

STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

Introductory Statement

The School has developed this policy in line with the current recommendation and guidelines relating to Child Protection Policy by the ADEK and the Federal Law, in alignment with Federal Decree Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema), Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties, Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 on Private Education, Federal Decree Law No. (51) of 2022 Concerning the Regulation of Nurseries, and ADEK School Student Protection Policy v1.1 (September 2024).

This policy addresses the responsibilities of the school in the followings areas:

- Prevention- Curricular provision/Training
- Procedures- Procedures for dealing with the concerns/disclosures
- Practice- Best practices in child protection
- An individual copy of this policy document was oriented to each APS staff and teachers.

Zero Tolerance Policy

The school adopts a zero-tolerance approach toward all forms of student maltreatment including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, and cyberbullying.

Any violation shall result in immediate action in accordance with ADEK regulations and UAE law.

1. AIMS

- Create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment.
- Provide a personal safety skills education which specifically addresses abuse prevention for all children in the school.
- Develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection among the whole school community.

- Put in place procedures for good practices to protect all children.
- Ensure that all staff members are aware of and familiar about the Child Protection Policy.
- Provide training to all staff to ensure awareness about the policy.

2. Best Practices

In its policies, practices and activities, Al Adhwa Private School will adhere to the following principles of best practices in child protection and welfare:

- treating all students with respect.
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.
- involving students in decisions that affect them.
- encouraging positive and safe behavior among students.
- being a good listener.
- being alert to changes in students' behavior.
- recognizing that challenging behavior may be an indicator of abuse.
- reading and understanding the school's child protection policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, physical contact and information sharing.
- asking the pupil's permission before doing anything for them of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid.
- maintain appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between students, and avoiding the use of sexualized or derogatory language.
- being aware of the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some students that lead to an increased risk of abuse.

For the higher grades (male students of higher grades) can be accompanied by a male teacher in going to the clinic.

3. Elements of the Child Protection Policy:

1. Prevention

Ensuring the school has a positive atmosphere and one in which students feel secure and able to voice any concerns.

2. Protection

By following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns.

3. Support

Ensuring that support is provided to help any children who may have been abused by reporting to the concerned authorities.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers at the school.

4. Definitions:

4.1. A Child under this policy is a person who has not attained 18 years old.

4.2. Child protection, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as all measures, steps and actions that must be taken to protect students from risks that may cause harm or injury while they are in the school's care, travelling to and from the school using school transport, and moving between, waiting for, and taking part in, all activities organized by the school inside or outside the school campus.

4.3. A school day is the time period spent by a student under school supervision. It includes the time spent by the student inside the school and includes the time spent by the student in school buses from and to the school and in extra-curricular school activities.

4.4. Abuse refers to physical abuse, corporal punishment, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and also includes bullying, exploitation, and neglect.

Mandated Reporter

All staff and any person who has regular or temporary contact with students are legally Mandated Reporters under Article 42 of Federal Decree Law No. (3) of 2016 (Wadeema Law) and must report suspected maltreatment within 24 hours via the ADEK Safety Concern Portal. Failure to report may result in legal accountability.

5. Kinds of Abuse

- **Physical abuse** is the deliberate physical injury to a student, or the intentional neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This involves actions including, but not limited to, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement, or giving the student drugs not prescribed by a physician to control behavior or to cause harm.

Refer to **APPENDIX 1** For common signs that indicate physical abuse.

- **Corporal punishment**, a physical punishment inflicted on a child by a teacher or any adult in authority, such as the guardian, as a form of discipline and is considered as **Physical abuse**.
- **Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment to a student such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the student's emotional growth and development. It involves actions such as, but not limited to, conveying to students that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It involves causing students to feel bullied, frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of students. Some levels of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a student, though it may occur in isolation.

Refer to **APPENDIX 2** For common signs that indicate emotional abuse.

- **Sexual Abuse and Exploitation** involves but not limited to forcing or a student to take part in sexual activities. The activities involve actions including or including enticing but not limited to physical contact, including penetrative or non- penetrative acts. They include non-contact activities such as involving students in looking at or in the production of, pornographic material or, watching sexual activities, sexual hinting or encouraging students to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Refer to **APPENDIX 3** For common signs that indicate sexual abuse.

- **Bullying** is unwanted aggressive behavior(s) from a student or more to another student and involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated (or is highly likely to be) multiple times. Bullying, as a form of violence, includes physical (hitting, tripping), verbal (name calling, teasing), relational/social (spreading rumors, leaving out of group), and cyber-bullying aggression (occurs through e-mail, a chat room, instant messaging, a website, text messaging, or pictures or videos sent through cell phones or posted on websites). A student can be a perpetrator, a victim, or both.

- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a student's basic physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. It involves failing of a parent or a guardian to take actions that are considered necessary to care for children including, but not limited to:
 - provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
 - protect the child from physical harm or danger;
 - provide adequate care (including the use of adequate caregivers)
 - provide healthcare and appropriate medical treatment
 - provide education and regular school attendance
 - maintain personal hygiene
 - ensure adequate stimulation.

Refer to **APPENDIX 4** for common signs of neglect.

6. Appointment of a Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) and Child Protection Team (CPT):

The school shall appoint a Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) and a Child Protection Team (CPT) consisting of the school counselor, social worker, and other relevant senior leadership members. The CPC will receive ADEK-mandated training, and the CPT members will also undergo necessary training as announced by ADEK.

- The CPC must complete ADEK-mandated training and should preferably be a senior staff member or someone with experience supporting students at educational risk.
- The CPT (Child Protection Team) will undergo required ADEK training and typically includes 3-5 members: the counselor, social worker, and relevant senior leadership. If a team cannot be formed, the CPC will handle case management, with a designated delegate in case of the CPC's absence.

7. Equal Rights, Protection, Safety and Security

All students have equal rights for protection, safety, and security in the schools. The school is fully responsible for the care and protection of students, while students are in the school's care, travelling to and from the school using school transport, and moving between, waiting for, and taking part in all activities organized by the school inside and outside the school.

Students have the right to:

- Be heard and express their views.
- Be treated with dignity and fairness.
- Be supported by an advocate when necessary.
- Be protected from harm.
- Be informed about safe reporting mechanisms without fear of retribution.

The School will also ensure the supervision of students before the start of the school day and after school hours. For safety and life reasons, all school staff shall never leave children unattended at any time.

All school staff - including any person who, in the performance of his/her duties, has regular or temporary contact with students and who provides services to students or school - shall report all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect to proper authorities within 24 hours upon suspicion.

In addition, school staff shall inform the School Principal immediately when they suspect the exposure of any student to any form of abuse and/or neglect.

School staff must raise the awareness of students of the importance to report any suspected case of student abuse and/or neglect inside or outside the school that becomes known to them, as stated in this policy.

Telephone hotline (116111)

You can report **child abuse** to MoI through the **hotline** number 116111 or through the MoI's **Child Protection Centre's** website and the 'Hemayati' (Arabic for protect me) app (available on Android and iOS). Other channels: Community Development Authority- CDA on **hotline: 800988**.

If a child is in immediate danger (risk of serious harm), the police should be called using the 999 service, followed by reporting to the Ministry of Interior - Child Protection Center within one hour upon discovery.

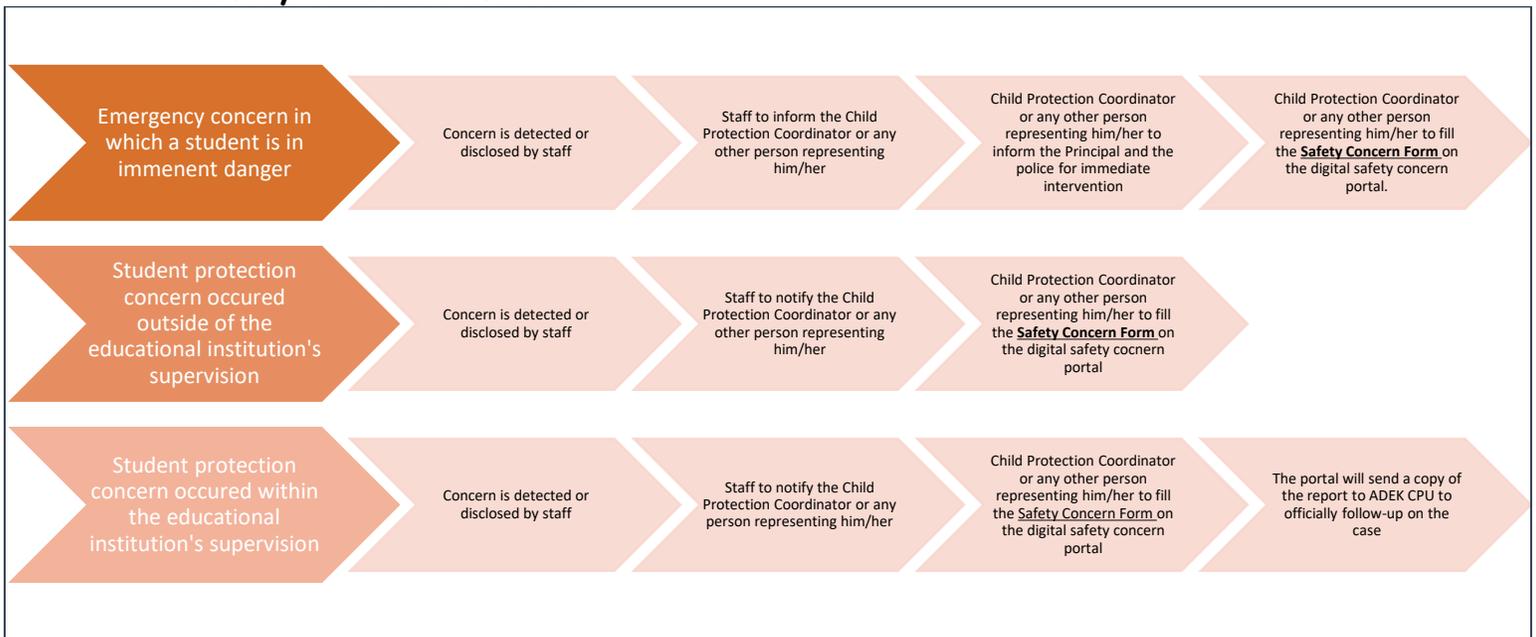
In emergency situations where the child is in imminent danger, the CPC must report to the police immediately (999), followed by submitting the Safety Concern Form to ADEK's CPU through the digital safety concern portal.

8. Student Maltreatment Reporting Process

Reporting and Handling Maltreatment Concerns:

- **Identification:** All staff members are trained to identify signs of maltreatment, including severe bullying, according to operational definitions provided in the policy.
- **Immediate Action:** If a student is in imminent danger, the concern must be immediately reported to the Police (999) and the Principal.
- **External Incidents:** If the maltreatment occurs outside school supervision, the staff must notify the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) or their representative. The CPC will fill out the Safety Concern Form via the digital safety concern portal. The form is automatically sent to the ADEK Child Protection Unit (CPU), FCA, and the Ministry of Interior - Child Protection Center (MoI-CPC).
- **Internal Incidents:** If the incident occurs under school supervision, the CPC or their representative will also complete the Safety Concern Form. This report will follow the same submission process as external incidents.
- **Case Management:** The ADEK CPU reviews all reports, conducts initial assessments, and refers cases to the FCA for management. The FCA will then proceed with necessary follow-up actions.
- **Incomplete Reports:** If more information is needed, the ADEK CPU may return the concern to the school for further investigation before resubmission.
- **Tracking and Logging:** ADEK CPU ensures that all concerns are logged and responded to appropriately.

Safety Concern Referrals



Relevant contact details are as follows:

- Abu Dhabi Police: 999
- Family Care Authority (FCA): 800444
- MoE Child Protection Unit (CPU): 80085
- Safety Concern Portal:

icm@adfca.gov.ae

cpu@moe.gov.ae

<https://daasafetyconcern.abudhabi/>

9. Supporting Students at Risk

Our school recognizes that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. While at school, their behavior may still be challenging and defiant and there may even be moves to consider suspension or exclusion from school. It is also recognized that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

APS will endeavor to support students through:

- The curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation;
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all students and adults a sense of being respected and valued;

- A consistent approach, which recognizes and separates the cause of behavior from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting;
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies that support the students and their families, in-line with appropriate confidentiality parameters;
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever possible and so long as it is in the child's best interests to do so;
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.

We recognize that, statistically, children with behavioral difficulties and disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behavior problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

It must also be stressed that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol misuse, children may also be particularly vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

10. Data confidentiality:

Case reports and student data are strictly confidential. The identities of the student subject to alleged abuse or neglect, the alleged perpetrator, and the person reporting the alleged case must be kept confidential by all parties involved in the case. The data should be shared only with authorized individuals from the ADEK Division in charge of child protection and the Ministry of Interior - Child Protection Center and Social Support Center authorized staff.

Case reports and student data are strictly confidential. The identities of the student subject to alleged abuse or neglect, the alleged perpetrator, and the person reporting the alleged case must be kept confidential by all parties involved in the case. Data should only be shared with authorized individuals from the ADEK Child Protection Unit (CPU), the Family and Child Affairs (FCA), the Ministry of Interior - Child Protection Center, and the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department. Authorized individuals are strictly prohibited from discussing active or closed cases with the media, third parties, or unauthorized personnel, except within the legal responsibilities of investigative and judicial authorities.

11. Student Protection Education & Awareness

- The school shall provide age-appropriate student protection learning resources.
- Student protection shall be taught through classroom awareness sessions and teach students how to recognize abuse and seek help.
- Visible reporting guidance (posters and digital channels) shall be displayed across the school.
- A student-friendly version of this policy shall be provided annually.

12. Training

- The CPC and CPT must complete ADEK-mandated student protection and safeguarding training and sign an affidavit of ethical conduct.
- All staff must complete ADEK's required training and acknowledge their responsibilities.
- Volunteers and invited visitors must receive training or attest to understanding the school's student protection policy.
- Staff providing counseling or close student support must receive continuous training and supervision.
- CPS staff working in ADEK CPU must hold MoCD certification.
- Staff, visitors and volunteers providing counseling, advocacy, or close personal support to students must receive continuous safeguarding training and supervision as required by ADEK.

13. Vetting and Monitoring

- All staff, volunteers, and visitors must undergo background checks before working with students.
- The Principal is responsible for ensuring compliance with safeguarding policies and preventing unsuitable individuals from working with students.
- Staff conduct must be continuously monitored, and any concerns must be reported immediately.
- Staff found guilty of serious misconduct will be dismissed following an official investigation.
- Criminal clearance must be obtained from the UAE and from countries of recruitment prior to employment.
- Any staff member suspected of serious misconduct shall be immediately suspended on a precautionary basis, pending the outcome of a formal investigation.
- The Principal holds full accountability for the suitability and continuous monitoring of all individuals working with students.

14. Acceptable Conduct

- Staff , visitors and volunteers must respect students' rights and avoid any behavior that may cause harm.
- Inappropriate actions toward students are strictly prohibited.
- Any misconduct must be reported immediately.
- Avoid any inappropriate physical contact or emotional behavior toward students.
- Staff shall not be alone with a student in any unsupervised closed spaces.
- Serious allegations of sexual misconduct must be reported to the Police and FCA, and the accused individual must be removed from school premises immediately.

15. Dissemination to all staff and parents about the policy:

The school shall conduct training to all staff in the school at the beginning of the school year or whenever necessary and shall inform the parent by posting the policy to the school site.

A student-friendly version shall be disseminated annually to students.

This policy shall be reviewed annually or whenever ADEK issues regulatory updates.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal will:

- Comply with the provisions of this policy.
- Publish a Child Protection policy to protect students from any abuse and neglect.
- Ensure that procedures to prevent situations that could lead to the abuse or neglect of students are in place and understood by all school staff and leaders.
- Ensure the supervision of students at all times while in school's care.
- Ensure that there is priority emphasis within the school on the protection of the students and for taking immediate actions when there is suspicion of cases of student abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that students can safely report their concerns about abuse and/ or neglect without fear of retribution or punishment.

- Ensure that staff and others can safely report their concerns about the potential exposure of any student to abuse and/or neglect without fear of retribution or punishment.
- Immediately report any case of potential abuse and/or neglect of students as stated by this policy.
- Conduct orientation sessions for parents/guardians at the start of every school year to promote this policy and to inform them of their roles and responsibilities, and their rights and duties.
- Maintain students' records in compliance with Student Records policy, and ensure confidentiality of open and closed cases.
- Immediately suspend any staff member who is suspected of an offence involving student abuse and/or neglect on a temporary basis until the suspicion is adjudicated.

All School Staff will:

- Report a suspected case of abuse and/or neglect upon immediate discovery
- Supervise students at all times while in school's care.
- Understand this policy to address suspected or alleged student abuse or neglect cases.
- Attend and participate in mandated student protection training.

Parents/Legal Guardians will:

- Cooperate with the school administration and staff, answer all inquiries related to the student's behavior, academic performance and respond to their feedback and guidance.
- Attend all scheduled school parent meetings.
- Communicate any concerns, observations, or changes in their child's behavior to the school administration or to the concerned school staff.

Compliance Statement

This policy is effective from Academic Year 2024/25 and ensures full compliance with ADEK School Student Protection Policy v1.1.

Failure to comply may result in administrative penalties under ADEK regulations and UAE law.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - Possible signs of physical abuse can include:

1. Unexplained bruises or injuries
2. Injuries which have not received medical attention
3. Repeated abdominal pain
4. Withdrawn from physical contact
5. Arms and legs covered in scalds
6. Fear of returning home
7. Fear of contacting caregivers/parents
8. Self-destructive tendencies
9. Displaying aggression towards others
10. Unusual passive behavior
11. Repeated running away from home
12. Cigarette burns
13. Human bite marks
14. Broken bones
15. Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge

APPENDIX 2 - Possible signs of emotional abuse can include:

1. Regular tiredness
2. Fear of a new situation
3. Low self esteem
4. High levels of anxiety
5. Unusually passive or aggressive
6. Delayed speech
7. Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
8. Running away
9. Lying
10. Neurotic behavior e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
11. Fear of making mistakes
12. Self-harm
13. Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

APPENDIX 3 - Possible signs of sexual abuse can include:

1. Unusual behavior which could be general or sexual
2. Age inappropriate sexual behavior
3. Sexually transmitted diseases
4. Physical indicators in the genital and anal areas
5. Pain or itching in the genital area
6. Bruising or bleeding near genital area
7. Vaginal discharge or infection
8. Discomfort when walking or sitting down
9. Pregnancy

APPENDIX 4 - POSSIBLE SIGNS OF NEGLECT CAN INCLUDE:

1. STEALING
2. POOR SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS
3. FAILURE TO THRIVE
4. POOR PERSONAL HYGIENE
5. FREQUENT HUNGER
6. UNTREATED MEDICAL COMPLAINTS
7. FREQUENT LATENESS OR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL
8. INAPPROPRIATE CLOTHING
9. SUBSTANCE OR ALCOHOL MISUSE

APPENDIX 5

Process to report a suspected case of abuse and/or neglect in Abu Dhabi schools:

- Recognize the signs of child abuse and/or neglect
- Refer to possible signs of Child Abuse in APPENDICES 1-4 of the Child Protection Policy

- Report the case to the Ministry of Interior – Child Protection Center using the telephone hotline (116111) and the electronic reporting link available on the ADEK website
- Record the case reference number and the date of reporting

- Inform the School Principal when suspect a case of student abuse and/or neglect

- Ensure confidentiality and privacy of reported cases
- Cooperate with the Ministry of Interior – Child Protection Center by implementing the required measures

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Principal and the Review Committee. Discussed and agreed for immediate implementation.

MS. AMIRA GAFER GORAISH
APS Principal

