

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At Al Adhwa Private School, safeguarding is a top priority. All staff members are entrusted with the duty of care, ensuring the well-being, safety, and protection of students under our supervision. The principal assumes in loco parentis responsibility, overseeing student welfare and ensuring a secure learning environment. Our commitment is to maintain a safe space where every student can thrive.

I. SAFEGUARDING PROCESSES, PROCEDURES, AND ASPIRATIONS

At Al Adhwa Private School, safeguarding is a fundamental aspect of our commitment to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment. Our comprehensive safeguarding processes and procedures are designed to ensure the well-being, safety, and protection of every student. We are dedicated to creating an environment where students feel secure, supported, and empowered to thrive.

II. ALIGNMENT WITH ADEK WELLBEING POLICIES

Our safeguarding practices are aligned with ADEK wellbeing policies, ensuring that all matters are handled with sensitivity and professionalism. We address safeguarding concerns in ways that support the needs of students, adhering to best practices and legal requirements.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Child	A "Child" under this policy refers to any person who is under the age of 18 years
Safeguarding/Child Protection	Encompasses all procedures, actions, and measures taken to ensure the safety and well-being of students. It aims to protect them from any harm or injury while they are under the school's supervision, including their travel to and from school using school-provided transport, participation in school activities both on and off the school campus, and any time they are engaged in school-related activities.
School day	The entire period during which a student is under the care and supervision of the school. This includes the time spent within the school premises, on school transport traveling to and from school, and during any co-curricular or extracurricular activities organized by the school.
Abuse	Any act that results in harm or injury to a child. This can include, but is not limited to, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, bullying,

	exploitation, and neglect.
Physical Abuse	The intentional infliction of physical harm on a student, or the failure to prevent such harm. This includes actions like hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, confining, or administering drugs not prescribed by a medical professional for the purpose of causing harm.
Corporal Punishment	The use of physical force as a form of discipline by a teacher, guardian, or any adult in a position of authority. It is considered a form of physical abuse under this policy
Emotional Abuse	Ongoing or repeated actions that severely harm a child's emotional development. This includes making a child feel worthless, unloved, or inadequate, or using fear, bullying, or intimidation. It can also involve exploiting or corrupting a child. While emotional abuse often accompanies other forms of mistreatment, it may also occur on its own
Sexual Abuse and Exploitation	Involve forcing or encouraging a child to participate in sexual activities, whether through physical contact (penetrative or non-penetrative acts) or non-contact activities such as making a child watch sexual acts or engage with pornographic material. It also includes verbal sexual harassment or enticing a child to act in sexually inappropriate ways.
Neglect	The consistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, or psychological needs, which may lead to significant harm to the child's health or development. This includes, but is not limited to, failing to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate food, clothing, and shelter • Protection from physical harm or danger • Proper care and supervision (including appropriate caregivers) • Necessary healthcare and medical treatment • Educational support, including regular school attendance • Personal hygiene • Adequate emotional and cognitive stimulation.
Bullying	Repeated, unwanted aggressive behaviour by one or more students towards another, characterized by an observed or perceived power imbalance. It can take various forms, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical (hitting, tripping) • Verbal (name-calling, teasing) • Relational/Social (spreading rumors, exclusion from groups) • Cyber-bullying (online harassment through emails, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or text messages, as well as the posting or sharing of inappropriate pictures or videos). • A student may be a perpetrator, a victim, or both.

IV. SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

At Al Adhwa Private School, the welfare of the students is the top priority in any situation of disagreement concerning the rights of the parent or student. Staff play a key role in identifying possible abuse and monitoring at-risk children. Any concerns must be promptly reported and recorded to the Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL).

The DSL, equipped with the knowledge and training required to address safeguarding concerns, serves as the first point of contact for staff and parents. The safeguarding team is trained to Level 3, and all school staff complete annual safeguarding training, including mandatory child protection courses.

Safe recruitment procedures are rigorously followed, ensuring all staff, including volunteers, undergo security checks prior to employment. The Board of Governors, along with the Principal and Senior Leadership Team (SLT), conduct an annual review of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure ongoing compliance and effectiveness.

a. DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL)

School Principal	- Ms. Amira
Vice Principal	- Ms. Hoda
Academic Coordinator	- Ms. Marwa
Social Worker	- Ms. Rasha
Counselor	- Ms. Fatima
Health and Safety Officer	- Mr. Mohannad/Mr. Roberto
IT Administrator	- Mr. Saeed
School Nurses	- Ms. Anne & Mr. Paul
Head of Inclusion & Inclusion Committee	
All Section Supervisors	
School Security Guard	

b. MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

At Al Adhwa Private School, the safeguarding and child protection team is tasked with ensuring the safety and well-being of all students. Their key responsibilities include:

- **Maintain Accurate and Confidential Records:** Ensure that child protection records are accurate, securely stored, and marked as 'strictly confidential.'
- **Monitor At-Risk Students:** Keep track of the attendance, academic progress, and emotional development of students identified as at risk.
- **Disseminate Relevant Information:** Ensure that all important information regarding the welfare of a child is shared with the appropriate staff members within the school to support their safety and well-being.
- **Transfer of Records:** Guarantee that comprehensive child protection records are transferred to the appropriate school when a student moves, whether due to natural progression or other circumstances.
- **Referral to ADEK/Police:** In consultation with the Principal, promptly refer any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities, including ADEK and the police, for further support and guidance.
- **Inform Key Staff:** Ensure the Principal and relevant Heads of School are promptly informed of any safeguarding concerns.

- **Staff Awareness:** Make sure all staff members are aware of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), their role, and contact details, and understand the procedures to follow in the event of concerns.
- **Policy Adherence:** Ensure the safeguarding policies of Al Adhwa Private School are implemented and followed consistently throughout the school.
- **Staff Training and Support:** Provide ongoing training and support to all staff to ensure they are equipped to handle safeguarding issues.
- **Deciding on Further Action:** Determine whether further action is needed in cases of concern, in collaboration with the Principal and other relevant staff.
- **Guidance for Parents:** Offer guidance and information to parents about safeguarding and child protection, ensuring open communication unless it places the child at greater risk.
- **Student Awareness:** Educate students on personal safety and ensure they know who the relevant staff are for raising concerns related to their well-being.
- **Partnership with Parents:** Communicate with parents about concerns in a collaborative manner, unless doing so may increase risk to the child.
- **Regular Team Meetings:** Hold fortnightly meetings of the safeguarding team to discuss concerns and provide updates to the Principal and Heads of School.
- **Collaboration with Authorities:** Develop and maintain effective links with the police and Ministry of Interior – Child Protection Unit (MoI-CPU) to ensure timely intervention when necessary.

c. ALL STAFF

The Principal at Al Adhwa Private School is responsible for:

- Complying with the school's Child Protection policy and ensure it meets the required standards.
- Ensuring staff understand procedures to prevent and address student abuse or neglect.
- Supervising students at all times while in school's care.
- Prioritizing student protection and take immediate action in suspected abuse or neglect cases.
- Ensuring students and staff can report concerns safely, without fear of retribution.
- Gathering feedback from students and parents on school security and protection.
- Reporting any potential abuse or neglect cases promptly.
- Ensuring staff receive and participate in student protection training.
- Conducting parent orientation on their roles and responsibilities in student protection.
- Maintaining confidential student records and handle open/closed cases appropriately.

- Temporarily suspending staff suspected of student abuse or neglect until the issue is resolved.

Each teacher is responsible for:

- Creating a secure and supportive environment where students feel safe, are encouraged to speak openly, and are actively listened to.
- Recording any concerns about a student's welfare, focusing on facts rather than interpretations (see Appendix A form).
- Reporting any suspected child abuse immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will then notify the appropriate authorities.
- Communicating concerns, when necessary, to other adults working with the child to ensure coordinated support.
- Integrating child protection topics into relevant lessons to help students learn how to protect themselves.

All staff are expected to:

- Report any concerns to the appropriate member of the safeguarding team, who will inform the Principal and DSL as necessary. Written records of concerns are securely stored digitally, and hard copies are kept in a locked filing cabinet, even in cases where evidence is limited.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding all matters related to the welfare of children.
- Respect each child as an individual and engage them in meaningful conversations to build trust and understanding.
- Cooperate fully with inquiries from relevant agencies concerning child protection matters.

V. SIGNS OF ABUSE

The following indicators may help staff recognize potential signs of abuse, though they do not necessarily confirm that a child has been abused:

a. PHYSICAL ABUSE

Possible signs of physical abuse may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Unexplained injuries	Bruises, burns, or broken bones that lack a clear explanation.
Lack of medical attention	Injuries that have not been properly treated.
Visible signs of harm	Scalds, human bite marks, cigarette burns, or multiple burns with defined edges.
Behavioural changes	Aggression towards others, unusual passivity, withdrawal from physical contact, or self-destructive tendencies.
Fear and avoidance	Fear of returning home, contacting caregivers/parents, or repeated running away from home.

Physical discomfort	Repeated abdominal pain or signs of broken bones.
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b. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Possible signs of emotional abuse may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Persistent tiredness	Ongoing fatigue or lack of energy.
Fear of new situations	Reluctance to engage in unfamiliar environments or activities.
Low self-esteem	Feelings of worthlessness or lack of confidence.
Excessive anxiety	Constant nervousness or high levels of worry.
Extreme behaviour	Unusually passive or aggressive actions.
Delayed communication	Speech or communication delays.
Inappropriate emotional responses	Odd reactions to painful or distressing events.
Running away	Leaving home or school frequently.
Frequent lying	Deceptive behaviour or untruthfulness.
Neurotic behaviours	Repetitive actions like sulking, hair twisting, or rocking.
Fear of mistakes	Intense fear of making errors or taking risks.
Self-harm	Injurious actions toward oneself.

c. NEGLECT

Possible signs of neglect may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Stealing	Taking items from others without permission.
Social difficulties	Challenges in forming or maintaining friendships with peers.
Failure to thrive	Inability to meet expected developmental milestones.
Poor hygiene	Neglect of personal care and cleanliness.
Frequent hunger	Signs of malnutrition or consistent hunger.
Untreated medical issues	Lack of necessary medical care for health concerns.
Absenteeism	Regular lateness or frequent absence from school.
Inappropriate clothing	Wearing unsuitable clothing for the weather or situation.
Substance misuse	Use of drugs or alcohol inappropriately.

VI. DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

Children are often more vulnerable to abuse from individuals they know and trust

rather than from strangers. At Al Adhwa Private School, it is crucial for staff and volunteers to create a safe environment where students feel comfortable disclosing any concerns. When a child comes forward with a report of abuse, staff should listen attentively, demonstrate that the child's concerns are being taken seriously, and respond in a supportive and calm manner. It is important to avoid probing for details or investigating; instead, the staff member's role is to listen, record the information, and report it according to established procedures.

In cases where a student reports abuse by another student, staff should follow the designated procedures outlined in this policy. The Designated Teacher will coordinate with local agencies to ensure appropriate handling of the situation, prioritizing the safety and well-being of all students involved.

a. RESPONSE TO A DISCLOSURE

When a disclosure of abuse is made, it is vital for staff to respond appropriately and sensitively. Here are key steps to follow:

Immediate Response:

- Allow the student to dictate the pace of the conversation.
- Use neutral questions that encourage sharing, such as, "Can you tell me what happened?"
- Accept the student's account without pressing for further details.
- Acknowledge the difficulty of their disclosure and reassure them they did the right thing.
- Carefully note any visible signs of injury or neglect, while being mindful of their privacy.
- Inform the student that you will need to share the information with the Designated Teacher for their safety.

Avoid:

- Asking questions that imply blame, such as, "Why didn't you tell me before?"
- Interrogating or pressuring the student for more information.
- Using questions that begin with how, what, when, where, or why.
- Attempting to undress or examine the child for injuries.
- Criticizing the alleged perpetrator, who may be someone the child loves.
- Making promises of confidentiality or assurances that cannot be guaranteed.
- If a student requests confidentiality, staff should explain that their responsibility is to share the information with the Designated Teacher to ensure the child's safety. They should also consider whether the student can provide consent for information sharing and reassure them that any disclosures will be limited to those who need to know.

Recognizing that abuse can leave children feeling helpless and ashamed, Al Adhwa Private School is committed to providing ongoing support, promoting a safe and caring environment, and fostering self-esteem through educational programs and positive relationships. The school will follow guidance from relevant authorities to ensure the integrity of any legal proceedings.

b. RECORDING INFORMATION

Staff must follow these guidelines when recording information related to disclosures or concerns:

- **Timely Notes:** Make brief notes immediately after the disclosure, including the date, time, place, context, and exact words spoken—avoid assumptions or interpretations. Ensure notes are signed and dated.
- **Clarity:** Distinguish clearly between facts, observations, allegations, and opinions.
- **Injury Documentation:** Record observed injuries and bruises on a body map.
- **Non-Verbal Cues:** Note the student's non-verbal behavior and key phrases used without rephrasing them.
- **Disclosure Form:** Complete a Disclosure Form, attach the original notes, and submit them to the Designated Teacher.
- **Legal Awareness:** Understand that these records may be used in criminal or disciplinary proceedings.

c. PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO DISCLOSED ABUSE



d. SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION FORM

I Need to Talk Form

Date:	
Student Name:	Class:
Details of Concern	
What happened? <i>(Can you describe what's making you feel unsure or worried?)</i>	
Where did it happen? <i>(Was it in school, at home, or somewhere else?)</i>	
When did it happen? <i>(Was it today, yesterday, or a few days ago?)</i>	
Who was involved? <i>(Did anyone else see it, or were they part of it?)</i>	
Do you want to talk to someone? <i>(Yes/No)</i>	Do you want to talk to someone? <i>(Teacher, Social Worker, Designated Safeguarding Lead, or someone else)</i>
Student Signature:	
Reported to:	
Designation:	
Date:	

VII. SECURITY POLICY

To protect students from physical and digital security breaches, our security policy includes:

- **CCTV System:** A comprehensive CCTV system monitors key areas of the school to enhance safety and security.
- **Security Guard:** On-site security personnel manage access control and respond to security incidents.
 - **Presence:** Stationed at the entry gates at all times and are required to stay at their posts unless a replacement is provided.
 - **Licensing:** Possess authorized licenses as per the ADEK Staff Eligibility Policy.
 - **Alertness:** Remains vigilant to maintain safety and security on the school grounds, with support from the school's security system.
 - **Visitor Log:** Records detailed visitor information, including name, ID, signature, telephone number, purpose of visit, arrival time, and departure time.
 - **Access Control:** Access passes are issued to visitors only after presenting photo ID and verifying it matches the individual.
 - **Communication:** Maintains a communication link with school reception/administration to approve the entry of unfamiliar individuals.
 - **Handover Procedures:** Follows established procedures to ensure smooth transitions when changing security providers.
- **IT Supervisor:** Oversees digital security measures to protect against cyber threats and breaches.

a. SCHOOL VISITING PROCEDURES

- **Visitor Check-In:** Visitors must sign in at the security gate and obtain a visitor's access pass.
- **Display of Passes:** Visitors are required to display their access passes while on school premises.
- **Supervision:** Invited visitors must be accompanied by a designated staff member throughout their visit.
- **Visitor Check-Out:** Upon completing their visit, visitors must sign out at the security gate and return their access passes.
- **Authorized Personnel Access:** Verify the identity of authorized personnel, ensure their visit aligns with the purpose and requirements of their visit, and ensure the school principal has access to records of all granted access.

b. SCHOOL DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

- **Authorized Pick-Up:** Only individuals authorized by the parent or guardian are permitted to pick up students.
- **Permanent Access:** For individuals other than parents who have permanent authorization to pick up students, advance pre-registration is required. Parents must notify the school in writing and provide the ID of the nominated person.
- **Emergency Changes:** In the event of sudden or emergency changes in pick-up

plans, parents must call the school to inform them of the new pick-up person. This individual must present their ID upon arrival.

- **ID Verification:** The identity of the nominated person will be verified at the gate by checking their ID.
- **School Community Members:** IDs are not required for individuals who are already part of the school community and whose ID is on record with the school.

c. DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP GUIDELINES

- **Drop-off Times:** Students may be dropped off no earlier than 45 minutes before the start of the school day and must be picked up no later than 90 minutes after the end of the school day.
- **Unscheduled Drop-offs:** If parents drop off students at the school without prior notification to the school, the school shall not be legally responsible for the child's safety until they are officially under the school's supervision.

d. SPECIAL EVENT PROTOCOLS

- **Guest Policy:** Special events are exclusively open to immediate family members. Parents who wish to invite additional guests must pre-register them with the school in advance.
- **Visitor Access:** Clear signage will direct visitors to accessible areas within the school premises during special events.
- **Increased Security:** Enhanced security measures will be in place for events expecting a large number of visitors. This includes the presence of Supervisors, Middle Leaders, and other administrative staff to ensure safety and order.
- **Outside Service Providers:** All external service providers must be pre-approved by the school. They are required to undergo security checks, and must provide a valid trade license and work permit for each employee.

e. PROTECTING PRIVACY WITHIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

- **Reception Area Privacy:** Reception areas are designed to be free of individually identifiable elements to protect the privacy of all individuals within the school community.
- **Confidentiality of Personal Details:** Personal information will not be shared except as authorized by applicable laws and ADEK policies.

f. PROTOCOL FOR MANAGING SECURITY BREACHES

- **Lockdown System:** Implement a system for locking down the school both manually and automatically, with established reporting mechanisms in place.
- **Staff Training:** All school staff are trained and informed about the security breach procedures to ensure a coordinated response.
- **Safeguarding Committee:** The designated Safeguarding Committee will meet the requirements outlined in the ADEK Safeguarding Policy.
- **Alert Systems:** Regularly maintain and test alert systems, including vocal announcements and timed bells or alarms, in accordance with local regulations.
- **Data Backup and Continuity:** As per the ADEK Digital Policy, ensure the

ability to back up critical data and activate the business continuity plan in response to security breaches.

- **Emergency Planning:** Conduct emergency planning and drills in line with the ADEK Health and Safety Policy to prepare for potential security breaches.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Adhere to local regulatory requirements by reporting any security breach incidents to ADEK and/or appropriate authorities.

g. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

- **Induction Training:** All staff will receive safeguarding training during their induction to ensure they are aware of and can effectively implement the school's safeguarding policies.
- **Visitor Acknowledgment:** Ensure that all visitors read and sign the school's Safeguarding Policy before being granted access to the premises.

VIII. WHISTLEBLOWING PROCEDURES

Identifying a Whistleblower

Whistleblowing refers to the act of reporting concerns about wrongdoing within the school so that they can be investigated and addressed.

You are likely a whistleblower if the concern involves:

- Illegal activities
- Violations of school policies or procedures
- Falling below established standards of practice
- Improper conduct

Examples of whistleblowing concerns include but are not limited to:

- Offering or accepting rewards, misusing school funds or stealing, deceptive acts for personal gain, violating laws that endanger health or safety, and etc.

School's Complaints Procedures

The school provides clear channels for addressing concerns through our Complaints Procedures, ensuring transparency, fairness, and confidentiality.

Grievance Procedure

This procedure applies to staff and students who wish to lodge a grievance concerning their own employment, providing a structured process for resolving issues.

Handling Anonymous Allegations and Ensuring Confidentiality

Concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Investigations will be fair and may involve sharing some details to ensure thoroughness. While the school aims to protect whistleblower confidentiality, complete anonymity cannot always be guaranteed.

Anonymous concerns will be considered, but investigations may be limited if details cannot be verified.

Factors to consider when investigating anonymous allegations:

- The seriousness of the concern, the credibility of the issue raised, and the confirming the concern without needing further testimony.

False Allegations and How to Raise a Concern

At APS, disciplinary or legal action may be taken if an allegation is found to be malicious. When raising a concern, please provide relevant details like names, dates, locations, and reasons. You may also contact the Principal anonymously if preferred. Concerns about child safeguarding should follow the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Response Procedures for Reported Concerns

The school's response will depend on the nature of the concern. Actions may include:

- Internal investigation (consultation with the Board of Trustees if the matter falls outside of the Whistleblowing policy).
- Referral to the authorities (depending on the severity of the act)

IX. MONITORING AND MEASUREMENT

We employ mechanisms to measure and monitor our safeguarding practices to ensure they effectively protect students from all types of harm. This includes regular reviews of procedures, staff and student feedback, and compliance checks to uphold high safety and well-being standards.

X. SAFEGUARDING RESOURCES

To support our safeguarding efforts, we provide the following resources:

- **School Nurses:** Two nurses address health concerns, provide first aid, and support students' physical well-being.
- **Health and Safety Officer:** Ensures a safe environment through regular inspections and adherence to health and safety regulations.
- **Teacher Assistants (KG to Grade 2):** Assist with monitoring and supporting younger students, ensuring their safety and well-being throughout the school day.
- **Supervisors:**
 - **Grades 1-2 Supervisor:** Oversees the safeguarding and well-being of students in early primary grades.
 - **Grades 3-4 Supervisor:** Manages the safeguarding needs of students in middle primary grades.
 - **Grades 5-12 Boys Supervisor:** Focuses on the safety and well-being of male students in upper primary and secondary grades.
 - **Grades 5-12 Girls Supervisor:** Ensures the safety and support of female students in upper primary and secondary grades.

- **Middle Leaders:** Support safeguarding initiatives within their respective departments and oversee the implementation of safeguarding policies.

By integrating these elements, Al Adhwa Private School reaffirms its dedication to maintaining a secure, nurturing, and responsive environment for all students.

Ms. Amira Gafer Goraish
Al Adhwa Private School

