

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## Ambassador International Academy

**Created: January 2019**

| Review Date    | Reviewed By             | Verified by | Uploaded / School Website |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| September 2024 | HoP, Hos, VP            | Principal   |                           |
| September 2025 | HoP, Hos, VP            | Principal   |                           |
| September 2026 | SLT / Safeguarding Team |             |                           |

## **1. Purpose and Scope**

Ambassador International Academy (AIA) is committed to providing a safe, secure and supportive environment in which every child can thrive and develop. Safeguarding is the responsibility of every adult in the school community. This policy sets out the school's arrangements for preventing harm, identifying concerns, responding to disclosures, recording and escalating concerns, and working with families and relevant authorities when required.

This policy applies to all AIA staff, leaders, volunteers, visitors, contractors, third-party providers and any adult working with or having access to students through school activities, including school trips and off-site activities.

## **2. Guiding Principles**

- The best interests, safety and wellbeing of the child are paramount.
- All children have the right to be protected from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation without discrimination.
- Children should be listened to, taken seriously and supported to express their views.
- Safeguarding concerns must be acted upon promptly; staff must never assume that someone else will report a concern.
- Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with safeguarding, legal and data-protection responsibilities.
- No member of staff may promise a child complete confidentiality where a safeguarding concern is disclosed.

## **3. Legal and Regulatory Context**

AIA's safeguarding arrangements are informed by the laws and regulatory expectations applicable to schools in the UAE and Dubai, including Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 concerning Child Rights (Wadeema's Law), KHDA requirements and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

- Wadeema's Law establishes children's rights to protection, education, health, appropriate living standards and equal access to essential services and facilities.
- AIA staff are reminded that notification of child-protection concerns is mandatory for educators and others entrusted with the protection, care or education of a child.
- The UNCRC principles reflected in this policy include non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life and development, and respect for the child's views.

## 4. Safeguarding Team and Responsibilities

### 4.1 AIA Safeguarding Team

| Role                                       | Area                | Current post-holder at publication                         |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)         | Whole School        | Rania Hussein – Vice Principal                             |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)         | Secondary           | Alistair Hamilton – Head of Pastoral                       |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)         | KG & Primary        | Sheldene Ann Scott – Assistant Head, Pastoral Care Primary |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) | Secondary           | Snehil Gianchandani – School Counsellor                    |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) | Primary / Inclusion | Suman Singh – Head of Inclusion                            |

The safeguarding flowchart displayed around the school identifies the current safeguarding team. Where staffing changes occur, the displayed flowchart and staff communications take precedence over names printed in this policy.

### 4.2 Principal and Senior Leadership

- Maintain a culture in which safeguarding is understood as everyone's responsibility and concerns can be raised safely.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding leadership, time, resources, training and systems are in place.
- Ensure safer recruitment practices and required checks are completed for staff and relevant adults.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements are implemented across the school and reviewed regularly.
- Support appropriate liaison with KHDA, the Ministry of Interior/Child Protection authorities, Dubai Police or other relevant authorities when required.

### 4.3 DSL/DDSL Responsibilities

- Receive, review and respond to safeguarding concerns and disclosures.
- Ensure concerns are recorded appropriately on iSAMS and that actions and decisions are documented.
- Assess risk, coordinate appropriate support and determine escalation in consultation with school leadership and relevant authorities where required.
- Maintain secure safeguarding records and monitor patterns or recurring concerns.

- Ensure staff know how to report concerns and receive appropriate safeguarding updates and training.
- Work with pastoral, counselling, inclusion, health and academic teams as appropriate to support the child.

#### **4.4 Responsibilities of All Staff and Adults**

- Remain alert to signs of abuse, neglect, vulnerability or other safeguarding concerns.
- Listen to children and take concerns seriously.
- Report and record concerns promptly using AIA procedures.
- Maintain professional boundaries and follow the staff Code of Conduct and safe-working expectations.
- Do not investigate allegations or question a child beyond what is necessary to establish the basic concern.
- Cooperate with safeguarding actions and maintain appropriate confidentiality.

#### **5. Reporting a Safeguarding Concern**

AIA uses iSAMS as the formal school system for recording safeguarding concerns. The Safeguarding Team receives an alert when a concern is logged.

- Formal safeguarding concerns must be recorded on iSAMS. Do not send safeguarding concerns by email.
- If there is an immediate or urgent risk, call the relevant DSL/DDSL at once. Urgent verbal escalation does not replace the requirement to create the formal safeguarding record on iSAMS.
- Records must be factual, clear and based on what was seen, heard or disclosed rather than assumption or interpretation.
- Record the date, time and place and, where relevant, the child's exact words and any visible injury or other relevant information.
- Record as soon as possible. Where contemporaneous recording is genuinely not possible, the record should be completed within 24 hours.
- Safeguarding information must not be discussed casually in corridors, staff rooms or other public areas.

## 6. Responding to a Disclosure

When a child discloses abuse or another safeguarding concern, staff should follow AIA's Responding to Disclosures approach:

| Step     | Expected response                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| React    | Take what you are being told seriously. Remain calm, avoid judgement, do not panic or show shock/anger, and do not criticise the alleged perpetrator. Do not ask leading questions. |
| Receive  | Acknowledge what you have been told and allow the student to speak at their own pace.                                                                                               |
| Record   | Make a factual record as soon as possible. Record exactly what was said rather than your interpretation, together with the date, time and place.                                    |
| Reassure | Tell the child they have done the right thing by speaking. Never promise that the information will remain confidential.                                                             |
| Report   | Report the concern to the DSL/DDSL and create the formal safeguarding record on iSAMS. If urgent, call immediately.                                                                 |

## 7. Definitions and Types of Abuse / Vulnerability

Abuse is any form of maltreatment of a child, including direct harm or a failure to protect a child who is at risk or already experiencing harm. AIA staff are trained to recognise the following key categories:

**Physical abuse:** May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, pinching, kicking, biting, starving, poisoning, burning, scalding or otherwise causing a non-accidental injury or physical impairment.

**Emotional abuse:** Persistent maltreatment that causes severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development, including frightening, humiliating, isolating, ignoring or conveying that a child is worthless or valued only in meeting another person's needs.

**Sexual abuse:** Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child understands what is happening. This includes contact and non-contact activity, including through social media or the internet.

**Neglect:** Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health or development.

**Increased vulnerability:** Includes children who are isolated, excluded from mainstream education, affected by substance misuse, witnessing domestic abuse, previously abused, looked after, or otherwise experiencing circumstances that increase risk or reduce their ability to seek help.

**Affluent neglect:** Neglect that can occur in materially wealthy families and may be harder to identify because its impact is often emotional rather than materially visible.

These categories are not exhaustive and safeguarding concerns may overlap. Staff should report concerns even where they are uncertain which category applies.

## **8. Indicators of Possible Abuse or Neglect**

Indicators do not prove that abuse has occurred, but they may warrant concern, recording and safeguarding review. Examples include:

- Persistent tiredness, hunger, poor hygiene, untreated medical needs, inappropriate clothing or poor growth.
- Consistent unexplained lateness or attendance concerns.
- Withdrawal, low self-esteem, apathy, depression, self-harm, significant changes in eating or behaviour, or extreme attention-seeking.
- Unexplained injuries, injuries in different stages of healing, flinching, fear of home or reluctance to change clothing.
- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge, unexplained gifts or money, running away, or unexplained physical discomfort.
- Changes in behaviour, mood, relationships or online activity that cause concern.

## **9. Specific Safeguarding Risks**

### **9.1 Self-Harm and Emotional Wellbeing**

Self-harm may present through physical or emotional indicators and must always be taken seriously. Staff who suspect self-harm must refer the concern immediately to the DSL/DDSL through the safeguarding process so that risk can be assessed and appropriate support coordinated.

### **9.2 Child Sexual Exploitation and Sexualised Online Behaviour**

Child sexual exploitation may involve exploitative relationships in which a child receives something in exchange for sexual activity and may occur in person or through technology. Sexting includes the sharing of sexual, naked or

semi-naked images/videos or sexually explicit messages. Any such concern must be treated as a safeguarding matter and reported immediately.

### **9.3 E-Safety**

- Online predators and exploitation through social media, gaming or other platforms.
- Cyberbullying, harassment or intimidation.
- Exposure to inappropriate or explicit content.
- Privacy, data-security, scams and identity risks.
- Unsafe use of unapproved or unvetted websites, applications or AI tools.

AIA teaches age-appropriate online safety and digital citizenship and expects staff to model safe and professional use of technology.

### **9.4 Vaping and Drug Prevention**

AIA is a vape-free environment. Vaping, electronic nicotine products and substance-related concerns may present safeguarding and welfare risks and should be addressed through the school's pastoral/behaviour procedures with safeguarding escalation where appropriate. AIA's drug-prevention approach aligns with the UAE SIRAJ framework of education and awareness, life-skills development, and family/community partnership.

### **9.5 Peer-on-Peer Harm and Bullying**

Bullying and harmful behaviour between students can become safeguarding matters, including where behaviour occurs online. Staff must take concerns seriously, act to prevent recurrence and use the appropriate safeguarding, anti-bullying and behaviour procedures. Where the nature or severity of the concern indicates risk of harm, it must be reported to the DSL/DDSL.

## **10. Students with Increased Vulnerability**

Some children may face additional barriers to recognising, communicating or reporting harm. This may include Students of Determination, children with communication needs, children who are isolated, children affected by substance misuse or domestic abuse, children with previous experiences of abuse, or children otherwise identified as vulnerable. Staff must not assume that changes in behaviour, mood or injury are solely related to a child's additional needs and should report concerns in the usual way.

### **11. Attendance, Early Leave and Supervision as Safeguarding**

- Attendance must be taken accurately at the beginning of class; staff must not bulk-enter attendance without checking each student.
- Where a student is absent for more than two days without communication or an appropriate medical note, the concern should be recorded on iSAMS and the family contacted in line with school procedures.
- Students leaving early must follow the approved phase-specific sign-out/exit process; students must not be released informally by a teacher.
- Staff on duty must actively supervise students, be punctual, avoid personal phone use or distraction, and maintain visibility of students.
- A child who is unwell or injured must be supported to access the clinic in line with school procedures.

### **12. Visitors, Lanyards and Site Security**

- AIA staff must wear visible blue lanyards while at school or on school trips.
- Parents must wear the designated red lanyard while on school premises.
- Visitors must sign in with security and wear the designated orange visitor lanyard.
- Adults without the appropriate visible identification should be challenged politely and reported to the DSL/DDSL or security if they refuse to comply.
- Visitors and other adults should not move around the school unaccompanied unless specifically authorised under school procedures.

### **13. Safer Recruitment, Volunteers, Contractors and Third Parties**

AIA will follow safe recruitment practices for employees and relevant adults working with students. This includes verification of identity and qualifications, appropriate police/background clearance and references, and any other checks required by AIA, KHDA or UAE regulation. Safeguarding suitability must be considered before an adult is permitted unsupervised access to students.

Volunteers, contractors and third-party providers must receive safeguarding expectations appropriate to their role. AIA will seek appropriate assurance that adults supplied by external organisations have undergone relevant recruitment and safeguarding checks. Where an adult is not cleared for unsupervised access, appropriate supervision must be maintained.

### **14. Staff Code of Conduct and Safe Working Practice**

- Do not use personal social media accounts to post images of AIA students or connect with/follow students.

- Do not exchange personal phone numbers with students or communicate with students through personal social media accounts.
- Do not use a personal device to WhatsApp or call parents/guardians for school business; use approved school communication channels and office phones.
- Do not photograph or video a child in order to evidence poor behaviour.
- Physical contact must be limited, necessary, and consistent with school policy, for example where first aid or immediate safety requires it.
- Staff must use adult bathrooms. Student bathrooms should only be entered where an emergency or authorised safeguarding/supervision situation requires it.
- Do not discuss inappropriate details of personal life with students; maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Do not enter confidential student information such as names, addresses, reports or grades into unapproved AI systems, including public/free or personal AI accounts.
- Do not use untested, unvetted or unapproved websites or digital services with students or student information.
- Do not give individual students personal gifts, sweets or food as rewards outside approved school practice.

## **15. Allegations or Concerns About Adults / Whistleblowing**

Any allegation or safeguarding concern about a member of staff, volunteer or other adult must be treated seriously and raised immediately. Staff must not investigate the matter themselves.

- Concerns regarding a staff member should be raised through the appropriate Phase Coordinator, Vice Principal or Principal and directly with the DSL/CPO where safeguarding is involved.
- Concerns regarding the Principal must be escalated through the school's identified governance/ownership route, as communicated to staff.
- AIA will respond in accordance with safeguarding, whistleblowing, HR and disciplinary procedures and will involve relevant authorities where required.
- A member of staff who raises a genuine concern in good faith should be able to do so without fear of retaliation.

## **16. Training and Safeguarding Awareness**

- All new staff receive safeguarding and child-protection training as part of induction.
- Staff receive safeguarding updates and refresher training appropriate to their role.

- DSLs/DDSLs receive appropriate enhanced training for their responsibilities.
- Safeguarding training includes reporting through iSAMS, responding to disclosures, signs of abuse/neglect, professional boundaries, e-safety and UAE legal responsibilities.
- AIA maintains appropriate records of safeguarding training and communicates updates to staff when procedures change.
- The school will provide appropriate safeguarding information and awareness to parents and students.

### **17. Record Keeping, Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

- Safeguarding records are sensitive and must be stored securely within approved school systems.
- Information should be shared only with those who need it to protect the child or carry out their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Safeguarding records must be factual and distinguish clearly between observation, disclosure, professional judgement and action taken.
- The DSL/DDSL will ensure significant actions, decisions and referrals are appropriately documented.
- Safeguarding information must not be copied into personal notes, personal devices, private messaging services or unapproved AI/digital systems.

### **18. External Referral and Partnership Working**

AIA will cooperate with relevant authorities and agencies where safeguarding concerns require external support, consultation or mandatory reporting. This may include KHDA, Ministry of Interior/Child Protection authorities, Dubai Police and other authorised bodies. Decisions about external escalation will be led by the DSL/Principal in accordance with the urgency of the concern and applicable legal duties. Nothing in this policy prevents immediate contact with emergency services where a child is in imminent danger.

### **19. School Trips and Off-Site Activities**

Safeguarding responsibilities continue during school trips, sporting events, activities and other authorised off-site provision. Trip planning must consider safeguarding risk, appropriate adult supervision, medical/welfare information and clear reporting routes. Adults accompanying students must follow AIA safeguarding expectations and report concerns to the trip leader and DSL/DDSL as soon as possible. This section should be read alongside AIA's trip and risk-assessment procedures.

## **20. Curriculum and Prevention**

AIA believes that effective safeguarding includes prevention. Through the curriculum, pastoral provision, wellbeing programmes, e-safety education and age-appropriate learning, students are supported to recognise risk, seek help, develop healthy relationships, make safe choices and understand how to protect themselves and others.

## **21. Monitoring and Review**

- The safeguarding team will review safeguarding systems, reporting patterns, training and emerging risks throughout the year.
- Senior leaders will ensure that the safeguarding flowchart, named contacts and reporting procedures remain current and visible.
- The policy will be reviewed at least annually and earlier where legislation, KHDA guidance, school systems or safeguarding practice changes.
- Operational contact numbers may be communicated separately from this policy so that urgent-contact information can be updated immediately when staffing changes.

## **22. Related AIA Policies and Procedures**

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour / Student Code of Conduct
- E-Safety / Digital Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment procedures
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Trips / Risk Assessment procedures
- Visitor and Security procedures
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policy
- Drug Prevention / SIRAJ guidance and relevant pastoral procedures

## Appendix A – Quick Safeguarding Response for Staff

| Situation                                          | Action                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A child is in immediate danger / urgent risk       | CALL the relevant DSL/DDSL immediately. Take reasonable action to keep the child safe. Record the concern formally on iSAMS as soon as possible. |
| A child makes a disclosure                         | React, Receive, Record, Reassure, Report. Do not promise confidentiality and do not ask leading questions.                                       |
| You notice a sign or pattern that worries you      | Record the factual concern on iSAMS and alert the DSL/DDSL as appropriate.                                                                       |
| You are unsure whether it is safeguarding          | Share the concern with the DSL/DDSL. Do not wait for certainty before seeking safeguarding advice.                                               |
| Concern relates to a staff member/adult            | Do not investigate. Escalate immediately through the safeguarding/leadership route.                                                              |
| Concern relates to the Principal                   | Use the school's identified governance/ownership escalation route and safeguarding procedure.                                                    |
| Someone asks you to email the safeguarding concern | Do not email the concern. Use iSAMS for the formal record and call for urgent escalation.                                                        |

## Appendix B – Staff Safeguarding Checklist

- I know who the AIA DSLs/DDSLs are and how to contact them.
- I know how to log a safeguarding concern on iSAMS.
- I know that urgent concerns are called through immediately and that email is not used to report safeguarding concerns.
- I understand how to respond to a disclosure without investigating.
- I maintain professional boundaries in person and online.
- I take accurate attendance and follow approved early-leave procedures.
- I challenge/report unidentified or unaccompanied adults appropriately.
- I protect confidential student information and do not enter it into unapproved AI or digital systems.
- I report concerns even when I am uncertain; safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.