
	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	0

American Academy Larnaca – Senior School


Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

SS025

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	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	1


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	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	2

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Aims	3
Creating a Culture of Safeguarding.....	3
3. Roles and Responsibilities.....	4
4. Monitoring and Review	5
5. Procedures	5
Recognising child abuse.....	5
Disclosure: how to respond	6
What to avoid	7
Useful phrases	7
Referral	8
Confidentiality	8
Record Keeping.....	9
Support and Monitoring	9
Staff conduct and Training	10
Canteen staff	11
Security of on school premises.....	11

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	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	3

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to provide clear guidelines to all American Academy Larnaca staff about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child protection issues. The School is committed to the development of good practice and sound procedures in order that child protection issues may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the child.


2. Aims

In order to minimise their chances of being abused the American Academy Larnaca recognises that children need high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult. We therefore aim to:

- Establish and maintain an ethos which encourages pupils to feel secure and confide in adults if necessary
- Ensure all staff are prepared to receive confidences from the children and young people
- Include in the PSHE curriculum opportunities to discuss personal safety
- Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies
- Offer children at risk a range of support strategies

Creating a Culture of Safeguarding


- The Academy recognises that safeguarding covers much more than child protection and so this Policy will operate in conjunction with other related policies and procedures, covering areas such as Anti-Bullying, Behaviour, ICT Acceptable User, E-safety and Missing Pupils

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	4

- ‘Safeguarding’ is broader than ‘child protection’. As well as protecting children from harm, ‘safeguarding’ widens the responsibility to preventing harm and promoting the well-being of children. It is recognised that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes:
 - Protecting children from maltreatment
 - Preventing the impairment of children’s health or development
 - Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- The Academy takes its responsibilities very seriously. As well as ensuring the school’s policies and procedures support its safeguarding responsibilities, the School will work with pupils, their families, Social Services Departments, the Police and other relevant agencies to ensure the risk of harm to children is minimised
- The Academy is committed to working in partnership with parents, Social Services Departments, Police and diverse communities, to continuously develop and improve the safeguarding culture within our School
- Having these safeguards in place not only protects and promotes the welfare of children but also it enhances the confidence of our staff, volunteers, parents/ and the general public

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a duty to protect them. There are, however, key people within schools who have specific responsibilities. The Designated Safeguard Lead is the Deputy Principal/Pastoral of the School. In their absence Child Protection issues should be discussed with the relevant Head of Year

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	5

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should

- Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection
- Support staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties
- Liaise closely with children's social care and other services
- Manage referrals
- Work with appropriate services
- Raise awareness
- Keep records

4. Monitoring and Review


This Policy will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Pastoral Team and then ratified by the AA Alumni Foundation Council Academic Committee.

5. Procedures

Recognising child abuse

There are four main categories of abuse: Neglect, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Emotional Abuse. In considering whether a child is suffering some form of abuse you should look for physical and / or behavioural signs which may include the following:

- Looking unkempt; frequently smelly or dirty
- Losing weight
- Being tired all the time
- Showing signs of anti-social behaviour


	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	6

- Injuries which cannot be explained
- Injuries on parts of body where accidental injury is unlikely such as cheeks, chest or thighs
- Hand or finger marks
- Burns or bites
- Aggressive behaviour or temper tantrums
- Reluctance to have parents contacted
- Flinching when approached
- Reluctance to get undressed for PE
- Covering arms and legs when hot
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- Self-harm
- Precocious sexual language or behaviour
- Talking to other children about the abuse
- An excessive need for approval and attention
- Makes comments or has questions regarding inappropriate or concerning issues

Disclosure: how to respond

It can take a great deal of courage for a child to talk to another adult about abuse because s/he is 'betraying' someone more powerful than s/he is, who is close to, and probably loved by, the child. When faced with disclosure:

- Stay calm and do not appear shocked
- Take what the child says seriously
- Listen without interruption or prompting
- If you are in a group situation arrange to see the child alone at the earliest opportunity

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	7


- If the child is in need of emergency medical care report to First Aid trained staff.
- Let the child know you will have to inform someone else and what you are going to do next
- Record what was said and who was present, using the child's exact words as far as possible; date and sign the notes: they may need to be used in court in the event of any legal action
- Report what you have been told to the Designated Safeguard Lead as soon as possible (or the Deputy DSL); this must be on the same day

What to avoid

- Do not ask leading questions or probe for more information than is offered
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Do not agree to keep the information a secret
- Do not express disbelief or shock

Useful phrases

- I'm glad you've told me
- This can't have been easy for you
- It's not your fault
- What I will do now is talk to someone in the school who knows what to do about these things and can help you

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	8

Remember it is not the teacher's role to establish whether the child is telling the truth or to decide whether what the child has described is abusive. Education is not an investigatory service and all disclosures of abuse should be passed on to Police and / or Social Services.


Referral

The DSL will talk with the child and will then contact the appropriate agency. The child will be told what is happening and parents will be contacted, unless this is not deemed to be in the best interests of the child. In very serious cases, where the child's safety is at risk, it may be necessary for the child to be found a place of safety.

Confidentiality

Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff of the American Academy Larnaca:

- All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Police and Social Services)
- If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tell the child sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child's sake. Within that context, the child should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it
- Staff who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts
- All information received in connection with child protection matters must be treated confidentially. The Child Protection Teacher will keep confidential records of referral information and feedback from agencies involved with individual cases. This

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	9

information is kept secure and separate from other school records. Heads of Year are made aware of children with child protection issues on a 'need to know' basis

Record Keeping

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff should:


- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court
- Record the date, time, place and noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury if relevant
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions
- All records need to be given to the DSL promptly
- No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer

The DSL will then keep a record of the above information, in addition to:

- A details of all actions taken, decisions reached and the overall outcome
- All record should be kept in a secure location

Support and Monitoring

The School will provide opportunities for a variety of means of support for a child at risk. This may involve designating a trusted adult as a mentor or offering counselling. The child's progress, health and safety will also be closely monitored.

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	10

Staff who receive a disclosure or work in child protection may also need additional support.

Staff conduct and Training

Standards of behaviour expected of staff are outlined within the Professional Code of conduct.


It is expected that all staff read, sign and comply with these standards.

TO ADD LINK TO CODE OF CONDUCT – RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS SECTION

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Every year, all staff:

- Should be made aware of the school's policy and procedures regarding Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Have regular, mandatory Safeguarding training
- New staff should have Safeguarding training as part of the induction process
- All staff should be aware of the following areas:
 - When and where abuse occurs
 - Types of abuse – physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, peer on peer abuse o How to respond if they suspect that a child or young person is being or has been abused
- Ensure that all staff who work with children undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding children effectively and that this is kept up to date
- All staff will ensure they are familiar with this and the following policies: anti-bullying and Student Code of Conduct– Staff will indicate they have read/are familiar with and understood the above policies
- Temporary staff, which should include supply teachers, activity providers and volunteers or assistants, need to have child safeguarding briefings

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	11

Canteen staff

All canteen employees will be required to wear at all times their ID badge and will be briefed on safeguarding by the DSL.


Security of on school premises

It is the duty of the school to ensure all steps are taken to ensure the school premises are secure.

All members of staff should wear their Staff Badge at all times. This includes non-teaching staff such as the cleaning, office, library and maintenance teams.

All visitors to the School must report to Reception and must wear a Visitor's badge. Visitors must sign in on arrival and sign out on departure.

It is the duty of all members of staff to challenge any non-member of staff/visitor who is not wearing Visitors badge. In such cases, they will be referred to Reception to sign in.

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	12

Risk assessments

Any Risk Assessment should include the points mentioned below in addition to any other Hazards / risks involved for any EOC activity

1. Travel to and from Venue

Hazards:

- Accidents during travel
- Missing student

Risks:

- Injury or fatality
- Student unaccounted for

Control Measures:

- Ensure all transportation is booked through reputable companies.
- Maintain a list of all students and check attendance before departure and upon arrival.
- Ensure students wear seat belts at all times.
- Assign staff to supervise groups of students.


2. Accommodation

Hazards:

- Fire safety
- Unauthorized access
- Hygiene and cleanliness

Risks:

- Injury or fatality from fire
- Intrusion by unauthorized persons
- Illness from poor hygiene

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	13

Control Measures:

- Ensure the accommodation has up-to-date fire safety certifications and procedures.
- Brief students on fire evacuation procedures.
- Implement a secure check-in and check-out process.
- Ensure accommodations are clean and hygienic.

3. Activities

Hazards:

- Physical injury from activities
- Inadequate supervision
- Health issues (allergies, pre-existing conditions)

Risks:

- Minor to severe injury
- Health complications

Control Measures:

- Conduct a risk assessment for each planned activity.
- Ensure activities are age-appropriate and supervised by trained staff.
- Collect medical information and consent forms for each student.
- Have first aid kits and trained personnel available.


4. Supervision and Safeguarding

Hazards:

- Inappropriate behavior or abuse
- Bullying

Risks:

- Emotional or physical harm

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	14

Control Measures:

- Ensure all staff and volunteers have undergone background checks and safeguarding training.
- Implement a code of conduct for both students and staff.
- Maintain appropriate staff-to-student ratios at all times.
- Designate a child safeguarding officer to handle any issues.
- Ensure there are same-gender staff members in accommodation areas.

5. Emergency Procedures

Hazards:


- Medical emergencies
- Lost student

Risks:

- Delayed medical response
- Student unaccounted for

Control Measures:

- Have a clear emergency plan communicated to all staff and students.
- Keep a list of emergency contacts for all participants.
- Have access to emergency medical services.
- Establish a meeting point and check-in system for students.

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	15

Child Safeguarding Clauses

6. Background Checks:

- All staff and volunteers must have current and satisfactory background checks.

7. Training:

- All staff must undergo safeguarding and child protection training prior to the trip.

8. Code of Conduct:

- All participants should be aware that the Student Code of Conduct Policy applies at all instances and that there is zero tolerance for bullying, harassment, and abuse.

9. Supervision Ratios:

- Maintain appropriate adult-to-student ratios as per ministry guidelines to ensure effective supervision.

10. Reporting Mechanism:

- Establish a clear and confidential process for reporting any safeguarding concerns. Ensure all participants know who the designated safeguarding officer is and how to contact them.

11. Accommodation Safety:


- Separate sleeping areas for male and female students with same-gender staff supervision.
- Regular night checks by staff to ensure students' safety.

12. Health and Safety:

- Collect and review health information for all students, including allergies, medications, and any special requirements.
- Ensure first aid trained personnel are available at all times.

13. Emergency Contact Information:

- Ensure all staff have access to emergency contact information for each student.

	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy SS025	Revision:	01
		Effective Date:	01/09/2022
		Page:	16

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