



AL BASMA BRITISH SCHOOL

**2023-2024**

## **Policy: Student Protection**

<b>Approved/reviewed by</b>	
Governors/Head of Centre	
<b>Date of next review:</b>	September 2024

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

## **Policy: Students Protection**

### **Corresponding to Private Schools' Policy (3) and Article (5) of the Organising Regulations**

#### **DEFINITION(S):**

For the purposes of this policy, **The School** refers to Al Basma British School and **students protection** is defined as all those measures, steps and actions that must be taken to avoid subjecting students while at School or outside it, during any School activities and during their transportation to any danger or harm, be it exploitation, violence, physical harm, sexual abuse, any verbal insult, moral threat or harm of any kind. It is every student's right to be in a safe School environment that is free of any form of abuse and that continuously offers care, support and protection to all students without discrimination.

#### **PURPOSE(S):**

- To emphasise the protection of students as a core principle, which stems from the moral obligation, and to safeguard them from abuse or harm and to ensure their security and welfare, as required pursuant to applicable laws in force in the UAE.
- To guide Private Schools in the Emirate to prepare comprehensive School policies and procedures to:
  - Protect students and prevent the exploitation, bullying, physical and/or sexual abuse, insult or harm of any other kind which students may face, and to identify those who may have suffered harm.
  - Promote students' cultural, social, and mental growth to enable them to become strong, self-confident members of society.
- To ensure all school staff, parents and children are aware of their rights and responsibilities under Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on Child Right.
- To ensure all school staff are aware that under Law 3 on Child Rights they are authorised and mandated to report any case of suspected abuse or neglect to the Child Protection Officer or Principal in their absence.
- To ensure Child Protection Officer and Principal are aware that under Law 3 of 2016 on Child Rights they are authorised and mandated to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect by any perpetrator to MOI 116111 and ADEK via reporting facility on the website.

#### **POLICY:**

The School is fully responsible for the care and protection of students whilst they are in the School's care, or travelling to and from the School using School-provided transportation means, and while moving between all activities organised by the School.

The School must take all possible measures to protect students from any form of exploitation, abuse, oppression and insult and/or any other physical, sexual or emotional threat, danger or harm. The School must exercise the utmost care over the security of students in their care.

The School's Principal shall accept *in loco parentis* (in the position of a Parent/Guardian) responsibility for all students whilst they are in the School's care, including travelling to and from the School using School-provided transportation means, and while moving between, waiting for, and taking part in all activities organised by the School.

The School management must also ensure the supervision of students 45 minutes before the start of the school day and 90 minutes after school hours, and must notify and regularly remind Parents/Guardians of their responsibility toward their children outside of these two periods.

The School has developed herein a student protection policy that follows, adheres to and aligns with all the relevant laws and regulations issued by ADEK and the relevant authorities in the UAE. Private schools' Policy (3) corresponding to Article (5) of the Organising Regulations shall act as a reference in respect of all measures and procedures taken by the School to protect students from any form of abuse or harm by providing the following as a minimum:

- Safe School buildings.
- Safe School provided means of transportation.
- ADEK approved School activities and educational visits.
- Provision to protect students' health, welfare and well-being through education, access to a Social Worker, approved healthy menus in the canteen and a licensed clinic.
- A disciplined body of students who adhere to the student code of conduct.
- Confidential treatment of students' personal data.
- Secure School IT systems.
- Supervision of students at all times during school day hours and related School activities.
- Counselling and School support services, enabling students to have access to a trusted professional counsellor, or a social worker, or someone in an equivalent position.
- Necessary background checks on all School personnel in association with the relevant authorities including police checks and references regarding moral fortitude.
- Reporting procedures in respect of any incident affecting the security of students within the School whereby Parents/Guardians, ADEK and other related government entities are informed in a timely, efficient and accurate manner.
- Confidential reports and investigations related to any kind of student abuse and their communication to the Council and relevant government entities.

- On-going First Aid training, and dissemination of knowledge regarding all health, safety and prevention matters so that all School staff know what is expected of them and what to look out for with respect to the protection and safety of students (e.g. First Aid, CPR).
- A variety of communication channels for students and their Parents/Guardians to share their opinions, which may include surveys, group discussions and opportunities for them to express their views while ensuring their privacy. Additionally, Parents/Guardians shall be continuously informed of and given clarification regarding the roles and responsibilities they share with the School to protect their children.

This policy is not only concerned with prevention, reporting and investigation of child protection concerns, it also promotes a safe and positive environment which is inclusive of the School's pastoral and care systems as well as the accommodation of the personal, social, emotional and learning needs of the students and their rights and responsibilities, together with the School's high expectations of students' behaviour.

The School recognises that effective student protection is based on support and encouragement, as students need (above all else) to feel a well-placed sense of trust and confidence in those they work with, without fear of exploitation or abuse.

#### *Reporting of alleged incidents taking place whilst the child is in school's care*

It is mandatory for all Schools to thoroughly investigate and report immediately to ADEK all incidents of abuse which students have allegedly suffered whilst in the care of the school during the school day, up to 45 minutes before and 90 minutes after the end of the school day, whilst at school activities or whilst using school approved transportation. Forms of abuse include exploitation, violence and/or any other physical harm, sexual abuse, emotional threat, or harm of any kind, all of which will be referred to as "abuse of students". If any such incident is proven or suspected, it is the responsibility of the School's Principal (or in the case of the abuse being carried out by the School's Principal, the Chair of Board of Trustees/School Owner) to:

- 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 – are authorised and mandated by ADEK to report all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect (conducted by any perpetrator inside or outside of the school) directly to the Child Protection Officer or Principal in their absence.
- Take immediate steps to safeguard all those involved, by reporting incidents to the relevant official entities, taking into account other laws that may be related to the incident.
- Report the incident immediately to concerned Parents/Guardians.
- Immediately suspend any member of staff who is accused of an offence involving student abuse if the alleged staff abuse involves a crime according to the provisions of prevailing UAE Laws, as per article 112 of the Labour Law (including notifying the relevant authorities), until an investigation in this matter is completed and a decision

is made concerning this member of staff's fitness to continue to work at the School.

- Carry out a formal investigation obtaining written statements from those involved;
- The Child Protection Officer is authorised and mandated to report the incident to ADEK using the reporting facility on the ADEK website and to the MOI telephone hotline 116111.
- Immediately terminate the employment of anyone found guilty by a competent authority of an offence of student abuse, in accordance with the provisions of United Arab Emirates Federal Law No. (8) of 1980 Labour Law and its amendments.

In order to comply with ADEK requirements, when handling cases of student abuse, School must conduct an investigation, maintain clear and scrupulous records of communications and actions when dealing with relevant government entities such as the Health Authority – Abu Dhabi (“HAAD”), the social welfare institutions and police departments. School should keep relevant records such that we can share such communications with ADEK if so requested.

#### *Suspected Incidents of Severe Abuse outside of school*

Where the School uncovers a case of severe abuse of a student outside of School, it must take the matter seriously and follow up the case with the social worker. School shall take the necessary steps to protect the student, including communicating with the Parent/Guardian to discuss the matter, or by forwarding the case to the relevant official entities in the UAE (social support institutions). School must prepare a detailed report concerning the incident and procedures taken in this regard. This report should be kept in the student's folder. If the abuse is a crime, the School is required to notify the relevant official entities.

**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 Centre within one hour upon discovery.**

#### *Suspected Incidents of Abuse outside of school*

If returning the child to the environment where the incident of suspected abuse took place is not considered an immediate or serious danger to the child's health, welfare or well-being the evidence should be recorded on a child protection form, reported to the Child Protection Officer or, in their absence, the Principal for review. Cases will be reviewed at the end of each month and cases which have not warranted further investigation during that time frame will be closed. Should further incidents occur in the future the cases can be reopened. All reported incidents relating to the same case are recorded in a 'case timeline log'. All alleged incidents which lead to the completion of a child protection form are recorded in the 'child protection log'.

#### *Failure to Comply with this Policy*

Failure to comply with this policy is subject to legal accountability and administrative

penalties stipulated in accordance with ADEK's regulations, policies and requirements in addition to the UAE Federal Law No.3 on Child Rights, Federal Law No.3 of 1987 on Penal code and any other local or Federal relevant laws effective at the time of incident.

#### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

##### **The School's Owners and Board of Trustees will:**

- Ensure that buildings provide secure and supportive environments that comply with ADEK's requirements.
- Approve the School's student protection policies, procedures and updates.
- Ensure that the School's recruitment policy and procedures include a condition of completing the required background checks on all School staff, in association with the relevant authorities.
- Make sure that the School's policy includes procedures that will prevent situations which could give rise to the abuse of students, for example by supervising students at all times while they are in the School's care.

##### **The School Principal will:**

- Comply with the provisions of this policy
- Every private school shall publish a Child Protection Policy to protect students from any abuse and neglect provided it meets the minimum requirements of what is included in this policy and does not contradict any of its provisions
- 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.
- Gain views from students and parents regarding security and protection within the school.
- Immediately report any case of potential abuse and/or neglect of students as stated by this policy.
- Ensure all school staff are aware of the Child Protection Policy and that they are authorized and mandated by UAE Federal Law No.3 of 2016 on Child Rights to report all suspected cases of abuse and/or neglect immediately on discovery to the Child Protection Officer or the Principal in their absence.

- Ensure the Child Protection Officer is aware that they are authorised and mandated by UAE Federal Law No.3 of 2016 on Child Rights to report all suspected cases of abuse and/or neglect immediately on discovery to the MOI Hotline and ADEK via the reporting facility on the website
- Ensure students are aware of their rights under Law No.3 of 2016 on Child Rights and the existence of the MOI hotline and how and when to use it.
- Ensure that all staff and administrators targeted for student protection training are fully attend and participate in all training sessions.
- Conduct orientation sessions for parents/guardians upon student registration or enrollment and at the start of every school year to promote this policy and to inform them of their roles and responsibilities and 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.

<b>Draft Date:</b>	<b>01/09/23</b>
<b>Approved By Board of Governors:</b>	<b>Approved</b>
<b>Principal Approval:</b>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>01/09/24</b>

