

AJAC Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding

Children have the right to protection and have the right to be safe.

Ajman Academy School is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all the children and young people with whom it works. The school is committed to promoting the rights of the child, including the participation of children and young people in matters that affect them.

This policy aims to create a safe and healthy environment for the young people with whom it works and is committed at all times to ensuring their safety and welfare.

A set of child protection guidelines is operated by the school to identify and support students who may have been subjected to abuse or neglect and to provide safeguards and support for staff when they are working with children and young people.

School staff are entrusted to ensure the safety and welfare of students whilst they are at school. This includes while they are travelling to and from school using school transport, and while they are moving between, waiting for, and taking part in all activities organized by the school under their supervision. This includes the failure of a parent or guardian to take actions that are considered necessary to care for children, including, but not limited to, the provision of adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, health care and medical treatment, as well as the maintenance of personal hygiene, stimulation and regular school attendance.

All pupils have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, or beliefs. The School recognizes its legal duty to work with and in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures. This responsibility is underpinned by the following aims to:

- Protect children from harm (maltreatment).
- Prevent impairment of children's health and development.
- Ensure children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

AJAC aims to uphold its responsibility to student safety and wellbeing through:

I. Prevention

By ensuring all reasonable measures are taken to minimize the risk of harm to children's welfare, including:

- Appointing an overall *Designated Safeguarding Lead* (DSL) (The School Director), and a *Designated Safeguarding Person* (DSP) in each section of the school (The Primary/ Secondary Principal).
- Ensuring safer recruitment practice.

- Ensuring through training that all staff are aware of and committed to the Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- Adopting a supportive, open and accepting attitude towards children so that they feel valued, listened to and respected.
- Establishing a positive and secure environment, in which children can learn and develop.
- Including in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and which will help them to develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life.
- Providing support that is accessible and available to all pupils and ensuring that pupils know to whom they can talk about their concerns both within and beyond school.

2. Protection

By ensuring all appropriate actions are taken to address concerns about the welfare of a child or children, working with agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local external agencies, where necessary, the Police. This may include:

- Sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know and involving children and their parents/carers appropriately.
- Monitoring children known or thought to be at risk from harm and contributing to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
- In the cases of domestic abuse which comes to light in school, teachers to report to SLT all suspicions or evidence available at the earliest opportunity.

3. Reporting

The School, under inter-agency procedures, will report complaints that raise Child Protection issues.

National laws in the U.A.E. govern any legal action taken in cases of child abuse. However, staff should know that, upon allegation, they may also be prosecuted in their country of origin or residence. For example:

- In the case of employees from the UK, the School will also report to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), within one month of their leaving employment, any person (whether employed, contracted, volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he/she is considered unsuitable to work with children.
- In the case of employees from other countries, the School will inform their relevant safeguarding authorities and teaching professional bodies.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Child protection is one very important aspect of safeguarding. It refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm. The term 'significant harm' was defined by The Children Act of 1989 as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children, to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Definitions of Terms

CHILD PROTECTION: A broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In the current context, it applies particularly to the duty of organizations – and individuals associated with those organizations - towards children in their care.

CHILD: For the purposes of this document, a “child” is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

CHILD ABUSE: According to the World Health Organization, “Child abuse” constitutes ‘all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse as well as corporal punishment, bullying and exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.’

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY: ‘A statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the school is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously.’

Whilst there are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm, the following factors are used by the DSL and the DSPs in assessing any case:

- The degree and extent of physical harm.
- The duration and frequency of abuse and neglect.
- The extent of premeditation.
- The presence and degree of threat, coercion, sadism.

Staff should be clear that they must not make judgments or carry out investigations. The information in these procedures must be read in the context of the specific advice offered herein, in terms of how to act in cases where safeguarding and/or child protection issues are suspected.

The Role of the Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL), Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) and Designated Person (DP)

The *Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)* for Child Protection in the School is The School Director and all referrals and paperwork must be held by his office.

There is also a *Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)* who takes responsibility for child protection matters in each phase. (In the event of the absence of any DSP another DSP within the organization will be empowered to deal with matters in the relevant school).

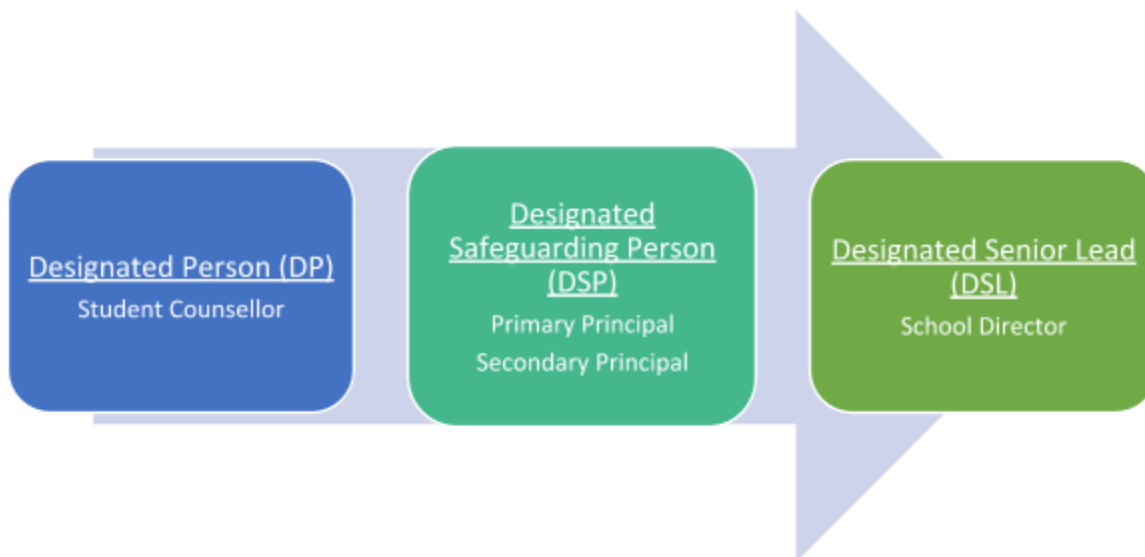
In addition, the *Designated Person (DP)* in the school is the Student Counsellor, who is the first person to respond to teacher concerns.

It is the expectation of the role that the DSL (The School Director) is the primary communicator with all external agencies.

The Director will hold all paperwork generated from any Child Protection issue in his role as overall DSL, although copies will be held by the relevant principle in their roles as DSP.

Designated Personnel

At AJAC the staff with the designated responsibility for Child Protection issues are as follows:



Raising Awareness

It is the responsibility of the school, through the *Designated Safeguard Lead* to:

- Monitor and review annually the effectiveness of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures, to ensure they comply with current best practice.
- Ensure the policies and procedures adopted by the School are fully implemented and followed by all staff.
- Ensure parents have access to the schools Child Protection Policy and Procedures (available on the website and hard copy provided on request).
- Ensure, where necessary, that records are passed on to the receiving school if a student transfers.
- Ensure the child's wishes or feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide to protect individual children through ensuring there are systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback.

Training and Support

It is the responsibility of the school, through the *Designated Safeguard Lead* to:

- Ensure that all **DSPs** receive appropriate training through a recognized provider and refresher training at two yearly intervals. This training is in child-protection case conferences, supporting children in need, record keeping and promoting a culture of listening to children.
- Ensure that **all staff who work with children** receive the appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding children effectively and that this is kept up to date by refresher training at two yearly intervals.
- Ensure that new staff receive a child protection induction within 7 working days of commencement of their employment.
- Ensure that temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection within 7 working days of their commencement of work, including provision of this document, the code of conduct for staff, the name and contact details of the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (The Principal)**.
- Ensure sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the **DSPs** and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussion and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children;
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with regard to safeguarding children, and to treat such concerns sensitively and effectively in a timely manner.
- Hold, and be conversant with the School's Child Protection procedures.
- Maintain an up to date central database detailing dates of training for all AJAC staff, the level of training received and the dates of when refresher training is required.

Referrals

It is the responsibility of the school, through the *Designated Safeguard Lead* to:

- Ensure that the school operates within the UAE legislative framework and recommended guidance, in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services.
- Decide upon the appropriate level of response to specific concerns about a child, referring to local guidance on thresholds and obtaining information on borderline cases. Responses may include discussions with parents or referral to relevant external agencies.
- Liaise and work with the Safeguarding agencies.
- Ensure that accurate child protection records relating to individual children are kept separate from the academic file with The School Director as *Designated Safeguarding Lead*, marked 'Strictly Confidential' and are passed on securely should the child transfer to a new educational provider.
- Submit reports and ensure the school's attendance at child protection conferences.
- Contribute to decision making and delivery of actions planned to safeguard the child.
- Ensure that the school monitors effectively children about whom there are concerns.
- Notify external agencies of any serious incident or injury (or death), of any child while in the care of the school, and to act upon any advice from those agencies.

Information for Staff

All staff are required to be aware of and up to date with the school's current Child Protection Policy and Procedures to enable them to support students effectively.

In *supporting students* the school recognizes that:

- A child who is abused or witnesses violence may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.
- A child in these circumstances may feel helpless and humiliated and may feel self-blame.
- The school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
- Research shows that the behavior of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal, to aggression or withdrawal.

The School will *support students* by:

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-confidence whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the School.
- Liaising and working closely together with all other support agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.

- Notifying the relevant external agencies as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Providing continuing support to a pupil, about whom there have been concerns, who leaves the School (other than at the end of Grade 12) by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new school.

Definitions of Child Abuse

Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 concerning child rights, also known as Wadeema's Law, stresses that all children must be provided with appropriate living standards, access to health services, education, equal opportunities in essential services and facilities without any kind of discrimination. The law protects children against all forms of negligence, exploitation, physical and psychological abuses.

Child abuse can be categorized into four different types:

1. Neglect:

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point.

2. Emotional abuse:

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms.

3. Physical abuse:

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from willful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

4. Sexual abuse:

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others

Common Indicators and Signs of Abuse and/or Neglect:

<p><u>Physical Abuse:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Frequent bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts ✓ Improbable excuses given to explain injuries ✓ Injuries which have not received medical attention ✓ Injuries, which occur to the body in places, which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc. ✓ Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains ✓ Refusal to discuss injuries ✓ Withdrawal from physical contact ✓ Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather ✓ Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted ✓ Showing wariness or distrust of adults ✓ Self-destructive tendencies ✓ Being aggressive towards others ✓ Being very passive and compliant ✓ Chronic running away Torn clothing ✓ Bite marks burns or welts ✓ Bruises in places difficult to mark e.g. behind ears, groin ✓ Undue or unnecessary fear ✓ Aggressiveness or withdrawn ✓ Absconding frequently from home
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<p><u>Neglect:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Frequent hunger✓ Failure to grow✓ Stealing or gorging food✓ Poor personal hygiene✓ Constant tiredness✓ Inappropriate clothing, e.g. summer clothes in winter✓ Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school✓ Untreated medical problems✓ Low self-esteem✓ Poor social relationships✓ Compulsive stealing✓ Drug or alcohol abuse✓ Frequent minor or serious injuries✓ Untreated illness✓ Hunger, lack of nutrition✓ Tiredness✓ Inadequate and inappropriate clothing✓ Lack of supervision✓ Low self esteem✓ Lack of peer relationships
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<p><u>Emotional Abuse :</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed ✓ Highly anxious ✓ Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder ✓ Fear of new situations ✓ Low self-esteem ✓ Extremes of passivity or aggression ✓ Drug or alcohol abuse ✓ Chronic running away ✓ Compulsive stealing ✓ Obsessions or phobias ✓ Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration ✓ Attention seeking behaviour ✓ Persistent tiredness ✓ Lying ✓ Unreasonable mood and/or behavioural changes ✓ Aggression, withdrawal or an 'I don't care attitude' ✓ Lack of attachment and low self esteem ✓ Attention seeking ✓ Depression or suicide attempts ✓ Persistent nightmares, disturbed sleep, bedwetting, reluctance to go to bed ✓ A fear of adults or particular individuals e.g. family member, babysitter or indeed excessive clinginess to parents/carers ✓ Panic attacks
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<p><u>Sexual Abuse:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Age inappropriate sexualised behaviour ✓ Physical indicators ✓ Behavioural indicators (general and sexual) which must be interpreted with regard to the individual child's level of functioning and development stage ✓ Over affectionate or inappropriate sexual behaviour ✓ Age inappropriate sexual knowledge given the child's age, which is often demonstrated in language, play or drawings ✓ Fondling or exposure of genital areas ✓ Hints about sexual activity ✓ Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities which involve undressing, e.g. games / swimming.
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Role of Staff

I. Concerns about a student

- Staff who notice injuries that appear to be non-accidental, a significant change in a pupil's behavior, or who are told anything significant related to child protection by another pupil, must report their concerns immediately to the relevant DP (Student Counsellor). A factual written record will be made and passed to the DSP (School Principal).
- If a member of staff has concerns about any student which may indicate physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect, they must discuss them with the relevant DP.
- It is important to recognize that child protection can relate to abuse of one pupil by another. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, by one or more pupils, the member of staff must make a written record of their concern and ensure this is shared with the relevant DP immediately.
- In the case of abuse by a pupil, or group of pupils, the key indicators that may identify abuse (as opposed to bullying or adolescent misbehavior, to be handled within the school's normal discipline framework) are:

- the frequency, nature and severity of the incident(s);
 - whether or not the victim was coerced by physical force, fear, or by a pupil or group of pupils significantly older than them, or having power or authority over them;
 - whether or not the incident involved a potentially criminal act;
 - whether or not the same incident (or injury) would have been regarded as assault or otherwise actionable, had it occurred to a member of staff or other adult?
- The relevant DP will liaise with the DSP and DSL and local and specialist agencies as appropriate, and ensure that accurate records relating to child protection are kept secure.
 - If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to external agencies immediately.
 - If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

2. Procedure following a disclosure

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief;
- Accept what is being said;
- Allow the child to talk freely;
- Reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep;
- Not promise confidentiality; it may be necessary to refer to the DP (Student Counsellor), DSP (School Principal) or the DSL (The School Director).
- Reassure that what has happened is not the child's fault;
- Reiterate the point that it was the right thing to tell;
- Only ask questions when necessary for the purpose of clarification;
- Not criticize the alleged perpetrator;
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told;
- Document the information on the school record of concern sheet where possible and pass this to the relevant DP (Student Counsellor) without delay.

***Important note:** school staff do not carry out investigations themselves, nor decide whether or not children have been abused. It is their responsibility to report all cases of suspected abuse and neglect by directly contacting the DP (Student Counsellor) immediately.*

3. Guidance on how to respond to a student wanting to disclose

GENERAL POINTS	DON'T SAY
Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).	Why didn't you tell anyone before?
Keep calm.	I can't believe it!
Look at the student directly.	Are you sure this is true?
Be honest.	Why? How? When? Who? Where?
Tell the child you will need to let someone else know but do not promise confidentiality . A useful distinction to make when explaining the difference between privacy and confidentiality to a students is: you <i>cannot promise</i> to keep a conversation private but you <i>can keep it confidential</i> by only informing the people who need to know in order to help the student.	Never make false promises.
Even when a student has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.	Never make statements such as 'I am shocked, don't tell anyone else.'
Never push for information. If the student decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.	
Never ask leading questions and try to record what the child says verbatim	
Be aware that the student may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.	
Helpful things you may say or show	Concluding
I understand what you are saying.	Again reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.
Thank you for telling me.	Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
It's not your fault.	Contact the appropriate senior member of staff or agency.
I will help you.	Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

4. Written records

The member of staff to whom a disclosure has been made should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable words or nonverbal behavior used/demonstrated by the child.
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any injuries.
- Record statements and observations rather than personal interpretations or assumptions.

All records need to be given to the relevant DP (Student Counsellor) promptly. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer. Any such records will then be passed on to the DSL (The Director), who will store them centrally.

5. Action by the Designated Person (Student Counsellor)

The DP will:

- Discuss the concern with the DSP (School Principal) to decide if the risk requires an immediate referral.
- Meet with the student, following the guidance on questioning pupils.
- Seek a medical examination or treatment for the students with the School Doctor, if appropriate.
- Take steps to protect the informing student as appropriate. Ensure that the student is aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed but that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know, and the child will know who these people are. If the allegation involves abuse by other students, it is likely that the students against whom the allegation has been made will need to be told.
- Meet with any students against whom an allegation has been made and follow the interview protocols as outlined above to develop an understanding of what has happened and to provide information to support these students too, in terms of further actions and involvement of others.
- Ensure the parents of any of the students involved are aware of the allegation.
- Refer the matter to the relevant external agencies for all of the children involved, as appropriate.
- Ensure that a reference is made on the child's main school file using the relevant incident form and that there is a record on the School Child Protection file.

Procedure For Staff Who Notice Any Signs Of Abuse

