Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Ambassador International Academy

Created: January 2019

Review Date	Reviewed By	Verified by	Uploaded / School Website
September 2024	**HoP, HoS, VP**	**Principal/HR**	

AIA fully recognizes its responsibilities to safeguarding and Child Protection under the following articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNRC):

Article 3: which states that the best interests of the children must be the primary focus in decisionmaking about them.

Article 13: which states that children have the right to get and share information as long as it is notdamaging to them or another child.

Article 14: which states that children have the right to think and believe what they want to and topractice their religion.

Article 16: which states that children have the right to a private life and their character and reputationshould not be attacked.

Article 36: which states that children should be protected from any activity that takes advantage ofthem or could harm their welfare and development.

Article 37: which states that no one is allowed to punish children in a cruel and harmful way.All the UN articles can be found in the following link: www.unicef.org

<u>Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy applies to all staff working in the school.</u>

Central to our safeguarding approach is our dedicated Safeguarding Team. This team is comprised of members of our Senior Leadership and Middle Leadership, who are highly trained and experienced staff who ensure the safety of all children at AIA. They play a pivotal role in creating and maintaining a protective environment, providing guidance to staff, and acting as a point of contact for children and families. Their expertise ensures that concerns are addressed promptly, effectively and discreetly, reinforcing the trust that is vital for a safe educational environment.

The team is not only equipped to handle immediate concerns but also proactively fosters a culture of vigilance and care. Through regular training, the team stays informed of best practices, legislative updates, and emerging trends in safeguarding, ensuring that AIA remains at the forefront of child protection.

At AIA we aim to:

- Ensure we practice safe recruitment by checking the suitability of staff to work with children.

- Raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse support the students who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.

- Ensure there are rigorous health and safety provisions across the school to safeguard the whole community, this establishes a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

- To provide a safe and secure curriculum that supports the needs of all students.

- To foster a safe and secure online environment in which children are taught how to use online platforms and tools in a safe and responsible manner.

- Share information about child protection and good practice with students, parents, staff, volunteers, and visitors.

- Develop and implement an effective anti-bullying policy and related procedures. (Please refer to the AIA Anti-bullying policy.)

o Safeguard children from the potential risks associated with artificial intelligence (AI) by conducting regular assessments to identify and reduce risks associated with AI technologies used within the school, ensuring that any AI systems used in the school comply with data protection regulations, and monitoring and supervising AI tools and applications used in the school to ensure they are used appropriately and do not pose any harm to students.

At AIA we will:

o Appoint nominated child protection leads and deputies.

o Establish reporting procedures that adopt straightforward and confidential mechanisms for reporting concerns. Whether a child, parent, or staff member needs to raise an issue, they can do so with confidence, knowing that it will be handled with sensitivity and urgency.

o Conduct regular risk assessments to identify and alleviate potential threats to children's safety, both within the school environment and during extracurricular activities.

o Protect all students who attend AIA and use our services in accordance with the laws of the UAE.

o Establish and maintain an environment where students feel secure, are encouraged to talk, andare listened to.

o Develop and implement an effective digital citizenship policy and related procedures. (Please refer to theAIA Digital Citizenship Policy.)

o Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our students.

o Ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities regarding safeguarding and child protection.

o Enable staff to identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect, and other safeguarding concerns.

o All new staff that join the school during the academic year receive safeguarding and child protection training.

o Equip our staff with the knowledge and skills needed to safeguard children from AI-related risks through training programs that cover: Understanding AI, identifying AI risks, safe use of AI and responding to AI concerns.

o Ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse.

o Ensure students know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.

o Record, store and use information professionally and securely.

o Use our procedures to manage allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.

o Ensure that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place. (Please refer to the AIA Whistleblowing Policy)

We take account of the guidance issued by the KHDA to:

o Have two designated Child Protection Leads for child protection with designated deputies. The details of the designated staff members can be found on the safeguarding flowchart which is displayed around the school.

o Ensure we communicate concerns with, when appropriate, the KHDA & the Child Protection Centre, Al Barsha.

o Ensure every member of staff knows the name of the designated Child Protection Leads responsible for child protection and their role.

o Ensure all staff members understand the difference between Safeguarding & Child Protection and their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility and follow the correct chain of communication in terms of a referral.

o Ensure that parents understand the responsibility placed on the school and staff for safeguarding & child protection. At various points in the year offer training to parents so they can understand how the school protects their children and handles cases of significant harm.

o Develop effective links with the Child Protection Centre, MOI and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences or court hearings.

o Record, store and use information professionally and securely.

o Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer. (Please refer to the AIA Whistleblowing Policy)

o Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed, which includes police clearance checks for all teaching and support staff at AIA.

Definition of Terms

There are a significant number of ways that students may be exposed to risk and danger, all of which necessitate a response. Abuse is defined as any form of maltreatment of a child, including direct harm or failure to protect a child at risk or already experiencing harm.

The more commonly referred to types of abuse are:

- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, pinching, kicking, biting, starving, poisoning, burning, scalding or otherwise causing any nonaccidental injury or physical impairment to a child.

- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent maltreatment of a child such as causing severe and adverse effects in the child's emotional development. This may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child. This may also be referred to as psychological abuse.

- **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This form of abuse can involve direct contact activities but also non-contact activities over social media or the internet by an adult, adolescent or older child.

- **Neglect:** This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs and is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

- **Increased Vulnerability:** This is children who are looked after. Children who are excluded from mainstream education. Children with substance abuse problems or children of parents with substance abuse problems. Children who are isolated. Children witnessing domestic abuse and a history of previous abuse

While the five areas mentioned are significant potential areas of abuse, it is important to recognize that abuse can take many different forms, which may involve one or more of these areas.

Organisational and school staff should remain vigilant and attentive to other potential types of safeguarding issues, being aware of indicators that may suggest their presence. While the sections below offer examples of additional safeguarding issues, it is important to note that this list is not exhaustive. There could be numerous other safeguarding risks that the Designated Safeguarding Leads will familiarise themselves with, ensuring comprehensive awareness and preparedness. The goal is to stay proactive and responsive to safeguarding concerns, prioritizing the well-being and safety of all individuals within the school community.

Self-Harm

Self-harm can manifest in various physical and/or emotional forms, and there can be multiple underlying reasons why children and young people engage in such behaviour. Once self-harm begins, it can becomea compulsive pattern. Consequently, it is crucial to identify signs of self-harm as early as possible andprovide comprehensive support. Regardless of the reason behind self-harm, it should always be takenseriously.

There are some common themes that may help to identify concerns including:

- Physical indicators such as cuts, bruises, burns and bald patches (where hair has been pulled out).
- Emotional indicators such as depression, sudden weight loss, unusual eating habits and isolation or withdrawal.

If staff suspect that a student is self-harming, it is crucial to follow the established protocols in the schoolpolicy. This involves referring the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately. The DSL will then assess the situation and determine the necessary steps to be taken.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 encompasses exploitative relationshipswhere young individuals receive something in exchange for engaging in sexual acts. Such exploitation canoccur through face-to-face interactions or through technology, including mobile phones or computers.

Sexting

Sexting refers to the act of sharing sexual, naked, or semi-naked images or videos of oneself or others,as well as sending sexually explicit messages. It involves using digital communication platforms, such as mobile phones or social media, to exchange such content.

E-Safety

The increasing use of electronic media in everyday life, along with the availability of a wide range of devices, has brought about additional risks for children. While electronic media and devices offer numerous benefits, such as educational resources and connectivity, they also expose children to various potential risks.

- o **Online Predators:** Children may encounter individuals with malicious intent who seek to exploit or harm them through online platforms, social media, or gaming platforms.

- o **Cyberbullying:** The use of electronic media can facilitate instances of bullying, harassment, or intimidation through online channels, causing emotional distress and harm to children.

- o **Inappropriate Content:** Children may inadvertently come across or intentionally seek out age-inappropriate or explicit content that can negatively impact their emotional and psychological well-being.

- o **Privacy and Data Security:** Children may unknowingly share personal information or engage in activities that compromise their privacy or expose them to identity theft, scams, or online fraud.

To mitigate these risks, it is essential for parents, educators, and caregivers to educate children about online safety, digital citizenship, and responsible use of electronic media. Implementing parental controls, monitoring online activities, and promoting open communication are also vital strategies to ensure children's safety in the digital world. Additionally, AIA will provide comprehensive digital literacy programs and create safe online environments to empower children to make informed choices and protect themselves from potential risks.

AIA believes that the best way to protect our students is to teach awareness and understanding of risk, particularly through personal, health education, sex and relationship education and wellness programs. The school's curriculum includes appropriate and frequent opportunities to teach children how to recognise when they and others are at risk and equips them with the skills, strategies and language they need to take appropriate action.

Allegations about staff and volunteers

Any allegation made against a staff member or volunteer will be treated seriously, regardless of when itis reported. There are robust procedures in place to handle such allegations promptly, fairly, and in accordance with established guidelines.

Whistleblowing (Please refer to AIA Whistleblowing policy)

Any allegation made against a staff member or volunteer should be treated seriously, regardless of whenit is reported. It is crucial to have robust procedures in place to handle such allegations promptly, fairly, and in accordance with established guidelines.

When an allegation is brought forward, it is essential to follow established safeguarding procedures toensure a thorough and objective investigation.

AIA treats any allegation seriously and follows appropriate policies and procedures. We prioritise thewell-being and safety of all individuals involved while upholding principles of fairness, confidentiality, and due process.

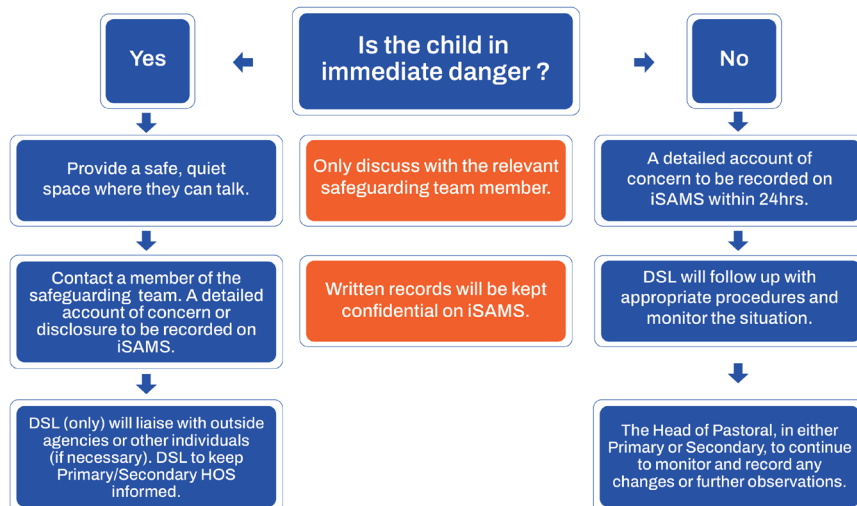**Anti-bullying (Please refer to the AIA Anti-bullying policy)**

Bullying is a safeguarding matter and if left unresolved can become a more serious child protection issue.Staff at every level will take seriously any concerns raised in relation to the bullying of any student. Actionwill always be taken to investigate concerns and to prevent repeat incidents or behaviours. Bullying may involve the misuse of social media or other technology or be direct from student to student. Having an anti-bullying policy and a commitment to restorative practices further strengthens your school's approach to addressing bullying.

These strategies emphasise not only addressing specific incidents but also focus on understanding the underlying issues, promoting empathy, repairing harm, and fosteringpositive relationships among students.

Safeguarding flow for Child Protection

If I am concerned about a child or if a child makes a disclosure:

DO NOT PROMISE CONFIDENTIALITY - LISTEN OBJECTIVELY- DO NOT ASK LEADING QUESTIONS

Is the child in immediate danger ?

Yes ← → **No**

Yes		No
Provide a safe, quiet space where they can talk.	Only discuss with the relevant safeguarding team member.	A detailed account of concern to be recorded on iSAMS within 24hrs.
Contact a member of the safeguarding team. A detailed account of concern or disclosure to be recorded on iSAMS.	Written records will be kept confidential on iSAMS.	DSL will follow up with appropriate procedures and monitor the situation.
DSL (only) will liaise with outside agencies or other individuals (if necessary). DSL to keep Primary/Secondary HOS informed.		The Head of Pastoral, in either Primary or Secondary, to continue to monitor and record any changes or further observations.

Safeguarding Team

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