



## **Child Protection Policy**

**2017-19**

## **Students Protection**

### **Corresponding to Policy 3 Students Protection and Article (5) of the Organising Regulations**

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

For the purposes of this policy **the School** refers to Ajyal International School. For the purposes of this policy, **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 of the School, 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 the School to prepare a comprehensive School policy and associated 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.

#### **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 will 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 will exercise the utmost care over the security of students in its care.

The School Principal accepts *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.

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

The School has developed herein a student protection policy ensuring it follows, adheres to and aligns with all the relevant laws and regulations issued by ADEC, corresponding to Policy 3 Students Protection and Article (5) of the Organising Regulations, and the relevant authorities in the UAE.

This policy shall act as a reference in respect of all measures and procedures taken by Schools to protect students from any form of abuse or harm. This policy includes, for example, the following:

- The safety of School buildings, transportation and School activities.
- Students' health, welfare and well-being.
- Conduct and discipline of students.
- Confidentiality of students' personal data.
- Security of 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.
- Conducting the necessary background checks on all School personnel in association with the relevant authorities.
- Reporting procedures in respect of any incident affecting the security of students within the School to Parents/Guardians, ADEK and other related government entities.
- Confidentiality of reports and investigations related to any kind of student abuse and communications when dealing with ADEK and relevant government entities.
- Provision of 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).
- Communicating with students and their Parents/Guardians to hear their opinion through a variety of means, 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.

Such a policy shall not only be concerned with prevention, reporting and investigation. It should also foster a safe and positive environment inclusive of the School's care system as well as the accommodation of the personal and learning needs of the students, and their rights and responsibilities, together with the School's expectations of students' behaviour.

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 Incidents***

It is mandatory for the School to thoroughly investigate and report immediately to ADEK all incidents of abuse which students may face including exploitation, violence and/or any

other physical harm, sexual abuse, or any 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:

- Take immediate steps to safeguard all those involved, such as reporting incidents to the relevant official entities, taking into account other laws that may be related to the incident.
- Immediately inform the ADEK, of the incident by telephone, and in writing within 24 hours of 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;
- Provide ADEK with a written report within 24 hours of the incident via the official email account ([private.schools@adec.ac.ae](mailto:private.schools@adec.ac.ae)).
- 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.

ADEC requires the School, when handling cases of student abuse, to conduct an investigation, and to maintain clear and scrupulous communications and actions when dealing with relevant government entities such as the Health Authority – Abu Dhabi (“HAAD”), the social welfare institutions and police departments. Schools should keep relevant records and inform ADEC of such communications if so requested.

Where the School uncovers a case of severe abuse to a student outside of School, it must take the matter seriously and follow up the case with the social worker. Schools shall take the necessary steps to protect the student, including by 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). The School will prepare a detailed report concerning the incident and procedures taken in this regard. This report will be kept in the student’s folder. If the abuse is a crime, the School is required to notify the relevant official entities.

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

Anyone who fails to comply with this policy shall be subject to legal accountability and the penalties stipulated in accordance with ADEK regulations, policies and requirements, notwithstanding any other penalties imposed by the Penal Code or any other relevant law.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### ***Teachers and Staff Will:***

Ajyal International School recognizes that because of their day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:-

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are heard.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried about any problems.
- Include opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.
- Follow the procedures set out by ADEK and take account of guidance issued by the Ministry of Interior.
- Treat all disclosures with the strictest confidence.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and its staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in an annual school report and that parents are offered a copy of this policy on request.
- Notify ADEK Centre of any cases of alleged or suspected child abuse.
- Inform parents of any concerns, and provide them with opportunities to change the situation, where this does not place the child at greater risk.
- Notify the Assistant Principal if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days.

### ***School's Owner 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.

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

- Develop a student protection policy and publish it in School, implement it effectively, and review and update it as necessary.
- Ensure that all School staff have undergone the required background checks.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to prevent situations that could lead to the abuse of students.
- Ensure that there is consistent emphasis within the School on the protection of the students and for taking immediate action when there is suspicion of cases of student abuse.
- Ensure that students and others can safely report their concerns without fear of retribution or punishment.
- Canvass the views of students and Parents/Guardians regarding security and protection inside the School.

- Report for investigation any case of possible abuse or harm to students in the School, as required by ADEK's guidelines.
- Ensure that all staff are appropriately trained in the area of awareness of student protection issues and confidential investigation procedures.
- Maintain clear student records and update them periodically.

Draft Date:	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
Approved By Board of Governors:	
Principal Approval:	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
Review Date:	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2019