Referral Process to report Violence in Schools

Question and Answer Sheet

1. What is the process CP agencies should follow for reporting alleged incidents of child abuse/ violence occurring inside a school?

* CP agencies and different stakeholders have to notify DOPS at MEHE by filling the specific referral form in Arabic and sending it at [CP@mehe.gov.lb](mailto:CP@mehe.gov.lb).

It applies to both first and second shift schools.

1. What is the minimum information required from partners when making a referral to MEHE?

* The information requested on the above mentioned referral form including; the name of the school, the name of the alleged perpetrator and the name of the victim. The information must be accurate and the form fully completed.

1. When a child or parent discloses an alleged incident of abuse occurring inside a school to a CP agency, the CP agency is obliged to report it. However, the CP agency is not in a position to determine the accuracy of all the information or gather all of the relevant facts needed, particular as the event happens within a school.

What advice can MEHE provide on this issue?

* The CP agency needs to emphasize the importance of accurate information being provided on the referral form as any incorrect or inaccurate information given may cause harm to the case and impede the protection process at MEHE.
* Information provided on the referral should be written in a professional manner, with factual information clearly stated.
* If CP actors are unable to obtain the minimum information required (name of the school, perpetrator and victim) they will need to assess if it is appropriate to make the referral.

1. What feedback or information can CP actors expect once they have made a referral to MEHE?

* MEHE is only able to confirm the receipt of the case and it’s processing by the concerned staff; Feedback about the procedures including the measures taken remains internal and confidential and will not be shared with the referring agency

1. What information should CP actors provide families and children about the referral process (as part of ensuring informed consent is obtained from the families in order to make the referral, as well as providing with them realistic expectations of the process)?

* MEHE units concerned process the cases in a confidential way, with the information provided on the referral form being disclosed only to a small number of people at MEHE central to the investigation.
* MEHE will confirm the receipt of the referral to the referring agency. The agency can pass on this confirmation to the family. Due to confidentiality reasons additional feedback cannot be shared by MEHE.
* MEHE will then assess the information provided on the referral and determine the necessary next steps.
* The CP agency needs to emphasize the importance of accurate information e.g. name of the perpetrator, and also to explain that any incorrect or inaccurate information may cause harm the case and impede the protection process at MEHE.
* It is also important to encourage parents to keep their children at schools to avoid drop out.

1. What actions should MEHE and referring agency take to prevent any additional harm being caused to the children/families of referred cases?

* MEHE units concerned’ process the cases in a confidential way, respecting the protocol of confidentiality of the CP policy.
* Similarly, it’s expected from the CP agencies to respect the confidentiality of all concerned

1. What shall the referring agency do in case the violence continued to happen even after making the referral?

* The referring agency should notify DOPS/ MEHE if the violence persists or exacerbates.

1. Can agencies make referrals regarding children who have already stopped attending school as a result of violence?

* Yes, as other children might be victims of violence.

1. What should CP Actors do if a family does not want to disclose the name of their child on the referral form?

CP actors should explain to families the following:

* Disclosure of the child’s name will be limited to very few people at central MEHE who deal with cases in confidentiality to avoid any additional harm or re victimization of child.
* Non-disclosure will impede the quick and proper follow up by the concerned unit at DOPS.
* If families still do not wish to provide the name of the child, the actions taken by MEHE /DOPs will be extremely limited. They will not have the ability to conduct a thorough investigation of the incident or meet the child. They may only conduct a general visit to the school.