



American Academy Junior School, Larnaca Safeguarding Children Policy

Purpose and Aims

The purpose of The American Academy Junior School safeguarding policy is to provide a secure framework for the school in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those pupils who attend our school. The policy aims to ensure that:

- “ All our pupils are safe and protected from harm.
- “ Other elements of provision and policies are in place to enable pupils to feel safe and adopt safe practices.
- “ Staff, pupils, visitors, volunteers and parents are aware of the expected behaviours and the school’s legal responsibilities in relation to its pupils.

Ethos

Safeguarding in The American Academy Junior School is considered everyone’s responsibility and as such our school aims to create the safest environment within which every pupil has the opportunity to achieve their Five Outcomes. The American Academy Junior School recognizes the contribution it can make in ensuring that all pupils registered or who use our school, feel that they will be listened to and have appropriate action taken to any concerns they may raise. We will do this by endeavouring to work in partnership with other agencies and seek to establish effective working relationships with parents / carers to develop and provide activities and opportunities throughout our curriculum that will help to equip our children with the skills they need. This will include learning experiences that will encourage our children to develop essential life skills.

Responsibilities and expectations

The American Academy Junior School has a Council whose legal responsibility it is to make sure that the school has an effective safeguarding policy and procedures in place and to monitor that the school complies with them. The Council should also ensure that the policy is made available to parents and carers if requested. It is also the responsibility of the Council to ensure that all staff and volunteers are properly vetted to make sure they are safe to work with the pupils who attend our school and that the school has procedures for handling allegations of abuse made against members of staff (including the Head Teacher and volunteer helpers). The Council will ensure that there is a Council member and a Senior Designated Person (SDP) who has lead responsibility for dealing with all safeguarding issues in our school.

The Senior Designated Person is: Mr Andrew Litchfield – Head Teacher

If he is not available then the SDP Alternate is Mrs Vanya Chailli – Lead Senior Teacher

(These people can also be contacted with any safeguarding concerns).

The Named Safeguarding Council member is:

It is the responsibility of the SDP to ensure that all safeguarding issues raised in school are effectively responded to, recorded and referred to the appropriate agency. They are also responsible for arranging whole school safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers who work with children and young people in our school and that this training takes place at least every three years.

The SDP is also required to complete a Self-Review Assessment Report annually which demonstrates that the safeguarding arrangements in the school are being met. If the self-assessment highlights any areas for improvement, this will be detailed in the action plan which will be signed off and monitored by the Named Council member for Safeguarding to ensure these improvements are implemented.

All Child Protection concerns need to be acted on immediately. If school staff are concerned that a child may be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, they should tell the Senior Designated Person immediately.

All adults, including the SDP, have a duty to refer all known or suspected cases of abuse to Children's Social Care or the police.

Recognising concerns, signs and indicators of abuse.

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. For our school it includes such things as pupil safety, bullying, racist abuse and harassment, educational visits, intimate care, children missing education and e-safety etc. The witnessing of abuse can have a damaging effect on those who are party to it, as well as the child subjected to the actual abuse. This in itself will have a significant impact on the health and emotional well-being of the child.

Abuse can take place in any family, institution or community setting, by telephone or on the internet. Abuse can often be difficult to recognise as children may behave differently or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their family circumstances change. However, it is important to know the indicators of abuse and to be alert to the need to consult further.

The following indicators listed under the categories of abuse are not an exhaustive list.

Physical Abuse

This can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, punching, kicking, scalding, burning, drowning and suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention through fabricated or induced illness. This was previously known as Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy.

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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include 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 being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:

- Excessively clingy or attention seeking.
- Very low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism.
- Withdrawn behaviour or fearfulness.
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please.
- Eating disorders or self-harm

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. They may include physical contact, both penetrative and non-penetrative. 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 is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Indicators of sexual abuse include: allegations or disclosures, genital soreness, inappropriate sexualised behaviour including words, play or drawing.

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 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); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

(Source Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010)

What to do if you are concerned.

If a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or other child or young person, it is important that you:

- Do stay calm and listen carefully.
- Do reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Do not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Do let them know that you will need to tell someone else.
- Do not promise to keep what they have told you a secret.
- Do inform your Senior Designated Person as soon as possible.
- Do make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident which you must sign, date and record your position.
- Do not include your opinion without stating it is your opinion.
- Do refer without delay.

If you are concerned that a member of staff or adult in a position of trust poses a danger to a child or young person or that they might be abusing a child or young person you should report your concerns to the Head Teacher. Where those concerns relate to the Head Teacher however, this should be reported to the Chair of Council.

Managing Allegations

We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against members of staff or volunteers that are working or may come into contact with children and young people whilst in our school. Allegations can be made by children and young people or concerned adults and are made for a variety of reasons.

If an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust whether they be members of staff or volunteers this should be brought to the immediate attention of the SDP who will advise the Head Teacher. In the case of the allegation being made against the Head Teacher this will be brought to the immediate attention of the Chair of Council. The Head Teacher/Chair of Council must discuss with the Council the nature of the allegations in order for the appropriate action to be taken.

- .. Consider safeguarding arrangements of the child or young person to ensure they are away from the alleged abuser.
- .. Contact the parents or carers of the child/young person.
- .. Consider the rights of the staff member for a fair and equal process of investigation.
- .. Ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed including whether suspending a member of Staff from work until the outcome of any investigation is deemed necessary.
- .. Act on any decision made in any strategy meeting or evaluation meeting.

Training

All members of staff and volunteers will have access to whole school safeguarding training at least every three years. We will also, as part of our induction, issue information in relation to our Safeguarding policy and any policy related to safeguarding and promoting our children/young people's welfare to all newly appointed staff and volunteers.

Our Senior Designated Person and Alternate Designated Person will undertake further safeguarding training in addition to the whole school training. This will be undertaken at least every two years which updates their awareness and understanding of the impact of the wide agenda of safeguarding issues. This will support both the SDP/Alternate to be able to better undertake their role and support the school in ensuring our safeguarding arrangements are robust and achieve better outcomes for the pupils in our school. This includes taking part in multi-agency training in addition to safeguarding training.

Our safeguarding arrangements are reported annually to the Council and our Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually, in order to keep it updated in line with local and national guidance/legislation.

We will include a summary of our Safeguarding Policy to parents in our website. We are also able to arrange for our policy to be made available to parents whose first language is not English on request.

Anti-bullying

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are:

Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)

Verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats or name calling)

Emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group).

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the harassment, maltreatment or discrimination of another through the use of Mobile technology including text messaging, or social network sites or mobile phones.

The American Academy Junior School has a clear commitment to enable all children and young people in Suffolk to live, play, learn and socialise in environments that are free from victimisation, harassment and bullying and will vigorously enforce anti bullying policies and procedures that support this cross county strategy.

Safeguarding Disabled Children

Disabled children have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect, to be protected from harm and achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes as non-disabled children.

Disabled children do however require additional action. This is because they experience greater risks as a result of negative attitudes and 'created vulnerability'. This may lead to disabled children having unequal access to services and resources, and because they may have additional needs relating to physical, sensory, cognitive and/ or communication impairment (Safeguarding Children, 2009).

At The American Academy Junior School we will ensure that our disabled children are listened too and responded to appropriately where they have concerns regarding abuse.

Safer Recruitment and Selection

It is a requirement for all agencies to ensure that all staff recruited to work with children and young people are properly selected and checked.

At The American Academy Junior School we will ensure that we have a member of staff on every recruitment panel who has received the appropriate recruitment and selection training and that all of our staff are appropriately qualified and have the relevant employment history and checks to ensure they are safe to work with children in compliance EU Employment Standards.

Domestic Abuse

The Ministry defines domestic abuse as " Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality"

Children may suffer both directly and indirectly if they live in households where there is domestic violence. Domestic abuse is likely to have a damaging effect on the health, development and welfare of children, and it will often be appropriate for such children to be regarded as Children in Need.

Where there is evidence of domestic violence, The American Academy Junior School will report our concerns to the appropriate agency including Children's Social Care and the police in order to prevent the likelihood of any further abuse taking place.

Child Exploitation and e-Safety

Children and young people can be exploited and suffer bullying through their use of modern technology such as the internet, mobile phones and social networking sites. In order to minimize the risks to our children and young people The American Academy Junior School will ensure that we have in place appropriate measures such as security filtering, and an Acceptable Use Policy linked to our e-Safety policy. We will ensure that staff are aware of how not to compromise their position of trust in or outside of the school and are aware of the dangers associated with social networking sites.