



FAWSEC Educational Company (FAWSEC Ed. Co.) and Subsidiaries

(Al-Bayan Bilingual School & Al-Bayan International School)

Child Protection Policy

*“All children deserve a safe environment to pursue their education.”*

*Child Protection Task Force*

## FAWSEC Ed. Co. and Subsidiaries Board of Directors

### Statement of Commitment to Child Protection

Child abuse and neglect are serious concerns throughout the world. They are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to the child's education as well as to their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. FAWSEC Ed. Co. and Subsidiaries endorse the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which Kuwait is a signatory. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status. The FAWSEC Ed. Co.'s Board of Directors shares a commitment to safeguard and protect all students. We believe that every child has a right to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect. We are dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing environment for our students to thrive at home and at school as well as in the global community.

Families have entrusted FAWSEC Ed. Co. and its Subsidiaries with their children and we have a responsibility to protect them. We are committed to:

- ensuring child safety with rigorous recruitment practices
- a code of conduct to guide interactions between adults and children
- having clear procedures in place to report and follow up with cases related to child protection
- enforcing security measures to reinforce our safeguarding protocols.

This policy provides eight important components that FAWSEC Ed. Co. and Subsidiaries are committed to:

#### **1) Important Definitions for Child Protection Abuse/Neglect**

FAWSEC Ed. Co. and Subsidiaries stand with the government of Kuwait in endorsing the Kuwait Child Rights Laws and decrees to ensure the protection of children stated in Article 71, law No. 21 of 2015.

**Child protection concerns** include suspected, alleged, self-disclosed, or witnessed abuse of a child by anyone associated within or outside the school, which must be investigated and followed by appropriate action. In order to ensure that our schools and community stakeholders understand our child protection policy, we will provide all of the necessary definitions for clear identification and recognition of abuse/neglect.

**Child abuse** - According to the World Health Organization, child abuse constitutes, "*all forms of physical and/or emotional ill- treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.*" A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, in an institution (e.g. school) community setting, or online. Most child abuse is inflicted by someone the child knows, respects or trusts; or by a stranger.

- a. **Physical abuse** involves hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child. (These symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as cutting and suicide ideation).
- b. **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that causes severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve harmful words such as they are worthless or unloved; that they are inadequate or valued only if they meet the needs of another person.
- c. **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- d. **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

## **2) Recognizing and Reporting Abuse**

Educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection; but they also need to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

All educators are mandated reporters according to the Kuwait Child Law (Chapter 7, Article 26). Staff members who have a reasonable cause to believe that the child has suffered, or is at significant risk of suffering, abuse or neglect must report their concerns. Reporting and following up on all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with our child protection policy guidelines and procedures. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the identified school personnel, corresponding governmental departments/offices and/or agencies.

In addition, Kuwait Child Law (Chapter 7, Article 28) ensures that the **whistleblower** will not be charged, criminally or civilly, for reporting child abuse or neglect to the appropriate governmental agencies. Our schools are also committed to protecting the rights and identity of the whistleblower (any staff or support staff) who reports abuse of any kind.

In rare cases, when considering the complexities of cultural/religious traditions, reporting an incident to parents or governmental offices will expose the child to more harm and cause additional violations of the child's rights. In this situation, FAWSEC Ed. Co. and Subsidiaries reserve the right to take all steps to protect the child.

If a staff member is reported as an alleged offender, FAWSEC Ed. Co. and Subsidiaries will conduct a full investigation and follow a carefully designed course of action and ensure due process, keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority. A procedural flow chart (page 5) has been adapted based on the International Task force for Child Protection (ITFCP) recommendations for addressing allegations and abuse.

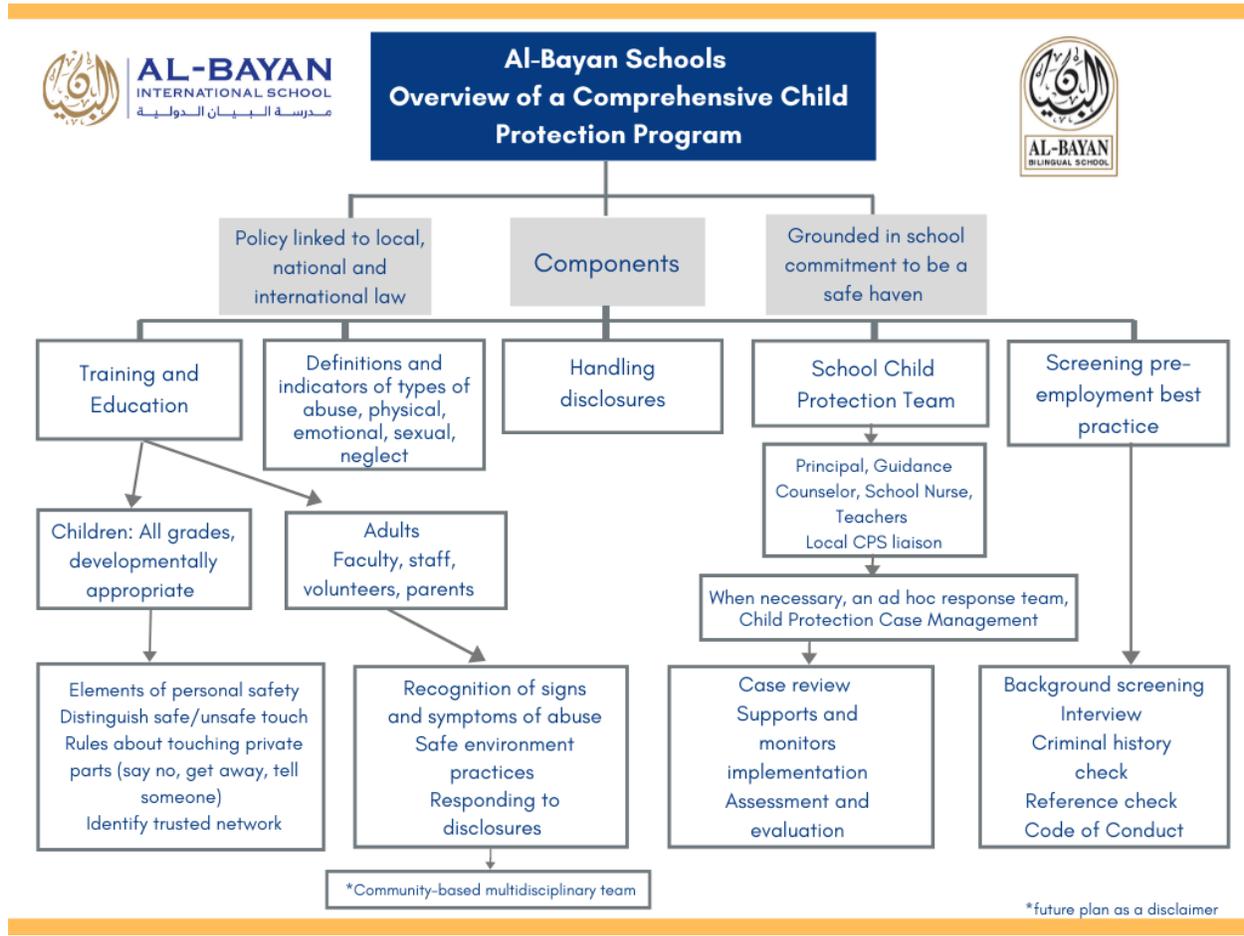
FAWSEC Ed. Co. and Subsidiaries have developed a number of training sessions and workshops that are delivered throughout the year to help staff members recognize signs of abuse and understand the steps to disclose abuse. FAWSEC Ed. Co. and Subsidiaries are committed to following the adopted practices and protocols to ensure child safety.

### **3) Reporting Procedures**

FAWSEC Ed. Co.'s Subsidiaries are mandated to design, implement, and update procedures related to child protection to ensure that reporting occurs in a systemic way while protecting the victim. Procedures have to include sections related to:

1. **Reporting by the first responder**, the person who receives the report from the child first hand or recognizes signs of child abuse.
2. **Interviewing the child**, how interviews are conducted and documented.
3. **Documenting**, account of events and/or report from the first responder, investigation, follow, and support.
4. **Conducting the investigation**, how the investigation is handled and communication to concerned personnel within specified timelines.
5. **Reporting**, a section on reporting to the necessary authorities and/or other parties involved.
6. **Follow-up and supporting the child**, a section outlining details of follow-up with the authorities, the child, and the families involved as well as providing necessary support to the child.

## Procedural Flowchart



### 4) Screening and Selecting Staff or Faculty

FAWSEC Ed. Co. and Subsidiaries’ Human Resources Division will follow a rigorous recruitment and hiring practices. Careful vetting and selection of new staff is an early and proactive measure to ensure the safeguarding of students. Potential employees are thoroughly screened with mandatory background checks, and verification of experience from all previous employers, to ensure that they pose no threat to our students. Prior to commencing the contract, staff are required to obtain police clearance/criminal record documentation issued by relevant authorities. Additional steps are also required by our schools and the Government of Kuwait to ensure that all staff coming from overseas are suitable to work with children.

**As part of the hiring process, full time staff are required to provide:**

- Experience letter upon request to the Kuwait Ministry of Education.
- All educational qualifications (degrees and transcripts) must be verified and authenticated by the issuing institution, higher education bodies and by Kuwait Embassies in the home country of the hired employee.
- An authenticated police report stamped by the Kuwait Embassy abroad is mandated by Kuwait Government as part of the work visa and residency process in order to be eligible for employment in Kuwait.
- A police clearance report obtained from the local police station is mandatory for staff transferring from other schools/institutions within Kuwait.

**As part of the hiring process, volunteer and external coaches etc. are required to provide:**

- A police clearance report to the school in order to be eligible to volunteer or to be hired.

**5) Training and Child Abuse Prevention**

FAWSEC Ed. Co. and Subsidiaries are committed to providing prevention training for all staff, students and parents to ensure the safety of our children. Training includes, but is not limited to:

- Specialized training for CIS Child Protection Policy requirements and expectations for school leaders and responsible Department heads.
- Training sessions and workshops that are delivered throughout the year to help staff members and community recognize the signs of abuse.
- Age-appropriate student instruction annually which incorporates safe touch and child personal safety curriculum.

**6) Code of Conduct that Guides Interactions between Adults and Children**

FAWSEC Ed. Co.'s Subsidiaries have created a Code of Conduct for acceptable behavior towards children. We are aware of our own and other persons' vulnerability, especially children and youth, and we are cognizant that we are responsible for maintaining physical, emotional and sexual boundaries in such interactions. To protect our youth, our schools have created a code of conduct for acceptable behavior towards children. The Code of Conduct applies to all faculty, staff, employees, volunteers and students who represent the school and who interact with children or young people in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity. All school stakeholders will be required to sign the agreement and abide by rules stated.

**7) Collaborate with Local Authorities and Resources to Protect Children**

FAWSEC Ed. Co. and its Subsidiaries are committed to collaborating with private and local governmental agencies to safeguard our children. A culture of shared responsibility for the social and emotional well-being and protection of students is promoted by the school leadership and teachers through programs to address awareness, prevention and responsiveness to issues such as sexual harassment, substance abuse, hazing and bullying, and discrimination in any form.

**8) Policy Review and Distribution**

The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed once every three years, or as necessary by the Directors of the Schools. Any amendments are to be presented to the FAWSEC Ed. Co. and its Subsidiaries Board of Directors for review and endorsement.

<b>Policy Creation</b>	<b>Review - Round 1</b>	<b>Review - Round 2</b>	<b>Review - Round 3</b>
May 2020	May 2023	May 2026	May 2029

FAWSEC Ed. Co. and its Subsidiaries seek to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. As such, the administration will distribute this policy annually to all school stakeholders.

### *Special Thanks and Acknowledgements*

*We would like to thank the Child Protection Task Force members for their dedication and hard work over the last year to develop this policy for our community. It was truly a labor of love. Our work was inclusive of all departments across FAWSEC Ed. Co. and its Subsidiaries. Our task force would especially like to thank Ms. Lynda Abdul Raheem whose 39 years' experience and passion helped to bring forth this process. We speak with one voice when we say, "All children deserve a safe environment to pursue their education." Finally, our task force would also like to acknowledge the work of others whose resources and expertise we referenced to create our policy and procedures.*

*~Child Protection Task Force Chair Person*

### **Local and International Resources**

- International Taskforce for Child Protection(ITFCP)
- International Center for Missing and Exploited Children(ICMEC)
- Association of International Schools of Africa (AISA) Handbook on Child Protection
- Council for International Schools (CIS)
- United Nations International School (UNIS) of Hanoi-Vietnam
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- The Juvenile Protection Department Kuwait (JPD)
- Kuwait National Child Protection Program (KNCPP)
- Ministry of Health- Kuwait National Child Protection Program Child Protection Unit, (Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect) SCAN TEAM and Dr. Mona Al Khawari Child Protection Lead
- Fawzia Sultan Health Network
- The Kuwait Police Department
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child
- Protect Ed™