

YAA Safeguarding and Child Protection

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-26

1. Safeguarding Commitment Statement

Yas American Academy 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 Yas American Academy 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 Yas American Academy 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 Yas American Academy schools, including those on a managed and operated basis. Yas American Academy 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:

Yas American Academy 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 Yas American Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Education Committee.

4. To fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, all Yas American Academy 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 Yas American Academy. 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 Yas American Academy 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. Swimming Pool Safety:

Particular care is required to ensure the safety of a child during swimming lessons and to ensure supervising adults engage in safe working practices. The following guidelines should be followed:

- Any handling / support of students should be done in clear site of others.
- Where Physical Education staff are male and supporting male students, they may supervise and assist with changing in Kindergarten through Grade 4/Year 5.
- Given that the vast majority of classroom assistants will be female, it is possible that they will be asked to help in the boy's changing rooms as well.
- If a child needs to be washed or cleaned in any way in the changing room before or after their swim session, the CA should ask the teacher for immediate help with this and not attempt to wash or clean the child themselves.
- Children should be encouraged to put their underwear and swimming trunks/costumes on and to take them off independently and if extra assistance is required then the teacher, or other member of YAA staff, should be present to help the child.

7. Intimate Care:

Guidance on Toileting Needs in Schools

The vast majority of children are appropriately toilet trained and able to manage their own needs competently before they start school. This policy will apply to pupils who, for whatever reason, require toilet training or special arrangements with toileting in Pre- KG and KG or older years in the case of special educational needs.

This guidance:

- Identifies the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers.
- Sets out the principles of good practice.
- Provides practical guidance for schools.
- Clarifies the implications of the UAE Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination laws.
- Sets guidance for all children including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Emphasizes the employer's duty to safeguard the health and safety of pupils and staff.
- Provides Child Protection advice.
- Raises awareness of the need to protect the dignity of the child.

Partnership with Parents/carers

Open and supportive communication with parents (including carers) is fundamental to planning for and meeting the child's toileting needs effectively and sensitively. Many parents may feel anxious that their child is not able to use the toilet independently and may have already experienced some difficulties with toilet training and/or experienced negative attitudes from others towards the issue. For some children their toileting needs may be relatively short term and related to initial toilet training, whereas others may require long-term toileting support. Parents will need to feel confident that the setting is able to support their child's toileting needs and are positive about doing so and should be encouraged to be open about and able to discuss any concerns in this area.

Partnership with Children and Young People

The active involvement of the child in their toileting programme is vital to make sure they have ownership and understanding of their needs.

Principles of Good Practice:

- All children have an educational entitlement irrespective of their difficulties with toileting.
- Children or young people who need assistance with toilet training or special toileting arrangements must be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity.
- Some children who cannot achieve continence and independent toileting will require high levels of assistance.

Educational establishments should ensure that they work in partnership with parents and carers in planning for toileting needs and effective toilet training, acknowledging that continence and independent toileting may not be achieved by some children.

It is important to adopt consistent approaches at home and at school.

- The setting, in partnership with parents/carers, child and any other professionals involved, should make and review care plans, working towards achieving maximum independence of the child with toileting.
- The setting, supported by Principals and senior leaders should positively address issues raised by toileting needs in a constructive and problem-solving way.
- Staff should be provided with access to appropriate resources and facilities and be supported by clear plans, policy guidelines and training. All staff supporting pupils with toileting difficulties must receive appropriate information and specific training as required.
- Principals and senior leaders should be aware of, and ensure implementation of, appropriate health and safety procedures and care plans for these students.
- It is important to alert the Head of Inclusion, school nurse and/or counselor if any school attendance difficulties develop as a consequence of toileting concerns. Staff should be provided with access to appropriate resources and facilities and be supported by clear plans, policy guidelines and training. All staff supporting pupils with toileting difficulties must receive appropriate information and specific training as required.

Definition of Disability

Special protection should be provided for children who have a physical, sensory or mental impairment or medical condition that has an adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Anyone with a named condition that affects aspects of personal development must not be discriminated against. It is also unacceptable to refuse admission to other children who are delayed in achieving continence. Delayed continence is not necessarily linked with learning difficulties. However, children and young people with global developmental delay, which may not have been identified by the time they enter school, are likely to be late achieving independence with toileting; some may never achieve independence with toileting.

A Service Guideline for Intimate Care and Intimate Care Plan are available for Students of Determination.

Attending preschool settings and starting school

Children with toileting difficulties should be admitted into classes with their friends in the same way as any other child. At this stage it is not possible to assume that failure to achieve independence with toileting is in itself an indication of special educational needs. However, there are some children who enter school with special educational needs and/or medical conditions which indicate the need for special toileting arrangements or toileting training.

Education providers have an obligation to meet the needs of children and young people with delayed personal development in the same way as they would meet the individual needs of children with delayed language, or any other kind of delayed development. Children should not be excluded from normal school activities solely because of incontinence.

All issues of continence and toileting needs should be dealt with on an individual basis, and settings are expected to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of each child.

Before the child begins schooling it is important to:

- Gather information from parents, child and any professionals involved.
- Establish effective partnership with parents/carers, child and any professionals involved.
- Focus on health and safety implications and determine whether a risk assessment is required.
- Decide, in consultation with parents/carers, whether you need further advice from Health Services.
- Arrange for any specialist advice, training, resources to be in place before the child begins attendance.
- Agree a plan with parents/carers and child and make an agreement.
- Make sure that all staff are informed and clear about their responsibilities.

It is important for all parties to monitor and review the plan regularly to ensure it is still appropriate and meeting the changing needs of the child. It is reasonable to discuss the level of independence with toileting before a child starts school. Should a child not be continent before starting school, it is important to agree a plan which will work towards maximum independence and support the child's attendance in the educational setting.

Good Practice Guidance

Each child and situation is of course unique. However, teachers may find the following guidance helpful in deciding what "reasonable steps" should be taken to support pupils who require toilet training.

It is anticipated that existing staff or individual assistants employed by the parents will support pupils with toilet training or special toileting arrangements in school. Where incontinence is caused by an underlying impairment, it is a necessary reasonable adjustment for staff to carry out personal care. When recruiting new staff it is important that duties relating to personal care are specified in the contract of employment (see link to Role Profiles below). Managers should ensure that staff carrying out such procedures feel confident and supported by relevant training and protocols to ensure the dignity of the pupil and protection of the staff.

If the child or young person is not able to use the toilet independently on entry, schools have found a variation on the following procedures usually addresses the difficulty.

Gather as much information as possible from the parents/carers and child. How have they tried to introduce toilet training at home? What happens at home? Has the child any regular routines or daily patterns which could inform the routine set up by the school? Have the parents/carers noticed any particular difficulties or phobias which the school should be aware of? Can the parents/carers suggest a strategy or procedure for dealing with the problem?

An appropriate toileting programme will need to be discussed and agreed so that the child, parents/carers and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. The plan must have regular monitoring and review arrangements. The plan should give careful consideration to choosing which adults should be involved in toileting care. Schools settings should give a written copy of the programme to the parents/carers.

- Clothes should be easy for the child to pull up and down. Wherever possible it is better to train the child with appropriate clothing rather than continuing to rely on a nappy/pad or training pants.
 - No child should be left wet or dirty for a parent/carer to change later.
 - It is not reasonable to expect parents or carers to be on emergency stand-by to change children during the school day, however an individual assistant can be employed to do this. Where this is a 'nanny' they are permitted to be in class no more than 50% of the time.
 - Staff should ask parents/carers to provide the school with a couple of appropriate changes of pants/trousers etc in case of accidents.
 - It is the responsibility of parents/carers to deal with wet/soiled clothing. Staff should liaise accordingly and make the necessary arrangements.
 - Organise that a member of staff familiar with the child is given the responsibility of taking the child to the toilet at fixed, appropriate intervals throughout the morning/day. Careful observations and discussions with the child may identify when the child "needs to go".
 - Ensure that the routine established in school is strictly maintained from the start and try hard to avoid accidents. If necessary shorten the time between visits to the toilet so that the child gets into the habit of being dry.
 - Children may be anxious and pre-occupied by toilet difficulties but usually respond to praise, encouragement and confidence building. It is important to promote self esteem in other areas.
 - Drinking water easily accessible for all children and encourage them to have "little and often" rather than in huge amounts at a time.
 - Reminders to use the toilet should be discreet and staff may consider the use of signs, pictures or code words.
 - Make little fuss over accidents that do occur and ensure that they are dealt with swiftly, appropriately,

sympathetically and in a calm, low-key way. Give extra attention when they have made the effort to go to the toilet independently.

- After a period of training it may be sufficient to remind the child to go to the toilet on their own. Be positive and patient and praise the child for effort.
- It is important to anticipate toileting needs for these pupils before planning off site activities. Children should not be excluded from off-site activities because of their toileting needs.
- Where difficulties persist there may be more complex issues to consider and further guidance and support may be needed from other professionals. It is important to discuss your continuing concerns with parents/carers and seek their agreement before involving further professional guidance and support.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

In addition to the good practice guidance described above the following considerations may apply:

- In consultation with parents, Health service staff will provide any relevant medical information, training and advice.
- It may be appropriate to consult a specialist adviser for children with Physical Disabilities who can provide guidance and assistance with risk assessments.
- Specialist equipment may be accessible through a specialist advisor.

Health and Safety considerations

Principals have a duty to safeguard the Health and Safety of pupils and staff. Schools and other settings registered to provide education will already have hygiene or infection control policies as part of their health and safety policy and will follow these when managing a child with toileting needs. Ensure all known allergies are considered when planning and carrying out each child's toileting programme.

Child Protection concerns

The normal process of changing underwear, nappy/pad should not raise child protection concerns, and there are no regulations that indicate that a second member of staff must be available to supervise the nappy changing process to ensure that abuse does not take place. However, as is always recommended, it would be advisable to have another staff member present should the child be in a secondary setting or have special educational needs. The school nurse may be an appropriate support staff member in such cases.

Refer to the Intimate care and Intimate Care for SOD Service Guideline as outlined by ADEK.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- **The Yas American Academy 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 Yas American Academy Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy and any legal/regulatory requirements. They demonstrate the Yas American Academy 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 Yas American Academy 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 Yas American Academy Safeguarding and Student Protection policy, any relevant safeguarding legislation and regulatory/Yas American Academy policies are delivered effectively in their respective cluster of schools.
- **School Board of Governors:** Manages overall governance, ensuring all safeguarding practices align with Yas American Academy 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.

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

This policy is part of the Yas American Academy 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 Yas American Academy.

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.

Approved by: Principal | **Date:** August 2025

Next Review Date: August 2026

Signed: _____

Principal – Ms. Sarah Griffiths