



The Australian School of Abu Dhabi

ASAD Child Protection Policy

September 2023

ASAD CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

The Australian School of Abu Dhabi is concerned about the welfare and safety of all its students. It attempts to create an environment where students feel secure and valued and are listened to and taken seriously.

Aims

We aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school in compliance with local requirements (ADEK).

As recommended, the policy recognises the need for a designated practitioner to safeguard children and liaise with local authorities as appropriate.

Practice and Procedure

Guiding Principles

- All staff should be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and know to whom they should report concerns or suspicions.
- A Designated person with knowledge and skills in recognising and acting upon child protection concerns is the first point of contact for staff and parents when a problem is identified.
- Staff with designated responsibility for child protection should receive appropriate training.
- There is an effective whole-school policy against bullying.
- We operate safe recruitment procedures. The school will ensure that any complete, part-time, supply, or volunteer staff are security checked before employment/engagement. This whole school requirement should include all ancillary and academic teaching staff.
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements will be remedied immediately.

Teaching and Learning

There is a Designated Person whose main tasks are to:

- Ensure that the principal is kept fully informed of any concerns.
- Ensure that all staff is aware of these procedures.
- Ensure that the safeguarding procedures are followed in the school.

- Ensure that appropriate training and support are provided to all staff.
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns.
- Ensure that accurate records are maintained on individual cases, kept securely, and marked “strictly confidential.”
- Guide parents and staff about obtaining support.

Specifically:

- Any staff member concerned about a child must inform the Designated Person immediately. They will tell the principal.
- Staff members must record information regarding their concerns on the same day. The record must be a clear, concise, factual account of the observations.
- The Designated Person, in consultation with the principal, will decide whether the concerns should be referred to an outside agency (ADEK and Police).

Recognising Child Abuse – When to be concerned

All staff members, including visiting staff, paid and unpaid, must be aware and alert to possible outward signs of abuse or neglect (see Appendix 1). These signs may include one or more of the following:

- An injury that is not typical of the bumps and scrapes associated with everyday activities or is inconsistent with any explanation given.
- Frequent injuries even when reasonable explanations are given.
- Sudden changes in behaviour, performance, or attitude.
- Anxiety or low self-esteem.
- Knowledge of sexual matters beyond what would typically be expected or sexual behaviour that is unusually explicit or inappropriate to the child’s age.
- Disclosure of an experience in which the child may have been significantly harmed.

Dealing with a Disclosure

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely.

- Reassure the child, but do not make promises that might be impossible.
- Do not promise confidentiality, as it might be necessary to refer the case to the Social Police and ADEK.
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not their fault and stress that talking was proper.
- Listen rather than ask direct questions; ask minimal open rather than leading questions.
- Explain what must be done next and who must be told.

Assessment and Record Keeping

- Make notes as soon as possible after the conversation.
- Do not destroy the original notes in case a court needs them.
- Record the date, time, place, and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child.
- Record the injury site on a body map (appendix 1).
- Record statements and observations, not interpretations or assumptions.

UAE Regulations and Support

If an incident occurs, the school must report it to ADEK – PSQA (Licensing and Accreditation Division) verbally as soon as possible after it has happened and in writing within 24 hours. (See contact numbers). Depending on the severity of the case, the school may need to report it to the Higher Committee of Child Protection, which is part of the Ministry of Interior Affairs.

A Family Protection Centre opened by HH Sheikh Fatema Bint Mubarak provides advice and counselling, medical and psychological checks, and follow-up. It also provides accommodation and support homes for abused women and children (up to 14 yrs. of age.)

Allegations Involving School Staff

Allegations against staff, volunteers, or the Designated Person should be reported to the principal. Any staff member with reason to suspect that a child may have been abused by another staff member, either at school or elsewhere, must immediately inform the principal. A record of the concerns must be made, including a note of any witness to the incident or allegation.

If an allegation is made against the principal, this should be reported to the Assistant Director General, who will contact the appropriate school representative.

Suppose the staff member is deemed unsuitable after an internal investigation. Suppose the school reports it to ADEK PSQA immediately, ADEK approval will be taken, and all necessary actions to end the staff member's ability to work in the UAE will be accepted.

Guidelines for Staff

This guidance is issued within this policy to protect both staff and students. In education, all relationships are founded on trust. Those in positions of faith need to understand the power this gives them over those in their care and the responsibility they must exercise.

- Do not let suspicion, disclosure, or abuse allegations go unreported or unrecorded.
- Do provide access for students to talk to you about any concerns they may have.
- Plan activities that involve more than one other person being present or are at least within sight or hearing of others.
- If speaking to a child alone is necessary, always inform another staff member where you are.
- It is advisable not to close the door of the room.
- recognise that caution is required in sensitive moments of counselling on matters such as bullying, grief, or abuse.
- on residential trips, students and staff must have separate sleeping accommodations.
- avoid situations that compromise your relationship with students and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust.
- during the coaching of sports or instrumental teaching, where a degree of physical contact may be inevitable, staff must be particularly aware that this should only be used to develop skills/techniques or to treat or prevent injury.
- staff are advised to avoid transporting a single child in a vehicle except in an emergency.
- remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned.
- do not have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with students. Avoid suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun.
- do not jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts.

- do not rely on your good name to protect you.
- do not believe “it could never happen to me.”

School Contact Telephone Numbers:

Waleed Barminy (Principal) 02 586 6980 or 02 586 6981

Dr Jehan Yousef (Assistant Director General) 02 586 6980 or 02 586 6981

Amel Hag Ahmed (Senior Mistress (Girls) 02 586 6980 or 02 586 6981

Tamer Hussain (Senior Master (Boys) 02 586 6980 or 02 586 6981

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing bodily harm to a child. Physical damage may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health to a child in their care.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child that causes severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are unloved, worthless, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet another person's needs. It may feature age- or developmentally inappropriate expectations imposed on a child. It may involve a child frequently feeling frightened or in danger or the exploitation or corruption of a child or children.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to participate in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g., rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and physiological needs, likely to result in the severe impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter, and clothing, protect a child from physical harm or danger, or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Appendix 2 - Signs of Abuse and Neglect

Some of the signs and behaviours which may indicate that a child is being abused:

- repeated minor injuries
- children who are dirty, smelly, poorly clothed, or who appear underfed
- children who have lingering illnesses which are not attended to, deterioration in schoolwork, or significant changes in behaviour, aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums
- an air of 'detachment' or 'don't care attitude'
- overly compliant behaviour
- a 'watchful attitude.'
- sexually explicit behaviour (e.g., playing games and showing awareness which is inappropriate for the child's age), continual open masturbation, aggressive and improper sex play
- a child who is reluctant to go home or is kept away from school for no apparent reason

- does not trust adults, particularly those who are close
- 'Tummy pains' with no medical reason
- eating problems, including over-eating, loss of appetite
- disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed-wetting
- running away from home, suicide attempts
- self-inflicted wounds
- reverting to younger behaviour
- depression, withdrawal

Appendix 3 - Lost Child Procedure

To minimise the possibility of a child getting lost, all staff must be vigilant in checking the number of children in their care. This means that headcounts should automatically occur after break times and at the beginning of lessons in addition to the statutory keeping of attendance registers. The practice will ensure that if a child should go missing, the loss is quickly discovered. In the event of a missing child, the loss should be immediately reported to the Principal, Senior Mistress/Master, or a senior member of staff, who will then direct the course of action.

This will include any or all of the following:

- Alert other staff members and deploy appropriately while maintaining adequate supervision of the remaining children.
- Question children.
- Conduct a thorough search of the buildings and outdoor area.
- If the child has not been found within 15 minutes, parents and possibly the police should be contacted.
- Continue to search involving as many adults as possible, opening the area and keeping in touch by mobile telephone.

Appendix 4 - Late Collection Procedure

Late Collection from School

If a child is not collected at the end of the school day, the child remains the school's responsibility until alternative arrangements have been made.

Each instance is different, and staff needs to act on the initiative, but the following procedure is likely to be “best practice.”:

1. Allow a 30-minute leeway for average delay or lateness.
2. After 30 minutes, the child(ren) will go to the front office to be supervised.
3. Office staff will call parents/collecting persons or allow the student to do this.
4. The child should not be left alone and should be reassured that the situation will be resolved.
5. Under no circumstances should a child be allowed to go with another parent without consent from the child’s parent or the principal/ senior master or mistress.
6. The child(ren) will remain in the front reception supervised until picked up.

Late Collection from After-School Activities

Those in charge of after-school activities ensure that the students in their care are safely collected at the end of the session. If a child is not collected, the “activity leader” will stay with the child for 15 minutes to allow for average delay or lateness. After this time, the activity leader will take the child(ren) to the front office, where they will be supervised.

1. Office staff will call parents/collecting persons or allow the student to do this.
2. The child should not be left alone and should be reassured that the situation will be resolved.
3. Under no circumstances should a child be allowed to go with another parent without consent from the child’s parent or the principal/ senior master or mistress.
4. The child(ren) will remain in the front reception supervised until picked up.

Appendix 5 - Intimate Care for Children

Children occasionally have accidents or injuries that necessitate some personal care. When dealing with these situations, it is essential to consider two factors.

- Respect the privacy of the child.
- Be aware of the staff member’s vulnerability in assisting the child.

The following procedure is designed to create a ‘best fit, considering both factors.

- The practitioner dealing with the incident should inform one of the other adults
- Leave doors slightly ajar but closed enough to give as much privacy as possible
- Try to arrange for other children to use an alternative cloakroom if possible
- Wear disposable latex gloves
- If the child is old enough, ask them to remove soiled garments
- Use sealed wipes or a disposable flannel with antibacterial soap to wash the child, avoiding any intimate contact
- Use a towel to dry the child, again avoiding any intimate contact; the towel will need to be laundered after use
- Rinse off the soiled clothes, then place them in a plastic bag ready to give to parents or carers at pick-up time

If the situation frequently happens with a particular child, discussing toilet training techniques with the parents or carers would be appropriate so that routines are the same at school and home. Suggesting that a child takes a few days out of school to re-establish regularity may be necessary.

Appendix 6 – Bullying

Objectives

To provide a safe school environment that is free of harassment and bullying.

Guidelines

Definition

Bullying is an act of aggression that causes someone to feel fearful, threatened, embarrassed, excluded, or in pain over an isolated period or repeatedly for an extended period. Teachers will ensure that the following forms of bullying are dealt with appropriately. Bullying can take many forms, including:

- **Physical bullying** - includes fighting, pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, aggressive play fights, or any unwanted touching used to harm, hurt, or intimidate. It also includes any deliberate property damage.
- **Verbal bullying** – includes name calling, putting people down (both to their face and behind their back), intimidating noises, and teasing people about their race, religion, appearance, family, or friends.
- **Visual bullying** – offensive notes or electronic material, either handwritten or computer generated, damaging other people’s possessions, and giving people looks and non-verbal signs used to intimidate them.

- **Exclusion** – deliberately leaving people out of activities or treating them as if they do not exist, spreading rumours, gradually making social invitations in front of them but not to them.
- **Extortion** – using stand-over tactics to control someone else’s behaviour, e.g., Giving up possessions, buying food or drink, doing the work for them, picking on others, and using threats.
- **Sexual bullying** – touching or brushing past sexually, sexually-oriented jokes, drawing or writing about someone’s body, unwanted advances of a sexual nature, using rude names, and asking questions about others’ personal lives.
- **Cyberbullying – students are telephoning others to harass, cause discomfort or spread rumours.** Sending an email, SMS, or MSN that harasses, intimidates, causes discomfort, or spreads rumours.

ASAD will:

- provide a safe environment through diligent yard supervision, astute classroom observation, and adherence to the Behaviour Management plan.
- provide a supportive environment that encourages and allows students to develop feelings of belonging and trust.
- incorporate social skills and resilience programs into the curriculum
- ensure that the Behaviour Management plan is continually reviewed to ensure a cohesive approach by all staff.

Implementation

- The Principal and Management coordinators will monitor all reported incidents and ensure that these are addressed.
- Through various strategies, management coordinators and teachers will address the sequential development of social skills, self-esteem, resilience, and communication.
- Student leadership programs will be developed across the school.
- Students will be reminded regularly that bullying will not be accepted.
- Staff will have regular professional development in Student Welfare.

Appendix 7 - Bus Travel

Purpose:

- To ensure that students travelling to and from our school by bus do so safely and in a manner consistent with the UAE policies and regulations.
- To ensure that issues relevant to bus travel are handled effectively and efficiently.

Guidelines:

- When students travel to or from home, on an excursion, or any other school event, seat-belted buses will be used where possible.
- Students will be expected to travel with seat belts permanently fastened.
- Close liaison between all Bus Supervisors and the Bus Manager must be maintained.
- Bus drivers, supervisors, and teachers travelling with students will ensure students follow the bus rules.
- Consequences for misbehaviour will be consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

Implementation

- Bus drivers, supervisors, and teachers will inform students that seat belts are to remain correctly fastened throughout the bus trip.
- Bus drivers and supervisors will ensure that all persons travelling are familiar with the bus rules before the start of each trip and apply consequences for non-compliance.

Bus Rules

1. **Always** stay in your seat.
2. No shouting or talking loudly. If the driver can hear you, it is too loud.
3. Do not contact other students or annoy them in any way.
4. Do not speak rudely to other students, supervisors, or drivers.
5. Do not call or signal people outside the bus.
6. Do not throw anything out of the bus.
7. No eating or drinking inside the bus.
8. Always keep the bus clean and do not litter.
9. Students must sit in their assigned seats.
10. Front – senior boys
11. Middle – young students
12. Back – senior girls
13. Always respect the driver and supervisor.

Appendix 8 - Student Behavioural Management

Discipline in the school reflects an attitude to orderly behaviour among all members of the school community, promoting proper conduct in all situations. It is more likely to arise from positive reinforcement within clear guidelines than through threats and punishment. The aim of discipline within the school is behaviour modification, not the instilling of fear and coercion.

Research has shown that punishment is not very effective in eliminating unwanted behaviour and can have adverse effects on emotional development:

- Though punishment temporarily suppresses the deviant behaviour, it becomes channelled into aggression and reappears as soon as the punisher leaves the room.
- If misbehaviour is attention seeking, punishment reinforces and increases the probability that misconduct will continue.
- Punishment produces avoidance behaviour, i.e., avoiding the teacher's way, skipping classes, pretending to work, cheating, or daydreaming.
- Punishment can create resentment against the teacher, damaging the teacher/student relationship.
- Punishment can generate anxiety in the student being punished and in others who witness the punishment, which can hinder performance.
- Punishment for poor performance causes students to assess themselves as failures, generating a poor self-image and continually reinforcing the expectation of further loss. The effects of this cycle can last a lifetime and flow into everything the person attempts to do.
- The punishment may become associated with the general environment in the student's mind and generate negative feelings towards the school and school-related activities.
- When a teacher punishes, a behaviour model is given that would be undesirable if copied by the students.
- Punishment teaches students that "might is right" and morality involves avoiding punishment and seeking reward.

This is not to say that all punishment is wrong or ineffective. Instead, it should always be borne in mind that a sentence must be directed toward eliminating unwanted behaviour through behaviour modification. It should not be an automatic response inflicted without considering the possible consequences. The first and perhaps most important consideration in any attempt to foster a spirit of discipline within the school is the quality of the environment within which the students work and play. If teachers are poorly prepared, if the equipment is not in place, if there is nothing for the students to do, if the students are bored, and if the students are poorly organised, nothing can be done to instil discipline. All activities within the school day must be well organised so that all concerned know what to do. The school must ensure that facilities are provided and in good order. The second consideration concerns the knowledge of procedures and regulations. The school community must know the rules and policies governing all activities. No area can be left to chance. Thirdly, reinforcing the rules and regulations must be consistent with a commonly held policy. Any differences in views must give way to the agreed-upon procedure so that the students see no inconsistencies in the reinforcement of discipline. Lastly, punishment for wrongdoings, in whatever form, must be a last resort, used only after thought-out behaviour modification techniques have been tried. The emphasis should always be on the positive so that a sense of discipline grows from fostering a feeling of self-worth within a positive, relaxed school environment. Students with difficulty learning who create behavioural problems indicate their inability to find a place in the class through constructive activity. They resort to inappropriate behaviour to gain recognition, significance, and a feeling of belonging.

Classroom misbehaviour is often directed towards one of four goals:

1. **Attention seeking:** Students who seek attention aim to put teachers in their service or to receive special recognition. The clown, the nuisance, and the lazy student are examples of attention seekers. The teacher's typical reaction is often to feel minor annoyance, and this reaction may temporarily stop the misbehaviour, but it will soon reappear.
2. **Inadequacy:** Students who display inadequacy are discouraged and no longer have hope for success or recognition in class. They cease to make any effort. They appear stupid or incompetent. They desire to be left alone, so their assumed deficiency may go unnoticed. Most students who perform very poorly in school operate on this goal. Their failure has nothing to do with ability--but reflects their wrong decision about what to do concerning their lack of recognition or success. The teacher often feels like giving up, but this reaction will reinforce the student's disinterest.
3. **Power:** Students whose goal is power believe they belong by being the most powerful. They may be stubborn, disobedient, defiant, apathetic, argumentative, and uncooperative. Their failure to complete assignments or homework is frequently an attempt to defeat teachers. If the teacher responds to the challenge personally, the behaviour will persist.
4. **Revenge:** Students who seek revenge feel hurt and disliked. They wish to hurt others as they have been injured, and their purpose is to get even. They are sullen, morose, vicious, cruel, violent, and moody. If the others feel deeply hurt, the behaviour is intensified.

Building up a positive atmosphere will go some way toward resolving many discipline problems. Teachers may apply individual psychology in the following ways:

- Go against the first impulse: Whatever the teacher feels like doing is often precisely what the student wants. Therefore, teachers (and parents) must learn to act rather than react.
- Use the encouragement process. Students experiencing difficulties in a subject or negative attitudes towards it have lost confidence in their ability to meet the demands teachers make upon them. Mistake-centered approaches provide a series of discouraging experiences by putting before the students' errors they have made or their inappropriate work habits. By focusing on mistakes, the student's confidence is eroded.

Practices that aim to encourage students to include the following:

- Build on assets and strengths while minimising mistakes and deficiencies.
- Emphasize the activity, not the result.
- Provide recognition for effort.
- Show faith in students and their ability so that students may have faith in themselves.
- Establish group cohesion. One of the best methods of achieving this is by sharing responsibilities. The class should take responsibility for misbehaviour and decide what will be done as a group.

Development of self-discipline in the student:

- Mutual respect for all (student/teacher, teacher/student, and student/student) should be fostered.

- Students are not to be detained in classrooms at recess, lunchtime, or before or after school unless the class teacher remains in the room.

BASIC RULE - no teacher in the room, no student in the room.

- Students must move through/between buildings quietly and orderly; whole classes and groups must be supervised, e.g., moving to the library.
- Students must not be sent out of the room to stand in the corridor as a disciplinary measure.
- Any serious discipline problem is referred to the Senior Master/Mistress and Principal, respectively.
- All students are expected to keep school grounds and buildings neat.

General Discipline Procedures

When positive behaviour modification techniques fail to cause a change in a student's behaviour pattern, and this pattern becomes disruptive to the normal functioning of the class, a series of discipline procedures may be resorted to. These same procedures may be resorted to solve any intractable discipline problems in or outside the classroom.

Quiet discussion:

The teacher talks with the student or class about the problem, and the student or the course agrees upon suggestions to remedy the situation. The teacher may also employ minor procedures such as the "thinking chair" or a "quiet corner" to allow students to reflect or become aware of their role in developing the problem.

Withdrawal:

The student may be isolated from the other students and given a task to keep him occupied or withdrawn from the class or playground.

Extra duties:

Students may be given extra duties to perform at home or during their free time at school. Care should be taken so that these additional duties are monitored.

Removal of Privileges:

Privileges ranging from minor to major may be withdrawn either temporarily or permanently. Removal from a position of responsibility or keeping the student from participating in the desired event (sport, games, excursion) is a severe matter. They should be decided upon only after much thought.

Discussing the problem with another teacher(s):

Usually, the Principal or Relevant Senior Mistress/Master should be aware of the problem student. The teacher may discuss the problem with another teacher (s) who teaches the same student. This technique may help to resolve some mild concerns. If the problem persists, more senior authority should become involved, and further action(s) may be necessary.

Contacting Parents:

If a problem persists, parents will be contacted by phone or letter to make them aware of the problem's existence and its rebellious nature. These contacts should be done through senior authority, e.g., Student Management Leaders, Senior Master/Mistress, or Principal. When informed, parents could be of good use as they may discuss the matter with the student and decide on appropriate measures from their side.

Conduct Cards

If a student's behaviour pattern becomes disruptive to the normal functioning of the class, parents will be contacted, and the student will be placed on a conduct card for two weeks. This may be extended if the student's behaviour does not meet the expectations.

A student placed on a conduct card must present it to their subject teacher at the start of each lesson to ensure the teacher can comment on the student's behaviour.

The student must take the conduct card home daily for parents to read and sign.

Parent Interviews:

Parents may be called to the school, through senior authority, to discuss the matter in person in the student's presence to see if some changes in the unwanted behaviour can be achieved. More severe episodes may require discussion without the student being present.

Classroom teachers are encouraged to take an active role in counselling and disciplining students at any stage. This may include lunchtime detentions, cleaning duties, additional work, etc.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE SCHOOL AND WILL RESULT IN TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT.

