



مدرسة الإتقان الأمريكية
ALITQAN AMERICAN SCHOOL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

From Flexebee (2021), there are 6 principles in mind when safeguarding children that guided us at AIAS:

1. **Empowerment.** “It is important for health staff to create an environment that empowers children to have autonomy over their own decisions, allowing them to say 'no' or speak up when faced with uncomfortable positions.”
2. **Protection.** “Children, especially those who are victims of abuse, need to be provided with the support they need to prevent further abuse. These need to be key measures such as access to healthcare, provision of social workers and other key child protection services.”
3. **Prevention.** “All school staff need to ensure that they prevent abuse or harm of any kind from happening to children in their care. This can be done through training staff, raising awareness of abuse and making sure that there is enough information and it is easily accessible.”
4. **Proportionality.** “Similar to risk assessment, proportionality ensures that all individuals in the school are taken into account when dealing with issues of abuse and safeguarding. Some individuals may face different levels of risk and this needs to be understood and mitigated as much as possible in order to create a safe space and prevent further abuse.”
5. **Partnerships.** “Safeguarding and ensuring successful child protection requires more hands-on deck. By forming partnerships with key stakeholders, local communities and relevant entities (child protection units, social workers, health care etc.), abuse, and those guilty of it can be more easily identified, aiding towards the prevention of further abuse. Partnerships allow for everyone to work together in creating a safe environment within and beyond the organisation.”
6. **Accountability.** “Partnerships also reinforce that we are all accountable for the safety of the children around us. Everyone has a role to play towards ensuring the safeguarding and protection of the most vulnerable members of our communities. As such, accountability is about taking responsibility for our actions and ensuring that we remain aware of abusive actions, not only to identify them but also to not inflict the same violent behaviour on those around us.”

SAFEGUARDING DEFINITION

“Safeguarding is set of policies, procedures and practices employed to actively prevent harm, abuse and distress.” On the other hand, child safeguarding “is specifically focused on preventative actions to ensure that all children are protected from deliberate or unintentional acts that leads to the risk or actual harm” (Child Safety, n.d.)

A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

“A safe learning environment covers the physical and cyber spaces students engage in for school activities. Schools develop school wide rules and consequences in collaboration with their school community. A positive learning environment supports students' personal and social development and staff wellbeing. Schools provide rich learning environments that are open, respectful, caring and safe”. (*Supporting student health and wellbeing policy statement, 2019*)

POLICY INTENT

The policy is developed to serve as a guide for the development and implementation of programs and activities that are designed to promote a safe environment in school. All stakeholders are expected to have their commitment over the implementation of the policy stated herein.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. [Child Rights: Wadeema Law](#)
2. [Child Protection Dimension](#)
3. [Child Safety](#)
4. [Regulations for the School Transport Activity in the Emirates of Sharjah](#)

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is implemented along with the wellbeing and e-safety policy of the school. The policy implementation date is 16th of March 2022. All stakeholders are expected to adhere to this policy with full fidelity.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed periodically and not less frequently than once a year.

Date of Completion:	30 September 2020
Date of Current version:	15 March 2022
Date of Next Review:	15 March 2023

AIAS SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

1. The committee who develops and monitors the implementation of the policy shall be named AIAS Safeguarding Committee spearheaded by an EHS Coordinator appointed by the school through the school Principal.
2. EHS Coordinator
 - a. Takes lead responsibility for safeguarding in the school in strong coordination with the section / educational supervisors and social workers / guidance counsellor.
 - b. Is alert to the specific needs of children, those with special educational needs, and all children at school.
 - c. Keeps written and digital records of all documents related to safeguarding, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged.
 - d. Monitors the delegation of staff duty in the morning and afternoon and coordinates with the section/educational supervisors of any concerns related to it.
 - e. Takes the lead in risk management procedures in school.
 - f. Has a working knowledge of relevant UAE laws, education inspection, process, and inter-agency support.
3. The committee includes subcommittee for the following areas to be headed by positions indicated herein:
 - a. Health Services: School Doctor
 - b. Child Protection: Child Protection Coordinator
 - c. School Transportation: Transport Coordinator
 - d. Online Safety: E-Safety Coordinator

CHILD PROTECTION

Section 1: Child Protection Committee and Responsibility

- a. All staff at AIAS should commit to protect children at all times. Particularly, the following should be observed by the school:
 - AIAS will protect students in a variety of dimensions including varied forms of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and neglect); on roads and in transport to school and back; in buildings; in crisis and disasters; in public venues during school trips; from technological risks and threats; against dangerous persons; from troubled families; and in sports.
 - AIAS shall ensure equal protection of all the children regardless of their, but not limited to, race, color, religion, nationality and racial heritage. Some going to children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous

- experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- AIAS will work in partnership with their parents and guardians, local community whenever applicable in the promotion of the students' welfare.
 - All adults working with children are responsible for noting and reporting cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect, whether or not the perpetrator is inside the school or not.
- b. The Child Protection is managed by the Child Protection Committee led by the assigned coordinator. The assigned person takes the lead responsibility for child protection in the school. Specifically,
- Implements and evaluates the Child Protection Policy of the School
 - Acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
 - Is alert to the needs of the children at school
 - Assigns a person responsible for investigation and review them for approval of the SLT.
 - Reviews the accuracy of the investigation report
 - Arranges for the Child Protection Committee meeting whenever necessary.
 - Takes charge for identifying the needs for training of the school staff in coordination with the CPD coordinator.
- c. The Child Protection Committee (CPC) shall comprise of the section supervisor, counselors and the SLT. The Child Protection Committee members are the same as the Discipline Committee.
- Counselors are responsible to prepare investigation report within the area of purview for approval of the CPC Coordinator, CPC members and the Principal. Together with the committee members, they recommend sound actions, penalties or next steps to ensure that child is protected. They are expected to attend meetings called by the CPC Coordinator.
 - Supervisors provide recommendations for the sound actions, penalties or next steps along with the other member of the CPC based on facts stipulated in the investigation report. They are expected to attend meetings called by the CPC Coordinator.

Section 2. Child Abuse and Dimensions

- a. Child abuse is when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual, or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care, and attention – this is neglect.
- b. Emotional Abuse is failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child. This includes conveying to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved. Signs of possible emotional abuse:

- Physical/mental/emotional developmental lags
 - Admission of punishment which seems excessive
 - Over reaction to mistakes
 - Fear of new situations
 - Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations
 - Neurotic behaviour (e.g., rocking, thumb sucking etc)
 - Fear of parents being contacted
 - Self-mutilation
 - Extremes of passivity or aggression
- c. Neglect refers to persistent or deliberate failure to meet a child's physical or psychological needs e.g. a failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, failure to protect a child or failure to provide adequate medical care. It may also involve neglect or failure to give adequate response to a child's emotional needs. Signs of possible physical neglect:
- Constant hunger
 - Poor personal hygiene
 - Constant tiredness
 - Poor state of clothing
 - Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance
 - Untreated medical problems
 - Low self-esteem
 - Poor peer relationships
 - Stealing
- d. Physical Injury involves physical harm to a child e.g. hitting, shaking, scalding and may be deliberate or a result of failure to take adequate precautions. It can also include the deliberate withholding of physical needs. Signs of possible physical abuse:
- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent.
 - Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.
 - Refusal to discuss injuries.
 - Untreated injuries, or delay in reporting them.
 - Excessive physical punishment.
 - Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
 - Fear of returning home.
 - Aggression towards others.
 - Running away.
- e. Sexual Abuse is where a child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) – including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated the behaviour. Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, language, behaviours discarded cuddly toys
- Loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressive behaviours such as thumb sucking, needing previously
- Becoming withdrawn, isolated
- Inability to focus
- Reluctance to go home
- Bed-wetting
- Drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Over-reacting to criticism
- Have outbursts of anger/irritability

Section 3: Code of Conduct between Adults and Children

AIAS requires that all staff, faculty, volunteers and anyone working with children at AIAS demonstrate responsibility in maintaining appropriate boundaries and professionalism at all times. All school staff are required to read and sign the Code of Conduct.

By signing the code of conduct, AIAS expects our employees to:

- a. Report any forms of abuse that happen to any AIAS students whether the abuse happened in or out of the school.
- b. Avoid situations in which you are alone with a child. When it is necessary to speak privately with a child, find a space out of earshot, but within sight of others for your protection.
- c. The privacy of children in situations such as toileting, showering and changing clothes should be respected. When it is necessary to supervise children in these situations, at least two adults should be present and intrude only to the extent that the health and safety of the children require. Staff should also preserve their own privacy in these situations.
- d. Avoid touching sensitive body areas that are normally covered by their school attire. When hugging is appropriate, hug from the side over the shoulders, not from the front.
- e. Sexual jokes, comments of a sexual nature, kissing, sensual massages or sexual gestures are not appropriate behavior in the school or on field trips for an adult staff member or volunteer.
- f. Revealing personal information about one's sex life by an adult volunteer or staff member is never appropriate.
- g. Do not use corporal punishment in any form.
- h. It is the adult's responsibility to set and respect boundaries. When a child attempts to involve an adult in inappropriate behavior, the adult must reject the overture.

Section 4. General Provisions

- a. All staff working at AIAS should have the police and security clearance from the relevant authority to be secured by the HR prior to their first day at work.
- b. Cases involving threats to safety of the students in any of the dimensions mentioned must be systematically investigated. The Child Protection Committee should convene to identify the actions needed based on the investigation report. All actions determined by the committee on aspects related to child protection should be subject for approval of the SPEA.
- c. The staff should reinforce the policy of the relevant authority when reviewing child safety practices.
- d. The school shall ensure that the safety of the children will not be compromised if the images of their home, community or environment are disseminated either in traditional paper based or in media form.
- e. The school should obtain permission of the child and the parent or guardian responsible for their care when using the children's image or information for public viewing and explain to the children and their parents how their image or information will be used.
- f. Taking photos or filming videos outside the purpose of education is not permissible.
- g. When posting photos, images, articles and the like personal information must be deleted to ensure privacy (names, grades & class and addresses should not be included and, if necessary, other data should also be omitted to avoid identification such as the name of the school).
- h. Use only photos available for public use (verified and officially validated by the assigned staff and/or the Principal). It is forbidden to use photos that have not been reviewed and approved by the Principal or share photos or unofficial information about children on personal web pages or social networks such as Facebook.
- i. Violation of this Policy will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, ensuring compliance with the competent authorities while conducting the internal investigation. After a thorough evaluation of the facts (depending on the circumstances of the case), it will be decided by the Child Protection Committee whether the case needs to be sent to the competent authorities in full compliance with the law, or if it may be dealt internally.
- j. Violation of this Policy will result in their advertence, suspension or dismissal, depending on the seriousness of the incident, without prejudice to the adoption of other appropriate measures.
- k. Individual communication between a staff and an AIAS student must be conducted through the following channels only such as Class Dojo, Email using

the school valid email account or MS Team. It is prohibited to communicate with an individual student using Phone, WhatsApp, or any social media messaging or direct social media messages (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat and the like). Never tag or follow a student in social media. However, in the event of emergency or for purposes related to their safety or other school-related purposes, staff may communicate with the students through phone with the written permission to be forwarded to the Principal.

- I. When using public toilets during trips, a supervising teacher or staff must be situated close to the toilet building and if appropriate in the area outside the toilet cubicles. Students should not use public toilets on their own, they must enter in pairs or larger groups.

- m. During trips outside the school, all teachers and staff should carry a charged mobile phone and school office and Leadership Team telephone numbers in case of emergencies/reporting etc.

Section 5. Reporting Procedure

- a. Any teachers and staff who witness or receive information related to child abuse involving AIAS students should be immediately reported to the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC). The CPC will appoint a member of the committee to do the systematic investigation which is usually the child's counselor or the section supervisor. Investigation report must be clear, precise, factual account of the incidence.

- b. After investigation report has been done, the designated coordinator will arrange a meeting with the Child Protection Committee who will decide for the needed action on the merit of the findings of the investigation.
 - If a referral is made to the Child Protection officer, the Child Protection Coordinator will ensure a written report is sent to their office within 48 hours.
 - Decision to be made should include the necessary psychological intervention to reduce the impact of the experience on the child's growth.

REFERENCES

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