

Puebla Christian Academy Child Safety Policy

Puebla Christian Academy places a high value on children and strives to provide a safe learning environment. The academy is committed to protecting the social, spiritual, moral, emotional, physical, and mental health of students and to maintaining an environment in which all individuals treat each other with dignity and respect.

Academies fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of children. With the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, educators are in a unique position to identify children who need help and protection, particularly in the area of personal safety. Children should be kept safe from all forms of harassment and abuse.

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse is physical, sexual, and/or psychological maltreatment or neglect of a child. This could include unwanted attention, physical contact or actions that cause physical, emotional or mental harm (touching, holding, teasing, mocking, discrimination, disrespectful behavior, etc.) whether intentional or unintentional.

Although the legal definition of child abuse refers to actions against individuals under the age of 18, the academy will protect the rights and safety of students who are over the age of 18. All policies apply to currently enrolled members.

Noticing Concerns

Children may not always recognize or disclose abuse on their own. Staff should be aware of signs that may indicate abuse. Possible indicators include:

- Significant and abrupt changes in behavior, hygiene, health, welfare, and mood.
- Child shows fear or strong avoidance to going home or being alone with a certain individual, or withdrawal from physical contact.
- Child's medical needs are not met (untreated illnesses and injuries).
- Threatening self-harm or harm to another, either emotionally or physically.
- Unexplained cuts, bruises, welts or fractures or injuries inconsistent with the information offered by the child.

If a student discloses information, the following general guidelines should be followed:

- Show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely it may sound.
- Listen without interrupting. Make notes during the meeting or as soon as possible after the meeting.
- Stay calm and look at the child directly while being sensitive to cultural differences. Do not show emotions, such as disgust or alarm.

- Be honest and tell the child that you will need to let someone else know (do not promise confidentiality).
- Never push for information, but be ready to listen if they want to tell you more.
- Submit a report to the Child Safety Team as soon as possible.

*The person reporting should not take any action other than submitting the report.

Raising Concerns

Any member of the academy community (parents, students, and teachers/staff members) should report concerns, observations, and disclosures related to student safety to the Child Safety Team as soon as possible. Reports may be given to the Child Safety Team verbally, in writing, or through pcschildsafetyteam@gmail.com.

The Child Safety Team is a group of three or more school staff appointed by the principal or school board whose role is to oversee the policies and procedures that will result in a safe campus environment. The Child Safety Team works alongside the principal and school board in dealing with concerns, following a clear reporting system for raised concerns and sensitively leading the response to any reports. The Child Safety Team will process all reports in a timely manner.

