

Ambassador International Academy

Child Protection Policy

Ambassador International Academy believes that every student has the right to develop themselves emotionally, intellectually and physically. All children have equal rights to protection from any form of violence, abuse or neglect.

Every member of staff in Ambassador International Academy has the responsibility to safeguard and promote the physical and social-emotional wellbeing of all children. Ambassador International Academy is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all the children is taken into consideration when developing and delivering school activities. All staff have an equal responsibility to report to a child protection team member any suspicion or disclosure suggesting a child is at risk of harm, to himself or others, in accordance with the protection procedures described in this policy. Every member of staff will sign and adhere to the AIA staff Code of Conduct. This agreement has guidelines of safe professional practice for the protection of the whole community. All students and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support from the child protection team and school administration who are charged with applying this policy.

Policy Aims:

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children;
- To ensure best practices are consistent across the school;
- To maintain hiring practices that ensure the safety of children;

- To demonstrate the school's commitment and compliance with procedures with regard to safeguarding children.

Policy Statement

Child abuse and neglect are concerns throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to the child's education as well as to their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. Ambassador International Academy endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, Italy, is a signatory and seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives.

Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of children. The Ambassador International Academy Community must ensure that all children in our care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop. Ambassador International Academy staff, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection.

All Ambassador International Academy members of staff are legal mandatory reporters and have a professional and ethical obligation to be alert to the signs of neglect or abuse and inform a member of the Child Protection Team of suspected abuse or neglect. Procedures are initiated as directed by school policy and regulations in accordance with local authorities and UAE child protection laws.

Ambassador International Academy will ensure this policy is available to all parents, applicants, and Ambassador International Academy members of staff. Ambassador International Academy will provide developmentally appropriate education to Ambassador International Academy students on child protection issues and will provide training for all staff. Ambassador

International Academy will make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children and will review the policy annually for child protection law and regulation compliance and effectiveness. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, Ambassador International Academy will follow a carefully designed course of action in accordance with UAE law and regulations with the support of the MOE and KHDA, keeping the safety and wellbeing of the child as the highest priority.

Definition of Terms

What is child abuse? According to the World Health Organization (Krug EG et al., 2002), 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.” A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional (e.g. school) or community setting; children may be abused by individuals known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. Often children may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, further complicating the problem. Most child abuse is inflicted by someone the child knows, respects or trusts. The World report on violence and health and the 1999 WHO Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention distinguish four types of child maltreatment: Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional and Psychological abuse and Neglect.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse of a child is defined as the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in – or has a high likelihood of resulting in – harm for the child’s health, survival, development or dignity. This includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling,

scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating. Much physical violence against children in the home is inflicted with the objective of punishing.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Children can be sexually abused by both adults and other children who are – by virtue of their age or stage of development – in a position of responsibility, trust or power over the victim.

Emotional and Psychological Abuse

Emotional and psychological abuse involves both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or caregiver to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment. Acts in this category may have a high probability of damaging the child's physical or mental health, or its physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Abuse of this type includes: the restriction of movement; patterns of belittling, blaming, threatening, frightening, discriminating against or ridiculing; and other non-physical forms of rejection or hostile treatment.

Neglect includes both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or other family member to provide for the development and well-being of the child – where the parent is in a position to do so – in one or more of the following areas:

- health;
- education;
- emotional development;
- nutrition;
- shelter and safe living conditions.

The parents of neglected children are not necessarily poor. They may equally be financially well off.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

Child Sexual Abuse is a ruthless combination of Sexual Abuse, of Emotional Abuse and of Physical Abuse. The Child Victim of abuse may show a cluster of physical, behavioural and emotional changes listed below:

Physical Symptoms

- Bite marks;
- Unusual bruises;
- Lacerations;
- Burns;
- High incidence of accidents or frequent injuries like swelling of face and extremities;
- Discolouration of skin;
- Sleep, speech disorders;
- Complaints of pain upon movement of contact;
- Bed wetting;
- Continuous loose motions and passing stools on bed;
- Recurrent abdominal pain;
- Constant throat and urinary infections.

Behavioural Changes

- Avoids physical contact with others;
- Avoids certain adults;
- Wears clothing to purposely conceal injury, i.e., long sleeves;
- Gives inconsistent versions about occurrence of injuries, burns, etc.;

- Often late or absent from school;
- Comes early to school, seems reluctant to go home afterwards;
- Not concentrating in school;
- Compulsions, obsessions, problems, phobias, hysterical reactions;
- Temper tantrums, aggressive over demanding behaviour;
- Say negative statements about self;
- Attempting to physically hurt oneself;
- Constant rubbing of body parts against objects;
- Sexual exploration and abuse of others;
- Substance-Abuse;
- Precocious sexual behaviour;
- Emotional changes;
- Apprehensive when other children cry;
- Depression, anxiety;
- Seems frightened by parents;
- Has difficulty getting along with others;
- Deep sense of isolation;
- Little respect for others;
- Overly compliant, shy passive withdrawn give in readily;
- Plays aggressively, often hurting peers.

Role of Teachers:

- To assess the psychological, physical and medical impact of abuse on the child and its family, historically, currently and in the future;
- To consider the social impact of the disclosure on the child and his/her family;
- To consider the current and rehabilitation needs of that child;

- To understand that it is best to listen to the child and consider the child's needs prior to taking any precipitate action.

There is a legal obligation to report situations prejudicial to minors (criminal ambit). A “prejudicial” situation is one occurring in the home or outside where the minor is subjected to suffering, distress or neglect such as to impair his/her potential for growth and development. Certain offences against minors are prosecutable and the relevant authorities will be informed immediately.

Ambassador International Academy is fully committed to ensuring the well-being and safety of all children within its care.

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