



Effective From	AY 2024/25 (Fall term)
Compliance From	1 February 2026

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

The commitment to highest standards of safeguarding and student protection is paramount in any educational setting. Schools in Abu Dhabi shall promote safe practices and protect students from harm, maltreatment, and exploitation to ensure the development and growth of every student, as is their right as per Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights. This policy sets out the priorities and processes for safeguarding and promoting the welfare and security of students and lists procedures to adhere to when dealing with allegations of abuse and maltreatment.

Purpose

- Set out ADEK's requirements in relation to safeguarding and the promotion of student welfare.
- Define a clear line of accountability within schools to ensure safeguarding protocols are fully implemented.
- Define procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of student maltreatment.
- Outline the security requirements for schools to ensure effective supervision and duties of security guards, school visiting and departure procedures, and an established system for managing security breaches.
- Set out ADEK's requirements in relation to the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras in schools.
- Define training requirements to ensure all staff carry out duties responsibly, effectively, and appropriately to facilitate a safe environment for students to grow and learn.

Definitions

Additional Learning Needs	<p>Individual requirements for additional support, modifications, or accommodations within a school setting on a permanent or temporary basis in response to a specific context. This applies to any support required by students of determination and those who have special educational needs and/or additional barriers to learning, access, or interaction in that specific context (e.g., dyslexic, hearing or visually impaired, twice exceptional, or gifted and/or talented).</p> <p>For example, a student with restricted mobility may require lesson accommodations to participate in Physical Education and building accommodations to access facilities but may not require any accommodations in assessments. Equally, a student with hearing impairment may require adaptive and assistive technology to access content in class and may also require physical accommodations (e.g., sit in the front of the class to be able to lip read) to access learning.</p>
At Risk of Harm	The inability to safeguard one's own wellbeing.
Authorized Personnel	Personnel who are authorized by ADEK or other relevant government entities to visit a school and access its premises and resources for a specific purpose.
Behaviors of Concern	Any pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning, wellbeing, physical safety, and/or engagement in pro-social interaction with peers and adults (Smith & Fox, 2003).
Duty of Care	The obligation to safeguard stakeholders, to maintain their health, safety, and wellbeing, and to take steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm while under the school's supervision (on its premises, utilizing its systems, or engaging in school-organized activities off-campus).
Governing Board	The governing body of a school, appointed by the school owners, and including qualified representatives and parents. The governing board is the senior authority of the school, with responsibility for the overall governance of its activities.
In Loco Parentis	Meaning "in place of a parent", in situations when parents are absent.
Maltreatment	Refers to abuse (physical, emotional, and sexual), and includes neglect, exploitation, bullying, and cyberbullying of a student.
Parent	The person legally liable for a child or entrusted with their care, defined as the custodian of the child as per the Federal Decree Law No. 3 of 2016 Concerning Child Rights.

Policy

1. Safeguarding Supervision

- 1.1 Duty of Care and *In Loco Parentis*: All members of staff in schools have the duty of care towards their students and are responsible for their wellbeing, safety, and protection whilst they are under the school's supervision. The Principal shall accept *in loco parentis* responsibility for all students whilst under the school's supervision.

2. School-Based Safeguarding Policy

- 2.1 Policy Requirements:** Schools shall develop and implement a Safeguarding Policy and communicate this actively to the whole school community. Schools shall include the following elements in their Safeguarding Policy, at a minimum:

1. Statement of the school's overall safeguarding processes, procedures, and aspirations.
2. School safeguarding practices created in line with the underpinning ADEK wellbeing policies, ensuring that all safeguarding matters are handled sensitively, professionally, and in ways that support the needs of students.
3. A security policy that outlines how the school intends to protect students from and during (in the event of) physical and digital security breaches.
4. Mechanisms to measure and monitor the delivery of safeguarding practices to protect students from all types of harm to their health and development.
5. Identification of resources provided to deliver safeguarding provisions for all students.

- 2.2 Appointment of a Safeguarding Committee or Lead:** Schools shall appoint a Safeguarding Committee or Lead, to oversee the school's overall safeguarding strategy. The school, through the Safeguarding Committee or Lead, shall:

1. Annually monitor and review the effectiveness of the school's Safeguarding Policy to ensure it is known, understood, and practiced appropriately by the school community.
2. Ensure the safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the school's governing board are fully implemented and observed.
3. With the Principal, ensure that all staff, volunteers, and invited visitors are informed of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding procedures.
4. Ensure parents have access to the school's Safeguarding Policy and all supporting documents, through all appropriate means (e.g., the school website).

5. Develop an induction and training strategy to ensure all staff and volunteers receive information on the school's safeguarding arrangements.
6. Ensure compliance with relevant processes set out in the [ADEK Student Protection Policy](#).

3. Safeguarding Awareness

3.1 Safeguarding Awareness Strategies: Schools shall adopt strategies for safeguarding, including the following elements, at a minimum:

1. Ensure the provision of a safe and caring environment in which all students can learn, thrive, and develop the confidence to voice ideas, feelings, and opinions in an atmosphere that prioritizes their best interests, in line with the guiding principles stipulated in the Dama Alaman in Schools and Nurseries Handbook.
2. Guarantee adherence to a zero-tolerance approach to student maltreatment and ensure that any visitor or member of the school community who has any maltreatment concerns about a student is aware and able to easily follow the processes set out in the [ADEK Student Protection Policy](#).
3. Monitor students known or thought to be at risk from harm, including students with additional learning needs, who could experience heightened vulnerability.
4. Ensure staff know how to respond to safeguarding incidents and reassure victims and/or witnesses who make a disclosure that they are being taken seriously and supported.
5. Ensure students and staff feel part of a positive and transparent environment where they can freely liaise with members of the Safeguarding Committee or Lead in instances where a concern or worry is raised about the behavior of a student, staff, or visitor.
6. Be vigilant of student safety in online spaces as per the [ADEK Digital Policy](#).
7. Ensure that no policy within the school shall adversely harm or jeopardize the health or wellbeing of a student (e.g., placing limitations on washroom breaks) in line with the [ADEK Wellbeing Policy](#).
8. Provide support and counseling that is accessible, free of judgment, and available to all students, so that students know whom to turn to for advice and support within the school.
9. Ensure every parent understands that they are obligated to enroll their child in school as per Federal Law No. (39) of 2022 Concerning Compulsory Education, and that sudden unexplained withdrawal of a student from school may be reported as a maltreatment concern, as per the [ADEK Student Protection Policy](#).

4. Safeguarding and the Curriculum

4.1 The School Curriculum: Schools shall ensure that their applied curriculum addresses safeguarding measures by:

1. Focusing on the development of students' self-esteem and self-regulation.
2. Fostering a sense of respect and civility towards people and other living things.
3. Enabling the development and improvement of communication skills and expression of consent.
4. Developing an understanding of all aspects of risk including online behaviors and usage of social media.
5. Assisting students in developing strategies for their self-protection and responses to peer pressure.
6. Developing an understanding of how to best be responsible for their own and others' safety.

5. Safeguarding the School's Security

5.1 Implementing a School Security System: Schools shall implement a comprehensive security system to safeguard the school's assets, data, and people against any risk of harm.

1. Policy Requirement: Schools shall be equipped with integrated and fully functioning access and security systems, including security video surveillance cameras (CCTV systems).
2. CCTV Systems: Schools shall install and maintain CCTV systems via an MCC-licensed vendor, in compliance with the Manual of Surveillance Devices (MCC, 2022).
 - a. Contract Validity: Schools shall maintain a valid maintenance contract at all times with an MCC-licensed vendor.
 - b. Coverage: Schools shall ensure that their CCTV cameras provide coverage/ restrictions of the following areas:
 - 1) All entrances and exits of the school buildings and grounds.
 - 2) All walkways and public areas (corridors, stairs, courtyard, sports hall, sports fields, canteen, libraries).
 - 3) Student pickup and drop-off areas for private vehicles and buses.
 - 4) Security areas (e.g., control room) and hazardous areas.
 - 5) Exterior areas surrounding the school grounds.
 - 6) Learning spaces (e.g., classrooms, labs, studios, maker spaces). Entrances to lavatories and changing rooms.
 - 7) All blind spots within the school premises.
 - 8) CCTV cameras shall not be installed inside lavatories, changing rooms, or any other areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

cannot enter the school with the invalid access card (they would need to sign in as would a general visitor).

6. Maintains a communication link between the security guard at the entry gate and the school reception/ administration to authorize the entry of unknown persons.
7. Are provided with the appropriate handover procedures to facilitate the transition in the event of the school changing security providers.

5.3 School Visiting Procedures: Schools shall develop procedures for visiting the school. The Principal shall have the right to deny or allow visitors in their school with good cause. The school's procedure for visitors shall include the following as a minimum:

1. All visitors to the school shall sign in at the security gate and obtain a visitor's access pass in exchange for a valid form of ID.
2. Visitors shall display their access passes, which are to be visibly worn at all times whilst on the school premises. Visitors are not authorized to enter classrooms unless invited.
3. Invited visitors shall remain under the supervision of a designated member of staff unless they are authorized personnel (see [Section 5.3.5](#)) whilst on the school premises.
4. Upon completion of the school visit, visitors must sign out at the security gate and return their visitor access passes upon leaving the school premises.
5. Granting Access to Authorized Personnel: Schools shall provide authorized personnel (e.g., government inspectors) with access to their full premises and relevant resources (e.g., school reports, records, access to keys for locked areas, etc.), as per Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 Concerning Private Education. Where required, schools shall enable such personnel to monitor and interact with staff, students, and parents.
 - a. Schools shall verify the identity of the personnel and ensure they have a valid purpose for their requests, prior to providing access to the school's premises or resources.
 - b. Schools shall ensure that any access granted is in line with the requirements and purpose of the personnel's visit.
 - c. Where access is provided to any school reports and records, Principals shall keep a record of the personnel to whom the access was provided, the reports and records accessed by them, and the purpose for providing access. Schools shall preserve these records in line with the requirements for administrative records, as per the [ADEK Records Policy](#).
 - d. Authorized personnel are authorized to be present on school premises without being accompanied by a member of staff.

5.4 School Departure Procedures: Schools shall establish school departure procedures to verify that student departures follow the parent-authorized methods for transitioning student supervision from the school to the home, such as ensuring that:

- 1. Only parent-authorized persons are picking up students.**

8. Inclusion

- 8.1 Inclusive Provision: Schools shall ensure that the Safeguarding Committee or Lead works closely with the Wellbeing Committee or Lead, Head of Inclusion, School Counselor, Social Worker, Health & Safety Officer as well as other relevant stakeholders (e.g., teachers, parents) to promote the safeguarding and security of all students. Schools shall ensure that the safeguarding practices and associated policies and initiatives take into account the individual needs, communication and behavior styles, and engagement of students with additional learning needs, in line with the [ADEK Inclusion Policy](#).

9. Compliance

- 9.1 This policy shall be effective as of the start of the Academic Year 2024/25 (Fall term). Schools are expected to be fully compliant with this policy by 1 February 2026.
- 9.2 Failure to comply with this policy shall be subject to legal accountability and the penalties stipulated in accordance with the ADEK's regulations, policies, and requirements, notwithstanding any other penalties imposed by Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law or any other relevant law. ADEK reserves the right to intervene if the school is found to be in violation of its obligations.



References

- Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA). (2023). Dama Alaman in Schools and Nurseries Handbook.
- Federal Decree Law No. (5) of 2012 on Combating Cybercrimes.
- Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 Concerning Private Education
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law
- Manual of Surveillance Devices (MCC, 2022).

Publication

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Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi (ADEK)

This policy applies to Charter Schools. However, any circular issued prior to this policy or issued specifically for Charter Schools thereafter supersedes the requirements of this policy.