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**FEZİYE
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VAKFI •1885•**

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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1. Child Protection Policy

1.1. Why Do We Need A Child Protection Policy?

Feyziye Schools Foundation has an integrated structure placing the students in the centre. Taking into consideration that the needs of children are different from the needs of adults, a rights-based policy has been created. One of the most important responsibilities of our school is to ensure that students are kept in the safest environment; it is also our job to create an environment where students know and exercise their rights. To meet these goals, our Child Protection Policy covers all internal and external community members.

1.2. What Is Our Child Protection Policy?

The Child Protection Policy has been created to establish a safe environment ensuring that students can be protected from any negligence and abuse if they are deprived of their rights. This is a mandatory policy and must be followed by all Feyziye Schools Foundation Schools and their community members. All processes of the school are carried out in accordance with this policy regardless of any challenges. If it is not possible to implement any portion of this policy due to security-related or legal considerations, the *“Child Protection Team”* is informed and an action plan is created to address the matter.

In order to create a safe environment for the children:

- Child protection and child abuse terms have been defined.
- A Child Protection Team has been formed.
- The Child Protection Policy has been generated and corporate principles developed for its implementation.
- Implementation guidelines have been prepared.
- Obstacles and challenges of the institution are dealt with and potential solutions developed.

1.3. Who is the Target Group of Child Protection Policy?

Feyziye Schools Foundation Child Protection Policy is both an internal and external policy. The policy covers all our support services, and they are expected to agree to work in accordance with our policy in their relations with Feyziye Schools Foundation.

The policy is of great importance for the individuals whom we are continually in contact with (for instance, children, families and teachers), with the main goal intuitional responsibility for the protection of children

2. Definition of Child Abuse and Cultural Awareness

Child abuse is defined as exposing any child from the age of 0 to 18 to any behaviour causing damage that is displayed deliberately and that can be prevented by any person(s). This must be a behaviour that prevents the physical and psycho-social development of a child, that is against the cultural values of the society where it occurs, or that is considered as an abuse by the experts. (Polat 1993)

Cultural Awareness

FMV Işık Schools respects the customs and traditions of those making up our school community. We teach our students to treat other cultures responsibly and respectfully. However, if any community creates a situation that will adversely affect the emotional and physical development of a child, the school believes that this should not be considered as a simple cultural difference. If necessary, the Child Protection Team evaluates any such incidents and takes appropriate measures to protect the children.

2.1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can be defined as “deliberate injury to the child” in its widest sense. Its most common form is beating a child. However, physical abuse is “any kind of abuse that causes bruises, fractures, burns and any similar lesion resulting in physical damage to the body.” Physical abuse includes deliberate injury to and/or maltreatment of the child. Physical abuse types include beating, hitting, throwing, pushing, burning and choking the child.

2.2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is any kind of chronic action or inaction that disturbs the development or emotional integrity of the child. It means the continuous emotional mistreatment of the child to cause serious and long-term effects on the emotional and psychological development of the child. Swearing, isolating, abandoning, misleading, frightening, mobbing, threatening, not satisfying the emotional needs, mocking and humiliating a child are types of emotional and psycho-social abuse. Moreover, continuously expecting more from the child exceeding his/her capacity, overprotecting the child, making the child defensive, extremely authoritative treatment, expecting responsibilities of a child of a higher age, discrimination between siblings and peers, giving severe penalties not appropriate for the behaviors of the child and inflicting violence to the face of the child are also types of emotional abuse.

2.3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse means forcing, encouraging or otherwise using the child as a means for sexual gratification, regardless of whether the child is aware of it or seems to consent to the sexual activity. Sexual abuse includes physical contact with or without sexual intercourse, exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexually-explicit speech, using the child in pornography, exposing children to pornographic content, causing children to be in inappropriate conditions and encouraging children to display inappropriate sexual behaviors.

2.4. Cyber Abuse

Cyber abuse includes any interaction through information and communication technologies that adversely affects the emotional and physical development of children. Cyber abuse disturbs the emotional, social and physical development of the child by exposing them to hate, oppression, stalking, harassment, bullying, violent and/or pornographic images. This type of abuse may also include physical and sexual abuse or negligence. A parent or guardian’s failure to protect or inform his/her children about any situation that might expose them to cyber abuse is also a type of cyber abuse.

2.5. Negligence

Negligence means that the parent/legal guardians on whom the child depends have chosen not to satisfy their obligation to meet the physical or emotional needs of their children. It is defined as the disregarding of nutrition, clothing, hygiene, medical requirements, sufficient social relation, emotional needs or optimal living conditions.

3. Our Responsibilities as An Educational Institution

All internal and external community members of Feyziye Schools Foundation are responsible for protecting the welfare of our children, ensuring them a safe environment and supporting the implementation of the Child Protection Policy. All employees of Feyziye Schools Foundation have the following responsibilities regardless of their position or duties:

- Reporting any claim from a student regarding actual or suspected incidents of child abuse.
- Reporting any actual or suspected abuse of the children by school personnel.

4. The Principles Forming the Basis of Child Protection Policy

Feyziye Schools Foundation, together with all its campuses, schools and the units and departments of the schools, is aware of its responsibility regarding the protection of our children. We also believe it is important to take preventative steps against any possible damage to our students. Considering the information and communication systems established within and between our schools, Feyziye Schools Foundation focuses on the following principles:

- Feyziye Schools Foundation and all its schools accept the articles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children approved in 1989, and respect the rights of children.
- Feyziye Schools Foundation presents a positive school environment with a positive system of values where the students know they are valued, safe, can speak and be heard.
- All the schools of Feyziye Schools Foundation accept that protecting children against all damage is an integral personal, professional responsibility.
- Feyziye Schools Foundation and all its schools consider the best interest of the child in any kind of protective measure or decision.
- Feyziye Schools Foundation provides necessary training and support to all individuals within its community to ensure that they recognize, prevent and intervene in the case of child abuse incidents.
- Feyziye Schools Foundation consults outside experts for support when necessary.
- Feyziye Schools Foundation regularly monitors the implementation of its Child Protection Policy and reviews this policy once a year.
- Feyziye Schools Foundation designs all procedures to increase the functionality of the Child Protection Policy and to extend it to the entire school community.

4.1. Preventive Actions

Feyziye Schools Foundation is obliged to take necessary precautions to prevent any incident that might harm children. The prevention of abuse forms the basis of child protection. Feyziye Schools Foundation accepts that corporate awareness and robust procedures encourage positive behaviors, decreases the frequency of bad incidents and ensures early detection and responses to child abuse incidents. To ensure this, Feyziye Schools Foundation undertakes the following preventive activities:

Raising Awareness: Feyziye Schools Foundation ensures the effective and systematic sharing of its Child Protection Policy with the entire school community via many methods, including parent letters, posters, bulletins, its website and school magazines. This ensures that our community members (including all educators and support personnel) are aware of their responsibilities to the children and treat them respectfully. They become a good listener for all children, pay attention to changes in children’s behavior and bear in mind that any change in the behaviors of any child could be an indicator of abuse.

Behavior Agreements: Feyziye Schools Foundation asks all staff and parents to sign a “behavior agreement” in order to prevent any potential abuse and to clearly express its expectations. Feyziye Schools Foundation ensures that all parties signing the agreement understand Feyziye Schools Foundation’s expectations regarding improper behavior and aims to protect children from such behavior.

The behavior agreement states that the school cares about the following items and expects community members to care too:

- Physical contact.
- Drinking and smoking in the environment of students.
- Social media connections with parents and students.
- Sharing of personal information with the students.

4.1.1. Recruitment Process

Feyziye Schools Foundation works hard to select the correct candidate for the correct position in line with its goals and principles. The care shown by the institution during the recruitment process and its in-depth monitoring throughout the employment process are valuable precautions in deterring criminals. Feyziye Schools Foundation takes all reasonable care to prevent inappropriate persons from working with our children. The Human Resources Department determines whether candidates are suitable for the school and checks their references to prevent any potential problems. The questions asked of candidates during the interview process are designed to assess their ability to interact with children in a positive way. An orientation meeting is held with all employees before they may work with students, which includes a detailed section about our “Institutional Ethics” and “Child Protection Policy.” All employees are monitored and evaluated based on firm criteria for ethical behavior.

4.1.2. Education of School Community: Feyziye Schools Foundation is committed to ongoing training for the whole school community in order to ensure that all community members are

aware of how important child protection is. Feyziye Schools Foundation aims to prevent any potential problem before it occurs by ensuring that everybody is continuously aware of the Child Protection Policy.

Education of Students: Feyziye Schools Foundation knows that educating and raising the awareness of children is one of the most important steps in preventing child abuse. Feyziye Schools Foundation ensures that a suitable curriculum is in place to achieve this. The school organizes awareness and corrective behavior development programmes for all grades from kindergarten to high school to ensure safety and prevention of children abuse, including individual and group interviews and collective studies such as in-class tasks and seminars. While developing these plans, the school encourages parents' participation and requests their feedback periodically. The education programme is regularly reviewed based on this feedback.

Education of Parents: Being aware that parents are our main partner in child protection, Feyziye Schools Foundation organizes various activities to ensure that parents are part of our child protection plan. The school informs the parents about "protection of children against abuse" through seminars, bulletins and individual meetings if necessary.

The following are organized during the school year:

- The school emphasizes the importance it places on the Child Protection Policy in bulletins sent at the beginning of the academic year.
- The school makes an official notification regarding the expectations of the school in accordance with the "United Nations Convention on Child Protection" for the welfare of the children.
- The school collectively and individually informs parents via its website about the Child Protection Policy and Procedures of the school.
- The school shares its expectations regarding child welfare, including proper nutrition, care and protection of the child, healthy communication and emotional development.

Moreover, seminars are organized for the parents of high school students every month by the school counsellors and experts as part of the "Parent Development Workshops" about various matters (e.g., Puberty, Child Development, Healthy Communication with Adolescents, Technology and Drug Addiction, Reckless Behaviors).

Education of School Staff: Feyziye Schools Foundation serves children from kindergarten to the 12th grade on all its campuses. Staff members interact with children on our campuses. These staff members include teachers, administration, librarians as well as support personnel including school bus drivers, school bus attendants, cafeteria personnel, security guards and cleaning personnel. The institution is responsible for educating of the children as well as the individuals interacting with the children. The highlights include recognizing child abuse, types of child abuse, indicators of abuse and common behaviors of abused children, statistical data regarding child abuse and actions to be taken in an emergency. The institution is also responsible for highlighting what constitutes child abuse.

Education of Educators: In addition to the child protection methods mentioned above, Feyziye Schools Foundation understands the importance of integrating child protection into the classroom. Feyziye Schools Foundation supports its educators in terms of

resources/scheduling/opportunities for child abuse education and ensures that curriculum plans are made accordingly.

4.1.3. Awareness through the Curriculum

Preventive activities, awareness programmes and subject-level practices regarding child protection policy are included in the curriculum and carried out systematically from kindergarten to high school at all campuses of Feyziye Schools Foundation Işık Schools.

The International Declaration of the Rights of the Child is displayed prominently at various places in all school buildings. Extracurricular activities, projects, competitions, ceremonies and exhibitions are organized according to our Child Protection Policy. A week of the school year is designated “Child Rights Week” at all our schools, and levels of awareness among the school community and our parents are raised with special activities carried out during that week.

A structure has been created to protect the children against any environment and incident where, regardless of their age, they can be harmed physically and emotionally. We aim to raise our children’s awareness of their rights and the requirements of the Child Protection Policy through clearly-understood, confidential methods. The fundamental principles of our curriculum are as follows:

- The aim is to increase the motivation of and win over every child.
- Teachers do not use humiliation, pressure or violence at any time.
- Students are presented with opportunities to show their skills and express themselves.
- Students are informed in advance about the sanctions they might face in case they violate any rule, and every sanction is implemented in the same way by everybody.
- Students are not forced to participate in any curricular or extracurricular activity.
- Students are given additional support when they fall behind or fail.
- The academic and emotional progress of our students is monitored by every course teacher, and their observations are shared at the meeting of the committee of level teachers held every semester. Precautions are taken if necessary.

Kindergarten: The primary objective of the kindergartens, where students at the age of 4 to 6 study, is to protect them physically and raise their awareness to ensure that they can protect themselves. The **children studying at kindergarten** are trained and educated about getting to know their own body and the body of the opposite sex, intimate areas, my body is mine, touching rules, recognizing desired and not desired touches and healthy use of technology.

Primary School: The primary school level—where students undergo fast change and development physically, mentally, spiritually and socially—is an especially important time to raise children’s awareness. All the facilities provided by the curriculum are used to serve the Child Protection Policy. **The children studying at the primary school** are trained and educated about understanding emotions, expressing oneself, communication skills, knowing how to ask for help (and when), Declaration of the Rights of the Child, personal boundaries, “saying no,” recognizing safe and unsafe touches, touching rules, puberty features and healthy use of technology.

Middle School: Since subject teaching starts at the secondary school, the number of people that the students are in contact with increases. To prevent student anxiety, the school administration holds common behavior meetings, which ensure that every teacher displays consistent behavior to the children. Students at this age become more individualized and introverted, and their insecurities increase due to puberty. Therefore, all educators of Feyziye Schools foundation consider this level very critical and monitor the children sensitively. Moreover, at this age a child's inner conscience and value system start to develop, and his/her abstract thinking system becomes more complex. Taking all these changes into consideration, the education programme is shaped to raise high awareness in children. **The children studying at middle school** are trained and educated about the puberty period, growth and development characteristics, sexual health education, social emotional development, bullying, abuse, social media and technology use.

High School: The high school curriculum includes an integrated perspective regarding "Rights of the Child." The rights of the child and child protection sub-subjects are included in the Child Protection Policy, and these topics are integrated into all course curriculum vertically and horizontally. In addition to course curriculum, extracurricular activities (competitions/concerts/art studies etc.) carried out at the school aim to raise awareness of the entire school community in this respect. **The children studying at high school** are educated and trained to refrain from risky behaviors by raising awareness and sensitivity about healthy sexual development and safe sex, respecting the differences of others, knowing and accepting their rights and freedoms and raising awareness about bullying and sexual abuse.

4.1.4. Trips

Trips are planned according the age groups, and any trip with any security weakness is cancelled. The companies to be engaged for the trips are selected only after checking their references. A risk assessment is made before any trip. Research is done about the place to be visited. The route, trip period and traffic etc. are reviewed.

Necessary security precautions are taken at hotels before any overnight trips. (e.g., mini bars are emptied, 18+ channels are closed, windows are locked). The students to stay together are paired in advance. Adults and students do not stay in the same room. The number of teachers and guides to accompany the students is determined based on the number of students (for example, 1 teacher for every 10 students, 1 assistant principal for every 40 students and guide and nurse for overnight trips). Students are insured by the tourism company for all trips. Trips are organized in accordance with a clear trip procedure.

Evaluations are made regarding the trip location and programme after the trip. Necessary precautions are taken for the next trip. The trip is not repeated if any risk was detected.

4.1.5. Use of Technology

The Digital Citizenship section of the computer course curriculum focuses mostly on the “*Digital Security and Digital Rights and Responsibilities*” sections that are closely related with this matter. The students are informed as part of the course contents about problems that they might encounter in the virtual world and social media, how they should react to such problems and what their responsibilities are when using social media.

Moreover, the IT Department uses various software to prevent access to any undesired domain at the locations in the school with internet access.

Feyziye Schools Foundation acts with the welfare of the child in mind when using any visual and written materials of the children. The Foundation acts on a fair basis while protecting the child’s descriptions, experiences, identity and dignity. The Foundation asks for verbal (in their mother languages) and written approvals from parents/guardians or caretakers before using any photo, film, video image, voice record or personal background of any child. Moreover, all data and contents (names, photographs, files) are stored securely at the schools.

Regular activities are carried out as part of both the course syllabus and IT practices in order to raise student awareness about virtual abuse and bullying that they might face or cause in the digital world and to ensure that they can protect themselves against such incidents.

4.1.6. Physical Environment and Audits

The campus child protection team audits all areas of the school occupied/used or not occupied/used by the children once every academic year. Any weakness or problem that might endanger the security and safeguarding of the children is forwarded to the responsible units for urgent remedy.

4.2. Foundation Child Protection Team: Feyziye Schools Foundation establishes a Feyziye Schools Foundation Child Protection Team from the representatives of the child protection team of each campus. This team evaluates the requests of the campuses and revises the Child Protection Policy if necessary. The team ensures information flow between campuses regarding the Child Protection Policy. The team contacts the external child protection experts if external support is needed. The teams receive support from the other organs of the Foundation, acting in cooperation with them. Two ordinary meetings are held during the year. The Foundation Child Protection Team is comprised of the following:

- A Board Member;
- An Executive Board Member;
- Foundation Lawyer;
- School Principals;
- Representative(s) selected from each campus.

Campus Child Protection Team: Feyziye Schools Foundation establishes a child protection team at each campus, emphasizing the importance of communication between schools sharing the same campus. The campus child protection team is comprised of:

- School Psychologist;
- School Counsellor(s);
- School Nurse;
- Teachers representing each grade;
- School Principal.

The campus child protection teams should regularly perform the following during the academic year:

- Organize meetings to inform the General Manager and school principals, teachers, parents and students about the Child Protection Programme;
- Organize meetings to give detailed information about the Child Protection Programme to new students;
- Review the school protection team in terms of position change;
- Review the activities of the previous year;
- Plan teacher and stakeholder training sessions;
- Review and, if necessary, revise the curriculum.

In case of any child abuse suspicion, any individual witnessing or suspecting abuse is automatically brought to the child protection team. The school principal and assistant principal of the school where the abused child studies are also included in the child protection team.

4.3. Approaches of Claims

Feyziye Schools Foundation Işık Schools consider themselves obliged to react to any actual or suspected abuse or damage incidents as per this policy. Any claim and concern will be treated seriously regardless of who the offender and the abused is and how unbelievable the incident seems.

Foundation personnel are not obliged to decide whether child abuse has occurred. However, all personnel are obliged to notify any unclear or suspicious incident or any intuition or concern that something is wrong. No personnel may fail to report information given to them about any actual or suspected abuse.

In case of any actual or claimed abuse, the school has an action plan. The claimant cooperates with the school counsellors of the school, the school counsellor notifies the school administration and the Child Protection Team of the school, and the school administration and its Child Protection Team contact the family and/or the authorities.

5. Policy Review Process

This policy is reviewed by the commission once every academic year. The Child Protection Team is responsible for reviewing the Child Protection Policy.