



Human Resources and  
Social Development

# Executive Regulations for the Child Protection System

# Chapter One

Definitions, Objectives, and Cases of Abuse and Neglect

## Article I:

The following terms: wherever they appear in this regulation, shall have the meanings set forth opposite each of them, unless the context otherwise requires:

**The Ministry:** The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development.

**The Minister:** The Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

**The System:** The Child Protection System.

**The Regulation:** The Executive Regulation of the Child Protection System.

**Child:** Every human being under the age of eighteen years.

**Abuse:** Any form of ill-treatment or exploitation of a child, or threats thereof.

**Physical abuse:** Any intentional or repeated act, omission, or neglect that results in harm to a child's body.

**Exploitation:** The use of a child by any person in lawful or unlawful activities, taking advantage of the child's youth, disability, inexperience, or lack of punishment.

**Sexual abuse:** The subjection of a child to any form of sexual assault, harm, or exploitation.

**Ill-treatment:** Any word or deed that is likely to harm a child's psychological, health, social, and physical development, and to violate the child's body, dignity, or rights guaranteed to him by law or regulation.

**Neglect:** The failure to provide for a child's basic needs, or the neglect thereof, including physical, health, emotional, psychological, educational, intellectual, social, cultural, and security needs.

**Physical Needs of a Child:** Everything necessary to maintain a child's life, protect their body, and provide food, drink, clothing, shelter, and protection from diseases and accidents, as well as necessary medical treatment.

**Health Needs of a Child:** All that is required to provide adequate healthcare for a child, including immunization with vaccines, protection from epidemics and diseases, accident prevention, and ensuring access to appropriate medical treatment.

**Emotional Needs of a Child:** Everything necessary to ensure a child's emotional needs are met, such as remaining with their biological family, or providing an alternative or foster family, or placing them in social care institutions or similar settings.

**Psychological Needs of a Child:** All that is required to ensure a child's healthy psychological development, including providing a suitable environment with warmth and affection, preventing feelings of threat or constant fear, and providing appropriate psychological treatment if necessary.

**Educational Needs of a Child:** Providing a child with knowledge and experiences appropriate to their age and abilities, educating and raising them according to sound educational methods that meet their needs.

**Learning Needs of a Child:** Ensuring that a child receives free basic education and providing a learning environment suitable for their age, psychological, mental, and physical condition.

**Intellectual Needs of a Child:** Guaranteeing a child's right to express their opinions and desires without harming others, such as bullying peers or contradicting other systems, and actively involving them in judicial, administrative, social, or educational procedures related to them that are appropriate to their age and maturity level.

**Cognitive Needs of a Child:** Everything necessary for the healthy development of a child's mind in terms of health, thought, science, cognition, and language.

**Social Needs of a Child:** Everything necessary to prepare a child physically, mentally, culturally, morally, and intellectually in accordance with the religious and social values of society, ensuring that the child acquires new skills, forms social relationships and friendships, and cooperates and integrates with others.

**Cultural Needs:** Ensuring a child's right to fulfill their cultural needs through arts, literature, knowledge, and information derived from their beliefs and community, and broadening their horizons by introducing them to human heritage and contemporary scientific and technological advancements.

**Security Needs:** Everything necessary to ensure a child feels safe in their natural or alternative family environment or their surroundings, and protecting them from all forms of violence, harm, or inhuman treatment.

**Alternative or Foster Family:** A family entrusted with providing educational, social, psychological, and health care to a child whose circumstances prevent them from being raised in their natural family.

**Guardianship:** The authority vested in another person to oversee a minor's person, property, and representation, and to care for all their affairs.

**Responsibility:** A legal or regulatory obligation of a person for the consequences of a child's actions based on their legal or regulatory relationship with the child.

**Being Left Without Family Support:** Any situation where a child loses the care of their natural family.

**Person:** A natural person is anyone capable of acquiring rights and assuming obligations, or a legal person, which is a separate legal entity established to achieve a specific purpose as required by the context.

**Relevant Parties:** Any public, private, non-profit, or non-governmental entity involved in protecting a child and empowering them to exercise their rights.

**Military Activities:** Activities that by their nature require joining a military force, armed forces, or non-regular armed groups.

**Child in Need of Care:** Any child whose parents or one parent are unknown, or who has been deprived of parental care or care by relatives due to death, separation of spouses, imprisonment, or a child with a disability or a chronic illness whose family is unable to provide care or treatment.

**Children's Toys:** Products designed or intended, exclusively or not, for use by children under the age of eighteen.

**Social Care Institutions:** Any public or private social care institution designated to provide care or rehabilitation for a child in need.

**Reporting Center:** A center designated to receive reports of abuse cases nationwide.

**Ideological Deviation:** Deviation of thoughts or concepts from the agreed-upon Islamic standards and values, and in violation of public order.

**Bullying:** The repeated targeting of a specific child or group of children using unwanted methods of a psychological or physical nature, causing significant harm to the targeted child. Bullying may be direct or indirect, using modern technology.

**Best Interests of the Child:** A comprehensive concept that governs all measures, interactions, and procedures affecting the child to ensure the child's priority in enjoying all their rights, and to assess the impact of the application of systems and procedures on the child's rights, development, and quality of life.

**Kingdom:** The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Protection Center:** A specialized administrative and field center/unit responsible for directly handling child protection reports against abuse.

**Multidisciplinary Team:** A team working in a protection center and shelter, consisting of at least the following specialists: (social, psychological, legal).

**Non-profit Sector:** A system of civil activities, volunteer services, and non-governmental organizations that do not primarily aim for profit and seek to achieve purposes of charity, cooperation, social development, or other public benefit purposes.

**Shelter Role:** The role of shelters for victims of domestic violence, which are designated to receive victims of abuse, whether they are affiliated with the ministry or the third sector under the ministry's supervision.

**Alternative Care:** Care provided for children by caregivers other than their parents.

## Article 2:

To Achieve the System's Objectives: The relevant authorities shall, each within its jurisdiction, do the following:

1. Protect the child from all forms of abuse, neglect, discrimination, and exploitation, and empower him with his rights as stipulated by Islamic Sharia, the provisions of the Child Protection System and its executive regulations, other related systems, and the international agreements to which the Kingdom has acceded.
2. Ensure that the child's environment, whether physical or virtual, is suitable to protect him from anything that threatens his survival or physical, psychological, intellectual, educational, moral, or social health.
3. Provide the necessary care, attention, and rehabilitation for a child who is subjected to abuse or neglect, in a manner that ensures helping him to stabilize and adapt to his family and social circumstances.
4. Ensure the commitment of institutions, departments, centers, and facilities responsible for the care, upbringing, or protection of the child, as well as public places where he is present, to the recognized standards in the field of safety and health, and the competence of employees entrusted with the tasks of protecting the child from abuse and neglect and empowering him with his rights.
5. The relevant authorities shall take all necessary administrative, social, educational, and educational measures to ensure the child's protection from all forms of discrimination, violence, harm, physical or mental abuse, neglect, treatment involving neglect or abuse, exploitation, or inequality, whether in the care of his parents or one of them or those in their position, or in the care of any other person or educational, reformative, shelter, social, or charitable institution.
6. Consideration of the Child's Best Interests: In all procedures concerning the child, whether carried out by government or private social welfare institutions, courts, administrative authorities, or other entities, the child's best interests shall be considered.
7. Raising Awareness: Raising awareness of the importance of empowering the child with his rights and protecting him from abuse and neglect through various media, educational and social institutions, and other relevant entities, to ensure that members of society are aware of the concept of child abuse and neglect, its dangers, its negative effects on the individual and society, and the best ways to prevent and deal with it, as well as educating children and families about their legal and regulatory rights and duties, and intensifying family counseling programs to help address behavioral

phenomena that contribute to creating an environment conducive to the occurrence of abuse or neglect. The Ministry shall coordinate with the relevant authorities to achieve this.

8. **Comprehensive Preparation:** Preparing the child comprehensively to live a decent life in society, and educating him on the values and high ideals encouraged by Islamic Sharia, authentic Arab customs, and the covenants and agreements related to the rights of the child to which the Kingdom has acceded.

### **Article 3:**

1. **No Denial of Education:** No child shall be denied education or its continuation, even if one or both of his parents have problems regarding his nationality, legal residence, or obtaining proof of his identity. Every child has the right to education, and the competent authorities shall take the necessary measures to facilitate this. No administrative procedure shall prevent a child from entering education at the regular age, and efforts shall be made to reduce the dropout of children from schools to encourage regular attendance.
2. **Mandatory Vaccinations:** The child must be immunized with the protective vaccinations that the relevant health authorities determine, according to the schedules and periods specified in this regard. The responsibility for presenting the child for vaccination rests with his parents or the person who has custody or care of the child.
3. **The relevant authorities shall do the following :**
  - a. Ensure that the child is not subjected to sexual exploitation or left without guardianship, supervisory authority, or family care.
  - b. **Protection from Exploitation:** Preventing the exploitation of the child in commercial marketing or involving him in organized or unorganized crimes or allowing him to beg or be homeless.
  - c. **Protection from Psychological Abuse:** Ensuring that the child is not subjected to continuous or repeated psychological or social abuse through the use of abusive or harsh language or verbal violence, which causes him harm at the level of his psychological development, especially his self-image and self-respect.
  - d. **Protection from Harmful Media:** Preventing the direct or indirect exposure of the child to media materials that are obscene, criminal, or unsuitable for his age, or that endanger his beliefs, thoughts, or behavior.
  - e. **Protection from Discrimination:** Protecting the child from any form of discrimination based on place of birth, parents, gender, race, disability, or any other status, and ensuring actual equality among children in enjoying all rights.
4. **Prohibition of Child Driving:** The child's parents or guardian shall not allow him to drive a vehicle unless he reaches the legal driving age according to the applicable traffic regulations, and after obtaining a driver's license.

### **Article 4:**

1. **Procedures for Abused Children:** When any child is found begging or exploited by others in an illegal act, he shall be referred to the competent authority to investigate the violation of the system and take the necessary legal measures against him.
2. **Investigation in Case of Child Absence:** In the event of a child leaving the authority of his parents or guardian, a social and psychological investigation of his case shall be conducted by the concerned department of the Ministry, and he shall be listened to and his parents or guardian shall be summoned and questioned about his situation and the reasons that led to it, whether they are attributed to him, his parents or guardian, or the surrounding environment. Then, a suitable recommendation shall be prepared for his case to be approved and followed up on its implementation.
3. **In cases where a child habitually runs away from home, educational or residential institutions, or sleeps in places not designated for residence or lodging, or frequents morally or socially suspicious places or activities, or associates with vagrants or corrupt individuals, the following shall be taken:**
  - a. Any person who becomes aware that a child is in any of the aforementioned situations shall report it to the reporting center on the unified number.
  - b. **Investigation:** Upon receiving the report, it shall be referred to the protection center, which shall contact the child and his/her parents or guardian to ascertain the reasons and verify whether they have been negligent.

- c. Parental Negligence: If there is neglect or abuse by the parents or either of them or the person acting as their guardian in caring for the child, they shall be summoned by the protection center, questioned, and a pledge shall be taken from them not to neglect the child, leave him unsupervised, or fail to guide him. In case of repetition, they shall be warned that the matter will be referred to the public prosecution.
  - d. Child or Environmental Factors: If it appears that the reasons are due to the child himself or the surrounding environment, the department concerned with the Ministry shall conduct a social and psychological investigation of his case, after listening to him and questioning him, and then prepare a suitable recommendation for his case to be approved and followed up on its implementation.
  - e. Transfer of Custody: If the child's parents are separated and custody is with one of them, and it is found that his preservation, care, and behavioral correction can be achieved by transferring him to the other parent or another family member, the department concerned with the Ministry may file a lawsuit, if necessary, before the competent court to consider transferring custody to the person with whom the child's preservation and care can be achieved according to the provisions of the Personal Status Law.
  - f. Emergency Care: If the child's life is in danger or if he is subjected to abuse by one of his parents or guardian, alternative care outside the family shall be provided for him on an urgent and temporary basis until his case is considered.
4. In case a child is caught engaging in acts related to prostitution, debauchery, gambling, drugs, or the like, or is serving those who engage in such acts, his/her parents or guardian shall be summoned and questioned about it by the protection center in coordination with the relevant authorities. If it is found that they were aware of it and remained silent or that they were the ones who pushed the child to engage in such acts, appropriate care shall be provided for the child, and he/she shall be placed in foster families or care institutions. The necessary measures shall be taken against the parents or either of them, as the case may be, or the person who was taking care of the child in accordance with the law, and the security authorities shall be notified to close down such suspicious places and complete the legal procedures against them.

## Chapter Two:

### Child's Right to Protection

#### Article 5:

1. **Best Interests of the Child:** The best interests of the child shall be considered by the relevant authorities, and he shall be given preference over others in providing shelter, assistance, psychological, social, health, security, and educational support.
2. **Priority in Emergencies:** The child shall be given priority over others in obtaining protection and relief in the event of natural disasters, wars, or similar situations.
3. **Children with Disabilities:** Without prejudice to the relevant regulations, the relevant authorities shall ensure that children with disabilities enjoy special care and a decent life, under conditions that guarantee their dignity and promote their self-reliance and active participation in society, and ensure their education and training, provide them with health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for work, and recreational opportunities, and receive these in a manner that leads to the child's social integration and individual development, including his cultural and intellectual development.

#### Article 6:

1. **Preventive Measures:** The relevant authorities shall propose the necessary preventive measures to protect against the abuse or neglect of children and shall implement those that fall within their jurisdiction.
2. **Principles in Handling Cases:** Taking into account the provisions of these regulations, all authorities, when dealing with cases of child abuse or neglect, shall consider the following principles:
  - The best interests of the child shall be considered in all procedures taken to protect him from abuse and to empower him with his rights.
  - Cases of child abuse or neglect shall be handled in accordance with standards that allow for the differentiation between serious abuse or neglect and potential, habitual, or repeated abuse or neglect in daily life, so that assistance, treatment, protection, or shelter is provided, as required by the type of abuse the child has suffered.
  - It shall be ensured that resorting to any of the means used for treatment does not result in greater harm to the child.
  - Disciplinary or behavioral punishments that are applied to the child and that may prevent or deprive him of education or cause him to drop out shall not be resorted to.
  - **Protective Policies:** Policies and supervisory procedures shall be put in place to ensure the protection of children within the places where they are located and to prevent any intentional abuse or unintentional harmful practices.

#### Article 7:

1. Children whose circumstances prevent them from being raised in their natural families shall be cared for through foster families, residential care institutions, government or private social welfare institutions, or non-profit sector institutions, and provided with social, psychological, health, vocational, and educational care, with the aim of raising them properly and compensating them for the affection and care they have lost, especially children in need of care.
2. A child who is temporarily or permanently deprived of his family environment or family support, or who cannot be allowed to remain in that environment in order to protect his best interests, has the right to protection, assistance, and shelter through government or private social welfare institutions, non-profit sector institutions, foster families, or custodians. The lack of documents or some of them shall not prevent the acceptance of the case if the child would be left without care if he is not received.

3. The alternative environment shall be prepared to receive the child and ensure a decent life for them, and ensure that they obtain all their rights to education, treatment, and nutrition.
4. Children in need of care and those whose parents cannot be traced by the competent authorities or whose place of residence cannot be determined, or those for whom it is proven through social research that they cannot be cared for in their natural families, shall benefit from foster family or custodial care.
5. The authorities responsible for alternative care shall gradually inform the child of unknown parentage of his situation at an early age in accordance with the procedures followed by the Ministry in this regard.
6. In the event that a child in need of care in a foster or alternative family is subjected to physical or psychological violence, neglect, abuse, or deprivation of his rights, he shall be taken by the Ministry and placed in its institutions. Such foster or alternative family shall be prohibited from fostering or caring for children in the future, without prejudice to their being held accountable for any harm or neglect inflicted on the child.
7. The care of the child in foster families, alternative families, or government or non-profit social welfare institutions shall continue in accordance with the basic regulations of social homes.
8. The department responsible for foster and alternative families in the Ministry shall propose a policy for operating the foster or alternative family system, supervise it, implement, follow up, and evaluate its work, consider submitted applications, follow up on the status of children under its care, and submit the necessary periodic reports in this regard.
9. Foster or alternative families shall be selected according to specific criteria and controls established by the department concerned in the Ministry, in a manner that ensures the safety and protection of the child, whether at the stage of assignment, follow-up, or termination of fostering.
10. A child in care may be transferred from one family to another or from one social institution to another if the need arises, and no court judgment has been issued, in accordance with the systems, regulations, and instructions in force at the Ministry.
11. Government or private social welfare institutions, non-profit sector institutions, and foster or alternative families shall provide full care and shelter under the supervision and follow-up of the Ministry.
12. Social welfare institutions of all kinds, as well as foster or alternative families, when dealing with children in need of care, shall comply with the provisions of the Child Protection Law and its implementing regulations, the Protection from Abuse Law and its implementing regulations, the Basic Social Homes Regulations, and other relevant regulations.



## Chapter Three:

### Prohibitions Related to Child Protection

#### Article 8:

The child has the right to protection from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to impede his education, or to be harmful to his physical, mental, moral, or social health or development.

#### Article 9:

1. Protection from Sexual Exploitation: The relevant authorities shall, each within its jurisdiction, take the following measures :
  - a. Protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation, and in particular from inducing or coercing a child into any unlawful sexual activity, or using or exploiting a child for prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices. The exposure of a child to prostitution, whether for or without remuneration and directly or indirectly, shall be considered sexual exploitation of the child.
  - b. Taking all necessary measures to prevent the kidnapping, sale, sale of organs, or trafficking of a child for any purpose or in any form, or the use of a child for begging.
2. The exploitation or involvement of a child in various forms of organized and unorganized crime, including instilling ideas of fanaticism and hatred in him, or inciting him to commit acts of violence, terror, or intimidation, is prohibited.

#### Article 10:

The relevant authorities shall take all necessary measures, including administrative, social, educational, and pedagogical measures, to prevent the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances by children, as defined in the domestic regulations and relevant international treaties.

#### Article 11:

1. The competent supervisory authorities shall monitor the extent to which these establishments and their employees comply with the prohibition of the sale of tobacco and its products to children, and shall conduct periodic inspections of commercial establishments to ensure that they are free of children's toys or sweets manufactured in the form of cigarettes or any other smoking devices.
2. The various print, audio, visual, electronic, and social media platforms are prohibited from the following :
  - a. Using children in advertising the sale of tobacco or any of its products or any other substances that harm their safety or health.
  - b. Presenting scenes that encourage or justify smoking among children.
3. The child's relatives and any person dealing with him, whether at home, school, or in public or private places, shall refrain from smoking in his presence.
4. The importation of children's toys or sweets manufactured in the form of cigarettes or any other smoking device is prohibited, ensuring that they do not enter the Kingdom, in accordance with the anti-smoking system.

#### Article 12:

1. The relevant authorities shall monitor the visual, audio, and print media production directed at children to ensure that it complies with the provisions of Islamic Sharia, the applicable regulations, the public order, and public morals.
2. The relevant authorities, each according to its jurisdiction, shall determine the age group served by any printed, visual, or audio publication, in a way that contributes to preserving the child's intellectual and mental development and helps prevent his deviation.

3. The relevant authorities shall disseminate programs, information, and materials of social, cultural, intellectual, educational, and educational benefit for children.

**Article 13:**

1. The relevant authorities shall take the necessary measures to ensure the safety of children when participating in races.
2. Safe Playgrounds: Schools and educational institutions shall provide suitable and safe places for children to play during their free time, in a manner that is appropriate for their age.
3. Public and private entities shall comply with the following:
  - a. Posting instructional guidelines in areas designated for children's sports and recreational activities to ensure their safety from harm.
  - b. Providing an adult supervisor or companion for children participating in races, sports, or recreational activities that do not endanger their safety.
  - c. Providing safety equipment such as safety belts for swing seats and appropriate barriers for games, as needed, to ensure children do not fall.
  - d. Ensuring that toys used by children are appropriate for their age and developmental abilities. Providing necessary instructions alongside each toy to indicate the suitable age, the maximum number of users at one time, and any other essential information. The play method should also be illustrated on the sign, if possible.
  - e. Providing a first aid kit in playgrounds and recreational areas frequented by children and placing it in an easily accessible location. Facilitating the availability of a telephone to call for an ambulance or security services.
  - f. Ensuring safe routes and crossings for children to reach playgrounds and recreational areas, whether on foot or by bicycle. The playground location should be away from traffic and accident hazards.
4. Relevant entities shall encourage the establishment of children's playgrounds and recreational areas in neighborhoods, schools, and centers.
5. Children under the age of twelve are prohibited from riding bicycles on public roads. The child's guardian or caregiver shall be responsible for any resulting damages.
6. Renters of bicycles designed for children are prohibited from renting them to anyone under the age of twelve. Otherwise, they shall be liable for any damages caused to others or to the child himself.

**Article 14:**

1. No medical intervention or procedure shall be performed on a fetus except for medical necessity or benefit, as determined by the provisions of the Health Professions Practice Law and its implementing regulations, and the In Vitro Fertilization and Infertility Treatment Law.
2. The relevant health authorities shall provide support, assistance, and medical treatment to pregnant women and children to ensure the care of the fetus and its protection from diseases before, during, and after birth. They shall also provide the necessary guidance in the field of disability and its prevention before, during, and after birth.

## Chapter Four :

### The Child's Right to Care and Responsibility Towards Him

#### Article 15:

1. The child has the right to live within a stable and supportive family and to receive its care. The child also has the right to know his parents. The child's parents shall share the responsibility for the child's upbringing and development. Parents, or those acting in their place, shall have the primary responsibility for the upbringing, development, and best interests of the child. The relevant authorities shall take all necessary measures to ensure that the child's parents, or those caring for him, fulfill their shared responsibilities and duties in the upbringing, care, guidance, and optimal development of the child.
2. In cases where the child is in the custody of one parent, the parent or guardian shall be responsible for providing for the child's needs, facilitating his education, vaccination, and treatment, and obtaining his identification documents. The parent shall bear the primary responsibility, within their financial means, for providing the living conditions necessary for the child's development.
3. The relevant authorities shall ensure that the child has contact with his parents and can visit them. The child shall not be forcibly separated from his parents unless a court order prohibits either or both of them from doing so. The authority responsible for child protection may temporarily prohibit direct contact between the child and either parent or guardian if they are accused of harming or abusing the child, until a court judgment is issued or the judge authorizes such prohibition, taking into account the child's best interests.
4. The relevant authorities shall provide appropriate assistance to parents or guardians to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities in raising the child by ensuring the development of institutions, facilities, and child care services.
5. The relevant authorities shall ensure the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for his physical, mental, spiritual, and social development.
6. The relevant authorities shall take all necessary measures to ensure the collection of child support from those legally obligated to pay it, and to guarantee that the child receives such support on a continuous and regular basis.
7. With due regard to the best interests of the child, a child separated from both or one of his or her parents has the right to maintain personal relationships and direct communication with both parents on a regular basis. The relevant authorities shall work to ensure the child's communication with his or her parents and to remind them, in the event of their separation, that it is not permissible to tarnish the image of either parent in the eyes of the child. It is prohibited to restrict visitation of the child at a police station.
8. In cases of parental separation, the custody of the child shall be governed by the provisions of the Personal Status Law, taking into account the best interests of the child. The child shall have the right to visitation with one parent by the other parent, according to their mutual agreement. In case of disagreement, the court shall decide as it sees fit, and the visitation order shall be executed in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure and its implementing regulations.
9. The Ministry and other relevant authorities shall encourage and support the establishment of family meeting centers and units within their branches or in non-profit sector associations affiliated with or supervised by them in order to ensure the psychological and social safety of the child.
10. In the event that one of the parents, or any other person, refuses to comply, or refuses to attend, or conceals the child, or falsifies information, or refuses to return the child, the court may impose penalties in accordance with the relevant regulations. In all cases, it is prohibited to take or remove an infant from his or her mother except by a court order or upon proof of harm or torture inflicted on the child by conclusive evidence.

#### Article 16:

1. The relevant authorities shall work to guarantee the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for his or her physical, mental, spiritual, and social development. These authorities have the power to monitor the extent to which the child's various needs, such as physical, psychological, educational, or developmental needs, are met, whether in the original family, in an alternative family, in social welfare institutions, in schools, or in any other places the child frequents

or interacts with. The relevant authorities shall take all necessary measures and procedures to ensure that the child's various needs are met.

2. The relevant authorities shall issue instructions to their staff emphasizing the need to give the child priority over others in all judicial, administrative, health, educational, and other transactions and procedures. The protection of the child and his or her best interests shall be the priority in all decisions and procedures related to childhood, regardless of the authority that issues or undertakes them.
3. The registration of a marriage for anyone under the age of eighteen is prohibited. The court may authorize the marriage of a person under that age, male or female, if he or she is mature, after verifying that his or her best interests are served by such a marriage.
4. Any person dealing with a child is prohibited from engaging in any act that may negatively affect the child's mental, psychological, physical, educational, or developmental abilities. The child's guardian or whoever stands in his or her place shall report any act to which the child is subjected that does not take into account his or her mental, psychological, physical, educational, or developmental needs, age, health, or best interests. The relevant authorities shall each, within their respective spheres, take the necessary measures to prevent such acts or to remedy any such acts that occur.
5. A child who is in the care of the ministry, institutions, associations under its supervision, or foster families, and who does not possess identification documents, shall be entitled to the rights of education, health, and other rights by virtue of a letter from the ministry addressed to the concerned party to enable the child to exercise his or her rights.

#### **Article 17:**

1. The addition of any coloring, preserving, or other food additives to foods and preparations intended for infant feeding is prohibited unless they comply with the conditions and specifications approved by the competent authorities.
2. Advertising of foods and preparations intended for infant feeding is prohibited unless they are registered and have obtained a marketing license from the competent authorities, especially breast milk substitutes.
3. Schools and educational institutions shall not allow the entry or sale of foods that are unsuitable for schools. These institutions shall coordinate with health authorities and other relevant authorities to determine the types of meals and foods sold in school canteens or those provided by contractors or suppliers to schools. The sale of carbonated drinks, energy drinks, and any other substances that are not beneficial to the child's health is prohibited.
4. The child has the right to prevention from infectious diseases and to the provision of emergency treatment in government hospitals and centers.
5. Those wishing to marry are required to undergo a medical examination to prove that they are free from hereditary and infectious diseases, in order to protect the child.
6. Children living in difficult circumstances, such as children of disputed custody, street children, homeless children, and victims of disasters and wars, must be assisted in a manner that contributes to alleviating their suffering by providing financial, housing, medical, educational, and rehabilitative support, as required by each case. Street children or homeless children who, through investigations, are found to be neglected, have no families or family support, and suffer from mental, psychological, or physical illnesses, shall be placed in a specialized government hospital based on a letter from the ministry or security authorities, taking into account the mental health care system. In the latter case, the security authorities shall notify the ministry of the case for the purpose of visiting and following up on it.
7. The relevant health authorities shall take the necessary measures to :
  - a. Reduce infant and child mortality.
  - b. Ensure the provision of the necessary medical assistance and health care for mothers and children.
  - c. Combating childhood diseases, providing and developing primary healthcare, and guaranteeing the child's right to free healthcare in government hospitals and centers.
  - d. Ensuring adequate healthcare for mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum, providing regular check-ups for mothers and children to ensure their safety from hereditary and serious diseases, and guaranteeing the healthy and sound growth of the child.
  - e. Working to disseminate health education through various media, in schools, and in different educational institutions, and raising awareness among parents about the basic information related to child health and nutrition, the benefits of breastfeeding, the principles of health preservation and environmental sanitation, and accident prevention.

- f. Developing preventive healthcare, guidance provided to parents, educational institutions, and services related to family planning.
    - g. Taking all necessary effective measures to eliminate practices that harm the child's health.
8. All media outlets shall play a constructive and effective role in the field of prevention and health education, especially in relation to child health, nutrition, the benefits of breastfeeding, accident prevention, and the harms of smoking and energy drinks.
9. Education is a right for all children in state schools, free of charge. Educational guardianship of the child shall be vested in the parents, guardian, or whoever stands in their place, in a manner that serves the best interests of the child. The relevant authorities shall provide the child with education appropriate to his or her age, and shall in particular:
  - a. Make primary education compulsory, accessible, and free for all, and prohibit the deprivation of a child of his or her right to education.
  - b. Encourage the development of various forms of basic and vocational education, and make it available to all children.
  - c. Take measures to encourage regular school attendance and reduce dropout rates.
  - d. Provide information and educational and vocational guidance principles to children and those who care for them, and educate them about their legal and statutory rights.
  - e. Take all necessary measures to ensure that the administration of schools is in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in accordance with the systems and regulations in the Kingdom.
  - f. Child education should be directed towards:
    - Developing the child's attachment to his religion, pride in his country, and respect for his identity, culture, language, and national values.
    - Developing the child's personality, talents, and intellectual and physical abilities to their fullest potential.
    - Developing the child's respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the relevant systems, regulations, and agreements in force in the Kingdom.
    - Preparing the child for a life that is aware of responsibility in an enlightened society, with a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality, and justice.
10. The child must be informed by the relevant authorities, in the event of his placement for the purposes of care, protection, or treatment of his physical or mental health, of his right to periodic review of the treatment provided to him and all services related to his placement.
11. Attention should be paid to the education of the child, in a manner that ensures the eradication of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the Kingdom, and that facilitates the child's access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern educational means. The needs of children in remote areas should be taken into account in particular.
12. Schools, educational institutions, shopping malls, children's playgrounds, public parks, and recreational facilities shall take all necessary measures to protect children from injuries resulting from accidents in general and vehicle accidents in particular, including the placement of warning signs, activating the role of supervisors and child escorts, and taking all necessary precautions in this regard.
13. Anyone carrying a child in their vehicle is obligated to ensure that the child is seated in the rear child safety seats and not left alone in the vehicle without an adult companion, in accordance with the traffic law and its implementing regulations.
14. The child has the right to a safe, healthy, and clean environment. All necessary measures shall be taken to eliminate practices harmful to the child's health, and the child shall be protected from environmental pollution. This shall be taken into account when establishing or renting schools, and the child shall be encouraged to respect and protect the natural environment.
15. Every child in school has the right to rest time, to engage in age-appropriate games and activities, and to participate in cultural and social life.
16. Children with special circumstances have the right to education and training in the same schools and centers as ordinary children if their condition permits. In cases of disability, education and training should be provided in special classes, schools, or centers, provided that they are linked to the general education system and are suitable for the child's needs. Education at all levels and types should be provided according to the child's needs, and they should be provided with qualified educators to teach and train them according to their disability.

17. The relevant authorities shall encourage the establishment of clubs and centers for children to provide social, educational, and developmental care for children by occupying their leisure time with sound educational means and methods, and in a way that achieves the following objectives:
- Providing social and educational care for the child during their leisure time, during vacations, and before and after the school day.
  - Complementing the role of the family and school regarding the child and working to assist working mothers in protecting the child from physical and educational neglect and preventing him from deviating.
  - Providing the child with the opportunity to grow holistically in all physical, mental, and emotional aspects, acquiring new experiences and skills, and reaching the maximum development of their potential abilities.
  - Assisting the child in improving his academic achievement.
  - Strengthening the bonds between the club or center and the child's family.
  - Family Empowerment: Equipping the child's family with knowledge and raising awareness about child-rearing, factors affecting their upbringing, and preparing them according to sound educational methods.

**Article 18:**

1. All relevant authorities, and in particular the Ministry and the Ministry of Health, shall take all necessary measures to encourage the physical and psychological rehabilitation and social reintegration of a child who is a victim of any form of neglect, exploitation, abuse, torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or armed conflict. Such rehabilitation and reintegration shall take place in an environment that promotes the child's health, self-respect, and dignity.
2. All measures shall be taken to rehabilitate a child who has been abused and his or her family in a way that ensures the child's return to his or her family in a normal condition, including treatment, psychological rehabilitation, educational and training courses, and the development of social skills and self-protection skills in the child, and the treatment of addiction among the parents or caregiver if necessary.
3. The case of a child who is subjected to abuse, neglect, or ill-treatment shall be studied from the health, psychological, social, economic, and legal aspects, and appropriate measures shall be taken, and the case shall be followed up on a regular basis if the child is handed over to the parents or caregiver.
4. In the event that the perpetrator of the abuse or neglect does not comply with the order issued by the competent authorities to undergo psychological treatment or rehabilitation programs, the matter shall be referred to the administrative governor to coordinate with the competent authorities regarding the case.

**Article 19 :**

The relevant authorities shall coordinate to set quality standards for locally manufactured and imported children's toys.

**Article 20 :**

Other public and private entities that are related to child protection shall continue to provide their services for the protection and assistance of the child in accordance with the regulations to which those entities are subject and in a manner that achieves the objectives of the system and its implementing regulations and does not conflict with them.

## Chapter Five :

### Reporting and Investigating Violations of the System and its Bylaws, and Commencement of Application

#### Article 21:

1. Any person who becomes aware of a violation of the provisions of this system and its executive bylaws, especially cases of abuse or neglect of a child, must immediately report it to the reporting center at the unified number. Competent authorities are obligated to facilitate the reporting procedures.
2. Every public or private entity is obligated to report to the ministry any case of violation of the provisions of this system and its executive bylaws, especially cases of abuse or neglect of a child, of which it becomes aware or receives a report.
3. If the violation, abuse, or neglect requires urgent intervention, the entity must immediately refer the report to the security authorities in the presence of a multidisciplinary team to assess the situation and follow up on its status. The identity of the reporter must be kept confidential.
4. Upon discovering a case of abuse or neglect of a child or a failure to provide a child with their rights by schools or other educational institutions and the inability of the educational institution to find suitable solutions, the school administration or its representative shall report this to the reporting center with a report on the case and shall facilitate the access of a multidisciplinary team to the school or educational institution to assess the situation and follow up on its status. In case of serious abuse or neglect, the security authorities must also be notified. In all cases, education departments and schools must establish a suitable mechanism for sending all statistics related to child abuse and neglect to the protection center, including cases that have been resolved or amicably settled by them.
5. When a case of child abuse, neglect, or deprivation of rights is discovered by a healthcare provider, that provider shall provide the necessary medical treatment and care for the case. They shall also report the case to the reporting center, sending a report on the case and facilitating the access of a multidisciplinary team to assess the situation and follow up on its status. In cases of severe abuse or neglect, the security authorities must additionally be notified. In all cases, healthcare providers must establish a suitable mechanism for sending all statistics related to child abuse and neglect to the ministry, including cases that have been resolved or amicably settled by them. After the medical and psychological condition of the child has stabilized, the case shall be transferred to the protection center or appropriate action shall be taken and the relevant entity notified.
6. The reporting center receives reports from all regions of the Kingdom regarding violations of the provisions of the Child Law and its executive bylaws, especially cases of abuse or neglect, whether from individuals, security authorities, or other public or private entities. After verifying the identity of the reporter, the center shall document the report, list any attached documents, and refer it to the specialized family protection center in the region where the reported incident occurred, so that it may directly carry out its duties regarding the report.
7. The reporting center shall maintain organized records and forms for receiving reports, as well as an electronic documentation system for all incoming reports related to children.
8. The reporting center shall prepare periodic statistical reports on the reports and complaints it receives related to children, classifying them according to the type of violation, abuse, or neglect, its severity, the gender of the victim, the nature of the report, and the number of cases that have been processed. These reports shall be sent periodically to the relevant department of the ministry.
9. The General Administration for Protection at the ministry shall handle any report received by the ministry from public or private entities, provided that this does not conflict with the tasks and responsibilities of the reporting center. It shall refer these reports to the specialized protection center to investigate, study, and address them, or it may escalate them for guidance.
10. It is prohibited to disclose the identity of a person reporting a violation, abuse, or neglect case without their consent and written permission, except in cases where the protection center receives a formal, reasoned request from an official entity or if the request for disclosure is issued by a judicial authority. Entities to which the identity of the reporter is disclosed are obligated to maintain the confidentiality of the reporter's identity and shall not be negligent in disclosing it. Any person who violates this shall be held accountable.

11. When addressing a case of abuse or neglect, the protection center shall take gradual measures to address the situation, giving priority to preventive, guidance, and remedial measures between the parties involved, ensuring the best interests of the child.
12. The protection center shall provide the child with health and social care, including medical and psychological treatment and rehabilitation programs. This shall also include those who require care from their surroundings due to abuse, neglect, or any other violation of the provisions of this system or its executive bylaws. The necessary care shall be provided through referral to specialized entities according to the type of procedure or care required. If such an entity refuses to accept the case, deal with it, or provide the necessary care, the ministry shall escalate the matter to the administrative governor.
13. In cases of non-severe abuse or neglect, the protection center may allow the child to remain with the family, provided that the head of the household or their representative undertakes to provide the necessary protection for the child and enable direct contact with the center, and to allow the center's designated employee to contact and visit the child at any time to follow up on their condition if necessary. The perpetrator of the abuse or neglect shall also undertake to cease inflicting any type of abuse or neglect on the child, to ensure that the child enjoys all their lawful rights, to fulfill their responsibilities and duties towards the child, and to provide all their basic needs. The perpetrator shall bear full responsibility in case of any violation of this.
14. A case of abuse or neglect shall be considered severe if the act of abuse or neglect results in severe harm to the child that necessitates immediate intervention to stop or prevent it, or if the act of severe abuse or neglect is proven by a medical report. A case of abuse or neglect shall also be considered severe if the act of abuse or neglect poses a risk of greater or ongoing harm to the child's life, safety, or health by the perpetrator of the abuse or neglect. In such cases, the administrative governor and the competent security authorities shall be notified.
15. If the abuser refuses to attend the protection center or refuses to comply with any of its instructions or decisions, the protection center shall request the security authorities to refer the matter to the public prosecution to take the necessary legal measures against them in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure until the investigation into the complaint filed against them is completed. This procedure shall apply to any person who fails to comply with the orders of the center or to respond to its instructions and who is connected to the abuse case.
16. The child who has been subjected to abuse shall be interviewed and their statements heard in the presence of a multidisciplinary team at the protection center. The child shall be questioned in a manner appropriate to their age, and everything that may frighten them or influence their will shall be avoided. The child may be interviewed alone in the presence of a close relative if the best interests of the child so require. The child shall then be presented with appropriate solutions and procedures to be taken regarding their case, which fall within the jurisdiction of the ministry, and their consent shall be obtained. If the child refuses to be taken or sheltered, they shall be informed that their situation will be monitored and appropriate measures will be taken against the perpetrator of the abuse. The possibility of taking the child without their consent shall be considered if their continued stay poses a threat to their safety and if they cannot be sheltered with a relative who can be trusted to care for them.
17. If a child is a victim of abuse or neglect by one of their separated parents and the situation does not allow the child to remain with the source of the abuse, the protection center, after studying the case and assessing the best interests of the child, shall provide the necessary care for the child temporarily. The relevant department of the ministry shall initiate a lawsuit - if necessary - before the competent court to consider transferring custody to a person who is able to provide for the child's care and protection in accordance with the provisions of the Personal Status Law.
18. The following shall be entitled to shelter :
  - a. A child who has not reached the age of eighteen.
  - b. A case of abuse or neglect as stipulated in the Child Protection Law and its executive bylaws, and who cannot be sheltered with relatives or in an alternative family.
  - c. Sheltering the case does not depend on the consent of the guardian.
  - d. The duration of shelter shall be three days, and it may be extended with the approval of the Director General of the relevant department of the ministry for a specific period not exceeding two months. If the case requires a longer period of treatment, it may be extended for additional periods with the approval of the competent Undersecretary.
  - e. Upon approval to shelter or receive a case, the protection center shall take the following measures:



- Verify with the security authorities whether there is a missing person or runaway report regarding the child. In all cases, the child shall not be transferred to a detention or observation center unless it is proven that they are accused of a crime that warrants detention or if there is a charge against them issued by any investigative authority ordering their detention in a case in which they are accused, taking into account the Juvenile Law and its executive bylaws.
  - Conduct the necessary medical examination of the child. If this is not possible at the time, the child shall be temporarily sheltered in the place designated for receiving cases until the examination is conducted and their safety is ensured.
  - If the child suffers from chronic mental illness, they shall be referred to a specialized psychiatric hospital or center for treatment in accordance with the Mental Health Care System. If any of these entities refuses to accept or treat the case, the matter shall be escalated directly to the administrative governor.
  - The child and their guardian shall be informed that their shelter will be temporary until their problem is resolved and suitable alternatives are found for them, whether in terms of housing or returning to their family, after taking the necessary measures to eliminate the abuse or neglect to which they are subjected. The child who is a victim of abuse shall be allowed to continue their studies during the shelter period, and in all cases, the child shall not be prevented from communicating with their family under the supervision and follow-up of the center.
  - A child who is placed in care shall not be released until a social investigation of his or her environment has confirmed that he or she will not be subjected to any harm or neglect that threatens his or her life or safety, and after coordination with some members of his or her family or relatives to receive him. The child shall be returned to the care home or foster home as soon as there is a danger that threatens his or her life or safety. During the period of care, the child's family members shall be contacted from time to time to encourage them to receive him, and a reconciliation committee may be used if necessary to achieve this.
19. A child who is placed in care, if his or her age permits, shall be allowed to go out and return during the period of care accompanied by or under the supervision of supervisors, provided that this does not harm his or her situation, in order to continue his or her studies or to engage in a recreational or sports activity or to go shopping to secure his or her necessary personal needs or if the center sees his or her participation in cultural or recreational activities outside the premises of the care home or foster home. The child shall be required to comply with the instructions of the protection center in this regard, and his or her going out and return in these cases shall be in accordance with the procedures specified by the center. In the event of his or her absence or failure to return, the center shall immediately notify the security authorities and shall be relieved of its responsibility for the case. The child's family shall also be notified. This incident shall not prevent the center from receiving the child again after questioning him or her about his or her absence or failure to return and taking the necessary measures to prevent the child from repeating the incident.
20. In the event that the violation or act of abuse or neglect is committed against a child residing in one of the institutions affiliated with the Ministry or against a child residing in one of the institutions supervised by the Ministry, the Ministry shall conduct an internal investigation and notify the security authorities of this case so that they may take the measures within their jurisdiction and follow up on the report, without prejudice to the punishment of the perpetrator of the abuse or neglect with the necessary disciplinary penalties. The child or his or her family shall have the right to claim compensation.
21. If, upon assessing a case, the specialists at the Transitional Protection Center determine that bringing the parties involved to the Center's location is necessary, the security forces and other relevant authorities shall, in all cases, bring the parties to the Center's location at the request of the Center's specialists. Such transportation shall be carried out in accordance with established procedures and after exhausting all standard notification methods.
22. In cases where the specialists at the Transitional Protection Center decide to take action on a case, the security forces must be immediately notified to facilitate their entry to the location, ensure their safety, and remain with them while they are carrying out their duties. The security forces shall enter locations where those inside refuse to allow the protection unit specialists to enter, and in such cases, the security forces shall ensure their safety and avoid involving

them in any raids or forced entries. In all cases, the systematic procedures for entering residences as stipulated in the Code of Criminal Procedure shall be observed.

**Article 22:**

1. The Ministry and the security forces shall refer cases involving child abuse, neglect, and other violations of this system and its executive regulations, which they deem important to investigate, to the Public Prosecution. Investigations shall be conducted in the presence of a lawyer, the child's guardian or representative, and a multidisciplinary team.
2. The Public Prosecution shall investigate any cases related to children, whether they are accused or victims, and shall request a report from the Ministry regarding the child's condition and the appropriate measures to be taken. This report, along with the public prosecution, shall be referred to the competent court if the investigating authority does not decide to dismiss the case.
3. When a child is accused of violating any rules or regulations, it is essential to treat them in a manner that preserves their dignity and self-esteem, fosters self-respect, takes their age into account, and facilitates their reintegration into society.
4. The juvenile justice system and the legal age of a minor, along with related provisions, shall be taken into consideration.
5. Whenever possible, measures should be taken to treat and rehabilitate the child without resorting to punitive measures or deprivation of liberty.
6. If a child is placed in a shelter or social care institution, they must be provided with appropriate necessities, such as care, guidance, supervision, counseling, and the right to make choices that do not cause harm. Additionally, they should be provided with access to education, vocational training, and other alternatives to institutional care to ensure that the child is treated in a manner that upholds their rights and is commensurate with their age, well-being, circumstances, and offense, if any.

**Article 23:**

1. The Minister may issue any specific detailed rules, regulations, or operational mechanisms related to the implementation of this regulation or any of its provisions.
2. The agency designated by the Ministry shall periodically review and evaluate the application of the provisions of this regulation or whenever the need arises.
3. This regulation shall supersede the Executive Regulation of the Child Protection System issued by Ministerial Decision No. (56386) dated 16/06/1436 AH (05/04/2015 AD).

