



PCS Child Protection Policy

PCS is a non-for-profit civil society institution which was founded in 2006 and officially registered by the Palestinian National Authority since February 2007. The Israeli Occupation is still ruining our life in Palestine, whether as individuals or groups. Not to mention it is threatening and putting at risk the principles of trust, unity, dignity, and respect. However, we believe that the freedom of Palestine is attainable thanks to the people who dream of a better future and who support the positive energies within the community.

Through our work in PCS, we strive to develop the creative potentials of the Palestinian youth, support them in building their individual identities and open the constructive and positive dialogue among them to enable them to become effective members within the community. PCS provides a safe place where children can meet with the youth, without any discrimination, to collectively work and attain the best outcomes.

PCS is aimed at challenging the differences within the community by collective work everywhere alike. It conducts its trainings in several regions and travels with its presentations across the West Bank challenging all kind of boundaries imposed on us a while ago: whether political, or geographical or economic or political or social.

Moreover, PCS encourages developing a new type of cultural expression and seeks to create a new generation of artists in Palestine. It further works hard so that such type of art be renewable, experimental, challenging all traditional concepts, and interacting with other forms of art.

PCS is open for creativity of all kinds to ensure the involvement of everyone: students, trainers, volunteers, and the entire community.

The largest group on which PCS focuses its work is children, including children with mental disabilities. The school believes in the entitlement of having an administrative and monitoring system to protect the rights of children within the framework of its activities. It further believes in the need to have policies on the protection of children from any violation they might be subject to, to be applied and enforced by the personnel, volunteers, administrative staff, and the school attendees.

The child protection policy is closely related to the work of PCS. It allows personnel and volunteers to figure out where to go should there be any violation or abuse against children. This is in addition to the guidelines and ground rules to deal with children within the child protection principles and rights. It is worth mentioning the PCS receives around 250 children annually. The nature of its activities and goals require direct contact with the students.

This policy addresses the employees, volunteers, trainers, and others. They will be referred to hereinafter altogether by the (personnel).

First: Key Definitions

Child: every human who is under eighteen years old as far as he/she has not completed the age of majority in accordance with the applicable law, and as per Article 1 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child Of 1989.

Violence: the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation. (WHO).

Abuse: actions or utterances or procedures addressing the child, directly or indirectly, causing him/her physical or emotional or sexual harm, that is actual, evident and direct or underlying, with possible deferred psychological and emotional effects.

Negligence: the failure of the child's guardian to provide the development needs of health, education, nutrition, emotional development, residence, safe living conditions, and appropriate oversight which may result in causing physical, mental, emotional, social, and ethical harm to the child.

Exploitation: to force the child or tempt or coerce him/her to carry out acts incompatible with his/her physical mental, emotional and ethical development whether, the acts are sexual or economic, jeopardizing the child's safety, survival, and development.

Child Protection: an inclusive term that describes philosophies, standards, guidelines and procedures aimed at protection children from intentional and unintentional harm. In this framework, it particularly applies to the attitude of institutions and individuals related to PCS towards the children who are under the guardianship of these institutions and individuals.

Child Protection Advisor: the social advisor of the Ministry of Social Development MOSD who is professionally and legally designated to receive and follow up on the status of children deprived from social care and those who are living difficult circumstances in addition to the victims of community violence, negligence and exploitation.

Child Protection Network: a group of government and non-government institutions working with children seeking to coordinate efforts and services rendered to children living difficult circumstances according to an agreed upon and workable transfer system among the institutions working in the field of social protection and care.

Child Protection Policy: a declaration of intent that demonstrates a commitment of safeguarding children and protecting them from harm. It clarifies what child protection requires, and contributes to securing a safe and positive environment to children, not to mention that it indicates that the school is assuming its care-related duties and responsibilities seriously.

Second: Principles of Fundamental Rights of the Child

1. **Right to Survival and Development:** includes all child development-related aspects.
2. **Non-Discrimination:** all children enjoy the rights included in the Convention, without any kind of discrimination and regardless the race of the child or their parents or legal guardian or their color or sex or language or religion or political or non-political opinion or their national or racial or social origin or their fortune or disability or birth or anything else.
3. **The Child Best Interests:** priority attention is always given to the child best interests in all works related to children, whether carried out by the public or private social care institutions or courts or administrative authorities or governing bodies.
4. **Involvement and Respect for the Views of Child:** children capable of forming their own views have the right of freely expressing these views in all matters related to children, and these views have to be given the due attention according to the child age and maturity.

Third: General Principles of PCS Child Protection Policy

- 1- **Child Rights-based Approach:** provides a beneficial framework used in planning for child protection, making relevant decisions, enforcing and monitoring the same, through the following five principles: the right to life, development and survival, the right to equality and non-discrimination, the right to give primary concern to the child best interest, the right to involvement, enforce the rights of the child/using the maximum available resources.
- 2- **Counseling:** retaining the proper counseling leads to taking the right decisions, as counseling is mainly concerned with protecting children in particular. Should you not consult children themselves or the concerned adults within your organization, you may end up developing policies children will not relate to and will be unable to access or benefit from.
- 3- **Ownership:** if the concerned personnel within PCS does not have the sense of ownership towards the child protection policy; it is unlikely they would assume responsibility to enforce the policy in their work. As far as individuals sense their “own” thoughts, the policies and procedures on child protection would become more sustainable. In the absence of comprehensive ownership within the school, child protection will highly depend on specific individuals. Thereupon, child protection will become weaker or might even disappear once these individuals leave the school.
- 4- **Confidentiality:** all information on child abuse shall be collected, used, exchanged and stored in files in confidentiality, to which only the concerned individuals shall have access. This means that information must be collected in complete confidentiality when conducting the interviews, and shall be exchanged in accordance with the amended Palestinian Child Law Of 2004, and the Child Protection System applicable in Palestine, only after obtaining an authorization from the child or his/her guardian, provided the information must be stored safely. In some cases where the safety of child or other concerned children is at risk, the child or his/her guardian shall be informed of the mandatory reporting procedures upon initiating the delivery of services.
- 5- **Transparency:** the child protection policies and procedures have to be transparent. Everyone should know that they do indeed exist, and shall have access to their contents thereof, as well as the consequences of violating and breaching the same. However, the actual information passed within the procedures (names and cases) must remain confidential, and no one but the concerned individuals shall have access to the such information.
- 6- **Sensitivity:** among the most critical challenges you might face is: how can you discuss abusing a child within your institution and restrict the same without resulting in uncertainty and horror. Some may feel worried regarding abusing a

child, others may feel threatened. Some individuals may be concerned about their privacy especially if they were questioned by the police. Sometimes, some individuals in the school would never expect that such abuse may take place within the institution.

Guidelines on reducing abuse at school and taking into consideration sensitivity:

- Act extremely carefully.
- Acknowledge others fears and respond to them.
- Acknowledge others anxiety when addressing child abuse.
- Provide a lot of opportunities for discussions.
- Provide educational material on child abuse.
- Assure the individuals that the procedure does not mean that they should not trust one another, but rather, it is aimed at protecting children and safeguarding the school.
- Assure the individuals that the questioning will take place in confidentiality and professionally.
- Demonstrate firmness and focus on the need to introduce child protection measures.
- Involve the personnel and children and encourage the sense of ownership.

Fourth: the Objective of Child Protection Policy and its Impact on PCS Personnel

The child protection policy is aimed at protecting children from any abuse by developing the appropriate conduct standards to be enforced within PCS by its personnel, volunteers, children, visitors and partners. This Policy also protects individuals in contact with children from any unfounded accusations. Furthermore, it demonstrates the unacceptable forms of conduct which may lead to official investigation, and then disciplinary measures, and even sometimes initiating a criminal case under the formal child protection system. Additionally, having a code of conduct will provide guidance on the expected standards of conduct of personnel towards children and the children's behaviors towards other children.

The Child Protection Policy creates a framework of principles and guidelines on which the individual and institutional practice is build as follows:

- Creating a safe, friendly environment to children. Having a child protection policy reflects PCS respect for the child's right to protection from all forms of abuse, violence, negligence, and exploitation. It also emphasizes the importance of prevention rather than responding to an unfortunate incident after it has occurred.

- Strengthen the awareness of employees, personnel, and volunteers on the controls and standards of handling children to prevent abusing them. The recognition of personnel of disciplinary measures taken against the violators of child protection policy lends mandatory and compliance towards the policy.
- The existence of child protection policy contributes to introducing to the school administrative systems all key elements leading to a safe environment for the child, with conscious culture. Otherwise, it would be subject to false or biased accusations, as such accusations, whether confirmed or not, may destroy the school reputation.
- The protection policy constitutes a guide for personnel to handle cases of violations. When a clear policy is followed, action and response will be undertaken consciously according to the protection system in force in Palestine. This policy also provides guidance and direction on appropriate and inappropriate behavior for personnel/partners, and school visitors permanently or temporarily.
- PCS will reap several benefits once becoming a safe environment for children, including:
 - The moral and legal duty of protecting children under PCS custody.
 - Protects itself from the harm that may arise from abusing children, their families and volunteers, destroying the school's reputation and sustainability.
 - The sense of satisfaction by school staff and parents because the school is making every possible effort to protect children.
 - Presents a positive and evolving model for other schools and institutions to follow the example of PCS and provide what is best for children.

Fifth: Key Elements of Child Protection Policy

1- Bases of Recruitment:

All personnel and volunteers, whether paid or not, full-time or part-time, worked for a specific or unspecific time or long-term, and whether they directly contact the child or not, shall undergo a comprehensive recruitment process based on specific criteria:

- The vacancies announcements must indicate the policy and examination related to child protection.
- The accepted candidates are requested to adhere to the following as a condition of employment:
 - Accept the school's child protection policy and code of conduct and adhere to the same thereof.

- Provide two references, at least, other than the family members whom the candidate has known for two years at least, in addition to their contact information to ask for their confirmation on the good conduct.
- The candidate has to sign a personal declaration of no convictions, and if any: All criminal sentences, including those which have expired, must be mentioned in the declaration. This information must be kept completely confidential. It is the responsibility of the officials to determine whether these sentences pose a threat to child protection or not.
(Note: Once an individual leaves the school, all of his/her confidential documents (i.e. police records and criminal sentences) shall be destroyed, either torn or burned. Form No. (3) of the Declaration of Criminal Sentences is attached).
- Conduct an interview with the candidate for the job according to specific criteria, and it is preferred that one of the members of the recruitment committee has received training or has knowledge on child protection issues. Upon employment, the job-seeker is obligated to sign a statement of commitment to the child protection policy at school, and he/she is required to undergo training on child protection issues as well.

2- Education and Training

PCS introduces and trains the employees, volunteers and children on its child protection policy. To this end, the following must be taken into consideration:

- All PCS personnel must fully understand the child protection policy and procedures, and know what to do as part of their ongoing work; they must learn about child abuse and how to handle the same.
- Train those in direct contact with children on the guidance of behavior ensuring the protection of children (the appropriate and inappropriate behavior).
- The training needs of PCS personnel must be measured, to identify what kind of training need to receive, and other matters related to their training on child protection.
- Introduce the personnel on child protection policy upon joining the school and afterwards.
- General and regular training for personnel (once or twice annually) to remind them of the existing procedures and update their information on any amendments to the laws, public policies or otherwise.
- Provide guidance to children on all aspects of child protection policy and measures.

3- Administrative Structure:

To create a safe and protective environment for children, a clear structure has to be developed for the protection system, not to mention communication lines have to be open, and a supportive atmosphere has to be secured in addition to encouraging the process of reporting any abuse or violence, spread an inclusive and conscious culture, so personnel and children may feel comfort when they express their

thoughts and enforce the protection measures. In order for the administrative structure to facilitate enforcing the protection policy, the following must be done:

- Form a small executive collective committee with the manager to oversee the implementation of the child protection policy, and some students' parents may be involved in the said committee.
- Assign an individual to supervise the child protection matters within the School, as part of his/her job description (to be referred to as the Child Protection Supervisor). His/her functions include coordinating with the Safety and Technician Officer to ensure the physical protection of children. This individual has to have a desire to meet this job. In addition to the ability to listen to children, willingness to learn, ability to follow up, and receive additional training.
- Define and clarify the role and responsibilities of the child protection supervisor for all personnel/beneficiaries at PCS to identify expectations and facilitate monitoring the results of their work.
- Include the child protection matters in the periodic evaluation of personnel, and the annual evaluation of the school and its various programs.
- Establish a safe system for storing and exchanging information and determine who have access to the same to ensure respect for the right of the child to enjoy privacy and not disclose their information except to the persons concerned to ensure that children are not harmed.

4- Conduct Protocols:

These protocols are basically written guidelines that all personnel, partners and visitors must adhere to, detailing and specifying the appropriate behavior that must be followed with children, and the inappropriate behavior that must not be shown with children, as well as directions about the behavior of children towards each other.

4.1 Examples on some guidelines for handling children: (you may add more through your daily experiences)

DO and DON'T DO

DO	DON'T DO
Respect the desires, choices, rights and dignity of children.	Do not assault or place physical or mental violence or abuse on the child.
Listen to the child and do not decide on their behalf, engage the child, listen to their views taking into account the child's age, and maturity.	Do not spend a lot of time alone with the child away from others.
Respect the privacy of children; maintain the confidentiality of their stories, unless it involves abuse and violence. In this case, the information must be shared with the child supervisor with the knowledge of the child.	Do not sleep in the same mattress or room with the child under supervision.
	Do not stay alone with the child: in a car, throughout the entire night, in your house,

	in the child's house.
Do not share the information related to the victimized children and their secrets with others, except with the concerned parties.	Do not share the children stories with others, except with the concerned parties.
	Do not stigmatize the child when exposed to abuse or violence or sexual assault, and never expose or mock them.
Act appropriately and taken into account the child's culture and age, as well as the child's sex, and whether he/she has any disability.	Do not use inappropriate words with the child or in front of him/her. Do not use a language that may harm the child emotionally or psychologically.
You must be trusted by the child. You have to control your reactions towards any situation the child shows. Exchange information with the child in a manner he/she understands.	Do not assign any additional works or punitive measures to the child inconsistently with his/her age.
Ask for the approval of the child and his/her parents to take the child's photograph, after giving him/her the information on how such photograph would be used, and respect the child if refuses so.	Do not treat the child in humiliation, provocative or insulting manner.
Take the procedures which ensure that the rights of the child to security, and ongoing development are not vitiated.	Avoid putting yourself in a sensitive or suspicious situation.
Maintain sufficient distance between you and the child. Draw boundaries between you and the child. Do not remove the barriers between you and the child and do not get physical in joking.	Do not act inappropriately or sexually.
Engage the parents in the event they are not the assailant or not involved in the assault.	In the event the parent is the assailant, he/she must not be informed of the abuse/violence disclosed by the child.
In the event the child was abused, and it is decided to refer him/her to the official authorities: Get the informed consent for the child and/or his/her parent before referral to the child protection adviser of MOSD, in case the child is exposed to serious abuse. (The informed consent is the voluntary consent of the eligible person based on correct and complete information).	Do not handle sexual abuse and assault by yourself. The competent authorities have to be informed in some case (the child protection adviser or the family protection police).
Changing to prepare for the training shall take place in the dressing room or the ladies' or men's room only.	Do not change your clothing in front of others or outside before everyone's eyes.
Physical contact between the child and the trainer is restricted to the extent required to implement the circus activity, and only as	

far as necessary.	
It is important that the child clothing need to be safe and does not cause the child any harm while carrying out the activities or training.	Do not use offensive words or cursing with the students or when calling them.
Train the child on independency and not to rely on you in the matters he/she can handle alone.	Do not get involved in any personal matters that children can manage by themselves.
Be a positive example for children to follow.	Do not show any discrimination or different treatment towards specific children. Do not be biased with specific children and exclude others.
Play a positive role in the protection, safeguarding, and enhancing the safety of children.	Do not cause any psychological or emotional abuse to the child.
Be careful of any possible peer-to-peer abuse (among children themselves). Avoid dragging children to situations of high peer-to-peer risk (the mixing of older age children with younger children without any supervision). The rule is that children must be separated as much as possible, taking into account the available resources at School. In any case, it is important to focus on supervision by the trainer if there are children of different ages in the same group.	Encourage the child to talk to an adult in case he/she has experienced bullying from other children. Encourage the child to create friendships with other children.
Do not allow children to get engaged in sexual games.	
Do not disregard the abusive or insecure behavior of the child or get involve in the same.	
Look at the child with disability as a human being entitled to all rights, and focus on the child him/herself.	Do not treat the child as incomplete in terms of the rights and do not give great attention to the disability.
Treat the child with disability as any other human being with feelings, instincts, thoughts, and dreams.	Do not treat the child with disability as a stranger with no feelings or thoughts or dreams.
Strengthen the concept that the child's body belongs to him/her only.	
	Do not give information about children enrolled to the School to anyone else other than their parents. Do not give information about children to other institutions without the approval of parents, after clarifying the purpose of information required and approve it.

Enhance the concepts of boundaries and privacy.	Do not consider that there is no need for child privacy.
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4.2 Guidelines on photography and handling the social media in relation to children:

A set of directives that control the process and prevent posting offensive and abusive images of children to PCS social media or its website as well as its activities and advertising materials:

The below rules shall apply to children-related social media networks:

- Each child has the right to be accurately represented in texts and photographs, provided their photos shall not be emotional or manipulative.
- The child’s dignity must always be preserved.
- The child’s permission has to be always sought before taking his/her picture.
- PCS shall ask for the informed consent/permission from the child’s parents, before using or posting any image or images of the child for advertising purposes, or any other purpose. With the need for clarification of the purpose of using such image or images to whomever gives the consent.
- The information and images of the child shall be kept in safe files with access restricted only to those in need of using such files during their work.
- In this regard, the below must be avoided:
 - The language and images which humiliate children and depict them as victims or makes them feel ashamed.
 - Avoid any kind of discrimination among children; or treating a child unequally compared with the other children, or approaching a specific child and ignore the others.
 - Take pictures beyond the scope of the School’s work and attach explanatory comments for the images if needed.
 - Photograph the child in situations that might be explained as sexual.
 - Personnel must avoid publishing personal images of children on the social media networks-such as Facebook. Such images may be shared at PCS website, from where any personnel is permitted to share the image to his/her personal page. The shared images have to be attached with an explanatory comment.

5- Protocols and Principles of Reporting, Moving on, and Intervening

These protocols and principles may be defined as the conditions which have to be available for the physical protection of children from violence, abuse, negligence and exploitation. This is in addition to the procedures and mechanisms to be followed in the cases of physical injuries or suspecting the occurrence of violence or abuse against a child.

5.1 Responding to the Children Physical Incidents and Injuries:

PCS has assigned a Technician and Safety Office to ensure security and safety. His/her role is to ensure meeting the standards and conditions of safety required to carry out the activities and training courses safely, provided the physical environment has to include all necessary equipment for this purpose. This is in addition to ensuring the halls preparations, the equipment, and the location of children.

During the training or presentation, children may be physically injured. In this case, it is the **responsibility of trainer and PCS** to take the below steps should there be any injury of a child during the training:

- a. Examine the injury by the trainer, as well as by someone else, to avoid any mistake in diagnosing the injury.
- b. Contact the child's parents to inform them of the injury, even if minor, and consult them whether they want to transfer the child to medical clinic and take their consent on the decided clinic.
- c. Transfer the child to the nearest clinic. The doctor shall decide whether the injury requires that the child be transferred to the hospital or not.
- d. The trainer and PCS must follow up on the injury of the child, in general, until completely recovered.

Furthermore, **PCS** shall:

- Check the safety conditions, the equipment and tools used regularly.
- Store the tools and equipment safely, away from children, and make sure they use these tools only in the presence and under the supervision of the trainer.
- Provide the first aid kit in the school headquarters and the locations of children training. The first aid kit has to meet the injuries expected to happen during the training courses or presentations, with the need to renew the kit regularly.
- Deliver courses on first aid to the trainers.
- Conclude agreement or memorandum of understanding with the hospitals or medical clinics close to every training headquarter so the intervention is quick and immediate in the event of any physical injuries requiring so.
- Secure the emergency exit for children, trainers and personnel in case of any fire or any emergency.
- Provide a manual firefighter at each training headquarters, in addition to conducting the regular check of the expiry date of the extinguishers and replace them upon expiration.
- Close the school gate at the beginning of the training to prevent the entry of those not concerned into the training headquarters.

5.2 Response in the event of suspecting abuse or violence:

If we had any concern involving direct abuse against a child, we must immediately act to avoid exposing the child to more risks. If we found any information on the child's abuse, it is our responsibility to share such information with someone.

5.2.1 Abuse or violence by family members or surrounding environment (outside the School):

In the event of suspecting abuse against a child by any of the family members, the following must be taken in accordance with the law:

- Go straight to the Child Protection Adviser without telling the parents or taking their consent, especially in the cases of serious abuse. The Child Protection Supervisor of PCS may inform the MOSD Child Protection Adviser to provide protection to the child expeditiously.

It is important that PCS seeks to participate in the membership of the child protection network and establish a coordinative and networking relationship with the Child Protection Adviser in the area.

5.2.2 Abuse or Violence inside PCS:

In the event of abuse or violence, or suspected violence or abuse against a child within the school, a set of procedures must be taken as well as the following steps:

1. Hearing the child's disclosure on the abuse as follows:

- Accept whatever the child says, without any coercion to get the information from the child.
- Keep calm and never panic or show any signs of shock.
- Avoid asking for help while the child is talking and let him/her know that someone else needs to be informed of the abuse.
- Make sure to distinguish between the what child says and the conclusions we reach.
- Be honest and directly look at the child.
- Assure the child that he/she is not guilty or blamed for that abuse.
- Avoid asking leading questions and repeating the same questions to the child. Avoid giving the child the words he/she cannot find and avoid finishing the sentences for the child and concluding assumptions.
- Make the appropriate steps to ensure the child's physical and psychological safety and not exposing him/her to threats. This may involve referring the child to the MOSD Child Protection Adviser.
- Inform PCS Child Protection Supervisor of the alleged abuse and never allow the personal suspicions to stop me from reporting to the Protection Supervisor.

2. Below are some phrases which may be said to the child:

- "I believe you, and I am glad that you told me".

- “I will help you. You do not have to face this situation by yourself”.
- “It’s not your fault, you are not the one to blame”.

3. Below are some of the phrases which cannot be said to the child:

- “You should have told someone earlier”.
- “I cannot believe this! I am shocked!”
- “This explains a lot of things”.
- “No, he’s not like that, he’s my friend”.
- “I will not tell anyone else”.

4. Below what has to be done once the child finishes the abuse disclosure:

- Assure the child that he/she has done something right by disclosing the abuse.
- Let the child know what I will be doing next and that he/she will be updated on everything.
- Write down exactly what the child told me, sign and put the date on the same, and keep all the observations in a safe place. These observations are necessary to help your institution, protection adviser, or police if necessary, to decide what is best for the child.
- Inform the child protection supervisor at school of the incident.
- Ask for assistance if you feel you need support.

5.3 Intervention Procedures and Principles:

It is important to identify the steps, behavior and procedures required to respond to alleged child abuse incidents, or concerns about children. Furthermore, the school's reporting procedures should be developed as follows:

5.3.1 If you find out about any child abuse through one of the following means:

- A child or member of the staff may come to you to inform you that a child has been harmed or there is high likelihood that a child will be harmed.
- You witness yourself an incident of child abuse.
- Noticed signs of abuse from outside the school (family, teacher, friends, etc.)
- If the abuse is by the family, the latter must not be informed, because this falls within the responsibilities of the Protection Adviser of MOSD.

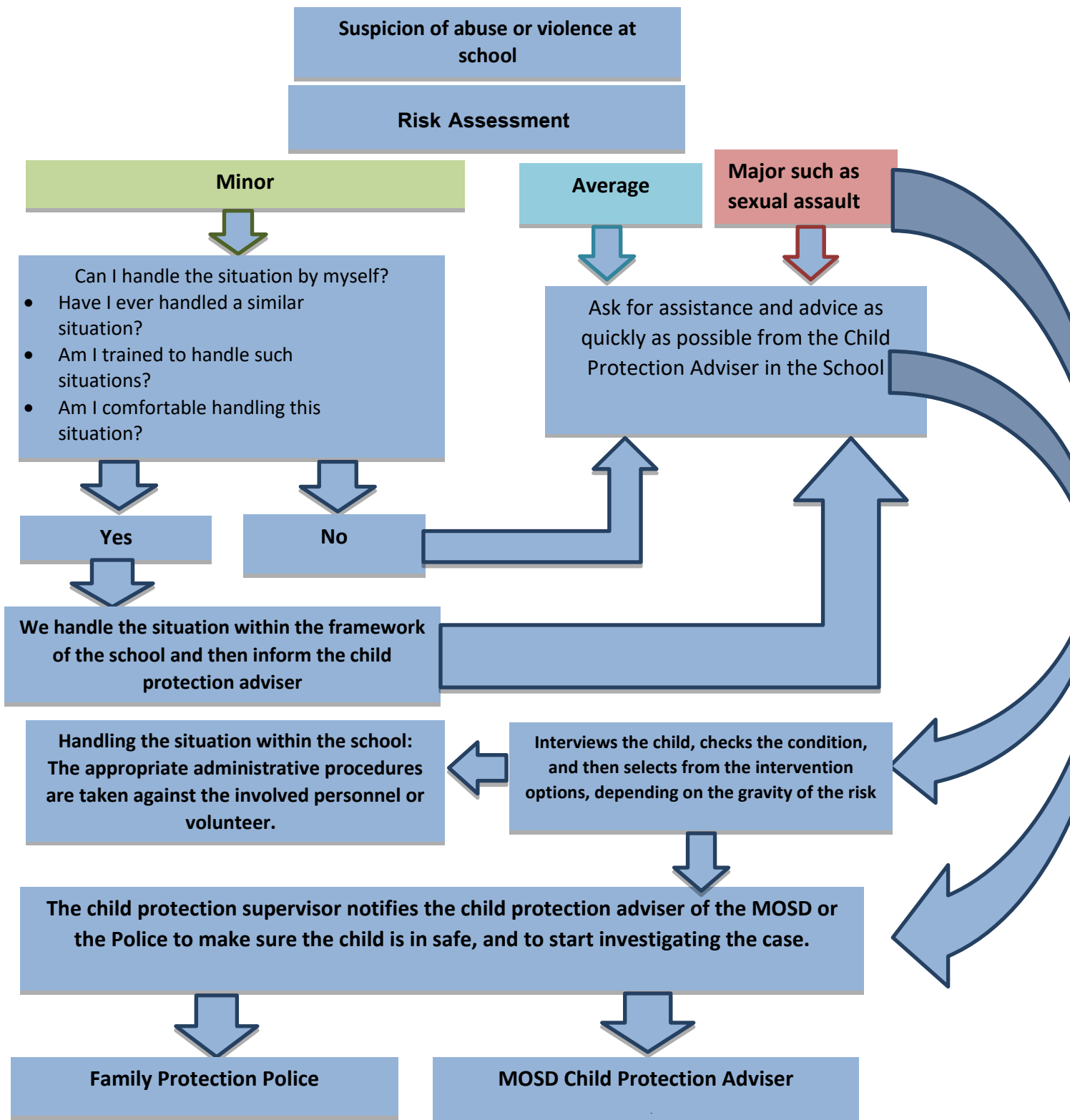
5.3.2 Useful advice to direct your response:

- Follow your sense of logic in addition to good practice of child protection.
- Allow child best interests to direct your response at all times.
- Should there be any doubt, ask for an advice from the Child Protection Supervisor at School.
- If the alleged abuse affected a specific individual, we have to seek a more appropriate person.
 - In Palestine, the authority in charge of investigating child abuse is the Police and/or the MOSD Child Protection Adviser, those who may inform the Public Prosecution, as the

case may require, according to the Child Protection System (and the National Referral Manual on Child Protection from Abuse, Violence and Negligence) in force in Palestine.

- PCS Child Protection Supervisor may seek some legal and social advice from the MOSD Child Protection Adviser, to decide whether it is necessary to go to the external official authorities. If it is decided not to externally report the incident, there has to be an express and logical justification of such decision and it has to be written down. The decision not to report in these circumstances must be unanimously approved by: the CEO, the coordinator of trainers, and the child protection supervisor at the School.
- Reports presented in bad intention require a strict disciplinary measure based on (the Human Resources System of Personnel).
- The process leading to decision-making must be documented, and all written facts, allegations and responses must be kept in confidential files.
- When a case is dropped immediately, the reasons behind this must be demonstrated to the person who reported the matter.

The below chart demonstrates response and intervention guidelines



6- Internal Administrative Intervention Procedures:

The phase in which the protection adviser of PCS carries out the initial examination procedures and assesses the level of risk. Then he/she takes administrative steps as a result of any questioning taking place regarding any claim of breach of policies or guidelines or principles or practices of Child Protection within the School. As follows:

- In the event of minor (not serious) assaults and average assaults, the following steps have to be taken:
 - a. Provide direct and immediate protection to the child.
 - b. Take administrative procedures against the person involved in the abuse or violence.

PCS shall determine the type of necessary disciplinary measures for the different levels of abuse. For example, in the event one of the personnel insulted a child verbally (whether it is the first time or not), dismissal may not be the action taken by the School. However, it may give verbal warning, followed by monitoring the personnel for a specific period of time. The disciplinary measure may be subjecting the breaching individual to the Protection Policy or practicing the same within the institution towards developing more training courses, as it may deem appropriate.

- In the major and serious cases, the child protection adviser or the protection police have to be involved to ensure providing the necessary protection to the children victims of abuse or violence.

Sixth: Protection of Children with Disabilities

Human rights and rights set forth in this Policy shall apply to children with disabilities just as they apply to other children without disabilities. However, they should get special treatment, not to mention the below matters have to be stressed:

6.1 Guidelines for working with children with disabilities (the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities):

- Respect for dignity and individual independency.
- Non-discrimination.
- Involvement and inclusiveness in the effective complete contribution to the society.
- Respect for differences and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity.
- Equal opportunities.
- Access to services.
- Gender equality.
- Respect for developed capabilities of children with disabilities and their right to preserve their identity.

6.2 Matters to be taken into consideration with children with disabilities:

Since the child cannot sometimes tell that he/she has been exposed to abuse, below are some matters to be given attention, taking into account that these indicators do not necessarily mean that the child was exposed to abuse, you may have to verify more than once:

- Unexpected and unjustified changes in the behavior.
- Signs of general concern or stress.
- New or unknown signs of bruises.
- Sexual behaviors.

- Self-harm.
- Unethical behavior.

6.3 Measures to be taken for the protection of children with disabilities:

- Emphasize non-discrimination.
- Listen to the views of children with disabilities.
- Ensure meeting the communication requirements.
- Introduce the disability-related matters and the rights of children with disabilities in the training courses.

(For more information: we recommend PCS to have access to the Professionals and Educators Manual on Handling Violence and Abuse against Children and Children with Disabilities issued by Qader for Community & Development. PCS can also contact Qader for further detailed discussions on children with disabilities received in the School).

Admission of Students:

Admission to PCS is supposed to be available to everyone. Should the School be able to offer varied services in consistent with the physical and mental structure of the child and trainers, then there shall be no impediment to admission. PCS is open for everyone.

- In the event the student is a child with disability, he/she must not hurt him/herself or others which will be assessed under PCS discretion and after the examination during the first interview.
- It is critical to understand and recognize the disparity among children and the capability of PCS to provide skills or toys tailored to the situation of each child.
- It is important that the child must not be forced to register at PCS and receive the training courses.

Seventh: the System of Complaints and monitoring the implementation of Child Protection Policy

PCS develops mechanisms for the complaints and to monitor the implementation of the Child Protection Policy provided they must involve periodic review and evaluation of the policy and its effectiveness.

7.1 Complaints Mechanism:

It must be clarified to children, personnel and others that the complaints on child protection may be filed to the school child protection supervisor. Furthermore, a complaints box may be placed for the students or parents or visitors or others in an easily visible place at PCS.

7.2 Mechanism of Monitoring the Implementation of Child Protection Policy:

- Ensure the regular update of personnel records, including the job description and make sure that child protection is included in the job description of personnel.
- Ensure the professional documentation of abuse or violence and respect the privacy and confidentiality of children when keeping their records.

- Verify the completion of training courses on child protection according to their specified agenda.
- Ensure the good progress of administrative procedures should there be any breaches of the protection policy or child protection practices.
- Ensure the availability of opportunities to discuss child protection in the regular meetings of personnel and give them the chance to address the problems they face, and how to overcome the same.
- Ensure the adaptability of PCS procedures and policies with the principles of this Child Protection Policy.
- Review the procedures and interventions taken in the cases of abuse to ensure they comply with the procedures set forth in this Child Protection Policy.
- Measure and identify the changes caused to children in custody of the school as a result of the Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- To ensure the effectiveness of monitoring, all of the concerned parties have to be involved in the evaluation process, and identifying the indicators of the effectiveness of Child Protection Policy within the school. This process has to be participatory and children have to be involved as much as possible.

7.2 The Success Indicators of Child Protection Policy at PCS

- a. **Knowledge:** the personnel knowledge of child abuse, behavior guidelines, mechanisms of reporting, and their individual responsibilities towards child protection.
- b. **Situation:** the seriousness of personnel towards child protection and their respect for children.
- c. **Practice:** revolves around the below practice indicators:
 - The change in the personnel behavior towards introducing the child protection policy into the school in their daily work.
 - The improvement in the physical environment of the school.
 - The children's sense of security within the school.

The Child Protection Policy has to be reviewed for the first time after one year. Then, every three years.

Eighth: discipline of children when showing unwanted behaviors:

Children at PCS may show some practices which constitute unwanted behaviors. Such behaviors may lead to children hurting themselves or others. This requires taking a disciplinary procedure against the child, taking into consideration that the child's existence at PCS is voluntary not systematic. The below listed procedures are consistent with PCS privacy so that any procedure taken for disciplinary reasons may be motivating to the child. In other words, the disciplinary actions are taken for the purpose of teaching children rather than punishing them.

8.1 Prevent the Occurrence of the Unwanted Behavior by:

1. Giving the child an understanding of their rights and duties the moment they register at PCS. Remind the child of the same later, and every once and a while.
2. Involve the children in the suggestions on discipline inside the school, and what is expected from them.
3. Introduce the children to PCS rules, and remind them of the rules they must abide by to strengthen their self-discipline. The rules have to be clear to children and parents at the registration phase, not to mention the trainer has to clarify the same at the outset of training.

8.2 Discipline Specifications:

The disciplinary procedure taken by the trainer against the child who shows unwanted behavior shall meet the below standards and specifications:

1. The disciplinary procedures have to be consistent with the misconduct or misbehavior shown by the child.
2. Preserve the child's dignity.
3. Consistent with the child best interest.
4. Consistent with the School's Child Protection Policy (avoid exposing the child to any form of physical or psychological violence or negligence or exploitation).
5. Consistent with all rights of the child.
6. If the child is assigned to an activity as a disciplinary procedure, it should not be exhausting to the child and it has to be consistent with his/her physical and psychological capabilities as well as age.
7. Positive discipline involves working with children not against them, and avoid any negative attitudes:
 - Saying "do" benefits more than saying "don't". Reward is more effective than punishment.
 - Show children and tell them what to do, not only what they are not allowed to do.
 - Explain to children the actual reasons, saying: "because I do not want this" does not teach children anything for the next time.
 - Try to say: "well done" as much as "stop doing this" is said. We must always be ready to praise the child for the good behavior just as we reprimand them for the misbehaviors.
 - We ignore the minor and nonsense misbehaviors, because the more we complaint the less the children listen to us.
 - When the child does something wrong, we explain to them what they have done and how to correct it.

8.3 Disciplinary Procedures

1. Inform the parents to assist the school in clarifying to the child the consequences of not abiding by the instructions.
2. Praise the good conduct by the trainer or supervisor. Give the greatest attention and praise to children who abide by the rules and show good conduct. Then when the child starts misbehaving, give him/her the praise and attention too.
3. Direct guidance of the child after showing inappropriate conduct, introduce him/her to the risks, and the possible results of the conduct. Associating the result with the problematic conduct helps the child recognize that his/her conduct has direct consequences.
4. Assign the child with extra activities so he/she can assume responsibility without involving humiliating punishment, but rather, making additional effort in which the child can sense joy and usefulness.
5. Positive reinforcement may be utilized by putting the conduct reinforcement sign in which conducts which are permissible to be carried out by children will be marked.

Ninth: some forms to be incorporated with PCS Child Protection Policy

Form No. (1): PCS Code of Conduct

PCS working team shall comply by the Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct. It should be noted that the working team of PCS consists of: the managers, the administrative staff, the personnel whether under a fixed-term or temporary contract, the trainers, the volunteers, and the partners.

PCS, registered under license No., hereby undertakes to create an environment that shall strengthen the values and principles of the rights of the child and maintains the same. It also focuses on the prevention of child abuse, negligence and exploitation. Furthermore, PCS strongly condemns any form of child abuse, whether inside or outside the school. It also confirms its readiness to respond to any case of abuse or negligence or violence, in accordance with the Palestinian Child Protection System, and the Palestinian amended Child Law No. 4 Of 2004.

PCS also undertakes to take the necessary measures to comply by the Child Protection Policy through: giving attention to human resources such as training, consulting and counseling, taking the proper measures against anyone who breaches the Policy, including: subjecting the person to the appropriate training, or warning or alarm or suspension from work for a specific period, or dismissal or any other legal or administrative procedural measures according to the intensity and seriousness of the violation.

Form No. (2): Code of Conduct enclosed with the functional/voluntary contract:

I, the undersigned, having viewed the Child Protection Policy approved by PCS, hereby declare my consent to its contents, commitment to abide by it, and assume my responsibilities thereof. Accordingly, I undertake to respect the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Palestinian amended Child Law Of 2004, and the Child Protection System in force in Palestine. I particularly undertake to comply by: respect the rights of the child, the child best interest, the child’s right to involvement and respect of his/her views, the non-use of violence of all forms, the non-exploitation of children in any way, maintain the safety and security of children, permanently and equally oversight children without any discrimination whatsoever, either sex, disability, religion, social origin, and others.

In witness hereof, I undertake that should I breach any of these items or the content of the Child Protection Policy, its principles and exercise, I will be subject to all punitive procedures which will be taken against me as a result of this breach or violation.

Date: / /2019
Employee

Signature of

This Code of Conduct is an integral part of the official job or voluntary contract.

It will be kept in the employee’s personal file.

Form No. (3): Acknowledgment of Criminal Convictions

Are you involved in any pending case, or have you ever been convicted, and awarded a punitive sentence/punishment for any abused you have committed in the past?

Yes / No

If the answer is yes, we appreciate it if you could give more details, including the trials and convictions, and declare any previous claims or investigations against you.

(The Child Protection Adviser at PCS shall maintain such information confidential, and shall assess whether any such information poses a threat or not on child protection).

I hereby acknowledge that the information I have incorporated is complete and correct. Thus, making a false declaration may result in terminating every contract signed between me and PCS.

Signature

Name

Date

References & Resources

1. The International Convention on the Rights of the Child Of 1989.
2. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Of 2006.
3. The Palestinian amended Child Law Of 2004.
4. The National Referral Manual on Child Protection from Abuse, Violence and Negligence, Ramallah/Palestine 2007.
5. Child Protection in Organizations, work manual: policies and procedures. Issued by Child Hope. The Arab Resources Workshop. By: Elanor Jackson and Marry Fernham, 2005.
6. Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action/Child Protection, LASC, Global Protection Cluster, 2007.
7. The Professionals and Educators Manual on Handling Violence and Abuse against Children and Children with Disabilities titled: How Can we Protect Our Children. Qader for Community & Development, 2013.