

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

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Overview

This policy is grounded in the UAE legal framework for child protection - principally Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on Child Rights (Wadeema's Law), the UAE Ministry of Education National Child Protection Policy for Educational Institutions and the KHDA inspection requirements - and in current international best practice, principally Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (DfE, in force 1 September 2026), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) CIE Child Protection Standards, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, UAE Law-No. 3, and Sharjah's Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre have been utilized to develop this policy.

The ASCS Administration, Governing body, and all other stakeholders are committed to safeguarding all children against abuse and harm as described in this policy. All terms and conditions related to such safeguards and the urgency of reporting suspected instances are provided within. This policy is subject to change, as ASCS deems necessary in order to provide the highest quality services to our children while ensuring their protection and safety. The goal of this policy is to promote and support the safety and well-being of all children enrolled in ASCS. This policy ensures a unified and consistent approach to protect children while it outlines the respective roles and responsibilities of ASCS staff.

This policy applies to all members of the ASCS community: all staff (permanent, temporary, part-time and support staff), the Governing Body, volunteers, contractors, coaches, therapists, bus staff, external providers operating on site and anyone else working with or on behalf of the school. It should be read alongside the school's Staff Code of Conduct, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policies, E-Safety/Online Safety Policy, Attendance Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Educational Trips and Visits Policy and Complaints Policy.

Values Statement

We recognize our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. We endeavor to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. Every child has the right to be protected and free from abuse and harm, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities, or any other status. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection, and justice. Aligned with ASCS's vision and the responsibilities set forth by the United Nations Convention of the Child, this policy ensures all reasonable measures are taken to minimize the risk to all children's welfare. All ASCS staff are responsible for the care, safety, and protection of children. This responsibility extends to the identification and timely response to concerns regarding the possible sexual, physical, emotional abuse, or neglect of a child.

Responsible Parties

ASCS Administration and all those employed by ASCS are entrusted with the protection and well-being of all children and have the responsibility to prevent, protect, and report any suspected instances of abuse or harm. Specific duties performed by trained staff regarding ASCS' Child Protection Policy, procedures, and practices have been designed to ensure the safety and welfare of all children at ASCS. The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) also known as the School Principal will assume responsibility in the decision-making process.

Mandated Reporters

UAE Law-No. 3 of 2016 on Child Rights (Wadeema's Law) addresses this by mandating everyone connected to the child, be it a teacher, doctor, or family friend, to report to authorities should they spot signs of child abuse or neglect. All ASCS staff working directly with ASCS students are considered mandated reporters.

Policy Principles

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- All staff should be alert to the signs of abuse and know to whom they should report concern or suspicions.
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion, or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- Children who are safe and feel safe are better equipped to learn.
- This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Representatives of the whole school community of students, parents, staff, volunteers, and governors will, therefore, be involved in reviewing, shaping, and developing the school's safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm at home, in the community, or in school.
- All staff members will maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead with knowledge and skills in recognizing and acting upon child protection concerns is the first point of contact for staff and parents where a concern is identified.
- If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral will be made to relevant statutory body and public services. Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, any staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some stage.
- Students and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident, new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

Aims

ASCS aims to create a safe and healthy environment for all children with whom it works and is committed to preventing and responding appropriately if children are abused or harmed, or if allegations of abuse or harm to children are made.

Policy aims:

- To ensure all our students are safe and protected from harm.
- To ensure safeguarding procedures are in place to help students to feel safe and learn to stay safe.
- To ensure consistent good practice across our school
- To ensure adults in the school community are aware of the expected behavior and the school's legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection.
- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to students, parents and other partners.
- To contribute to the school's safeguarding portfolio.

Definitions

ASCS has developed and adopted appropriate definitions of child abuse including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect and commercial or ideological exploitation, and inappropriate behavior of children toward other children. All terms are defined below.

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY: A statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from abuse and 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.

Safeguarding is defined as:

- ensuring that children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances
- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- preventing impairment of children's health or development and
- protecting children from ~~maltreatment~~ maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.

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, child protection applies particularly to the duty of organizations – and individuals associated with those organizations - toward 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.

PARENT: refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example, stepparents, legally appointed guardians, foster parents, and adoptive parents.

CHILD ABUSE: Child abuse constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other 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.

PHYSICAL ABUSE: A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. It includes any intentional act causing injury or trauma.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: The ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child. At times referred to as psychological abuse and can seriously damage a child’s emotional health and development. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child or isolating or ignoring them. It may include verbal abuse such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling, not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations, overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, including the effects of domestic abuse. It may involve serious bullying, including cyberbullying. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

SEXUAL ABUSE: Any type of sexual behavior involving a child where the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence; or the child has less power than another person involved in the behavior; or there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behavior. It includes sexual penetration, encouraging a child to

perform indecent acts such as touching genitals, penis/digital penetration or oral sex, inappropriate touching, exposure to sexual acts or pornographic materials and using electronic means to procure or expose a child to indecent material. Sexual abuse can take place wholly online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males: women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education, and all staff must be aware of it and of the school's procedures for dealing with it.

EXPLOITATION: Using a minor child for profit, power, status, sexual gratification, or some other purpose.

CHILD NEGLECT: A form of child abuse and a deficit in meeting a child's basic needs, including the failure to provide adequate health care, supervision, clothing, nutrition, housing as well as their physical, emotional, social, educational and safety needs. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. In the ASCS context, staff should also be alert to neglect arising where day-to-day care is delegated to household staff or relatives without adequate oversight.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR: Any behavior that seems to go against natural and logical schemes as it relates to interactions with a child.

ABUSE (UMBRELLA DEFINITION): Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill-treatment that is not physical, as well as the impact of witnessing the ill-treatment of others. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members (child-to-parent or care-giver abuse).

CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE: Children can abuse other children, both inside and outside school and online. It includes bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying); abuse within intimate personal relationships between children; physical abuse; sexual violence and sexual harassment; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent; the consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes; up-skirting; and initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals. It is a safeguarding issue for both the child who is harmed and the child who has caused harm.

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) AND CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE): Forms of abuse in which an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal or sexual activity, in exchange for something the child needs or wants, and/or for the advantage of the perpetrator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence. A child cannot consent to their own exploitation. Both boys and girls can be victims, and children who are criminally exploited may present as perpetrators before they are recognised as victims.

DOMESTIC ABUSE: A single incident or a pattern of incidents of psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse within the home or within a young person's own intimate relationship. Children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right where they see, hear or experience its effects.

EXTRA-FAMILIAL HARM (CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING): Abuse or exploitation that occurs outside the family home - in the community, in a peer group, at a workplace or online. All staff, and especially the DSL and Deputy DSLs, should consider whether a child may be at risk from harm beyond the family, and provide as much contextual information as possible when making a referral.

LOW-LEVEL CONCERN: Concern about an adult working in or on behalf of the school that does not meet the harm threshold for an allegation, but where the adult's behaviour is inconsistent with the Staff Code

of Conduct. Low-level concerns must still be reported to the Principal and recorded, so that patterns can be identified.

MODERN SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING: The exploitation of a child through trafficking, forced labour, servitude, forced criminality or the removal of organs. Any suspicion of trafficking or modern slavery must be treated as a child protection concern and referred immediately.

Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance

This policy is derived from relevant International legislation which includes the following:

- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- NEASC/CIE Child Protection Standards of 2015
- ITFCP Expectations for School Communities (2021)
- UK Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) - statutory guidance in force from 1 September 2026, referenced by ASCS as best practice.
- UK Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).
- UK What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015)
- UK Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (2015)
- UKCIS, Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings (current edition)
- UK Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and the DfE flowchart on actions where there are concerns about a child

The law and guidance set within the UAE is as follows:

- National Child Protection Policy in Educational Institutions in United Arab Emirates 2022
- UAE Federal Law No 3 2016 (Wadeema Law)
- UAE Cabinet Resolution No. (52) of 2018
- UAE Ministry of Education Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General Education
- UAE Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021 on Combatting Rumours and Cybercrimes
- Dubai Law No. (26) of 2015 on the Organisation of Data Publication and Sharing
- UAE Wadeema's Law Executive Regulations and the National Child Protection Policy in Educational Institutions (2022)
- UAE School Inspection Framework (current edition), Performance Indicator 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students, and the KHDA inspection requirements applicable to Dubai private schools

Child Protection Personnel

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

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Safeguarding Governor at Corporate Office (BEAM)

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Deputy Safeguarding Governor (BEAM)

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The Dubai Police Child Protection Hotline (confidentiality and advice)

Contact Number: 800-243

Website: www.dubaipolice.gov.ae

Al Ameen Service

800-4-888

Designated Safeguarding Leads

The school will have an appropriate senior member of staff to take lead responsibility for child protection. This person should have the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Is a senior member of staff from the school's leadership team and as such has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff.
- Takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in the school, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place. Their overall responsibility will not be delegated; however, the day-to-day activities of the DSL may be delegated to appropriately trained deputies.
- Receives refresher training every two years and regularly (at least annually) updates their knowledge and skills to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.
- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community.
- Encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings.
- Is alert to the specific needs of children in need, including those with special educational needs.

- Has working knowledge of relevant UAE law, education inspection process, and inter- agency support.
- Keeps and maintains detailed written records of all concerns.
- Ensures records of all concerns are stored securely and kept separate from the student's general file.
- Refers cases of suspected abuse to relevant external agencies and police as necessary.
- Attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences and/or strategy meetings.
- Develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensures that all staff have read and understood the child protection and safeguarding policy and Staff Code of Conduct and that all staff have signed that they have received copies of these and have read them.
- Keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training.
- Ensures that the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated annually
- Ensures the child protection and safeguarding policy are published on the school's website.
- Ensures parents are aware of the school's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made.
- Will keep the Governing Body Safeguarding Lead informed of any issues and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.
- Understands and supports the school's response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods.
- Ensures safeguarding records are transferred securely to a receiving school when a child leaves, and makes direct contact with the receiving DSL where a child is vulnerable or has an open concern.
- Analyses safeguarding patterns and trends at least termly and reports these to the Governing Body, so that the school's response is data-informed and preventative.
- Ensures the voice of the child informs safeguarding practice, including through the school's student voice and Student Safeguarding Champions arrangements.

During term time the child safeguarding officer and/or a deputy will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns and individual arrangement for out of hours/out of term activities will be:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in this school is:

Mrs Sara Hollis

During term time, the DSL or a Deputy DSL will always be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. In case of absence, the Deputy Safeguarding Lead must be contacted. Out of hours, during school holidays and on residential or off-site activities, cover arrangements are published to all staff, and the duty DSL contact details are held at reception, in the staff handbook and on the school intranet. The absence of a DSL must never delay action to protect a child: where no DSL is contactable, staff must speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and, where a child is at immediate risk, contact the emergency services or the Dubai Police Child Protection Centre directly.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are appropriately trained to the same level as the DSL, and in the absence of the DSL, carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of students. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume all of the Designated Safeguarding Leads responsibilities.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads in this school are:

Mrs Nada Mourad

Mrs Dina Murad

Mrs Hana Abu Samra

When the DSL is absent, the corresponding Deputy DSL, will act as cover.

Child Protection Officer

Broad Areas of Responsibility for the Child Protection Officer:

- To ensure all staff are familiar with school guidelines for identifying and reporting abuse, including allegations of abuse against staff.
- To ensure that all staff receive foundation training in child protection.
- To be responsible for coordinating action and liaising with other agencies and support services over child protection concerns.
- In consultation with the Principal to assist in enquiring into allegations of child abuse.
- To follow, as appropriate, recommendations made by the Principal.
- To be aware of any relevant documents.
- To support and advise staff on Child Protection issues generally.
- To monitor the attendance and development of children who have given cause for concern.
- To disseminate relevant information to the appropriate staff e.g. to class teachers or Teaching Assistants (TA).
- To complete appropriate records and send on to new schools (where relevant).
- To participate in Safeguarding Reviews.
- Liaise with the Principal to inform him/her of issues within the school community.
- Act as a source of support, advice, and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral.
- Support staff that make referrals.

Safeguarding Governor (BEAM)

- Ensures that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description and that safeguarding responsibilities are identified explicitly in the job/role descriptions of every member of staff.
- Ensures the child protection policy and procedures, including a staff code of conduct, that are consistent with BEAM, and statutory, requirements, and is reviewed annually and made available publicly on the school's website or by other means.
- Has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff and volunteers including allegations made against the Principal and allegations against other children.
- Follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and disqualification by association regulations.
- Develops an induction strategy that ensures all staff, including the Principal, and volunteers receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, Staff Code of Conduct and the role of the DSL on induction.
- Develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the Principal, and volunteers receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training and updates as required (at least annually) to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively in line with any requirements of BEAM. The training strategy will also ensure that the DSL receives refresher training and regular updates as defined under the DSL's duties above.
- Ensures that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, are provided with copies of or access to the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and Staff Code of Conduct before they start work at the school.
- Contributes to inter-agency working and plans.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the school's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the Local Authority, BEAM and national guidance.

Child Protection Procedures

Guiding Principles

Our school Principal is responsible for liaising with BEAM Governors who may contact the local authority Designated Officer for Allegations and other partner agencies in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against any member of the school community.

Defined procedures related to the prevention, protection, and urgency of response and reporting of allegations of abuse or harm are followed by all staff and outlined below.

I. Prevention-reasonable measures are in place to minimize risk of abuse or harm.

- Appointing a designated authority, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to oversee all aspects related to the Child Protection Policy.
- Ensuring thorough recruitment practices.
- Training all ASCS staff with regard to this policy and its procedures.
- Adopting a supportive, open, and accepting attitude toward children so that they feel valued, listened to, and respected.
- Establishing a positive and secure environment in which children can learn and develop.
- Providing guidance to students related to safety.
- Providing support to all children including accessibility to confidentially discuss concerns related to any incidents of harm.

II. Protection-all appropriate actions are taken to address concerns regarding children's safety and well-being.

- Empowering children by providing guidance and information to understand acceptable treatment while diminishing possible incidents of abuse or harm.
- Providing a nurturing and safe environment free from harm and abuse.
- Ensuring confidentiality.
- Training stakeholders.
- Working with external partners when necessary including the local police department
- Monitoring suspected cases of abuse or harm.
- Providing counselling through ASCS's Guidance Counsellor or outside agencies when necessary.
- Reporting all incidents of suspected abuse or harm immediately according to ASCS procedure.
- Follow-up on all cases.

III. Urgency of Response and Reporting-all allegations or complaints that raise Child Protection issues shall be documented, reported, and raised to the appropriate authorities for further investigation.

- All ASCS are mandated reporters under UAE Law.
- All suspected cases of abuse or harm shall be immediately reported as specified by ASCS procedures.
- All suspected cases will be investigated by designated staff.
- All suspected cases shall be documented.

- Some suspected cases may require external investigation.
- National laws in the U.A.E. govern any legal action taken in cases of child abuse.

Dealing with a disclosure or allegation by a child or another person

Children in school may feel safe and secure enough to make a disclosure of past abuse or an allegation of current abuse or neglect to a member of staff whom they feel they can trust. A disclosure of this kind can arise at any time and may have been anticipated by staff or equally be unexpected. In these situations, school staff should:

- Demonstrate that they are willing to listen to what the child has to say
- Be prepared to listen impartially to the child, giving appropriate support, but without introducing their own opinions or judgement
- Be aware of documenting requirements
- Remember that they are working as part of a team, and must never make an unconditional promise of confidentiality to a child
- Record any concerns on Safeguard My School without undue delay and report to the DSL or the Deputy DSL
- Be aware that what the child has to say may be uncomfortable or distressing to them, and make clear to them that they may seek support, help or advice for themselves if required.

If a disclosure or allegation is made by any other person (parent, family member, another professional, etc.) regarding a safeguarding or child protection issue, the same principles regarding documenting and evidence will apply. Adults should be offered the opportunity to make a written statement, which should be signed and dated by them, and by any witness(es) to the statement. This should be uploaded to the specific concern on Safeguard My School.

Acting on a current child protection issue

If, after discussion with a DSL there is still cause for concern about a child, then the Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures will be followed. The DSL or a named deputy acting on his or her behalf will take the lead role in any safeguarding or child protection issue. The Head Office Safeguarding Governor is the initial contact point for any external referral and is responsible for keeping the school informed of the process from BEAM's perspective. If this has not been done already, a decision will be reached as to whether any immediate action is necessary to secure the child's safety and welfare, and on any subsequent investigation or action to be taken. ASCS holds at least two emergency contact numbers for each child, usually both parents, and if it is deemed appropriate, (i.e. if there is not an allegation against one of those contacts) these individuals will be contacted in the event of any safeguarding concern or incident at school without undue delay.

If a child protection concern, allegation or incident relates to a member of staff or a person working with children, then the BEAM Head Office will be notified without delay of any high level and/or substantiated allegations.

Where a child has made a specific statement, it may be necessary to clarify what they have said, and it is important to document this information accurately together with the circumstances in which the statement was given. The relevant person in the school should meticulously document all observations, concerns, discussions and actions; inclusive of the date and time they were noted, this forms the safeguarding chronology. These records must be uploaded to Safeguard My School and may provide important information that may be required for external referrals or subsequent court proceedings.

Do's & Don'ts

To admit to being abused takes a tremendous amount of courage. The child may feel ashamed; the child might even feel it is their fault. The child may also be afraid particularly if their abuser has threatened what will happen to them if they tell anyone. In some cases, the child may not even be aware that what is happening to them is abuse.

If a student talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will need to let the student know that they must pass the information on. Staff are not allowed to promise that they will keep it a secret. Staff will need to use professional judgement as to when to work this into the conversation as if they do so too early the student may shut down or think the staff member is dismissing what it is that they have to say. However, if left too late, the student may feel misled into confiding too much information.

Staff adhere to the following Dos and Don'ts when concerned about abuse or when responding to a disclosure of abuse:

Do's:

- demonstrate that you are willing to listen to what the child has to say
- create a safe environment by offering the child a private and safe place if possible so that the student can speak freely
- be prepared to listen impartially to the child, giving appropriate support, but without introducing their own opinions or judgement
- stay calm and reassure the child and stress that he/she is not to blame.
- tell the child that you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you.
- listen carefully and tell the child what you are going to do next.
- use the 'tell me', 'explain', 'describe' and/or mirroring strategy.
- tell only the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead verbally and complete the online report
- record in detail using the relevant forms without delay, using the child's own words where possible (not whilst the student is speaking but immediately after the conversation)

Don'ts:

- take photographs of any injuries.
- postpone or delay the opportunity for the learner to talk.
- take notes while the learner is speaking or ask the learner to write an account.
- try to investigate the allegation yourself.
- promise confidentiality e.g. say you will keep 'the secret'.
- approach or inform the alleged abuser.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused. It is very important that staff report all of their concerns, however minor or insignificant they may think they are – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk. It is always safer to report.

All staff record any concern about or disclosure by a student of abuse or neglect and report this to the DSL using the online reporting link via Safeguard My School. Once reported electronically, the system will notify the Designated Safeguarding Leads. It is the responsibility of each adult in school to ensure

that the DSL receives the record of concern without delay. In the absence of the DSL, staff members know to speak to the D/DSL.

The voice of the child is central to our safeguarding practice and learners are encouraged to express and have their views given due weight in all matters affecting them, knowing they will be listened to in a safe environment.

Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

If the concern is about a member of staff or volunteer, the matter is to be reported to the Principal. If the concern is about the Principal, the matter needs to be reported to the BEAM Safeguarding Governor. Refer to **Appendix C**.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is any disclosure of information that is made in the company and/or public interest and, in the reasonable belief of the individual that relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This could be happening at the present time, have taken place in the past or is likely to happen in the future. This may include:

- a criminal offence e.g. manipulation of accounting records and finances, or inappropriate use of school assets or funds
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a breach of any other legal obligation
- a concern relating to the safeguarding of children or adults
- the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters

Senior leaders within the school are to ensure all staff have access to the Whistleblowing Policy.

Low-Level Concerns About Adults

A low-level concern is any concern, however small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including outside of work, but that does not meet the threshold of an allegation of harm. Examples include being over-friendly with a child, having favorites, taking photographs of children on a personal device, engaging in inappropriate humour or conversation, or arranging to meet a child outside school.

Low-level concerns must be reported to the Principal, or to the BEAM Safeguarding Governor where the concern relates to the Principal, as soon as possible and on the same day where practicable. They are recorded in a confidential low-level concerns log, held separately from personnel files, so that patterns of behaviour can be identified. Concerns raised in good faith will never result in detriment to the person reporting.

The Principal reviews the low-level concerns log at least termly. Where a pattern emerges, or where a single concern is more serious than first appeared, the matter is escalated under the allegations procedure at Appendix C. Records of low-level concerns are retained and referred to when providing employment references only where they have resulted in disciplinary action.

Staff Behavior Policy (for safer working practice)

American School of Creative Science is committed to positive academic, social, and emotional outcomes for our learners underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the protection and welfare of our staff, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behavior.

The Staff Behavior Policy sets out staff behavior that should be avoided as well as those that constitute safe practice and supports our commitment to safeguarding children.

Teaching staff are additionally expected to act within the guidance of the 'personal and professional conduct' section of the Teachers' Standards.

In order to fulfill our obligations towards the welfare of our students, we have outlined good practices which set our code of conduct of our staff:

- All students will be treated with respect.
- All staff will act as role models ensuring to set a good example by conducting themselves in an appropriate manner at all times.
- All staff will work to involve students in decisions that affect them.
- All staff will create a safe environment where they encourage positive, respectful and safe behavior among students.
- All staff will be good listeners.
- All staff will remain vigilant and will be alert to changes in students' behavior and to signs of abuse and neglect and exploitation.
- All staff will recognize that challenging behavior could be an indicator of abuse.
- All staff will read and understand the school's child protection and safeguarding policy.
- All staff will read and understand all other policies that make up our safeguarding portfolio including our Anti-Bullying, Behavior, E-Safety, Staff Code of Conduct, etc.
- All staff will ensure appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between students and will avoid the use of sexualized or derogatory language.
- All staff will be aware of students' personal and family circumstances that may lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- All staff will report concerns about students' safety and welfare to the DSL.
- All staff will abide by the school's rules in regard to communication and relationships with students.
- All staff will abide by the school's social media policy.

Abuse of position of trust

ASCS Staff or volunteers providing care, supervisory and educational support to children are in a 'position of trust.' The position of trust carries with it certain expectations and responsibilities. Breaches of these expectations and responsibilities are likely to lead to disciplinary action and possible dismissal.

'Positions of trust' exist in professions where the professional is in a position of authority or status over a child or vulnerable person, e.g. school staff, volunteers, medical staff, therapists, coaches, drivers, services staff, bus staff, external providers and contractors.

All relationships developed with children will be as agents of the company and as such no personal relationships will be permitted outside the remit of the service. This means that adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviors which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and document any incident with this potential.

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behavior towards students is unacceptable and that their conduct towards students must be beyond reproach. Any relationship with a student, even if over the age of consent, is regarded as 'an abuse of a position of trust'.

The School's Staff Behavior Policy sets out expectations of staff.

Empowering Children to Keep Themselves Safe

ASCS ensures that children are taught about elements of safeguarding; including online safety, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. We ensure a curriculum that is relevant, and is sensitive to social, cultural and moral principles, exists in all phases of the school.

Vulnerable Children

It is the case that some children are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect than others. Various factors may act to contribute to the child's increased vulnerability. These include prejudice, discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication difficulties, a child's personality, a child's behavior, a child's disability, a child's mental or physical health needs, or a child's family circumstance. To ensure that all of our students receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are (This list is not exhaustive):

- Disabled or have special educational needs.
- Affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and violence or parental mental health needs.
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying behaviors.
- Living in temporary accommodation.
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, or disability.
- At risk of being drawn into extremism
- Living apart from one or both parents, or whose day-to-day care is provided by relatives, household staff or a guardian
- Newly arrived in the UAE, with limited language, social or family networks
- Young carers, or children with significant caring responsibilities at home
- Experiencing or affected by domestic abuse, including within their own intimate relationships
- Experiencing mental ill health, self-harm or suicidal ideation
- Absent or missing from education on repeated occasions or for prolonged periods
- Affected by a parent or carer being in custody, or by parental offending
- At risk of harmful practices, including forced or early marriage

Intimate Care

When providing intimate care, schools must follow the school's Intimate Care Policy including the provision of a risk assessment and risk reduction plan. This plan should be created in conjunction with the child's parents and key school staff.

Early Help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. At ASCS, we continually monitor the welfare of all of our students, and our staff remain vigilant and identify children who may benefit from early help as a problem emerges. These concerns are discussed with the DSL as we recognize that working to provide early help for these students will be more effective to proactively promoting their welfare than reacting later.

KCSIE 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children now describe this activity as Family Help, delivered at a community-based early help level and at a targeted level. ASCS retains the term Early Help for internal use; staff should understand the two terms describe the same principle of support provided as soon as a problem emerges, before statutory intervention is required.

The early help process should involve the child and family as well as all the professionals who are working with them. However, if by doing so this puts the child at further risk, relevant best interest decisions should be made, in consultation with UAE inter-agencies.

The school will keep the needs and circumstances of children receiving early help under constant review. If the child's situation does not improve and/or the child's parents and/or the child do not consent to early help being initiated, the school will make a judgement about whether, without help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, a referral to an external agency may be necessary.

All staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for additional support for any child who: is disabled or has special educational needs; has a mental health need; is a young carer or has significant caring responsibilities at home; has shown early signs of abusive, violent or harmful behaviour; is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery or trafficking; is at risk of being radicalized; has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending; is living in a family circumstance presenting challenges, such as substance misuse, adult mental ill health or domestic abuse; is misusing alcohol or other substances; is frequently absent or missing from education or from home; has been repeatedly removed from class or is at risk of exclusion; is living apart from their parents; or is newly arrived in the UAE and has limited social or family support.

Attendance

Students must attend school regularly to benefit from activities and discussions. Regular attendance enables our students to build upon the learning of the previous day and to grow as an individual. When a student is absent from class, a serious disruption of a student's learning and skills may result. If a student is continually absent this can have detrimental to their education. Therefore, attendance is monitored closely. Please refer to our **Attendance Policy** which is reviewed annually.

Children Absent from and Missing from Education

All children have the right to full time education. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalization.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Therefore, attendance, absence, and exclusions are closely monitored.

The DSL will monitor unauthorized absence and take appropriate action, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Where a student has 5 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to relevant BEAM Safeguarding Governor and relevant UAE authorities. The school will also comply with KHDA requirements for reporting non-attendance. Absence from education, particularly on repeat occasions or for prolonged periods, can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding risks, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, forced or early marriage, travel to conflict zones and mental ill health. Patterns of lateness, part-time attendance and repeated single-day absences are therefore reviewed by the DSL alongside safeguarding records.

The school will take reasonable steps to establish the whereabouts of the child which include:

- Phone calls to all known contacts including the emergency contact on file
- Emails to parents

- Messages via SMS
- Possibly a home visit if it is safe to do so
- Enquiries through other services the family is known to be using

All contacts and outcomes will be documented.

Bullying

The school has a detailed **Anti-Bullying Policy**. Bullying can take many forms and cause a great deal of distress for victims. It is very important that when a student feels that they are being bullied that they tell someone as quickly as possible. We urge friends of victims to tell someone if the victim is reluctant. This is because we need to know about it so that we can tackle it. Our students are encouraged to tell anyone they feel they can talk to. This can include their homeroom teacher, a member of our pastoral team, a subject teacher, a student council member. All of these people will know what to do and pass on the issue to the Phase Head of Section who will take charge of dealing with the incident.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the DSL will consider implementing 'early help' or child protection procedures.

Child-on-Child Abuse

All children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

KCSIE 2026 uses the term child-on-child abuse. Staff should understand that even where there are no reports in school, this does not mean it is not happening; it may be that it is not being reported. It is essential that all staff challenge inappropriate behaviour between children. Dismissing behaviour as 'banter', 'having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' risks creating a culture in which abuse is normalised and children do not come forward.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but is not limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying); abuse within intimate personal relationships between children; physical abuse; serious physical assault or the threat of harm with a weapon; sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent; the consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes; up-skirting; and initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals.

Child-on-child abuse is preventable. Staff are trained to recognise behaviours and risk indicators early, and the school provides timely support to children showing early signs of harmful behaviour as well as to those who are harmed. The school is also alert to when children may be at highest risk around the school day, including at transition points, at break and immediately before and after school.

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures as above where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a student's behavior warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

When dealing with abuse of students by other students, staff will be mindful of the potential for prejudice-based bullying; racist, disability abuse; gender-based violence and teenage relationship abuse. While mindful of the vulnerability of girls to violence, it is also recognized that boys too can be abused by both members of the same gender or opposite gender.

Members of staff who become concerned about a student's sexualized behavior, including any known online sexualized behavior, should record their concerns and report them to the DSL as soon as possible, as with any other safeguarding concern. The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behavior is complex as the school recognizes that youth who display sexualized behavior may have been victims of abuse themselves and the school would, therefore, need to apply child protection procedures for both the victim and the perpetrator.

Any instances of sexual harm caused by one student to another and any situation where there are concerns about power imbalance, coercion or force will be discussed with UAE agencies, and potentially the police.

In cases where a child displays sexualized inappropriate behavior, but where evidence of sexual harm towards other children is not clear, the school may seek consultation and advice from BEAM Safeguarding Governor who will make the following considerations when deciding on the appropriate response:

- The nature and extent of the inappropriate/abusive behaviors. In respect of sexual abuse, it is necessary to distinguish between normal childhood sexual development and experimentation, and sexually inappropriate or aggressive behavior
- The context of the abusive behaviors
- The child/young person's development, family and social circumstances
- The need for services, specifically focusing on the child/young person's harmful behavior as well as other significant needs; and/or
- The risks to self and others, including other children in the school, household, extended family, peer group and wider social network.

The school is committed to participating in plans both to provide students who are at risk from other children and those students who may present a risk to other children with appropriate services to address any concerns and, wherever possible, to facilitate ongoing access to education in school for all children concerned, subject to appropriate risk assessments and risk management plans.

We minimize the risk of peer-on-peer abuse by providing:

- a relevant curriculum, that helps children to develop their understanding of acceptable behavior, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe.
- established/publicized systems for children to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, supported and valued, and that the issues they raise will be taken seriously.
- The DSL liaises with other professionals to develop robust risk assessments and appropriate specialist targeted work for children that are identified as posing a potential risk to other children.
- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour
- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualized or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female students, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behavior and consent
- Ensuring students know they can talk to staff confidentially by speaking to the school Guidance Counsellor.
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a student harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.

If a student makes an allegation of abuse against another student:

The staff member must inform the DSL verbally and record the allegation online via our online reporting platform. Report but do not investigate. The DSL will:

- Ensure the concern is fully explored and recorded. The school does not conduct its own investigation into potential criminal conduct; where a criminal offence may have been committed, the matter is referred to the police and relevant UAE authorities
- If warranted, contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- Put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved – both the victim(s) and the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made – with a named person they can talk to if needed
- Consider the wishes and feelings of the child who has been harmed in deciding how to proceed, while recognising that the school's duty to act does not depend on their consent.
- Consider whether the child who has caused harm has themselves been abused, exploited or is otherwise at risk, and put safeguarding support in place for them.
- Put in place proportionate practical arrangements - for example seating, timetabling, supervision at break and travel arrangements - to keep the children apart while the matter is resolved.
- Notify the parents of all children involved, unless doing so would place a child at increased risk.

Nudes and Semi-Nudes (previously referred to as Youth Produced Sexual Imagery or Sexting)

All incidents of sexual imagery produced by youth will be treated as a safeguarding concern. Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (YPSI) is a relatively newer term which means:

- 'Youth produced' includes young people sharing images that they, or another young person, have created of themselves
- 'Sexual' is clearer than 'indecent.' A judgement of whether something is 'decent' is both a value judgement and dependent on context
- 'Imagery' covers both still photos and moving videos
- Current UK guidance (UKCIS, Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes) and KCSIE 2026 use the terms 'nudes' and 'semi-nudes' rather than 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery'. Staff should note the distinction between consensual sharing between children of a similar age, which may not be abusive but is still unlawful, and non-consensual sharing, which is both unlawful and abusive.

Sharing photos and videos online is part of daily life for many people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends, and record their lives. Photos and videos can be shared as text messages, email, posted on social media (ages 15 and above) or increasingly via mobile messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, etc.

Although the production of such imagery will likely take place outside of school, these issues often manifest in schools. We aim to respond swiftly and confidently to ensure that children are safeguarded, supported, and educated.

The primary concern at all times will be the welfare and protection of the young people involved. Young people who share sexual imagery of themselves or their peers are breaking the law. However, given their young age, the school believes it is important to avoid criminalizing youth unnecessarily. The school will work in partnership with external agencies with a view to respond proportionately to the circumstances of any incident.

All incidents of sexual imagery produced by youth must be reported to the DSL as with all other safeguarding concerns. If staff become concerned about sexual imagery in relation to a device belonging to the student, the member of staff will ensure to secure the device. It should be confiscated. However,

staff will not look at or print any of the images. The confiscated device will be turned in to the DSL, who will speak with appropriate staff and to the students involved.

Parents/caregivers will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm. If, at any point in the process, there is concern that a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made UAE Agencies and police. The police will always be informed when there is reason to believe that indecent images involve sexual acts.

The DSL will make a judgement about whether the incident is experimental or aggravated. Aggravated incidents involve criminal or abusive elements beyond the creation, sending or possession of sexual images created by young people. These include possible adult involvement or criminal or abusive behavior by young people such as sexual abuse, extortion, threats, malicious conduct arising from personal conflicts, or creation or sending or showing of images without the knowledge or against the will of a young person who is pictured.

When reviewing what response is necessary, the investigation will consider

- If there are any offences that warrant police investigation
- If child protection procedures need to be invoked
- If the parents/caregivers require support in order to safeguard their child
- If any perpetrators and/or victims need additional support

The DSL will make a judgement about whether or not a situation in which indecent images have been shared with a small number of others in a known friendship group with no previous concerns constitutes an aggravated incident, or whether the school is able to contain the situation in partnership with all parents of the students involved, arrange for the parents to ensure that all indecent images are deleted and that the young people involved learn from the incident in order to keep themselves safe in future.

In the latter instance, the DSL will usually consult with the police to check that no other relevant information is held by those agencies and to ensure an agreed response is documented before proceeding.

Adults should not view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is good and clear reason to do so. The DSL will endeavor to respond to these incidents based what they have been told about the content of the imagery. The images will never be viewed if the act of viewing will cause significant distress or harm to a student. If a decision is made to view the images, the DSL will ensure:

- This is the only way to make a decision about whether to involve other agencies. This stipulates that during the course of the investigation it was not possible to establish facts from the youth involved.
- Viewing is necessary in order to report the image to a website, app or suitable reporting agency to have it taken down, or to support the young person or parent in making a report
- Viewing was unavoidable because a young person has presented an image directly to a staff member or the imagery has been found on a school device or network.

If it is necessary to view the imagery, then the DSL will:

- Never copy, print or share the imagery as it is illegal to reproduce such imagery
- Discuss the decision to view with Designated Safeguarding Governor in order to obtain approval
- Ensure viewing is undertaken by the DSL
- Ensure viewing takes place with the Designated Safeguarding Governor in the room. The Safeguarding Governor does not need to view the images but is present in the room when they are being viewed by the DSL. The viewing will take place in the DSL's office.
- Ensure wherever possible that images are viewed by a staff member of the same sex as the young person in the imagery.

- Ensure a second senior member of staff is present in the room while the imagery is viewed, whether or not that person views the images.
- Never copy, photograph, print, forward or store the imagery on any device.
- Record the details of the viewing of the imagery in the student's safeguarding record. The DSL must note who was present, the date of viewing, why the image was viewed, and any subsequent actions.

If the school has decided that other agencies do not need to be involved, then consideration will be given to deleting imagery from devices and online services to limit any further sharing of the imagery.

Financially Motivated Sexual Extortion (Sextortion)

Staff should be alert to financially motivated sexual extortion, in which a child is coerced into sharing a nude or semi-nude image and is then threatened with its release unless money is paid. Children affected are victims of a crime and must never be blamed. Any concern of this kind is reported immediately to the DSL, who will contact the parents, secure evidence without viewing or forwarding images, advise the child to stop all contact and not to pay, and refer to the Dubai Police Child Protection Centre. Staff should be aware that shame and fear of getting into trouble make children reluctant to report, and that the risk of self-harm in these cases is significant.

Online Safety

The school's **E-Safety Policy** explains how we strive to keep students safe in school and work to protect and educate our students in the safe use of technology. Any form of cyberbullying will be taken seriously and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Any serious incidents may be dealt with in line with our child protection policy.

The school categorises online risk under four headings, and the curriculum, filtering and staff training address each:

- Content: exposure to illegal, harmful or age-inappropriate material, including pornography, self-harm and suicide content, extremism and radicalisation, misinformation and disinformation, and material generated by artificial intelligence.
- Contact: harmful interaction with others, including grooming, adults posing as children, peer pressure and unwanted contact through games and messaging apps.
- Conduct: the child's own online behaviour, including the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, online bullying, and creating or sharing harmful content.
- Commerce: online gambling, in-app purchasing, phishing, financial scams and financially motivated sexual extortion.

Filtering and Monitoring

The Governing Body ensures that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on all school devices and networks, that these are reviewed at least annually, and that roles and responsibilities for managing them are clearly assigned and understood. The DSL holds lead responsibility for online safety and for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place. Filtering and monitoring must be proportionate and must not unreasonably restrict what children can be taught about staying safe online. Alerts generated by monitoring systems are reviewed and, where they indicate a safeguarding concern, recorded on Safeguard My School and actioned by the DSL.

Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technology

Staff and students are made aware of risks associated with generative artificial intelligence, including AI-generated harmful or sexualised content, the creation of manipulated or 'deepfake' images of real children, AI companion applications, and the use of AI tools to facilitate bullying or harassment. The creation or sharing of sexualised images of a child, including AI-generated images, is treated as a child protection concern and reported to the DSL.

All incidents of youth produced sexual imagery (YPSI) will be dealt with as safeguarding concerns. All incidents of YPSI should be reported to the DSL as with all other safeguarding issues and concerns. Staff will not make their own judgements about whether an issue relating to YPSI is more or less serious enough to warrant a report to the DSL. If, at any point in the process, there is concern that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will seek advice without delay from the BEAM Safeguarding Governor and, where required, refer to the relevant UAE authorities.

Educating and guiding students to keep themselves safe

The UAE School Inspection Framework stipulates that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a 'broad and balanced curriculum.' Our students access a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and, with the support of staff, work out how those risks might be reduced or managed. Discussions about risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behavior rather than fear or anxiety. Digital safety is integrated into our morning wellbeing curriculum as well as guidance on personal, social, emotional development. Students are also taught to understand and manage risk through our Moral Education lessons, and through all aspects of school life. In both our wellbeing curriculum and Moral Education classes, children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children are also reminded regularly about online safety, the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying procedures.

The school continually promotes an ethos of respect for children and students are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.

The Moral Education and Wellbeing curriculum specifically include the following objectives:

- Developing student self-esteem and communication skills
- Developing strategies for self-protection including online safety
- Developing a sense of the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behavior in adults and within peer relationships (positive relationships and consent)

Training

ASCS Administration recognizes the importance of stakeholder transparency and takes on the role of providing all necessary training for the effective implementation of this policy. Training modules included in the appendices section of this policy ensure all staff involved are provided clear guidance as to their roles to ensure good practice throughout the school.

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to recognize the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern. New staff who will have direct contact with children and volunteers will receive an explanation during their induction which will include:

- The school's child protection and safeguarding policy.
- Signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.
- Responding to disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child.
- Reporting and recording arrangements.
- Details of the DSL.
- The identity of the Deputy DSLs and the Allegations Manager, and how to raise a concern about an adult.
- The Staff Code of Conduct, including low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing.

- The Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies, including measures to prevent bullying and cyberbullying.
- The school's response to children who are absent from education.
- Online safety, including the school's filtering and monitoring arrangements and staff roles in relation to them.
- Child-on-child abuse and the school's procedures for responding to it.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads and Child Protection Officer will undergo formal training every two years. In addition, to this training, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (for example via e-bulletins, meeting other CPOs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at least annually to

1. Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments.
2. Have a working knowledge of how local authorities in Dubai conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
3. Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff.
4. Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.
5. Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
6. Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses.
7. Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them.

All staff, volunteers, and governors will receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training and thematic updates as required (at least annually) during inset days and regular discussions at staff meetings, to provide them with the requisite skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively in line with UAE guidance and any requirements of BEAM.

From September 2026, KCSIE removes the shortened version of Part One that was previously available. Accordingly, ASCS requires all staff - including those who do not work directly with children, such as administrative, facilities, catering, transport and security staff - to receive the same core safeguarding briefing and to sign to confirm they have read and understood this policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

Training is tiered as follows: Level 1 basic safeguarding awareness for all staff, volunteers and Governors, annually and before commencing work on site; Level 2 enhanced training for pastoral staff, social workers, heads of section, counsellors and the SENDCo, at least every three years; and Level 3 DSL training for the DSL, all Deputy DSLs, Child Protection Officers, the Allegations Manager and the Principal, renewed at least every two years with practice updates at least termly.

External providers, coaches, therapists and regular contractors receive a Level 1 safeguarding briefing before beginning work on site, with a signed register retained. Where contractors are on site without training, for example for emergency works, they are supervised at all times and work is scheduled outside student hours wherever practicable.

A training register is maintained by the DSL, and the impact of training - not merely attendance - is evaluated annually and reported to the Governing Body.

Visitors

Visitors to the school, including contractors, must be appropriately supervised. All visitors complete a signing in/out form, wear a school ID badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site, and are provided with key safeguarding information including the contact details of safeguarding personnel in school. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in school are kept safe.

Scheduled visitors in a professional role (e.g. fire officers, BEAM officials, etc.) are asked to provide evidence of their role and employment details (usually an identity badge) upon arrival at school.

If the visit is unscheduled and the visitor is unknown to the school, we will contact the relevant organization to verify the individual's identity, if necessary.

Site Security

The school maintains a secure site with controlled access. All visitors sign in and out, wear an identifying badge and lanyard, and are supervised at all times unless their pre-employment checks are recorded on the Single Central Record. Perimeter security, gate supervision and arrival and departure arrangements are reviewed annually and after any incident. Students are supervised at all points of the school day, including arrival, break, transition, lunch, dismissal and bus loading, and supervision rotas are published. Any breach of site security is reported to the Principal and recorded.

Extended School and Off-Site Visits

All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment and must satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. When ASCS children attend off-site activities, including day or residential visits and work-related activities, the Principal is responsible for ensuring that effective safeguarding and child protection arrangements are in place. The Principal must ensure that the school has followed procedures as outlined in the ***Educational Trips and Visits Policy***.

If other organizations provide services or activities on the school site, the school will ensure that there is an appropriately trained safeguarding lead and check the organizations have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment and health & safety procedures. The school must ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to report safeguarding concerns.

Behavior Management

Our school works to establish a culture of visible consistency across all phases, ensuring students see all staff as a united front who are fair, consistent, caring, and model respect. This consistency works to create a safe environment conducive to learning as learners know what to expect and enjoy positive student-teacher relationships. Please refer to ***our KG Behavior Policy, Elementary Behavior Policy, and Middle & High School Behavior Policy***.

Mental Health

There is still a huge stigma around mental health which can prevent students from getting the support they require. Mental health problems can lead to young people being disruptive, difficult, withdrawn and disturbed, and it's vital that the indicators are recognized so that these children are identified and supported.

We recognize that mental health issues can present a significant safeguarding concern especially if left untreated. At ASCS we aim to pick up signs of mental health issues in any of our students as soon as possible. Our Social Worker is also our Wellbeing Champion. Our social worker receives regular training on mental health including areas on depression and anxiety, self-harm, and eating disorders.

Our aim at ASCS is to:

- Spot the early signs of a mental health issue in young people so that early help procedures can be applied
- Feel confident helping a young person experiencing mental ill health
- Help protect a young person who might be at risk of harm
- Help prevent a mental health issue from getting worse
- Help a young person recover faster

- Guide a young person towards the right support
- Reduce the stigma of mental health issues

Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation

Only appropriately qualified professionals may diagnose a mental health condition. School staff are not expected to diagnose, but are well placed to notice warning signs, which may include significant changes in behaviour, ongoing difficulty sleeping, withdrawal from social situations, loss of interest in things the child usually enjoys, and physical signs of self-harm or self-neglect.

Any disclosure or suspicion of self-harm, suicidal ideation or a suicide attempt must be reported to the DSL immediately and recorded on Safeguard My School the same day. The student must not be left unsupervised while the DSL is contacted. The DSL will initiate the school's Care Protocol, which includes a risk assessment and a written risk management and safety plan drawn up with the student where appropriate, the parents and key staff, and reviewed at agreed intervals.

Where a child is judged to be at immediate risk, the school will call the emergency services and arrange for the child to be taken for urgent medical assessment, with the parents informed without delay. Where a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, child protection procedures take precedence and are followed alongside pastoral support.

Staff are reminded that they must not promise confidentiality, must not use social media or personal devices to communicate with a student in distress, and should seek supervision and support for themselves following any such disclosure.

Photography

In order to document events in school and to document a child's learning journey, photographs are taken within the school. However, to protect our students, the school will:

- Seek parental consent (parents sign a social media consent form)
- Seek the student's consent for photographs to be taken or published
- Ensure the students are appropriately dressed
- Encourage students to express if they are concerned about any photographs taken of them.
- Ensure photographs are not taken on personal devices but rather a school registered device.

Mobile phones, cameras, and SMART devices

Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones or SMART devices e.g. SMART Watches to school for their own use but will limit such use to non-contact time (outside classroom in staffroom) when students are not present. Staff members' personal phones or SMART devices will remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with pupils.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of students on their personal phones, cameras, or SMART devices.

Student use of mobile phones, smart watches and other personal devices is governed by the school's Behaviour and Online Safety Policies. Students must not photograph or record other students or staff without permission. Any device believed to contain a nude or semi-nude image of a child is secured and passed to the DSL without being viewed, in line with the procedure set out above. Staff must not search a student's device themselves.

Distance Learning

Building positive relationships with students is important to staff at ASCS. These guidelines aim to support staff maintain those positive relationships in a safe way whilst we conduct online learning. When school is suspended and Distance Learning is implemented, normal school safeguarding policies and protocols apply. The principles of Keeping Children Safe in Education and this guidance continue to

apply. The way the school is currently operating is fundamentally different to business as usual, however a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- The best interests of students must always continue to come first
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about a student they should continue to act and act immediately
- The DSL & Deputy DSL's are fully contactable with details available
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online

Video conferences whilst different in nature should be kept as near to normal as possible between the student(s) and staff. Whilst this may feel different for parents, caregivers and students, the school aims to create an environment that mirrors usual practice as much as possible. To ensure high quality teaching, learning and pastoral care, this may involve times when staff speak with one student at a time.

To safeguard staff and students please follow these guidelines:

Academic Staff should:

- Keep doors open, and if possible, have another teacher/adult in the same room or in line of audio or visual sight when speaking with an individual student via video conference.
- Ensure all face-to-face conversations use the official school software/ platforms
- If one-to-one, record the conference
- Store recorded conferences on school drive/server not personal drive or server
- All live teaching lessons should be recorded by the teacher.
- When a live lesson is finished, students should exit the session and the teacher should end the session
- Live lessons should take place during school hours
- Live lessons should take place from an environment that is quiet, safe and free from distractions. Ideally position yourself where there is a wall/curtain behind you.
- Live/recorded lessons must be delivered in professional dress
- If a pupil were to behave inappropriately, the school's normal Behavior policy will apply.
- A record of attendance should always be kept, iCampus should be updated daily
- Forms of less formal communication, e.g. memes, emojis, GIF/giphys, stickers, text talk should not be used.

The Guidance Counsellor should:

- Only use the official school online learning platform to video conference or call.
- Seek permission from the parent to carry out 1:1 sessions with students
- Ensure any 1:1 sessions with students are recorded
- Store recorded conferences and case logs on school drive/serve, not personal drive or server

Do:

- Do feel free to contact students. This is important to them and makes them feel connected to the school community. They will appreciate you reaching out to offer support.
- Use the school's official e-learning platform
- Use only your school e-mail when communicating with students or parents
- Share lesson resources via the school's OneDrive and using the class Microsoft Team account owned by the school
- Organize support lessons as needed after seeking approval from your Head of Section and notify parents and seek their permission for their children to attend these sessions.

Don't:

- Give your personal number out.
- Make contact through social media.
- Meet students outside of school to re-teach content, chat or support.
- Become too familiar with the students. Remember you are staff and they are children which means boundaries exist and should not be crossed.

Child Protection concerns may arise. If children disclose a concern, please follow the Child Protection protocol by:

- Validating the student's feelings, reassure them and thank them for trusting you with this information.
- Reassuring the student that the concern will be handled with care and this includes letting someone else know.
- Contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Report via our online safeguarding platform.

Safer Recruitment

All staff are subject to safer recruitment processes and checks and we follow the local authority and BEAM recruitment and hiring procedures.

At American School of Creative Science, we scrutinize all applications for paid or voluntary posts. We undertake interviews and make appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Pre-screening Form.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- Complete an application form which includes their employment history and explains any gaps in that history.
- Provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children.
- Provide evidence of identity and qualifications.
- If offered employment will be subject to vetting and barring checks relevant to their country of origin.
- If offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UAE. :

The School will:

- Ensure that every job description includes a description of the role holder's responsibility for safeguarding.
- Ask at least one question at interview for every role in school about the candidate's attitude to safeguarding and motivation for working with children.
- Verify the preferred candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.
- Obtain references for all shortlisted candidates, including internal candidates.
- Carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UAE.
- Ensure that applicants for teaching posts are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the country of origin
- Obtain a Good Conduct Certificate or equivalent police clearance, as required for UAE residency and employment, and any additional overseas criminal record checks for each country in which the applicant has lived or worked.
- Ensure that at least one member of every interview panel has completed safer recruitment training.

- Verify references directly with the employer, never accept open references or references provided by the candidate, and take up references before interview wherever possible.
- Explore any gaps in employment history and any concerns arising from references at interview, and record the outcome.
- Ensure that no member of staff, volunteer or contractor has unsupervised access to children until all pre-employment checks are complete and recorded on the Single Central Record.
- Apply the same standard of check to volunteers, coaches, therapists, bus staff and staff employed by external providers who work on site.

We maintain a single central record of the essential checks as set out in the policy, that have been carried out and certificates obtained.

The Single Central Record is maintained by a named member of staff, checked termly by the DSL and audited annually by the Governing Body. Any concern that arises about an existing member of staff after appointment is managed under the allegations and low-level concerns procedures in this policy.

All new staff will undergo an induction that will include familiarization to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and will sign to confirm they have received a copy of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Identifying the Signs of Abuse

Identifying the signs

To ensure that our students are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behavior constitute abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

There are **four** categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can be perpetuated by both males and females.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or caregiver failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

All staff know how to recognize and are alert to the signs of neglect and abuse. Refer to **Appendix H** for an overview of all indicators of abuse.

Children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Students with additional needs face an increased risk of abuse and neglect. Staff take extra care to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse or neglect. We never assume that behavior, mood, or injury relates to the student's additional needs without further exploration. Staff understand that additional challenges can exist when recognizing abuse and neglect in learners with SEND, including communication barriers. Staff recognize that children with SEND are also at a higher risk of peer group isolation and can be disproportionately affected by bullying.

To address those additional challenges, extra pastoral support is considered for children with SEND and they are also encouraged to discuss their concerns. The D/DSL works with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) to identify learners with additional communication needs and whenever possible, these learners are given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills.

Staff Concerned about a Student's Welfare

At ASCS we maintained the attitude of "It could happen here" recognizing that any student could become a victim of abuse.

A staff member may have noted what seems to be real and credible evidence that a student is being abused. However, there will be instances where a staff member may suspect that a student is at risk but not have 'real' evidence. There may be more subtle signs such as change in behavior, artwork, themes or ideas expressed in their writing that indicate the child might be in distress. In cases such as these, staff will try to give the student the opportunity to talk. The signs noted could be the result of a variety of factors such as a parent moving out, death in the family, etc. It is okay for the staff member to ask the student if he/she is okay or if he/she needs any support. With such concerns, the staff member must report to the DSL as per any other concern about a child's welfare. Concerns which do not meet the threshold for child protection intervention will be managed through the Early Help process.

Reporting

We follow an online system for reporting safeguarding concerns. All staff are able to log their concerns via **Safeguard My School**

Link to report: <https://edukeyapp.com/safeguard/american-school-of-creative-science-nas>

Code: ASCS_SAFE

Once a concern is reported the designated safeguarding leads are notified electronically prompting them to review the concern. Once reviewed, the staff member will receive a confirmation email that the safeguarding concern has been seen by the designated safeguarding lead.

Only the designated safeguarding leads will be able to review the report and will be able to update the status of each case logged at each stage of the investigation, etc. **Refer to Appendix A.**

All staff are required to report via the above secure online platform.

In the event of a disclosure, best practice is followed as soon as is practically possible:

- Report via SafeguardMySchool and speak directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Listen but do not ask leading questions. Your role is not to investigate the disclosure
- Record your notes on SafeguardMySchool, which is a secure platform.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behavior and the words used by the student.
- If required, SafeguardMySchool includes a body map where you can indicate the injury site.
- Record statements and observations, not interpretations or assumptions.

Following an initial concern being raised, it is essential that any subsequent discussions with children or others are accurately documented on Safeguard My School as soon as possible.

Any written information should be clearly signed and dated then be uploaded onto the SafeguardMySchool platform by attaching a PDF of the original documentation. The original information should always be filed and stored securely with the DSL. Any records may be required as part of a subsequent investigation, and they could be used as evidence in court if there is a criminal prosecution. Consequently, it is vital that all written records are accurate and factual. Any allegations or statements made by a child or by any other person should be documented verbatim (documenting the exact words used) wherever possible. The person, who made the allegation or statement, and any witness who was present, should countersign any written record.

As soon as a child protection issue or concern has been raised, a timely and accurate record must be made by the DSL of all events, reports, decisions, actions taken and outcomes. This should be entered into SafeguardMySchool.

On some occasions, it may be deemed necessary to obtain photographic evidence of suspected injuries to a child. School staff (including medical staff) must not photograph children. This evidence will be obtained by the Police, external medical professionals or child protection services. School staff may document details in writing of any visible injuries or illustrate the position and extent of the injuries on SafeguardMySchool using the body map but must not take any photographs of a child.

Specific Safeguarding Issues

Safeguarding issues rarely occur in isolation, and in most cases several issues overlap. All staff are trained to recognise the following, and to report any concern to the DSL without delay. This list is not exhaustive.

- Child criminal and sexual exploitation: staff should be alert to unexplained gifts, money or possessions; association with older individuals or groups; changes in emotional wellbeing; substance misuse; going missing or returning home late; and declining attendance or engagement. A child cannot consent to their own exploitation and must be treated as a victim, even where they have committed offences under coercion.
- Domestic abuse: children may be affected by abuse in the home or may experience abuse within their own intimate relationships. Where the school becomes aware of a domestic abuse incident affecting a student, the DSL ensures that key staff are informed on a need-to-know basis so that timely, discreet support can be provided that day.

- Serious violence and weapons: any concern that a child is carrying, threatening with or using a weapon, or is at risk of or involved in serious violence, is reported to the DSL immediately. The DSL assesses risk to the individual and to others, puts a safety and support plan in place, and involves the authorities where required.
- Radicalisation and extremism: staff should be alert to changes in behaviour that may indicate a child is being drawn towards extremist ideology, and report concerns to the DSL, who will act proportionately and seek advice from the BEAM Safeguarding Governor and the relevant UAE authorities.
- Modern slavery, trafficking and children living apart from their families: staff should be alert to children whose care arrangements are unclear, who are living with adults who are not their parents or legal guardians, or whose attendance, appearance or account of home life raises concern.
- Harmful practices, including forced or early marriage and female genital mutilation: any disclosure or suspicion is treated as a child protection concern and reported to the DSL immediately, who will seek advice from the BEAM Safeguarding Governor and the relevant UAE authorities. Staff must not attempt to resolve such matters with the family directly.
- Cybercrime: children with strong technical skills may drift into offences such as unauthorised access to systems or denial-of-service attacks, sometimes without appreciating that these are crimes. Concerns are reported to the DSL, who will consider a preventative and educational response alongside any required reporting under UAE cybercrime legislation.
- Substance misuse: concerns about a student's use of alcohol, vaping products, prescription or illegal substances are treated as a safeguarding as well as a behaviour matter, and are reported to the DSL.
- Extra-familial harm: where a child may be at risk in the community, in a peer group, at a workplace or online, the DSL records the contextual information available and includes it in any referral, so that the response addresses the source of harm and not only the child's behaviour.

Confidentiality

It is expected that staff will naturally engage in day-to-day conversations about commonplace concerns about students in the interest to work together to ensure the student's needs are being met and to devise needed action plans or individual learning plans that when followed through collaboratively will work to ensure positive outcomes for the student. However, safeguarding concerns are not to be discussed amongst staff. Any safeguarding concern will be reported by the staff member with the concern directly to the DSL. The DSL receiving the concern will then decide who else needs to receive the information and the DSL will disseminate the information on a need-to-know basis.

All staff are aware that they cannot promise a child confidentiality and that they must when reporting to the DSL provide accurate, factual information.

The school makes every effort to store the information reported in a secured platform recognizing the sensitivity of this information.

Information Sharing, Retention and Transfer of Records

Data protection requirements do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must never be allowed to stand in the way of safeguarding a child. Staff who are unsure whether to share information should speak to the DSL, and the presumption is always in favour of sharing where a child may be at risk of harm.

Safeguarding records are held securely on Safeguard My School, separately from the student's general file, and are accessible only to the DSL and Deputy DSLs. Records are retained in line with UAE requirements and BEAM retention schedules, and in any event until the child reaches the age of 25, given that safeguarding records may be required long after a child has left the school.

When a student transfers to another school, the DSL transfers the safeguarding file securely and separately from the general school file, obtains confirmation of receipt, and speaks directly to the DSL at

the receiving school where the child is vulnerable or a concern is open. Where a child leaves the UAE, the DSL records what information was shared, with whom and on what basis.

Support for Children, Families and Staff

Safeguarding concerns cause distress for children and anxiety for families and staff. The DSL acts as the central point of contact, offering access to the school counselling service, external support and helpline details, and liaising with the BEAM Safeguarding Governor where specialist support is required. Staff involved in a concern are offered a debrief and access to support, and are reminded that they may seek help for themselves. Staff wellbeing is considered as part of the DSL's case review.

Complaints

Any complaint that contains a safeguarding or child protection element is recorded on Safeguard My School and managed under this policy in parallel with the school's Complaints Policy. A complaint must never delay a safeguarding referral. Where a complaint concerns the school's handling of a safeguarding matter, it is referred to the BEAM Safeguarding Governor.

UAE Safeguarding Mandate for Educators

The following information can be used in a school/service's literature/website to inform parents of the expectations of school staff regarding UAE child protection legislation:

'Under UAE governmental guidance, schools must make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Parents/carers should know that the law requires all school staff to pass on information, which gives rise to a concern about a child's welfare, including risk from neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Staff will seek, in general, to discuss any concerns with the parent/carer and discuss the need to make a referral to UAE agencies if that is considered necessary, however, this discussion will only take place where such discussions will not place the child at increased risk of significant harm or cause undue delay. The school will seek advice from UAE agencies when they have reasonable cause to suspect a child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Occasionally, concerns are passed on which are later found to be unproven. Parents/carers will appreciate that the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead carries out their responsibilities in accordance with the law and acts in the best interests of all children.

National Child Protection in Educational Institutions in the United Arab Emirates Policy

Notifying Parents

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents. This must be handled sensitively, and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

If we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with BEAM Safeguarding Governor and relevant UAE agencies.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved.

Making a Referral to Children's Social Care

The DSL will make a referral to UAE agencies, and the police, if it is believed that a student is suffering or is at risk of suffering harm.

The student (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child or create undue delay.

Audit

The nominated D/DSL for safeguarding liaises with the principal and other health and safety members to complete an annual safeguarding audit return to the Governing Body BEAM.

Review and Revision

The ASCS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and all specified procedures are subject to annual scheduled review and revision to ensure newly employed staff are sufficiently trained, policy procedures are transparent among all stakeholders, and implementation is carried out readily.

Appendix A: Child Protection Policy Procedures

Procedure protocol is a basis for eliminating further instances of abuse or harm. All allegations should be handled on a case-by-case basis. Respecting the rights of the parties involved and ensuring confidentiality must be considered at all time. The immediate response, urgency of the matter, and the investigation shall dictate the process.

All allegations of abuse or harm will be taken seriously by all ASCS Staff who will follow the procedures as specified below. This document should be used as a guideline as each case will require individualized attention.

All allegations will be addressed with urgency and will be reported to the appropriate staff immediately. Any staff noticing signs of abuse or harm or any staff to whom allegations of abuse or harm were reported will inform the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is the School's Principal who will instruct/advise staff of the next steps in the process of reporting and documentation of any alleged instances of abuse or harm.

All information is recorded on Safeguard My School and stored securely; any paper records are scanned, uploaded and then stored in a locked cabinet accessible only to the DSL. A preliminary investigation will be conducted to observe the child and collect pertinent information. The DSL will inform the Phase Social Worker, CPO, who will also gather necessary information. The ASCS Administration will be notified accordingly depending on the nature of the allegation.

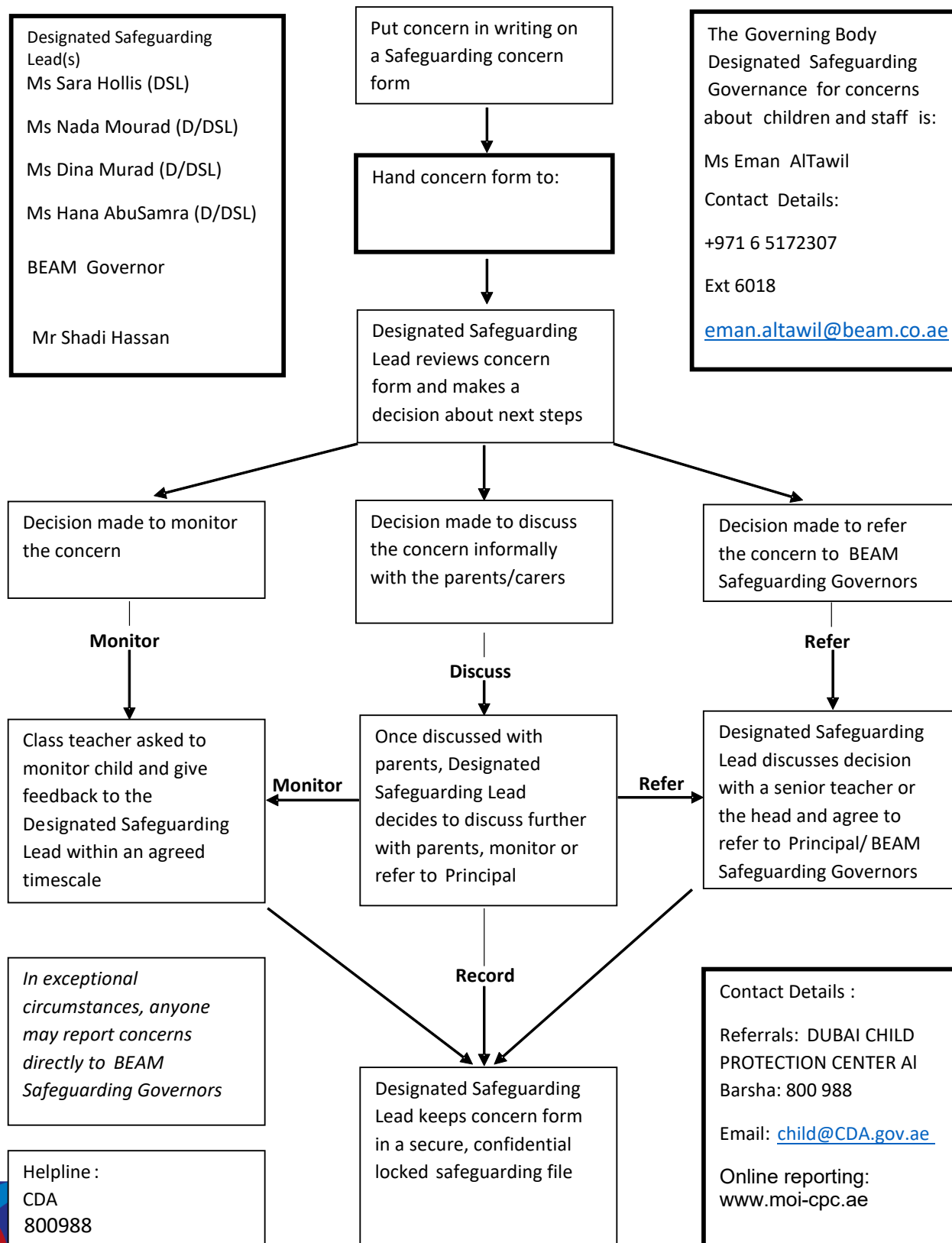
Observation and investigation will be carried out regardless of the magnitude of the allegations. All documentation will be kept confidential as deemed necessary.

Outside agencies may be contacted to assist in the process of investigation and with any legal ramifications.

Subject to the outcome, counselling and intervention sessions along with behavioural plans may be implemented.

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

FLOW CHART FOR RAISING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD



Appendix B: Child Protection Policy – Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the protection of personal, private, and sensitive information. ASCS recognizes and reinforces the importance of protecting an individual's privacy.

In order to establish a form of trust among children, it is important to ensure a child understands their personal information will be treated respectfully and confidentially. ASCS staff support a safe and nurturing environment of effective care and realize the student/staff relationship is essential to creating such an environment.

- ASCS is committed to developing creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard while recognizing the responsibility to use, hold, and safeguard information received.
- ASCS is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust by all involved and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.
- All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff on a need to know basis. This includes contact information, telephone numbers, and emails.
- All reports and documentation shall be maintained on our secured online reporting platform.
- A consent form will be signed by any pertinent members for a release of information to any investigating agency such as a medical doctor or law enforcement agent.

Exceptions: Limited Confidentiality Circumstances

The key to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare often hinges on the timely sharing of information as it enables intervention to take place immediately.

If a child is at risk of being abused or harmed, confidentiality can be breeched in order to provide the necessary response. The release of information without consent is supported by ASCS in order to provide the highest care to all children suspected of being abused or harmed.

ASCS staff must use their professional judgments based on individual case facts whether information should be shared. The key consideration in making these judgments is the safety and welfare of the child. There should be a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing information without consent.

Appendix C: Allegations of Abuse Against Staff

This section of this policy applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Suspension

Suspension will not be the default position and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the Principal (or chair of governors where the Principal is the subject of the allegation) – the ‘case manager’ – will take the following steps:

- Immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children’s social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police before consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children’s social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children’s social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children’s social care services, as appropriate
- If immediate suspension is considered necessary, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
- If it is decided that no further action is to be taken in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- If it is decided that further action is needed, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children’s social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate.
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children’s social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence)

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- Make a referral to the authority where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

We will inform the local authorities of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made.

Timescales

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will institute appropriate action within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we will hold this within 15 working days

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the case manager and the school's personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to make a referral to the relevant authority for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the KHDA to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching (as appropriate).

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

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Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the Principal, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the Principal, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a student.

Confidentiality

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the local authority's designated officer, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above)

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file, and provide a copy to the individual. We will retain these records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

References

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are substantiated, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

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This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

Appendix D: ASCS Staff Training Modules

Training Packet

Practical learning tools, resources, and exercises

Note for review: the mandated reporter training modules below are based on the California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act and are not aligned to UAE law. They should be replaced with training built on Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 (Wadeema's Law), the UAE Ministry of Education National Child Protection Policy and KHDA requirements, delivered at Levels 1 to 3 as set out in the Training section of this policy. The California materials may be retained only as supplementary background reading.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - School Principal-Vice Principal(s), Heads of Phases, School Guidance Counsellor and SENDCO.

Objectives:

To introduce all ASCS staff to the Child Protection Policy and to equip them to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate their knowledge in safeguarding the well-being of children.

Child Protection:

Safeguarding Children – the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm – is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking appropriate action.

All ASCS staff are mandatory reporters. A mandated reporter shall report concerns and allegations of abuse or harm to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If any ASCS staff is informed of a concern related to the protection of children, the staff member is obligated to report information to the DSL. The DSL will decide on the appropriate response, which may include internal pastoral support, an Early Help plan, or referral to the relevant UAE authorities. The school does not investigate suspected criminal conduct.

Online Training Modules

The following online training modules were developed by the California Department of Social Services.

Purpose:

To address the specific issues and concerns of School Personnel with regard to mandated reporting requirements.

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Desired Outcomes:

This program is self-paced and will provide an overview of the significant definitions, requirements and protections of the California Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA). You will learn:

- What the law requires of you as a mandated reporter
- How to spot indicators of possible child abuse or neglect
- How to talk to children about suspected abuse
- How to make a report
- What happens after a report is filed
- Special issues related to child abuse reporting in the school environment

The School Personnel module includes vignettes and is self-paced. At the conclusion of the training, you will take a final test that requires an 80% or higher score to pass. Upon passing the test, you will be able to print verification of your completion of the training.

<http://mandatedreporterca.com/training/educators.htm>

Mandated Report Training and Exam

The following online training modules were developed by the California Department of Social Services.

This program is self-paced and will provide an overview of the significant definitions, requirements and protections of the California Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA). You will learn:

- What the law requires of you as a mandated reporter
- How to spot indicators of possible child abuse or neglect
- How to talk to children about suspected abuse
- How to make a report
- What happens after a report is filed
- Special issues related to child abuse reporting in the school environment

At the conclusion of the training, you will take a final exam, which will test the information that you have learned during the training. Upon scoring an 80% or higher you will be able to print your certificate and will be emailed a proof of your completion of this training. This standalone training does not require the General Training to be taken first.

Training Instructions - There are many interactive pieces to this website, anytime you see an item Underlined and hyperlinked you can hover over it or click on it to interact with it. Make sure your Pop-up blocker is disabled as well for the training website.

<http://educators.mandatedreporterca.com/default.htm>

ASCS Training:

The importance of the R's: Recognizing, Responding, Recording, and Reporting

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1. Recognize

Child abuse occurs when a child has been subjected to physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and/or neglect which has resulted in, or is likely to result in, harm to the child's wellbeing. Child abuse may involve ongoing, repeated or persistent abuse, or arise from a single incident.

2. Respond

How should I respond if a child discloses information regarding abuse or harm? All staff must be aware of the immediate needs of children making disclosures and respond accordingly.

If a child discloses information to you:

- Use protective interrupting (see next page) if their disclosure is in a public situation (for example, during a lesson).
- Find a quiet place to talk.
- Reassure the child that telling was the right thing to do.
- Allow the child to tell the story in their own words.
- Let the child know what might happen next.
- Show support by using active listening.
- Assess the child's immediate safety.
- Document and report the allegations to the DSL as soon as possible.

***You are advised to avoid the following behavior:

- Dismissing or ignoring the disclosure.
- Putting words in the child's mouth, pushing for details.
- Making the child repeat the disclosure to a third party.
- Stopping the child from talking once there are reasonable grounds for forming a belief that abuse occurred.
- Promising not to tell when there are clear limits on confidentiality.
- Confronting the person believed to be the abuser.
- Engaging in general staffroom discussion about the child's disclosure.

NOTE: Staff should be aware that a disclosure can arouse personal feelings of shock, anger and helplessness. It is important to conceal these feelings at the time of a disclosure.

3. Record

Documentation of allegations of abuse or harm must be detailed, descriptive, and factual. The Initial Mandatory Report Form is available from the DSL and should be filled out immediately after concerns are made.

4. Report

Reporting involves providing information to the DSL in regard to any concerns or allegations made. The DSL and social worker will decide if outside agencies must be contacted for further investigation.

Appendix E: Protective Interrupting

What is protective interrupting?

Protective interrupting is a strategy to prevent a child disclosing in front of other students and providing them with the opportunity to disclose in a safe and confidential manner.

Protective interrupting involves the following steps:

1. Interrupt the child by acknowledging them and preventing further disclosure e.g. "Thank you, it sounds as though you have something important to talk about, why don't we have a chat at recess?"
2. Be supportive and gently indicate that the child can talk in a more private situation.
3. Quietly arrange to see the child as soon as possible.
4. Listen attentively in a private location within the school and reassure the child that telling was the right thing to do.
5. If abuse is disclosed, explain to the child that because they are being harmed you need to make sure they are safe and gain some help for them. **Do not promise the child you will keep it secret.**
6. Reassure the child that the abuse was not their fault.
7. Explain what is likely to happen next.
8. Report the abuse as soon as possible. Follow procedures within this policy.

Appendix F: Types of Abuse

Abuse occurs in different settings and in different ways. It is important to recognize there is no specific set of circumstances eluding to child abuse or harm. Each case is different and should be evaluated according to the individual. Typically, harm can come from one self, peers, adults, or society. These are described as:

Self-harm: deliberately cutting or harming oneself; suicidal thoughts; attempted and actual suicide.

Peer Abuse: bullying (physical and/or psychological); physical and sexual abuse; gang violence.

Abuse by Adults: domestic violence (physical, psychological, sexual); corporal punishment in schools and organizations; sexual abuse and exploitation.

Societal Abuse: a social, political, economic and cultural environment, which actively encourages or condones violence against children, e.g. political campaigns that encourage 'clearances' of street children.

Religions and cultures, which encourage physical and humiliating punishment of children as acceptable childrearing practices; harmful traditional practices.; high prevalence of violence in the media; cultural

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attitudes which condone violence against women in the home / which promote ideas of women and children as being the 'property' of men / parents rather than as human beings deserving of equal rights.

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone vents that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

Definitions of Child Abuse

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. It is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

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. It is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

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. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in 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. It involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)
- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Appendix G: Resources & Exercises

Articles:

Why and How to Talk to Children-Listening as a Way of Life

This article discusses the importance and benefits of listening, being able understand how children feel, and how listening is a foundation for honesty, collaboration, and responding to challenges. Included are case studies to help promote effective listening skills.

<http://lx.iriss.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Why%20and%20how%20we%20listen%20to%20young%20children.pdf>

Bullying- What children are telling us about bullying

This article talks about types of bullying and key issues surrounding bullying.

<http://lx.iriss.org.uk/content/what-children-are-telling-us-about-bullying>

Child neglect: Experiences from the Frontline

The damaging effects of neglect are discussed.

<http://lx.iriss.org.uk/content/child-neglect-experiences-frontline>

It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright: Report of the Child Protection Audit and Review

A report focusing on the reduction of child abuse and neglect.

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<http://lx.iriss.org.uk/content/its-everyones-job-make-sure-im-alright-report-child-protection-audit-and-review>

PRACTICAL EXERCISE 1:

What are we protecting children from?

To exchange ideas on what 'child protection' means to different people and to come to an agreed definition.

Brainstorm ideas: participants contribute ideas on - 'What are we protecting children from?'

Possible answers: abuse, neglect, violence, adults, bad people, strangers, war, drugs, unwanted diseases, discrimination, bullying, and/or pain.

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.

A **Child Protection Policy** provides a framework of principles, standards and guidelines on which to base individual and organizational practice in relation to areas, such as:

- Creating a 'child safe' and 'child friendly' organization (in relation to environmental safety as well as protection against physical, psychological and sexual abuse)
- Prevention of abuse
- Personnel recruitment and training
- Robust management systems
- Guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate behavior / attitude
- Guidelines for communications regarding children
- Recognizing, reporting and reacting to allegations of abuse
- Ramifications of misconduct for those failing to follow the policy

PRACTICAL EXERCISE 2: 'Abuse or not abuse?'

To clarify how you decide what makes one thing abuse and another thing not abuse.

Divide into pairs or small groups, discuss the following statements and decide whether they refer to cases of abuse or not. Keep the following questions in mind:

How did you decide?

What makes one thing abuse and another thing not abuse?

Is it abuse when.....

- A 12 year old is slapped hard with a hand?
- A baby is shaken by its mother?

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- A father sleeps in the same bed as his 12 year old daughter?
- A mother sleeps in the same bed as a 14-year-old son with a disability?
- Parents walk around the house naked in front of the children?
- A mother tells her young son that she wishes he had never been born?
- A man persuades a 10 year old into sexual acts by offering affection and money?
- A 13 year old boy is beaten with a belt for telling lies?
- A 6 year old girl is left on her own at home, for several hours every night, while her mother goes out to work?
- A 7 year old boy is sent out to sell sweets on the streets for 10 hours a day?
- A 10 year old girl is told to go out and not return home until she has enough money to buy food for supper?
- A 2 year old is tied to a post while her mother is making bricks by hand?

Keep in Mind-Perceptions

What is the context of the behavior?

Is the behavior age appropriate?

Are there cultural, gender, or religious factors to consider?

Is the activity of a sexual nature?

Are the forms of discipline proportionate to the behavior?

Is the behavior repeated?

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Appendix H: Indicators of Neglect & Abuse

Common Indicators and Signs of Abuse and/or Neglect:

<u>Physical Abuse:</u>	✓ 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
<u>Neglect:</u>	✓ 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
<u>Emotional Abuse:</u>	✓ Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed ✓ Highly anxious ✓ Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder ✓ Fear of new situations

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	✓ Low self-esteem ✓ Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations ✓ 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 ✓ 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, baby-sitter or indeed excessive clinginess to parents/carers ✓ Panic attacks
<u>Sexual Abuse:</u>	✓ 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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Appendix I: 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 – don't 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.

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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.