



## Ruya Schools

### Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

(Aligned with UNCRC | WHO | ICMEC | IB Standards | Saudi Child Protection Law 2014 & Executive Regulations)

#### Vision & Mission Alignment

##### Vision:

To nurture compassionate, self-aware learners who are safe, confident, and capable of shaping a better world.

##### Mission:

Ruya International School is committed to providing a learning environment built on emotional safety, respect, inclusion, and ethical responsibility. Through high-quality education and a culture of wellbeing, we empower our students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

##### Core

Respect, Integrity, Empathy, Accountability, Collaboration

##### Values:

**This policy reflects these values by ensuring that every student is protected, valued, and heard.**

#### Executive Summary (For Staff & Parent Handbook)

##### Purpose:

To protect all students from abuse, neglect, and harm, and to create a culture of safety and wellbeing through proactive education, prevention, and accountability.

##### Key Principles:

1. The *best interests of the child* guide all decisions.
2. Every child has *equal rights* to protection and dignity.
3. Prevention, education, and early intervention are essential.



4. Children's *voices* are respected.
5. *Confidentiality* is maintained at every stage.

### Responsibilities:

- **All Staff:** Identify, respond to, and report concerns immediately.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Oversees safeguarding, maintains records, and liaises with authorities.
- **Counselor:** Provides psychological support, embeds SEL and self-protection learning.
- **Students:** Learn about safety, seek trusted adults, and promote respect.
- **Parents:** Partner with the school and reinforce safe behavior at home.

### Emergency Contacts:

- **Police:**
- **Child Protection Hotline:**
- **Ministry of HRSD:**
- **School DSL:**
- **Head of School:**
- **Reporting Commitment:**

All concerns must be reported *within 24 hours* of awareness.

## 1. Definitions & Key Principles

### 1.1 Definitions

To this policy:

- **Child:** Any person under the age of eighteen years. Saudi Laws+1
- **Abuse:** Any form of ill-treatment or exploitation of a child, or the threat thereof; includes physical abuse, psychological (emotional) abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. MoHRSD+1
- **Neglect:** Failure to provide for a child's basic needs (physical, health, emotional, psychological, pedagogical/educational, social, cultural, security) or failure to act on such. MoHRSD+1
- **Self-Protection:** The knowledge, awareness, skills and behaviors that enable a child to recognize risks, seek help, and keep safe in a range of settings. (As outlined in SEL & Child Self-Protection Framework) ICMEC+1
- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):** Processes through which students develop core competencies including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. (Adapted from CASEL)



## 1.2 Principles

Based on the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, **WHO standards**, and **Saudi Child Protection Law**, Ruya International School upholds:

The school commits to the following guiding principles:

- **The best interests of the child** shall be the primary consideration in all decisions and actions. (Derived from United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – UNCRC)
  - **Non-discrimination:** Every child is entitled to protection and support regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, socio-economic status or nationality.
  - **Right to life, survival and development:** The school fosters an environment in which every child's physical, psychological, emotional, and social development is promoted.
  - **Children's voices:** Every child has the right to express their views and to have those views taken into account in matters affecting them.
  - **Prevention first:** Protection is not solely reactive: we emphasize proactive preventive measures, education, safe environments, and early identification of risk. (Aligned with World Health Organization standards on violence against children)
  - **Confidentiality and respect for dignity:** Children, families and staff will be treated with respect, privacy and fairness.
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- **Professional responsibility and accountability:** All staff assume responsibility for safeguarding and must understand and fulfil their roles.

## 2. Roles & Responsibilities

### 2.1 Leadership & Governance

- The School Board and Head of School / Director set up the tone, approve this policy, ensure sufficient resources, and monitor its implementation.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is appointed and has overall responsibility for operationalizing this policy, providing guidance to staff, liaising with external agencies, maintaining records, and ensuring staff training is up to date.

### 2.2 All Staff (Teachers, Counsellors, Support Staff, Volunteers, Contractors)

- They must familiarize themselves with this policy and associated procedures.



- Have a duty to **identify, respond and report** any concerns, disclosures, or suspicions of harm or risk to a child.
- Must create a safe, nurturing, inclusive environment and apply SEL principles in interactions with students.
- Should act as positive role models in line with the school's Code of Conduct (see section 6).

### 2.3 School Counselor

- Provide support for students at risk or recovering from harm; refer to external services as needed.
- Work collaboratively with the DSL, students, families and staff to embed SEL/self-protection education across the school.
- Contribute to data-tracking, review of incidents, and recommend preventive and responsive measures.
- Ensure student voice is centered: conduct check-ins, focus groups and wellbeing surveys.

### 2.4 Students

- Must engage actively in the school's safe-learning culture: attend training/curriculum segments on self-protection/SEL, know trusted adults, and use the reporting mechanisms as needed.
- Are expected to treat peers and staff with respect, uphold the school values and contribute to a safe and inclusive environment.

### 2.5 Parents/Guardians & External Community

- The school will partner with families and community agencies to promote child protection, wellbeing, and SEL.
- Parents/guardians will be informed of the policy, their responsibilities, and encouraged to support their children's learning around safe behaviors and emotional wellbeing.



### 3. Reporting Procedures & Response Protocols

#### 3.1 Notification of Concerns

- Any member of staff who has **reason to believe** or **is informed** that a child may be experiencing harm, abuse or neglect must **immediately** inform the DSL (unless the DSL is implicated, in which case the next senior designated person).
- The DSL will log into the concern, assess the immediate risk, and determine the next steps (which may include contacting the relevant local authority, medical services, or emergency services).
- In Saudi Arabia, any person aware of a case of abuse or neglect must promptly report it to the competent entity. 1+سعوديبيديا

#### 3.2 Response Protocol

1. **Immediate safety:** If the child is in immediate danger, call emergency services (in Saudi Arabia: 999) and ensure the child is protected.
2. **Initial assessment:** DSL considers severity/harm/risk, checks for siblings/other children at risk.
3. **Record & Refer:** DSL completes Incident Report Form and, where required, makes a formal referral to the competent child-protection authority (e.g., Ministry of Human Resources & Social Development in Saudi Arabia) or external partner.
4. **Support the child:** Provide prompt counselling or safeguarding support; ensure the child feels heard, safe and supported.
5. **Communication with family/guardians:** Unless doing so increases risk to the child, the family/guardian will be informed of the concern and next steps.
6. **Investigation, follow-up, and review:** The school will collaborate with external agencies, monitor the case, provide ongoing support, and review the incident for any systemic improvement.
7. **Record closure & monitoring:** Once resolved, maintain archive of records, and monitor any recurrence or pattern of risk.

#### 3.3 External Reporting & Legal Compliance

- The school will comply with the Child Protection Law (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) 2014 and the associated Executive Regulations. MoHRSD+1
- The DSL maintains up-to-date knowledge of national reporting requirements, inter-agency protocols, and any changes in legislation or best practice.



#### 4. Confidentiality & Record-Keeping

- All concerns, disclosures, reports and referrals must be documented in writing using the school's secure Incident Report Form and logged in the Safeguarding Database.
- Records will include date/time of concern, who raised it, nature of concern, action taken, outcome, and follow-up.
- Records are kept confidential, accessible only to DSL, senior leadership and relevant safeguarding/child protection partners.
- Records shall be stored in secure electronic or locked paper format, retained for at least **10 years** (or per local law) and then securely archived or destroyed.
- Students, parents, and staff have the right to access information held about them, in line with local data protection laws.
- The school will ensure that any sharing of information outside the school (e.g., with social welfare, police) is only done on a "need-to-know" basis and with due regard to safeguarding confidentiality.
- If a child moves to another school, appropriate safeguarding records should be transferred securely and in compliance with data protection protocols.

### 5. Preventive Measures & Awareness Strategies

#### 5.1 Curriculum Integration

- The school will embed SEL & Child Self-Protection content across the curriculum, aligned with the frameworks developed by International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC) & CASEL — "Social-Emotional Learning & Child Self-Protection Curriculum Standards & Benchmarks for International Schools." [ICMEC+1](#)
- Age-appropriate lessons will cover personal safety (safe vs unsafe situations), trusted networks, emotional regulation, assertiveness, digital safety, healthy relationships, and reporting mechanisms.

#### 5.2 Safe Learning Environment

- School facilities and routines will be designed to promote supervision, visibility, accessibility of trusted adults, and reduction of risk zones (e.g., unsupervised areas, isolated spaces).
- Staff recruitment, staff induction, and volunteer screening will include child-protection checks and reference verification.



- Playground, sports, and extracurricular activities will follow safe-practice guidelines (e.g., two-adult rule, open doors/windows, visible supervision, mobile-device policy).
- The school will promote norms and values of respect, empathy, inclusion, and positive relationships (reinforcing SEL competencies).

### 5.3 Awareness & Partnerships

- Regular training and awareness campaigns for students, staff and parents will raise knowledge of child-protection, SEL, and self-protection skills (see section 6).
- The school will maintain a visible “Safeguarding Noticeboard” listing trusted adults, helplines, student support contacts and child protection information.
- The school will partner with local child protection agencies, professional counsellors, policing authorities, and community organizations to support prevention and response.
- Use of student voice: the school will hold focus groups, surveys and student-led initiatives (peer-mentors, ambassadors) to promote safe culture and gather input into policy and practice.

### 5.4 Monitoring & Review

- The DSL and leadership team will conduct regular audits: e.g., number and nature of child-protection incidents, student-wellbeing surveys, staff training compliance, risk-zone mapping.
- Findings from audits will feed into annual review of the policy, adjustments to preventive strategies, and resource allocation.
- The school will maintain a culture of continuous improvement: encourage feedback from students, staff and parents about the safeguarding culture and apply lessons learned.

## 6. Staff Training & Code of Conduct

### 6.1 Training Expectations

- All new staff (teaching, support, volunteer, contractor) must complete **child-protection induction training within** their first month of employment/engagement.
- All staff must participate in **annual refresher training** on child protection, SEL, recognizing signs of abuse/neglect, reporting procedures and self-protection of staff.
- The DSL is responsible for maintaining training records, ensuring 100% compliance, and scheduling additional bespoke training (e.g., for coaches, drivers, after-school providers).



- The school will evaluate training effectiveness via quizzes, case-scenario drills, staff survey feedback, and incident data review.
- Additional optional training will be offered for staff working with high-risk students, new extracurricular contexts, or digital safety.

## 6.2 Code of Conduct

All staff; volunteers and contractors are required to abide by the following Code of Conduct:

- Treat all students with dignity, respect and fairness; uphold their rights and voice.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries: avoid one-to-one situations without visibility, avoid casual or unmonitored contact outside school (digital or in-person) with students. (Reflecting ICMEC/INA guidelines) [tri-association.org](http://tri-association.org)
- Never hit, physically punish, humiliate, intimidate, or emotionally abuse a child.
- Do not develop personal social media or personal contact communications with students outside school-approved channels.
- Report any inappropriate behavior by colleagues or adults towards children — the school has a **whistle-blowing safe** channel.
- Protect student confidentiality, never disclose personal information about a child to others except under the defined safeguarding protocols.
- In transporting or supervising students, follow safe-practice guidelines: ensure visibility, maintain communication, and avoid being isolated with a child.
- If staff have personal circumstances (e.g., health, stress) which may impair their professional judgement towards children, they must report to their line manager/DSL to ensure appropriate support and supervision.

## 6.3 Sanctions & Remediation

- Failure to comply with this policy or Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment/engagement and reporting to external authorities as required.
- For staff who make mistakes (not deliberate harm) but breach the policy, the school will provide supervision, counselling, and retraining as appropriate.

## 7. Implementation Plan (Annex A)

| Phase | Timeline | Responsible Person | Description |
|-------|----------|--------------------|-------------|
|-------|----------|--------------------|-------------|



|                                   |              |                           |  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--|
| <b>1. Staff Induction</b>         | Jan 2026     | DSL / Counselor           | Introduce policy; collect signed acknowledgements.       |
| <b>2. Student Awareness</b>       | Nov 2025     | DSL/ Counselor / Teachers | Launch “Safe Ruya” Week; SEL lessons on personal safety. |
| <b>3. Parent Orientation</b>      | March 2026   | DSL / Parent Liaison      | Conduct workshops on safeguarding & SEL.                 |
| <b>4. Annual Staff CPD</b>        | Jan–Mar 2026 | DSL + External Trainer    | Professional workshops; updated legal guidelines.        |
| <b>6. Monitoring &amp; Audits</b> | Quarterly    | DSL + Leadership          | Review incident trends & reporting culture.              |
| <b>6. Annual Review</b>           | June 2026    | DSL + Board               | Evaluate impact; revise policy.                          |

### 7. Communication and review

- This policy will be published on the school’s website, included in the staff handbook, and communicated to students and parents at the start of each academic year.
- Annual review will be conducted by the DSL and senior leadership team; recommendations are presented to the Board for approval. Any major incident or change in legislation will trigger an immediate review.
- The school maintains a safeguarding committee (led by DSL, includes student-voice representative, parent representative, teacher representative) which meets at least twice per term to review safeguarding culture, incidents, training compliance, audit results and areas for improvement.
- New staff will sign an acknowledgement of understanding of this policy during their induction.
- The policy aligns with international frameworks (UNCRC, SEL + Child Self-Protection benchmarks, WHO violence-prevention standards) and with national legislation (Child Protection Law 2014 and its Executive Regulations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

### 8. Cross-Referenced Policies

This policy complements and aligns with:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Counselling & Wellbeing Policy
- Behavior & Discipline Policy



- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy

Together these form the **Ruya Safeguarding Ecosystem**.

### **Closing Statement**

Ruya International School affirms that safeguarding is **everyone's responsibility**.

Through proactive education, empathetic guidance, and firm accountability, we will ensure every child at Ruya learns and grows in an environment of safety, dignity, and love.