various activities. Schools must submit the reviewed policy documents to Education Supervision and Quality Improvement Division of Ministry of Education before 15th November of every year.

(d) Responsibilities of School Principal

- i. Implement the National Child Protection Policy efficiently.
- ii. Ensure that the school develop and implement their own School Based Child Protection Policy which is aligned with the National Child Protection Policy.
- iii. Monitor and ensure that all school personnel respect and fulfill their responsibilities mentioned in the National Child Protection Policy.

- iv. Monitor and ensure the school collects and maintain necessary documents of all school personnel as required by the Ministry of Education to show that they are fit and proper persons to work with children.
- v. In cases of child abuse / neglect to liaise with Ministry of Gender and Family and/or the Maldives Police Service to ensure the wellbeing of the child and to plan for the child's continuing needs within the school environment. In such cases relevant focal point of Ministry of Education must be informed about the communication with Ministry of Gender and Family and or Maldives Police Service.
- vi. Monitor and ensure that school maintains written records of all referrals and or communication regarding child protection issues with any other institution (For an example: Ministry of Gender and Family, Juvenile Justice Unit, Ministry of Education, Maldives Police Service).
- vii. Upon written requests to provide documentation on the actions taken by school to ensure the safety of a child to relevant government authorities. Principal must ensure the documentations are shared with the relevant governmental authorities confidentially.
- viii.** Draw on the resources and expertise of other ministries, non-government organizations to support children in need of care and protection and conduct preventative programs for parents and teachers after discussing with Ministry of Education.

(e) All School Personnel

Everyone working in a school must ensure that they:

- i. Ensure that they understand their obligations and responsibilities as per the National Child Protection Policy.
- ii. Ensure that all relevant legislation, policies and procedures on protection of children are implemented in all school activities.

- iii. Provide school with the necessary documentation such as educational certificates, work experience letters, and police report to show that they are fit and proper person to work with children. Upon request schools must share these documents with Ministry of Education.

(f) Working in Collaborative Partnership

- i. Child protection is a shared responsibility of schools and the community. The need for effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise are required if children are to be protected from harm and their welfare promoted.
- ii. This policy outlines how schools in close alliance with parents, the community, government and non-government agencies, should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

6. Reporting and Referral Procedures

Schools should follow the following procedures in reporting and exchanging information of any identified or suspected case of child abuse and neglect to the relevant authorities.

- (a) Any school personnel who suspects or identifies a case of sexual, physical, emotional abuse or neglect a child they must report the case immediately to the relevant authorities.
- (b) A flowchart of the referral and support mechanisms in cases of identified or suspected child abuse or neglect is at Annex A of this policy.
- (c) If there is reason to believe that the safety of the student is compromised, school should ensure safety of the child and inform the liaison officer and deputy liaison officer.
- (d) If the concern relates to the conduct of school personnel; principal or liaison officer must report the case immediately to Ministry of Education. Ministry of Education should then take the necessary actions against the employee.
- (e) Disclosure of abuse and or neglect by students must be responded appropriately and necessary support must be provided to the student. If a disclosure from a student is ignored or dismissed the student continues to be placed at risk.

- (f) The responsibility of school towards the student does not end with a referral to external agencies; schools should continue to support the student. If necessary schools may seek the help of a third party to provide specific support to the student.
- (g) If the concern relates to the conduct of the principal; liaison officer or deputy liaison officer must report the matter as per this policy to Ministry of Education
- (h) If appropriate and safe for the student schools may seek to engage and involve parents to provide support and care to the student.
- (i) If an employee is found to falsely accusing another employee without any doubt, Ministry of Education must take administrative action against that employee in line with the relevant laws and regulations.
- (j) Principal must maintain written records of all cases involving a school employee. This information must be provided to relevant authorities upon request.

7. Confidentiality and Information Sharing.

- (a) Maintaining confidentiality is one of the most important aspects in cases related to child protection.
- (b) While school personnel should be conscious of the requirements for confidentiality they should not take any undertakings inconsistent with the reporting obligations laid out in this policy.
- (c) Teachers and school counsellors should work within code of conduct laid out by Ministry of Education.
- (d) The principal, liaison officer and deputy liaison officer and all the school employees must take all reasonable steps to ensure all information of a particular case is kept in a secure manner.
- (e) When working with a third party to provide support to a particular student school must ensure that the information is shared confidentially.
- (f) To the extent possible parents, teachers and students must be informed that schools are obliged to report child abuse or neglect cases to the relevant authorities.

8. Protecting Students during Extra and Co-curricular Activities.

- (a) Schools should develop a protocol to ensure the protection of the students during extra and co-curricular activities.
- (b) The protocol developed should ensure that more than one person is responsible for students during extra and co-curricular activities. Similar arrangements must be made even in activities where a single child is involved.
- (c) The protocol should include precautionary actions that would be taken by school to bring the students to and from school if the activity is conducted outside of school premises.
- (d) Schools must pay special attention to ensure that children with disabilities or children in other special circumstances are catered well during extra and co-curricular activities.

9. Dealing with Vulnerable Students

- (a) The needs of children with particular vulnerabilities must be considered by schools so as to ensure that they can safely enjoy and participate in the programs and services wherever possible.
- (b) Students should plan and carryout interventions focusing on vulnerable students.
- (c) Vulnerabilities such as a developmental delay or disability may profoundly affect children and their family members in a range of ways. It can also contribute unnecessarily to increased vulnerability or the exclusion of these children and family members from community activities and services. School should establish ways to help students in such circumstances.

10. Criminal Background Check

- (a) All staff working at schools must clear the criminal background check as outlined by Ministry of Education.
- (b) In addition to permanent staff of the school, any person working who are required to work with children such as scout leaders, guide leaders, cadet masters must clear the criminal background check.

11. Training in Child Abuse and Neglect Recognition

- (a) Ministry of Education will work with all schools to ensure appropriate training is provided to school personnel in recognising, understanding and undertaking the appropriate responses with regard to child protection concerns.
- (b) The annual review of the School Based Child protection Policy must include initiatives and activities undertaken by school to provide training for school personnel in the area of child protection.
- (c) The annex E of this policy outlines indicators of child abuse and neglect.

12. Early Grade Risk Assessment for Grade 1 Students.

- (a) The Ministry of Education will work with all schools to introduce an early risk assessment process for all students entering grade 1. This assessment will act as a guide for early intervention or subsequent planning that is required for any student identified in the process as being at potential risk of abuse or neglect.

13. Ongoing Monitoring by Ministry of Education

- (a) Ministry of Education will work with all schools to monitor and determine how schools are performing in meeting their obligations with respect to complying with the requirements of the National Child Protection Policy.

14. Other Issues Related to Child Protection

(a) Anti-Bullying

- i. Harassment and bullying behaviour between students is usually dealt with under the Behaviour Management Policy. In some instances behaviour in question might be indicative of a child protection issue and subsequently the reporting procedures outlined in this policy must be followed.
- ii. All schools must also have an Anti-Bullying Policy. This policy should be shared with the whole school community.
- iii. Children with disabilities are known to be particularly vulnerable to experiences of bullying and negative treatment from other children and may have limited

communication and social skills to respond assertively. Strategies that promote understanding and acceptance of diversity around developmental delay and disability and policies that highlight on how to respond to victimisation and bullying of vulnerable children are a vital component of creating healthy, child-safe schools.

- iv. Students should be able to discuss bullying related issues with school counsellors easily. Counsellors should be ready to help and guide the children to overcome bullying. In cases of severe bullying school counsellor or any other staff who identifies the issue must discuss with the principal in order to take necessary precautionary actions.
- v. If there is no school counsellor, liaison officer or deputy liaison officer should discuss identified bullying issues with principal in order to take necessary precautionary actions.
- vi. All school employees including counsellor, liaison officer and deputy liaison officer plays an important role in reporting and attending to bullying cases in school environment.
- vii. If a school employee is suspected to be involved in bullying, the case must be reported to Ministry of Education. Reporting details are mentioned in circular number: 22-E/CIR2015/29, “Guideline for Recording and Reporting of Incidents and Injury within Schools”.
- viii. A Template for a School Based Anti-Bullying Policy is at Annex B of this policy.

(b) Behaviour Management

- i. All school personnel should work together with children having behavioural issues. The disciplinary actions taken by school personnel should not cause any harm or injury to the child as per the Behaviour Management Policy.

(c) Corporal Punishment

- i. Ministry of Education forbid any punishment that may cause physical harm to the child. If a teacher engages in an action that caused any harm to the child, that particular incident should be informed to Ministry of Education

(d) Self-harm and Suicide Prevention

- i. To reduce the risk of suicidal and self-harming children, decisive action must be taken by school staff regarding any concerns they have about a child and as early as possible and the principal should be informed immediately.
- ii. School should have an established protocol to attend to cases of self-harm or suicidal thoughts in a timely manner.
- iii. The principal must report any concerns and actions taken regarding suicidal thoughts or self-harm related cases to Ministry of Education

(e) Sexual Behaviour between Children

- i. Sexual behaviour between children may be an indicator of maltreatment and therefore is considered to be a child protection issue. If any such case is identified school must report the issue as per this policy. The principal should inform any concern that they may have with regard to such cases to Educational Supervision and Quality Improvement Division of Ministry of Education.

(f) Student's Attendance

- i. Attendance issues may be an indicator of child abuse or neglect. Therefore principal should ensure that school implement Ministry of Education's Attendance Policy. The Attendance Policy was shared with all schools by Ministry of Education's circular number: 22-E/CIR/2016/50.
- ii. Upon registering the students in school daily attendance should be recorded and maintained. There should be a team to work with the principal to deal with the attendance issues among students. If there are students who don't come to school without a valid reason, it must be discussed with Ministry of Education to decide upon further actions.

15. School Based Child Protection Policy

- (a) All schools must develop and implement their own School Based Child Protection Policy by 01st September 2017.
- (b) The School Based Child Protection Policy must reflect the principles and procedures outlined in the National Child Protection Policy.
- (c) The School Based Child Protection Policy must affirm with the following guiding principles in respect to child welfare and safety:
 - i. Recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance.
 - ii. Outline responsibilities of the employees with regard to issues related to child protection.
 - iii. Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters.
 - iv. Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave them open to accusations of abuse or neglect.
 - v. Highlight on the importance of early identification in order to help children at potential risk of harm, abuse or neglect and establish ways to identify such children. (The early grade risk assessment tool referred to in this policy can be used by schools to identify children who at potential risk of harm, abuse or neglect).
 - vi. Develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children.
 - vii. Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.
- (d) A copy of the policy must be made available to all school personnel and the Parents' Association (*if any*) and be readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of the policy must also be made available to the Ministry of Education as requested.
- (e) A template for the development of School Based Child Protection Policy is at Annex C of this policy.

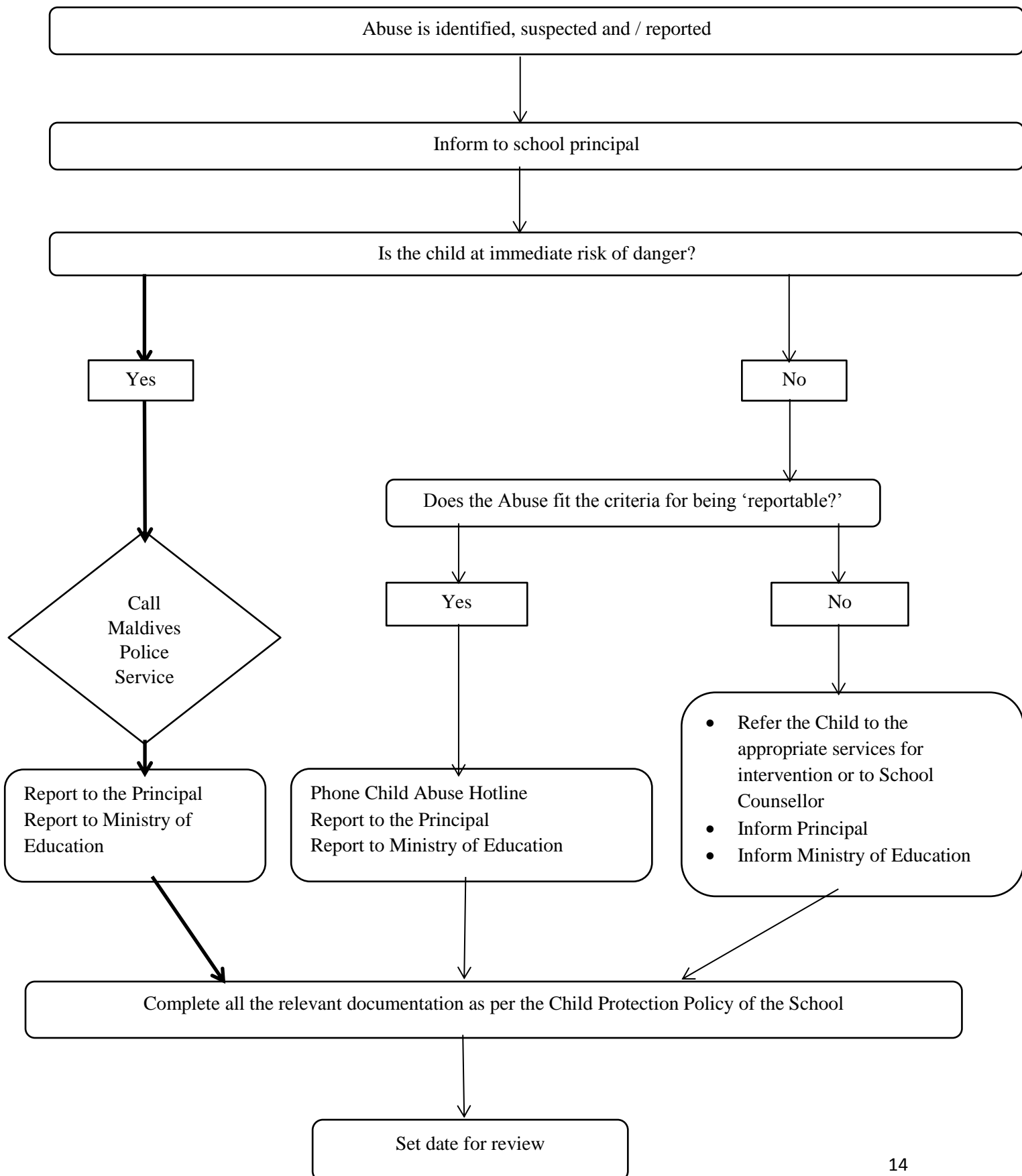
- (f) A checklist for the annual review of the School Based Child Protection Policy by the senior management team is at Annex D of this policy.

ANNEXES

- A Reporting and Referral Process Flowchart
- B Template for School Based Anti-Bullying Policy
- C Template for School Based Child Protection Policy
- D Template for Annual Self-Assessment by School Senior Management Team
- E Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

Annex A:

Referral / Reporting Process Flowchart



Annex B:

Template for Schools Based Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

Our School <school name> is committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying occurs when a student is subjected to negative behaviour, repeated over a period of time, by another student or group of students.

Bullying is aggressive behaviour that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can take many forms:

- Direct Bullying: teasing, verbal attacks, shoving, assaults, extortion, destruction of property.
- Indirect Bullying: shunning, spreading rumours, malicious practical jokes, and similar verbal and social behaviour.
- Cyber-Bullying: use of Internet technology, including social websites, text messaging and e- mails.

Educational Programs

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers understand what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at <school name>. At <school name> we use the following educational strategies:

- Xx
- Xx
- Xx

Prevention Programs

Effective social skills and positive relationships act to prevent bullying. At <school name> we promote effective social skills and positive relationships by:

- Xx
- Xx
- Xx

Responses to bullying

Reports of bullying will be investigated and acted upon. Responses to bullying might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

At <school name> we support targets and perpetrators by:

- Xx
- Xx
- Xx

At <school name> the consequences for bullying might include the following:

- Xx
- Xx
- Xx

Reporting and monitoring bullying

At <school name> reports of bullying are taken seriously. Students and parents/carers may report bullying in the following ways:

- Xx
- Xx
- Xx

Reports of bullying will be collated and monitored to inform the school community about the extent of bullying and to identify particular areas of concern for future action. Our monitoring our approach to bullying and our strategies in dealing with the bullying will be reported to ESQID, Ministry of Education on an annual basis.

Annex C:

Template for School Based Child Protection Policy

The senior management team of [SCHOOL NAME] recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. In accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Education's National Child Protection Policy, the senior management team of [SCHOOL NAME] has agreed the following Child Protection Policy:

1. The senior management team has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Ministry of Education's National Child Protection Policy as part of our School Based Child Protection Policy.

2. The Designated Child Protection Liaison Person (DCPLP) is

3. The Deputy Designated Child Protection Liaison Person (DDCPLP) is

4. In its policies, practices and activities, [SCHOOL NAME] will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare: The school will

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any child or adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

5. *This section of the child protection policy should be used to list school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection (e.g. the Code of Behaviour/Anti-bullying Policy, Pupil Attendance Strategy, Supervision of Pupils, Sporting Activities/School Outings/Pupil Work Placements at post primary etc.) The SMT has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.*

6. This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association (if any) and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Ministry of Education as requested.

7. This policy will be reviewed by the senior management team once in every school year and a report will be forwarded to Educational Supervision and Quality Improvement Division of Ministry of Education

This policy was adopted by the senior management team on _____[date]

Signed: _____

Principal _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Annex D

Template for the Annual Self-Assessment of School Based Child Protection Policy by Senior Management Team (SMT)

	YES / NO
Has the SMT formally adopted a School Based Child Protection Policy in accordance with the National Child Protection Policy?	
As part of the School Based Child Protection Policy, has the SMT formally adopted, without modification the National Child Protection Policy?	
Are there both a DCPLP and a Deputy DCPLP currently appointed?	
Are the relevant contact details (Ministry of Gender and Family, Maldives Police Service, Ministry of Education) easily available?	
Has the DCPLP attended available child protection training?	
Has the Deputy DCPLP attended available child protection training?	
Have any members of the SMT attended child protection training?	
Has the School Based Child Protection Policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance?	
Has the SMT ensured that the Ministry of Education's National Child Protection Policy is available to all school personnel?	
Has the SMT made arrangements to communicate the School Based Child Protection Policy to all new school personnel?	
Is the SMT satisfied that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the National Child Protection Policy?	
Since the SMT's last annual review, was the SMT informed of any child protection reports made to the Ministry of Gender and Family, Maldives Police Service and Ministry of Education by the DCPLP?	
Since the SMT's last annual review, was the SMT informed of any cases	

where the DCPLP sought advice from the Ministry of Gender and Family and as a result of this advice, no report to the Ministry of Gender and Family was made?	
Is the SMT satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to Ministry of Gender and Family and Maldives Police Service were appropriately followed?	
Is the SMT satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	
Has the SMT ensured that the Parents' Association (if any), has been provided with the School Based Child Protection Policy?	
Has the SMT ensured that the School Based Child Protection Policy is available to parents upon request?	
Has the SMT ensured that the life skills curriculum is implemented in full in the school?	
Is the SMT satisfied that the Ministry of Education's requirements for criminal background check have been met in respect of all school personnel (employees and volunteers)?	
Is the SMT satisfied that, from a child protection perspective, thorough recruitment and selection procedures are used by the school in relation to all school personnel (employees and volunteers)?	
Has the SMT identified any aspects of the School Based Child Protection Policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the SMT put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the School Based Child Protection Policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement ?	
Has the SMT ensured that any areas for improvement that that were identified in any previous review of the School Based Child Protection Policy have been adequately addressed?	

Has the SMT provided a copy of the latest annual review to Educational Supervision and Quality Improvement Division of Ministry of Education?	
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Annex E

Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

Recognition of child maltreatment is not based always upon the detection of one or two clues, but rather on the recognition of a cluster of indicators that make up a composite or pattern. It also is very important to remember that some indicators, both physical and behavioural, may be indications of something other than abuse.

Neglect

Does the child:

- Come to school in soiled clothing or clothing that is significantly too small or large for them or often in need of repair?
- Seem inadequately dressed for the weather?
- Always seem to be hungry, hoarding, or stealing food, but coming to school with little of their own food?
- Appear listless and tired with little energy due to no routine or structure around bedtimes?
- Often report caring for younger siblings?
- Demonstrate poor hygiene, smell of urine or faeces, or has very bad breath or dirty or decaying teeth?
- Seem emaciated or have a distended stomach indicative of malnutrition?
- Have unattended medical or dental problems such as infected sores or badly decayed or abscessed teeth?
- Exhibit stealing, vandalism, or other delinquent behaviours?
- Have frequent school absences or tardiness?
- Have poor peer relationships, possibly due to hygiene problems or a depressed or negative attitude?
- Appear withdrawn?
- Crave attention, even eliciting negative responses to gain it?
- Demonstrate destructive or pugnacious behaviour and show no apparent guilt over his or her acts?

- Exhibit low self-esteem?
- Have a conduct disorder diagnosis or act oppositionally defiant?
- Have difficulty problem solving or coping?
- Have difficulty with language comprehension and expression?
- Have a variety of academic problems?

Physical Abuse

Does the child have?

- Extensive bruises, especially in areas of the body that are not normally vulnerable? Are the bruises of different colours indicating various stages of healing?
- Frequent bruises around the head or face, the abdomen or midway between the wrist and elbow? Although bruises to the knees, legs, and elbows frequently occur in normal falls, the above areas are less likely to occur in falls and should be investigated.
- Bruises in specific shapes such as handprints, hangar marks, or belt buckles?
- Marks that indicate hard blows from an object such as an electrical cord or other whip-like object that make a burn around the body?
- Bruises on multiple parts of the body indicating blows from different directions?
- Unexplained abdominal bleeding (i.e., caused by internal bleeding) that might be observed as discoloration under the skin or blood-filled lumps?
- Extreme sensitivity to pain or complaints of soreness and stiffness or awkward movements as if caused by pain?
- Bald spots from severe hair pulling?
- Adult-sized, human bite marks?
- Burns, especially from objects such as cigarettes, irons, and other objects?
- Injuries for which the explanation given is inadequate?
-

Emotional Abuse

Does the child sometimes exhibit?

- Inappropriate affect such as turning negatives into jokes and laughing when in pain?
- Extremes in behaviour - manically happy or very depressed?
- Withdrawal - no verbal or physical communication with others?
- Self-destructive behaviour (e.g., cutting oneself)?
- General destructive behaviour?
- Difficulties with concentrating or learning new material or compulsive attention to detail?
- Cruelty to others?
- Vandalism, stealing, cheating?
- Rocking, thumb sucking, head banging?
- Enuresis (wetting one's pants) or soiling after an age when such behaviour is inappropriate?
- Substance abuse?
- Eating disorders?
- Physical manifestations such as frequent stomach aches or headaches or unexplained weight loss or gain?
- Delinquent behaviour?
- Sexual Abuse

Does the child:

- Have difficulty in walking or sitting?
- Complain of genital or anal itching, pain, or bleeding?
- Have frequent psychosomatic illnesses?
- Frequently vomit without organic causes?
- Become pregnant at a young age?
- Have any sexually transmitted diseases?

Does the child exhibit:

- Exceptional secrecy?
- More sexual knowledge than is age appropriate (especially in younger children)?
- In-depth sexual play with peers (different from the normal "playing doctor" form of exploration)?
- Extreme compliance or withdrawal?
- Overt aggression?
- An inordinate fear of males (or females)?
- Extremely seductive behaviour?
- A drop in school performance or sudden nonparticipation in school activities?
- Sleep problems or nightmares?
- Crying without provocation?
- A sudden onset of wetting or soiling of pants or bed?
- Sudden phobic behaviour?
- Feelings of little self-worth or talk of being damaged?
- A much older and more worldly appearance than peers?
- Suicide attempts or ideas of wanting to kill self?
- Excessive attempts to run away from home?
- Cruelty to animals (especially those that would normally be pets)?
- Setting fires and enjoying watching them burn?
- An eating disorder?
- Self-mutilation (cutting or scratching to draw blood)?

Source: Crosson-Tower, C. (2002). How can we recognize child abuse and neglect? In *When children are abused: An educator's guide to intervention* (pp. 8-34). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon

Behavioural Clues That May Indicate Child Abuse

Although there are many other potential indicators, the abused child may:

- Be aggressive, oppositional, or defiant;
- Cower or demonstrate fear of adults;
- Act out, displaying aggressive or disruptive behaviour;
- Be destructive to self or others;
- Come to school too early or not want to leave school—indicating a possible fear of going home;
- Show fearlessness or extreme risk taking;
- Be described as "accident prone";
- Cheat, steal, or lie (may be related to too high expectations at home);
- Be a low achiever (to learn, children must convert aggressive energy into learning; children in conflict may not be able to do so);
- Be unable to form good peer relationships;
- Wear clothing that covers the body and that may be inappropriate in warmer months (be aware that this may be a cultural issue as well);
- Show regressive or less mature behaviour;
- Dislike or shrink from physical contact—may not tolerate physical praise such as a pat on the back)