STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

Introduced	September 2024
First review	September 2025
Next review	September 2027

DEFINITION:

Student protection refers to the policies, procedures, and practices put in place by the school to ensure the safety, well-being, and rights of students while they are in a learning environment. This can include protection from physical, emotional, and psychological harm, abuse, neglect, bullying, harassment, and discrimination. It is every student's right to be in a safe School environment that is free of any form of abuse and that continuously offers care, support and protection to all students without discrimination.

PURPOSE:

- Protect our students under the supervision of school from all acts and omissions constituting maltreatment.
- Emphasize the protection of students as a core principle, which stems from the moral obligation, and to safeguard them from abuse or harm and to ensure their security and welfare, as required pursuant to applicable laws in force in the UAE.
- Prioritize that all staff in the Grace Valley India school are mandated reporters of cases of alleged and/or suspected maltreatment of students inside and outside the school.
- Ensure all school staff, parents and children are aware of their rights and responsibilities under Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on Child Right and Federal Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law.
- Ensure that our school is responsible for the care and protection of all students and coordinate actions to safeguard them.

ACRONYMS

CPC	Child Protection Coordinator
CPS	Child Protection Specialist
CPT	Child Protection Team
CPU	CPU Child Protection Unit
FCA	Family Care Authority

MoI CPC	UAE Ministry of Interior – Child Protection Center

TYPES OF STUDENT MALTREATMENT

Physical Abuse	An intentional physical act which results in, has a high likelihood of resulting in, or poses a threat of resulting in immediate and/or long-term physical injury or harm to the student's health, survival, and development.
Emotional Abuse	An act, whether consistent or inconsistent, used to make a student feel unloved, worthless, and of no value and integrity, interfering with the student's positive mental and emotional development.
Sexual Abuse	Involvement of a student in sexual activity that they may or may not fully comprehend, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Student sexual abuse is evidenced by the activity between an adult and a student, or between a student and another student, who by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. The intent of the activity is to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.
Neglect	Failure of a parent or any adult supervising a student to provide for the basic needs and rights of a student towards their physical safety, development, and wellbeing, which may lead to a failure to thrive in the context of the resources reasonably available to the parent and causes or has a high probability of causing significant harm to the student's health and/or physical, social, educational, mental, spiritual, or moral integrity.
Exploitation	Use of the student in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, student labor and exploitation of students in prostitution or involvement of the student in gangs, militia or military. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social development. • Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where there is abuse of power by a youth, adult, or group who may coerce, manipulate, or deceive a student into sexual activity by physical contact and/or use of technology for monetary, social, or political profits. • Economic exploitation is the use of a student who is below the minimum age of labor in the workplace or related activities for the benefit of others through the production, distribution, and consumption of goods or of a particular service delivered by the student.
Bullying	Repeated physical, social, or verbal aggression exercised by students who feel they are in a position of power against other students who are perceived weaker or powerless, to achieve specific gains or draw attention, in a way that hurts the student physically and/or emotionally. Bullying can be committed by groups or individuals, in online

	(cyberbullying) or offline settings. • Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Online bullying can follow the bullied student wherever they go via social networks and mobile phones and has a wider reach than bullying in the real world.

Principles:

- The school must prioritize the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of all our students.
- Ensure the school environment is physically safe, with secure access, regular safety drills, and clear procedures for emergencies.
- All staff and students in Grace valley Indian school must understand their responsibility to report any suspicions or disclosures of abuse.
- All mandated reporters and staff and other stakeholders are accountable for ensuring student protection measures are in place.
- Clearly outline a zero-tolerance stance toward physical, emotional, sexual, and verbal abuse.

POLICY:

1. **Legal Obligations and Rights**

1.1 Compliance with Regulations

This policy is developed in accordance with federal student protection laws and related regulations. Grace Valley Indian School is committed to ensuring a safe educational environment for all students.

1.2 Development of Institutional Policies

Grace Valley Indian school has developed maintained a student protection policy that aligns with this overarching policy, ensuring all provisions are met.

1.3 Management of Maltreatment Concerns

GVIS will adhere to the "Handling Student Maltreatment Concerns within Educational Institutions" (ECA, 2024) guidelines for the management of reported abuse-related incidents.

1.4 Communication and Agreement

The student protection policy will be communicated to all stakeholders, including board members, staff, volunteers, parents, and students. A student-friendly version will be provided, and student assent will be obtained for concerns raised.

1.5 Role of the Principal

The principal is the guardian of student rights and will ensure that all students are protected from maltreatment while under school supervision. The principal will take all necessary actions to uphold this responsibility.

1.6 Equal Rights for Students

All students have equal rights to care, protection, and safety. GVIS is fully responsible for safeguarding students during their time at school.

2. Reporting of Concerns of Maltreatment

2.1 Mandatory Reporting by Staff

All staff members, including those who have regular or temporary contact with students, are required by Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 concerning Child Rights to report any suspected maltreatment directly to the ADEK Child Protection Unit (CPU) within 24 hours. Staff must follow the procedures outlined in the "Safety Concern Referrals in Abu Dhabi Educational Institutions" and the ECA (2024) guide.

2.2 Notification of Concerns

All maltreatment concerns, whether occurring inside or outside GVIS, should be reported to the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) or their representative.

2.3 Handling Bullying Cases

GVIS will comply with the National Policy for the Prevention of Bullying in Educational Institutions for handling bullying incidents. Severe bullying cases will be treated as maltreatment and managed according to this policy.

2.4 Child Protection Coordinator and Team

GVIS will appoint a Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) and a Child Protection Team (CPT). The CPC will receive ADEK-mandated training and will preferably be a senior staff member. The CPT will consist of 3-5 trained members, including the counselor or social worker, and relevant senior leadership.

2.5 Reporting Allegations of Maltreatment

All staff, including volunteers, must report any allegations or concerns of maltreatment to the CPC or a member of the CPT immediately, regardless of where the maltreatment occurred.

2.6 Emergency Reporting Protocol

In emergencies, where a student is in imminent danger, staff must report the situation immediately to the police (999) and inform the principal. A Safety Concern Form should be completed online afterward.

2.7 Procedures for Maltreatment Concerns

Upon identification of maltreatment concerns, staff will report them to the CPC or their representative. If the concern occurred outside the school's supervision, the CPC will complete the Safety Concern Form online. If it occurred within school, staff will also report it to the CPC, who

will complete the form. This will be shared with the ADEK CPU, the FCA, and the Ministry of Interior CPC.

2.8 Follow-up and Documentation

The ADEK CPU will review all reported concerns. If further information is required, the school will be notified to provide it. The ADEK CPU retains the right to conduct preliminary assessments as needed.

2.9Training and Implementation

All staff members will undergo training on this policy and maltreatment identification procedures. Regular reviews will be conducted to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

Procedures for Identifying and Reporting Student Maltreatment Concerns

Grace Valley Indian Schools is committed to the safety and well-being of all students. When maltreatment concerns, including severe bullying, are raised, the following procedures must be followed:

1. **Immediate Reporting**:

- All staff members are trained to identify maltreatment according to the operational definitions outlined in this document. Any staff member who identifies a concern of student maltreatment must report it directly to the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) or their designated representative.
- In emergency situations where a student is in imminent danger, the matter must be reported immediately to the Police and the Principal.

2. **Concerns Outside Institutional Supervision**:

- For maltreatment concerns occurring outside the supervision of the educational institution, the CPC or a designated representative must complete the Safety Concern Form through the digital safety concern portal.
- This form will automatically be shared with the ADEK Child Protection Unit (CPU), the Federal Competent Authority (FCA), and the Ministry of Interior (MoI) CPC. The FCA will then review the case and follow the necessary procedures for case management.

3. **Concerns Under Institutional Supervision**:

- If maltreatment concerns occur while the student is under the institution's supervision, staff should inform the CPC or a designated representative. The CPC will complete the Safety Concern Form on the digital portal.

- Upon submission, a copy of the Safety Concern Form will be automatically shared with the FCA, ADEK CPU, and MoI CPC. The ADEK CPU will conduct an initial review before referring the case to the FCA for further case management.

4. **Initial Safety and Risk Assessment**:

- The ADEK CPU reserves the right to conduct or designate qualified personnel to carry out an initial safety and risk assessment before escalating the concern to the FCA.

5. **Case Management by FCA**:

- If referred by the ADEK CPU, the FCA will manage the concern through the Child Protection Services (CPS) at the FCA. The ADEK CPU will provide necessary administrative support, including sharing relevant information to facilitate assessments and other activities related to case management.

6. **Non-Referral Back to Institution**:

- If the ADEK CPU determines that the case should not be reported to the FCA, the concern will be returned to the educational institution with justifications provided. The institution will be required to collect additional information before resubmitting a Safety Concern Form.

7. **Logging and Response**:

- In all circumstances, the ADEK CPU will ensure that the concern is logged and that a timely response is provided.

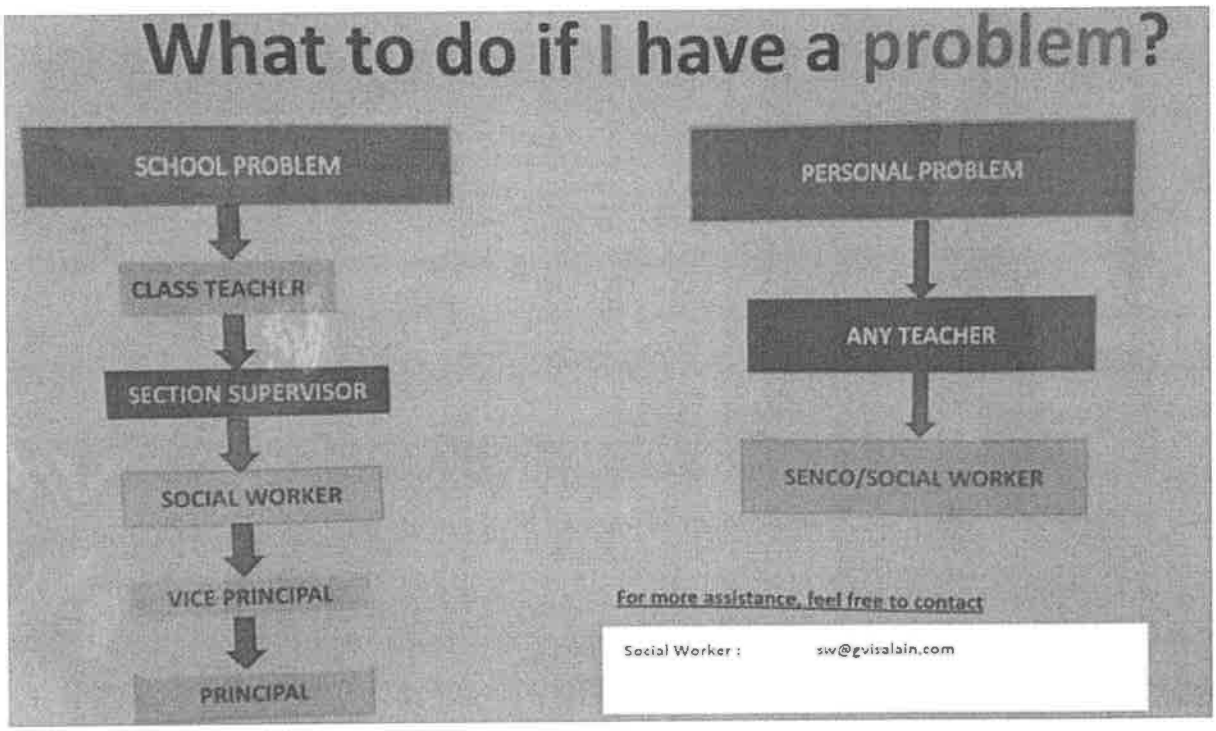
Figure 1. Safety Concern Referrals in Abu Dhabi Educational Institutions



1. After submitting the Safety Concern Form on the digital safety concern portal, a copy of the report is automatically shared with FCA, ADEK CPU, and MoE CPC.
2. For cases occuring within educational institutions' supervision, the ADEK CPU will review the information first before referring to the FCA for case management. Note: The ADEK CPU will take the necessary procedures to followup on the cases after receiving the report.

Relevant contact details are as follows:

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



3. Data Confidentiality

3.1 Confidentiality of Reports

All case reports and student data are strictly confidential. The identities of students subject to alleged or suspected maltreatment, the alleged/suspected perpetrators, and the individuals reporting the cases must be kept confidential by all parties involved.

3.2 Authorized Sharing of Data

Data may only be shared with authorized individuals from the ADEK Child Protection Unit (CPU), the Family and Community Awareness (FCA) team, investigative bodies, and the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department.

3.3 Prohibition on Discussion

Authorized individuals are prohibited from discussing active or closed cases with the media, any third parties, or unauthorized staff, except as required by investigative or judicial authorities under legal responsibilities.

4. Training

4.1 Training for CPC and CPT

The Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) and Child Protection Team (CPT) shall complete all mandatory student protection policy and safeguarding training as required by ADEK, including an affidavit affirming adherence to the highest ethical standards and code of conduct in case management.

4.2 Staff Training

All GVIS staff are required to complete ADEK-mandated training sessions on the student protection policy and safeguarding measures. Staff must sign off confirming they have received training and understand their responsibilities.

4.3 Volunteer Training

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

4.4 Continuous Training for Support Staff

Staff providing counseling or close personal contact with students shall receive ongoing training in student protection and safeguarding, supervised by the principal.

4.5 Certification for CPS

Any Child Protection Specialists (CPS) working with the ADEK CPU shall obtain certification from the Ministry of Community Development.

5. Vetting, Hiring, and Monitoring of Staff, Volunteers, and Visitors

5.1 Screening Procedures

All staff, volunteers, and invited visitors must be properly vetted and screened prior to accessing any locations where students are present. This includes obtaining criminal record checks from their countries of origin.

5.2 Principal's Responsibility

The principal is accountable for the suitability and compliance of all personnel working in the school, ensuring that no individual poses a risk to student safety and wellbeing.

5.3 Continuous Monitoring

The principal must continuously monitor all staff and report any allegations or suspected inappropriate conduct immediately to the relevant authorities.

6. Acceptable Adult Behaviors

6.1 Respect for Students' Rights

Staff and volunteers must respect and protect the rights of all students, ensuring no actions put students at risk of maltreatment.

6.2 Inappropriate Behaviors

Staff and volunteers must refrain from any inappropriate behavior toward students or in their presence.

6.3 Reporting Requirements

All staff and volunteers are required to report any incidents of inappropriate behavior against students.

6.4 Handling Serious Allegations

Serious allegations of sexual misconduct by staff, volunteers, or invited visitors must be reported immediately to the police and FCA. The accused individual will be removed from school premises without delay.

7. Student Protection Learning Resources

7.1 Development of Resources

Age-appropriate student protection resources will be developed or procured and distributed to help students understand personal safety and wellbeing, and to inform them of actions they can take to report violations.

7.2 Instruction in Resources

These resources will be integrated into classroom lessons and counseling sessions, utilizing various media (storybooks, activity books, posters, etc.) for individual and group discussions.

7.3 Trained Instructors

Student protection education will be taught by staff trained in understanding student protection and development.

7.4 Assistance References

All content will include clear references for where students can seek assistance if needed.

8. Policy Dissemination and Review

8.1 Availability of Policy

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

8.2 Regular Review

All policies, guidelines, safeguarding measures, and procedures will be reviewed and updated regularly, at least every five years, or as required.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Compliance**: All students, staff, and faculty must comply with the provisions outlined in this policy to ensure a safe and supportive environment.
2. **Publication and Accessibility**: The school will publish and prominently display this policy to protect students from maltreatment, ensuring that all community members are aware of its provisions.
3. **Prevention Procedures**: The institution will implement and communicate clear procedures designed to prevent situations that could lead to the maltreatment of students. All staff, including the principal, must be familiar with these procedures.
4. **Supervision**: Staff will ensure that students are supervised at all times while under the care of Grace Valley Indian School, maintaining a safe and secure environment.
5. **Immediate Action**: The institution prioritizes the protection of students and will take immediate action upon any suspicion of student maltreatment, following established protocols to address concerns swiftly and effectively.
6. **Reporting Concerns**: Students will be informed about how, where, and to whom they can safely report concerns about alleged and/or suspected maltreatment without fear of retribution or punishment.

7. **Awareness for Staff and Volunteers**: Staff, volunteers, and students will be educated on how, where, and to whom they can report concerns regarding the potential exposure of any student to alleged and/or suspected maltreatment without fear of retribution or punishment.
8. **Inclusion of Stakeholder Input**: The views and recommendations of students and parents regarding safety and protection reporting will be considered and integrated into the educational institution's practices.
9. **Mandatory Reporting**: Any case of alleged and/or suspected maltreatment of students must be reported immediately, as stipulated by this policy.
10. **Training Participation**: All staff and volunteers targeted for student protection training are required to fully attend and participate in all training sessions and sign off on safeguarding and student protection training.
11. **Parent Orientation**: Orientation sessions for parents will be conducted upon student registration and at the start of every school year to promote this policy and inform them of their roles, responsibilities, rights, and duties.
12. **Record Keeping**: Student records will be maintained in compliance with Policy 35 (Records), ensuring confidentiality of open and closed cases according to the established guidelines.
13. **Suspension of Suspected Staff**: Any staff member suspected of an offense involving student maltreatment will be immediately suspended on a temporary basis until the suspicion is adjudicated.
14. **Confidential Reporting**: Students will have a safe and confidential opportunity to report any concerns regarding their rights to safety and well-being.
15. **Vetting and Monitoring**: All staff, volunteers, and invited visitors will be vetted, hired, and monitored according to this policy and relevant safeguarding measures.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal will:

- Comply with the provisions of this policy.
- Every private school shall publish a safeguarding policy to protect students from any abuse and neglect provided it meets the minimum requirements of what is included in this policy and does not contradict any of its provisions.

- Ensure that procedures to prevent situations that could lead to the abuse or neglect of students are in place and understood by all school staff and leaders
- Ensure the supervision of students at all times while in school's care.
- Ensure that there is priority emphasis within the school on the protection of the students and for taking immediate actions when there is suspicion of cases of student abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that students can safely report their concerns about abuse and/or neglect without fear of retribution or punishment.
- Ensure that staff and others can safely report their concerns about the potential exposure of any student to abuse and/or neglect without fear of retribution or punishment.
- Gain views from students and parents regarding security and protection within the school.
- Immediately report any case of potential abuse and/or neglect of students as stated by this policy.
- Ensure that all staff and administrators targeted for student protection training are fully attend and participate in all training sessions. Conduct orientation sessions for parents/guardians upon student registration or enrolment and at the start of every school year to promote this policy and to inform them of their roles and responsibilities, and their rights and duties.
- Maintain students' records in compliance with Student Records policy, and ensure confidentiality of open and closed cases.
- Immediately suspend any staff member who is suspected of an offence involving student abuse and/or neglect on a temporary basis until the suspicion is adjudicated

All Staff and Volunteers:

1. Report immediately any alleged and/or suspected case of maltreatment upon discovery.
2. Care for students at all times while under the institution's supervision.
3. Understand this policy to effectively address alleged and/or suspected student maltreatment cases.
4. Attend and participate in mandated student protection and safeguarding training.

Responsibilities of Parents:

1. Cooperate with the educational institution's principal and staff by responding to all inquiries related to the student's behavior and academic performance, as well as addressing their feedback and guidance.
2. Attend all scheduled parent meetings with the educational institution.
3. Communicate any concerns, observations, or changes in the student's behavior to the educational institution's principal, board members, and/or concerned institutional staff.
4. Support the educational institution in ensuring safe online practices during distance learning and homework.

9. Compliance

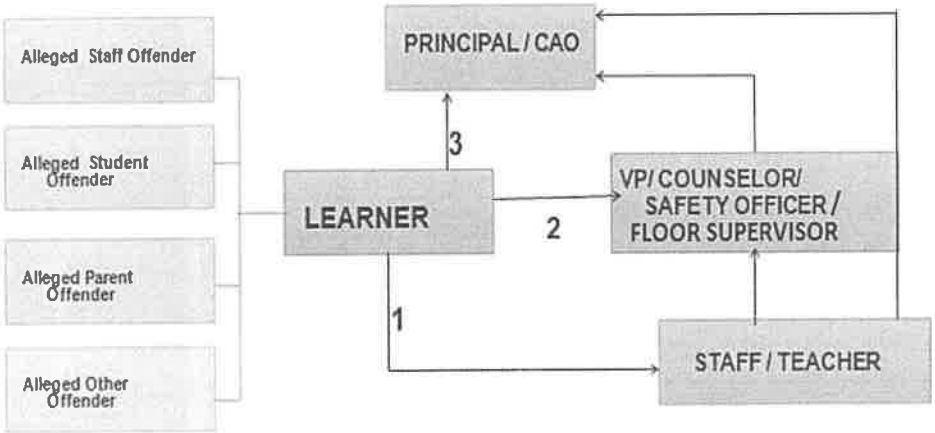
9.1 Effective Date

This policy shall be effective at the start of the Academic Year 2024/2025 (Fall term). Full compliance is expected by the start of the Academic Year 2025/2026 (Fall term).

9.2 Monitoring Compliance

ADEK will actively monitor school compliance with this policy. Non-compliance may result in legal accountability and administrative penalties as outlined in ADEK regulations, as well as UAE Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 concerning Child Rights and other relevant laws.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE – FLOW CHART



Child Protection Disclosure

Student Name			
Grade			
Name of person reporting the concern			
Date		Time	
Details of Concern			

Outcome of Action			
Further actions required, by whom and when			
Review Date			
Signature		Date	

Disclosure Form

This form should be used when a child informs any staff member or volunteer that they, or another child, are experiencing or at risk of abuse.

Dos and Don'ts

Do:

- Let the child control the pace of the conversation.
- Ask neutral questions that encourage the child to speak, such as "Can you tell me what happened?"
- Accept what the child says without seeking additional details.
- Acknowledge the difficulty they faced in sharing their experience.
- Reassure the child that they did the right thing by speaking up.
- Explain who you will need to inform (the Designated Safeguarding Lead) and why.

Don't:

- Make the child feel guilty by asking questions like "Why didn't you tell me sooner?"
- Interrogate or press the child for information.
- Ask any questions beginning with how, what, when, where, or why.
- Undress or physically examine any part of the child's body.

- Criticize the alleged abuser.
- Promise confidentiality or make assurances such as "Everything will be fine now."

1. You

Your name: .....

Date: .....

2. The child

Name of child: .....

DOB: .....

Parent/carer: .....

3. The Alleged Perpetrator

If the child has named or described the alleged perpetrator, note the details here:

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4. The Disclosure

Record of conversation (use continuation sheet if necessary):

• Record what was said by the child and by you.

• Use the exact words and phrases used by the child.

• Clearly distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion.

• Note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the child.

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Did the child name witnesses? If so, note them here:

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Was anyone else present during the disclosure? If so, note them here:

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5. Consent to Share

Was the child able to provide informed consent? (please circle)

Yes No

If so, how did you seek consent?

• Specifically, what did you explain, what questions did you ask and what were the responses?

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Did the child provide consent to share? (please circle)

Yes No

If yes, what did the child say?

• Note the exact words used by the child

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If no, did you explain that you would have to share this information with the DSL and who else might receive this information and why? (please circle)

Yes No

If yes, what did the child say?

• Note the exact words used by the child

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6. Additional Information

Any other comments

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Signed: .....

Time and date: .....

This form and any notes taken must be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, [Dr Muhammed Ibrahim ,Principal], or in his absence to the Social Worker, or another GVIS Designated Person as soon as possible and in any event no later than the end of the timetabled day. If the allegation or complaint is made against the Principal, this information should be passed directly to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

Review Date:		
Next Review Date:		
Principal	Date:	
GVIS Board of Governors		