



Child Protection Law



01

Definitions, Objectives, and Cases of Abuse and Neglect



Article 1:

For the purposes of this law, the following terms and expressions, wherever mentioned herein, shall have the meanings assigned to each, unless the context otherwise requires.

1. **Child:** Every person who has not reached the age of eighteen.
2. **Abuse:** Any form of abuse, exploitation, or threat to a child, including:
 - **Physical Abuse:** Infliction of harm or physical injury to the child.
 - **Emotional Abuse:** Exposure of the child to mistreatment that may cause psychological or health-related harm.
 - **Sexual Abuse:** Exposure of the child to any form of sexual assault, harm, or exploitation
 - **Neglect:** Failure to provide the child's basic needs or shortcomings in doing so, which includes physical, health, emotional, psychological, educational, intellectual, social, cultural, and safety needs.
3. **Regulation:** The executive regulation of this law
4. **Relevant Authorities:** Entities involved in child protection as defined by the regulations.

Article 2:

This law aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Emphasizing the provisions of Islamic law and the international agreements to which the Kingdom is a party, which safeguard children's rights and protect them from all forms of abuse and neglect.
2. Protecting the child from all forms of abuse and neglect, as well as their manifestations that may occur in the surrounding environment (home, school, neighborhood, public places, care and educational institutions, foster families, or governmental and non-governmental entities), whether perpetrated by a person with guardianship, authority, or responsibility over the child, or by others.
3. Ensuring the rights of children who have experienced abuse and neglect by providing them with the necessary care.
4. Raising awareness of children's rights and educating them about these rights, particularly in relation to protecting them from abuse and neglect.

Article 3:

Abuse or neglect of a child is considered to occur when the child experiences any of the following:

1. Keeping the child without family support,
2. Failure to obtain or retain the identification documents of the child,
3. Failure to complete the required vaccinations of the child,
4. Causing disruption in the child's education,
5. Placing the child in an environment where he may be at risk,
6. Mistreatment of the child,
7. Sexually harassing or exposing the child to sexual exploitation,
8. Exploiting the child for material gain, criminal activities, or begging
9. Using derogatory language that diminishes the child's dignity or leads to his humiliation,
10. Exposing the child to indecent, criminal, or age-inappropriate content,
11. Discrimination against the child for any racial, social, or economic reason,
12. Persistent neglect in child upbringing and care,
13. Allowing the child to drive a vehicle below the legal age,
14. Any actions that threaten the child physical or mental health and safety.

Article 4:

The child is considered at risk of delinquency in any of the following situations:

1. Engaging in begging or any illegal activities,
2. Disengagement from the authority of parents or guardians,
3. Becoming accustomed to running away from home or educational or care institutions.
4. Sleeping in places not designated for accommodation or lodging.
5. The child's frequenting of morally or socially suspicious places, or places inappropriate for his age, or associating with the homeless or morally corrupt individuals,
6. His involvement in activities related to prostitution, vice, gambling, drugs, or similar matters, or providing services to those who engage in them.



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Child's Right to Protection

Article 5:

The child shall, in all circumstances, have priority in enjoying protection, care, and assistance.

Article 6:

The child shall have the right to protection from all forms of abuse or neglect.

Article 7:

The child who does not have a suitable family environment, where he may be subjected to abuse or neglect, shall have the right to alternative care through the following means:

1. The foster family that takes on his guardianship and care.
2. Social welfare institutions, whether governmental, private, or charitable, if a foster family is not available.

The regulations shall specify the necessary controls for this.



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Prohibitions Related to the Protection of the Child

Article 8:

Without prejudice to the provision of the Labor Law, it is prohibited to employ a child before reaching the age of fifteen, and it is also prohibited to assign him tasks that may harm his safety or physical or mental health, or to use him in military work or armed conflicts.

Article 9:

It shall be prohibited to exploit the child sexually, to expose him to forms of sexual exploitation, or to traffic him for criminal activities or begging.

Article 10:

It shall be prohibited to employ the child in places producing narcotics or psychotropic substances or to engage him in their trafficking in any form.

Article 11:

1. It shall be prohibited to sell tobacco and its derivatives, or other substances harmful to the child's safety, to the child. Additionally, it shall be prohibited for the child to be involved in purchasing, producing, selling, or advertising such substances.
2. It shall be prohibited to import and sell children's toys or candies designed to resemble cigarettes or any smoking apparatus.
3. It shall be prohibited to display scenes that encourage the child to smoke, and it shall also be prohibited to smoke in the child's presence.

Article 12:

The provision of Article 12 is amended, in accordance with Royal Decree No. (M/72) dated 06/08/1443 AH., to be as follows:

It shall be prohibited to produce, publish, display, circulate, or possess any printed, visual, or audio material aimed at children that appeals to their instincts or stimulates them in a manner that glorifies behavior contrary to Islamic law, public order, or public morals, or that encourages behavioral or ideological deviation.

Article 13:

It shall be prohibited to involve the child in races and sporting or recreational activities that pose a risk to his safety or health.

Article 14:

Without prejudice to what is stipulated in other regulations, it shall be prohibited to perform any medical intervention or procedure on the fetus except for medical necessity or benefit.



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Child's Right to Care and Associated Responsibilities

Article 15:

The provision of Article 15 is amended, by adding paragraph No. (4) in accordance with Royal Decree No. (M/72) dated 06/08/1443 AH.

1. The child's parents, either one of them or their caregiver, shall be responsible, within their financial means and capabilities, for raising the child, ensuring his rights, providing care, and protecting him from abuse and neglect.
2. The relevant authorities shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the child's parents, or his caregiver, fulfill their responsibilities towards him, uphold his rights, and protect him from abuse and neglect.
3. In the event of the parents' separation, the child shall have the right to visitation and contact with either parent, unless his best interests require otherwise.
4. In the event of the parents' separation, the mother shall have the right to custody of her children, and this right shall not be revoked except by a judicial ruling.

Article 16:

All relevant authorities shall consider the child's best interests in all actions taken regarding him, expedite these processes, and take into account his mental, emotional, physical, educational, and developmental needs, in accordance with his age and health.

Article 17:

The relevant authorities shall promptly take appropriate care and intervention measures if the child is in an environment that poses a risk to his mental, emotional, physical, or educational well-being.

Article 18:

The relevant authorities shall take all appropriate measures for the following purposes:

1. To play a constructive and active role in the areas of prevention, health guidance, and raising awareness of children's rights, particularly regarding their health, nutrition, the benefits of breastfeeding, mental well-being, protection from accidents, the dangers of smoking, and its risks during pregnancy, as well as clarifying the rights of the child, through various media channels.

2. Support the school health system to fulfill its complete role in the areas of prevention and health guidance.
3. Ensure the child's right to receive education appropriate to his age.
4. Protect the child from infectious and serious diseases.
5. Protect the child from injuries resulting from vehicle accidents and other incidents.
6. Protect the child from the risks of environmental pollution.
7. Alleviate the suffering of children living in difficult conditions, such as disputed children, street children, the homeless, and victims of disasters and wars.

Article 19:

The provision of Article 19 is amended, in accordance with Royal Decree No. (M/72) dated 06/08/1443 AH.:

1. The relevant authorities shall establish health, educational, psychological, and social programs to rehabilitate the child who has been subjected to abuse or neglect.
2. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development shall, when necessary, coordinate with the Ministry of Health to subject the perpetrator of abuse or neglect to psychological treatment or rehabilitation programs suitable for his condition.

Article 20:

The relevant authorities shall establish comprehensive quality standards for locally manufactured or imported children's toys, ensuring they comply with health, environmental, and cultural specifications and standards, safety measures, and do not violate Sharia regulations.

Article 21:

The provisions and procedures stipulated in this law shall not prejudice the following:

1. The obligations of other relevant authorities, each within their jurisdiction
2. Any provision that ensures better protection for the child as stipulated in another law or international agreement to which the Kingdom is a party.



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Reporting and Addressing Violations of the Law and Its Regulations, as well as the Timeline for Its Enforcement

Article 21:

1. Anyone who becomes aware of a case of abuse or neglect shall report it to the relevant authorities immediately.
2. The relevant authorities shall facilitate the reporting procedures for cases of abuse and neglect, especially reports made by the child.
3. The regulations shall specify the procedures for reporting cases of abuse and neglect and the way to handle them.

Article 23:

The provision of paragraph (2) of Article (23) is amended, and paragraph No. 3 is added in accordance with Royal Decree No. (M/72) dated 06/08/1443 AH.

1. Subject to the provisions of paragraph (3) of Article (22) of this law, the Public Prosecution Authority shall investigate violations of the provisions of this law and file charges before the competent court.
2. Without prejudice to the provisions of Article (23) bis of this law, and in accordance with other relevant regulations, the competent court shall address violations of the provisions of this law and determine the appropriate penalties for the violator.
3. Subject to the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Law, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development shall follow up on the case mentioned in paragraph (1) of this article until it is resolved by the court.

Article 23 (bis):

Add the provision of Article (23) bis to read as follows, based on Royal Decree No. (M/72) dated 06/08/1443 AH:

1. Subject to the provisions of paragraph (2) of this article and without prejudice to any harsher penalties prescribed by law or Sharia, anyone who commits an act constituting a crime of abuse as outlined in Article (1) of this law shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years and a fine not exceeding one hundred thousand riyals, or by one of these penalties. The competent court may impose an alternative penalty to imprisonment.
2. The penalty for the crime mentioned in paragraph (1) of this article shall be imprisonment for a term not less than two years and not exceeding five years, and a fine not less than one hundred thousand

riyals and not exceeding five hundred thousand riyals, if the crime is accompanied by any of the following circumstances:

- A. If the victim of the abuse is a person with a disability.
 - B. If the abuse occurs in the workplace, educational institution, care facility, or place of worship.
 - C. If the abuse is committed by those entrusted with enforcing the provisions of this law.
 - D. If the abuse is accompanied by the use of a weapon.
 - E. If multiple acts of abuse occur in the incident.
3. The penalty shall be doubled in the case of recidivism.
 4. Anyone who incites, agrees with, or assists another person in any form of incitement, agreement, or assistance to commit the crime mentioned in paragraph (1) of this article shall be punished with the penalty prescribed for that crime.

Article 24:

The Minister of Social Affairs shall issue the regulations within ninety days from the date of publication of this law in the official gazette, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Human Rights Commission, and other relevant authorities, each within their jurisdiction, and they shall take effect from the date this law comes into force.

Article 25:

This law shall come into effect ninety days after its publication in the official gazette.

