

Policy	Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy
Service Pillar	Education Safeguarding and Child Protection
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1. Safeguarding Commitment Statement

Aldar Education is committed to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. We recognise that children have a right to feel secure and cannot learn effectively unless they do so. All children have a right to be protected from abuse and maltreatment and to be well-informed about their rights and responsibilities, promoting a safe and supportive learning atmosphere. This Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy framework embodies the ethical standards, objectives, and core beliefs that are fundamental to education, prioritising the child in all decision-making.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of children is everyone's responsibility. All adults who come into contact with children and families are legally and morally compelled to work to prevent harm and respond to a child at risk of, or suspected of being at risk of abuse, neglect or maltreatment.

Therefore, for this policy to be effective, there needs to be collective duty shared by every member of the Aldar Education community. Board members, Principals, senior leaders, employees, support staff, volunteers, third-party services, children and parents must play an active and conscious role in promoting and embedding a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and harm.

We encourage everyone to think proactively to prevent abuse from occurring to children as well as responding to it, so that the organisation builds a safeguarding culture built on the Aldar values:

- **Result-oriented** in delivering tangible wellbeing, academic, and personal outcomes for every learner.
- **Growth-minded** in embracing innovation in safeguarding, learning from challenges, and continually raising our standards.
- **Community-focused** in building inclusive, culturally respectful partnerships with families and stakeholders, whilst keeping the child at the centre of our work.
- **Collaborative** in fostering teamwork, distributed leadership, and cross-sector cooperation
- **Responsible** in safeguarding every child, ensuring ethical governance, and sustaining trust across all we do.

This approach ensures that schools are empowered to develop safe and caring environments in which all children can learn, thrive and develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings, and opinions in an atmosphere that prioritises their best interests.

Safeguarding and child protection are central to all policies, with Aldar Education schools prioritising children's best interests. Therefore:

- Zero tolerance for maltreatment is upheld in all student-related actions and environments.
- All staff are tasked with a duty of care towards children and are responsible for their wellbeing, safety and protection whilst they are under the school's supervision. All adults in school fulfill this responsibility from a 'position of trust', this carries with it certain expectations and responsibilities, breaches of which may lead to disciplinary action and possible dismissal.
- Parents, carers, and trusted individuals can harm children through direct acts or neglect, leading to various forms of abuse. Therefore, all school adults, will prioritise children's best interests and adhere to this policy.

2. Purpose and Scope:

2.1 Purpose:

The purpose of this policy and any relevant guidance is to provide all stakeholders with the best advice and clarity they need to keep children safe in our schools, by recognising, responding and reporting effectively in cases where abuse or neglect is alleged or suspected. This policy also provides information on how we safeguard children whilst they are in our care through a positive, proactive safeguarding culture and how school's work to prevent student maltreatment as well as handle any abuse or maltreatment and support children following any concerns.

2.2 Scope:

The scope of this policy covers all Aldar Education schools, including those on a managed and operated basis. Aldar Education believes that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and working together is essential for effective safeguarding and child protection, therefore roles and responsibilities at all levels are clearly identified. All schools are required to observe and implement this policy as a minimum expected service level.

3. Continuous improvement:

Aldar Education are committed to continually reviewing and enhancing the Safeguarding and Student Protection Framework, using data insights from schools and international best practice. The safeguarding landscape is ever changing, and new challenges, harms, technology and best practice emerge that require responses to ensure children's safety and wellbeing. This commitment to learning and proactive risk management keeps our policy relevant, fosters accountability and transparency. This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident, new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review. This will be led by the Aldar Education Safeguarding and Child Protection Education Committee.

4. To fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, all Aldar Education schools ensure that:

- **Policies, approaches and the organisational culture** supports, cares for, and safeguards all children, staff and wider stakeholders, irrespective of their faith, nationality, gender, lived experiences or culture.
- The **best interests and safety of the child** is a primary consideration in all actions taken to safeguard their wellbeing. 'Positions of trust' exist in professions where the professional is in a position of authority or status over a child or vulnerable person, e.g. teachers/school staff, doctors, social workers, therapists etc. Staff in school are employed in a 'position of trust' in respect of all children connected to Aldar Education. All relationships developed with children will be as agents of the company and as such no personal relationships are permitted outside the remit of the school service. This means that adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviours, which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and document any incident with this potential.
- A **person-centred approach** is developed so that policies, systems and processes consider the diverse backgrounds, abilities and circumstances of individuals to promote trust and open communication.
- **Student participation** is fundamental to ensuring that children's rights are upheld and that they participate in relevant decisions that might generally affect their lives.
- **Partnership with parents** is prioritised so that trust is built between school and home, leading to effectively protecting children from harm.
- All **children are provided with appropriate support** in school and their needs are identified and responded to effectively, including those who have experienced abuse, neglect and/or maltreatment. This includes access to support and counselling for any child who needs it.

- All staff receive **appropriate training** to fulfil their roles effectively and safely. Staff and volunteers respect and protect the rights of all students and take no actions that may put the student at risk of maltreatment. Staff and volunteers are required to report any incidents of inappropriate behaviours against students.
- **Safeguarding education**, which is culturally informed is integrated across the curriculum and regularly reviewed to reflect emerging risks including those through technology. This may be delivered to children or parents to raise awareness of safeguarding issues.
- **Data driven insights** on safeguarding risks are used to inform decision making and provision. All schools use the CPOMS platform to support this risk-informed approach, identifying and addressing prevalent issues and contributing to continuous improvement in practice.
- Effective **whistleblowing procedures and a positive safeguarding culture exists** where students, staff, volunteers, parents and the wider community know how they are expected to behave. If concerns arise regarding child welfare/adult behaviour, individuals may raise them in confidence and without fear of retaliation. This includes concerns related to digital spaces e.g. social media and in-person harms.
- There is a **clear line of accountability** within the educational organisation for safeguarding and child protection. It is the responsibility of the Principal and all staff of the education institution to recognise, respond to, and manage student protection risk and impact to the best of their ability.
- **Effective working relationships with other agencies** including the relevant Regulator, Family Care Authority, CDA, Police and emirate-specific Child Protection Units are developed and promoted.
- This **Safeguarding and Student Protection policy is communicated publicly** through the school website, understood and followed by all within the institution community, with a student-friendly version available.
- **Recruitment and HR procedures** prioritise the safety and welfare of children, through staff, volunteers, and invited visitors being properly vetted and screened prior to working in or accessing any locations where students are present. This includes criminal record checks from countries from which the applicant is being hired. The Principal takes full responsibility and accountability for all persons working in educational institutions and ensures their suitability and compliance with all student protection and safeguarding requirements. This includes preventing any person from working with students if they pose a risk to students' safety and wellbeing. The Principal also ensures continuous monitoring of all staff and immediately reports alleged inappropriate conduct or suspected actions that may result in harm or risk of harm to a student.
- **Confidentiality and data privacy** is paramount and that safeguarding concerns are raised and managed through the secure CPOMS safeguarding platform to ensure that case reports and student data remain strictly confidential. The data is shared only with authorised individuals who are strictly prohibited from discussing active or closed cases with the media, any third parties or other staff, and/or unauthorised regulator representatives, with the exception of investigative and judicial authorities and within the legal responsibilities.
- Effective **Digital and physical security** mechanisms are in place to measure and monitor the delivery of safeguarding practices to protect students from all types of harm to their health and development. These may include regular school Safeguarding & Child Protection Committee meetings, review of the school security systems that safeguard school assets, data and people against any risk of harm, relevant audits and critical incident response protocols.

5. Child Rights: The Aldar Education Safeguarding & Student Protection policy advocates for and protects the right of all students to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Be treated with fairness and justice.
- Be listened to and heard, and to express their voice through schools seeking children's views in ways that are appropriate to their age and understanding.
- Have these views taken account of in individual decisions and the establishment or development of provision.
- Be supported by an advocate and provided with necessary support where required so that their rights are protected.
- Be safe, protected from harm and aware of what constitutes risk and harm.
- Have equal rights to care, protection and safety in all educational institutions.

6. Roles and Responsibilities:

- **The Aldar Education Board of Directors/CEO/Executive Management Team (EMT)/Chief Education Officer** is responsible for corporate governance, exercising the duty of care for all and the oversight of the effective delivery of the Aldar Education Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy and any legal/regulatory requirements. They demonstrate the Aldar Education commitment to safeguarding through the organisation's governance and scrutiny procedures, safer recruitment, training framework, working practices and complaints/allegations processes.
- **The Chief Child Protection Officer** oversees the enhancement and implementation of safeguarding and child protection activities throughout Aldar Education and Chairs the Safeguarding & Child Protection Education Committee. This involves strategic leadership to ensure compliance with legal requirements and best practices in safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures across schools.
- **The Director of Education** is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the Aldar Education Safeguarding and Student Protection policy, any relevant safeguarding legislation and regulatory/Aldar Education policies are delivered effectively in their respective cluster of schools.
- **School Board of Governors:** Manages overall governance, ensuring all safeguarding practices align with Aldar Education and school policies and legal standards, and focuses on long-term strategic issues.
- **Principal/Head of School:** Leads the development of a positive safeguarding culture, enforces safe recruitment practices, and ensures all safeguarding and child protection concerns are addressed and that stakeholders recognise, respond to, and manage student protection risk and impact to the best of their ability.
- **Safeguarding Governor:** Collaborates with the Principal and DSL to embed effective safeguarding within the school's strategic plans, supporting the allocation of sufficient resourcing to keep children safe.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead/Child Protection Coordinator (DSL/CPC):** Holds primary responsibility for all safeguarding and child protection activities including liaison with external agencies, leading initiatives and policy implementation.
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads/Child Protection Team (DDSLs/CPT):** Assist the DSL and assume their duties when necessary, ensuring ongoing safeguarding efforts.
- **Specific Roles:** Provide specialist support for specific risks related to safeguarding e.g. Digital Safety Leads, Counsellors/Mental Health Leads, Social Workers, Clinic staff, or Site Security.
- **All Staff and Volunteers:** Prioritise children's welfare and safety, actively contributing to a supportive and safe learning environment.
- **Parents/Carers:** Support the school's efforts to maintain a safe environment, helping ensure that children feel secure and supported in their development both at home and in school.
- **Children:** Support the school and each other to maintain a safe environment, develop and maintain positive relationships so that the right of everyone to feel safe and happy is protected.

7. Status of the policy and how to use it:

This policy is part of the Aldar Education Safeguarding and Student Protection framework that includes policy, procedures and guidance that interconnect to create a strong governance approach to safeguarding for all schools.

Section A - Policy: Applied to all stakeholders: the overarching intentions, commitments and responsibilities for the safeguarding, welfare and protection of children in Aldar Education.

Section B - Procedures: School-level guidance on how to respond when an incident occurs so that concerns are effectively managed for those affected.

Section C – Resource Base: Supportive resources for schools to ensure the policy becomes practice.

This policy framework is written to align with the specific context, culture and unique character of the region to create safer environments that effectively prevent and respond to safeguarding and welfare concerns in all schools. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the relevant UAE and emirate-specific legislation, regulatory requirements and policies (see below).

This policy is informed by:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNCRC, (1991)
- UAE Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child's Rights, (Wadeema's Law)
- Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 on Private Education
- UAE School Inspection Framework (2016)
- National Child Protection Policy in Educational Institutions in the UAE, Ministry of Education, (n.d.)
- The National Policy for the Prevention of Bullying in Educational Institutions (Ministry of Education, n.d.)
- ADEK Student Protection Policy (2024)
- Dama Al-Aman Handling Student Maltreatment Concerns within Educational Institutions, DAA Child Protection Committee, (2024)
- ADEK Private Schools Policy and Guidance Manual (2014-2015)
- ADEK Safeguarding Policy (2024)
- Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (KHDA, n.d.)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, UK Dept for Education (2024)

This policy is also closely aligned to the ADEK Policy framework for Wellbeing.

All schools are required to observe and implement this policy as a minimum expected service level, and comply with all regulatory policies and procedures and relevant legislation.