AAS-CPP

ANGLO-AMERICAN SCHOOL of SOFIA - CHILD PROTECTION POLICY: Safeguarding Children

Developed December 2012 - Approved March 2013 – Updated March 2016, August 2016

Introduction
The Anglo-American School of Sofia (AAS) recognises its clear responsibility in respect of its “duty of care” to protect children and to support students in school. People serving in schools, because of their regular contact with children, are particularly well placed to detect outward signs of abuse, behaviour changes and other changes in social-emotional and academic conduct. Teachers, teaching assistants, support staff other school staff should note that reporting the suspicion of child abuse, “in good faith” exempts them from school disciplinary action in relation to the AAS Code of Professional Conduct.

*In addition to the above, the Child Protection Policy is to support an environment that is commensurate with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights,

- [United Nations Declaration of Human Rights - English](#)
- [United Nations Declaration of Human Rights - Bulgarian](#)

*This policy applies to the whole school including Pre-School to Grade 12, AAS Staff and the AAS School Board.

*This policy works in accordance with all school policies, procedures and handbooks, in particular the AAS Code of Professional Conduct.

*For the purposes of this Code references to “staff” include, employees, staff, faculty, volunteers, invited instructors or consultants, coaches, sponsors, contracted employees, including third party contractors.

Aims

- To provide an ethos within school where children feel secure, valued, respected and are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- To educate our students through the schools’ Personal, Health, Social and Citizenship curriculum to understand the appropriate behaviour that relatives, friends and strangers may demonstrate towards children
- To educate and guide our students so that they know how they can deal with the behaviour of others that gives them cause for concern
- To train all staff in good practice for recognising and dealing with child protection issues
- For parents to recognise that the school is a caring establishment where they too can seek support and advice in matters relating to Child Protection

Objectives

- To follow procedures and good practice in the name of safe guarding children and maintaining the best environment possible for student growth and development
- To disseminate the procedures to all teaching staff teaching (full-time and part-time); Supply Teachers; Classroom Teaching Assistants; School Supervisors; Support Staff, Business Staff, Maintenance Staff; Third Party Contractors (Bussing, Security and Food Service); as well as Students and volunteers working in school
- For the School Board to regularly monitor and review procedures and policy
- To provide support and counseling for staff whenever the need arises.
School Commitment
AAS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, along with their protection and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. As such, all employees are required to sign a declaration that they are in the possession of the qualifications they claim; that they are not disqualified from working with children; that they have no convictions, cautions or bind-overs or are subject to any sanctions imposed by any regulatory bodies. School requires all employees to produce evidence of qualifications and references are sought from previous employers. Finally, police checks are carried out on all employees. The police checks may be from country of origin and / or from the country of their most recent posting.

The Council of International Schools and the Association of International School Heads will be informed in cases where a member of staff’s employment is terminated because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children. The school will seek further guidance in the event of the above as to how to properly inform the home country the staff member in question.

We recognize that for children, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to protect. AAS will therefore establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to, staff making time to support children whenever the need arises. We will ensure that children know that there are adults in school who they can approach if they are worried, or in difficulty. This will be achieved through the PSHE (Personal Social Health Education (grades K to 6) curriculum, assemblies, circle time (younger grades), advisory (known as Wolf Pack Time for students grades 6 to 12) and the work of the school leadership team. The PSHE curriculum features regular opportunities to equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse. Children in Middle School will be encouraged to develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, with particular regard to childcare and parenting skills through the schools sex education curriculum (within PSHE, PE and Science curricula). AAS will make every effort to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.

Framework
Schools do not operate in isolation. Child Protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the School Board and local Social Services, as well as diplomatic support in extreme cases if needed.

The designated member of staff for Child Protection at AAS is Elementary School (ES) Principal and Middle School/ High School (MS/HS) Principal. Also involved to provide support and guidance are the school counselors, learning resource teachers, school nurse and school director.

Roles and Responsibilities
All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect children. To ensure clarity and prudence there are people with specific roles with respect to child protection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role in School</th>
<th>Role Related to Child Protection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Designated Child Protection Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>ES Principal</td>
<td>Designated Child Protection Officer - Pre-School to Grade 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS/HS Principal</td>
<td>Designated Child Protection Officer - Grade 6 to Grade 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>ES Counselor</td>
<td>Designated Child Protection Officer - Pre-School to Grade 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transition Counselor / BG Liaison</td>
<td>Designated Child Protection Officer - Bilingual</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS Counselor</td>
<td>Designated Child Protection Officer - Grade 6 to Grade 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>HS Counselor</td>
<td>Designated Child Protection Officer - Grade 9 to Grade 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>Designated Child Protection Officer - Bilingual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>Designated Child Protection Officer - Bilingual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>Designated Child Protection Officer - Bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher / Board Rep</td>
<td>Designated Child Protection Officer Conducts review of CPP</td>
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Designated Child Protection officers will disseminate policy. Staff should discuss any concerns regarding Child Protection with the designated officers who will advise on the monitoring of children and the making of referrals to Social Services. To further support children the nurses and other support staff should also be trained in CPR and first aid.

The School Board member responsible for Child Protection within the school (this is one of the roles of the Teacher Representative to the Board) will report to the Board on issues relating to policy and procedures regularly and through the Governance Committee. **Board members will not be given specific details relating to child protection situations.**

**Procedures**
The schools’ induction procedures include guidelines as to what adults working in school should do in the event that they become aware of child protection concerns. Staff will be informed of changes to policy and procedures and updated in good child protection practice through regular staff meetings.

**Guidelines:**
1. Where staff observe signs, which give cause for concern they should make this known to the designated officer without delay. This must be carried out with tact, confidentiality and sympathy. Over questioning should be avoided. Notes should be taken, including date and time of any conversations held with the child as soon as possible after the interview.
2. Both the designated officer and the person raising the concern should log details of the concern in writing.
3. Other staff should be informed of concerns on a **need to know basis** only and any suspicions or additional information added to the concern notes.
4. Following initial discussions it may be decided that other reasons are responsible for the concern and the possibility of child abuse can be ruled out. If this is so, then the matter can be dropped, but notes will be held in a secure area.
5. Following initial discussions it may be decided to monitor the situation. In this case, the class teacher is responsible for keeping confidential notes in a secure area recording daily observations. All notes must be dated and times noted where appropriate.
6. If a child talks openly and makes direct references to being abused, a referral should be made to the appropriate Child Protection Officer at AAS, usually one of the principals.
7. The class teacher, teacher assistant or supervisory personnel cannot be absolved from the ultimate responsibility for reporting his/her suspicions if they persist, even though the designated officer may not be in agreement. If this situation should arise the supervisor and assistant should follow the procedure as laid down in this document and inform the designated supervisor, in writing, of his/her actions.
8. The designated Child Protection Officer will represent the school in a case. A member of staff with detailed knowledge of the child and case may be asked to accompany the child protection officer. Staff will be offered support and counseling to assist them deal with any stress that results from dealing with a case.

**Referrals to Local Authorities / Agencies**
One of the Designated Child Protection Officers must be bilingual (English and Bulgarian). This person (the bilingual Child Protection Officer), in conjunction with one other Child Protection Officer will liaise with local officials. Referral forms will be prepared as per specifications of Bulgarian authorities and be translated into English.

All paperwork must be kept in the confidential file. Careful notes should be made of dates, times, personnel involved, details of telephone conversations and copies of letters sent.

**Training and Support**
Our school will ensure that the Director and Principals, all Designated Officers for Child Protection attend the training relevant to their role. Staff working with children will receive regular updates and training ‘in house’ and be informed of opportunities to attend specified courses. Staff will receive training through the schools’ induction procedures, which includes advice on Care, Control and Physical Intervention and allegations against professionals. The school’s nurse and counselors are available to discuss issues with any parents, child or member of staff.
Records and Monitoring
Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concerns held about the child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be passed to other agencies.

General information about a child’s behaviour and discipline are kept in teacher’s grade books and report cards. Whilst not confidential or secure, these documents are maintained by the teacher. Child Protection concerns are recorded separately and kept in a secure area separate from other school records within the school office.

Child Protection concerns are monitored closely and regular reviews organised by the designated Child Protection Officers. The designated officer(s) will decide when further advice or a referral is necessary.

The school will pass on to transfer schools information related to confirmed cases that have occurred within two years prior to the date of transfer. Documents relating to concerns that were raised more than two years prior to transfer will be destroyed.

Supporting Students at Risk
Our school recognises that those children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. This school recognises that it may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. It is also recognized that some children who have experiences of abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

This school will endeavor to support students through:
• A curriculum that encourages high levels of self-motivation
• An ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all students and adults a sense of being respected and valued
• The implementation of school behaviour management policies
• A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays
• Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies that support the students and their families
• A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the interests of the child to do so
• The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.

The Child Protection Policy will be carefully considered alongside other related policies in school. AAS recognizes that statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. Where children are exposed to domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children may be vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

Allegations Against Teaching Staff, Volunteers or the School Administration
All complaints must be directed to the school office. The school will have in place policies and procedures relating to “speaking up.” The AAS – Speaking Up Policy procedures will be followed in the case of an allegation against a member of staff. In addition, on receipt of an allegation or complaint, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended with immediate effect whilst the allegation is investigated. If an allegation is made against a designated Child Protection Officer or a member of the School Board, the Director must be informed immediately, and in the absence of the Director, the Principals. Members of the Child Protection Officer Team, minus the Director, will address the allegations if the allegations are against the Director.
Safe School, Safe Staff

- School gives the monitoring of children in terms of their health and welfare a high priority
- Only staff who have been police checked are permitted to work on a ‘one to one’ basis in school, or on authorised school visits
- The school participates readily when sharing perspectives and experiences with practitioners from other agencies
- The performance of all staff, including the building of successful and appropriate relationships with children is monitored closely by the Leadership Team
- School requires that security checks are in place before any person is employed, or deployed to work with children in the school setting
- School monitors all personnel, including volunteers, who work with children
- Personnel must never place themselves in a position where their behaviour or actions place students or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student
- School has introduced and emphasized expectations to ensure that staff is not exposed to the risk of abuse within the school setting
- Procedures for protecting staff from abuse will be regularly reviewed and revised when necessary
- The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually by Board Governance Committee to include the elected Teacher Representative to the Board.

Mission Driven

Our Child Protection Policy helps us live our mission. We engage, support and prepare each student for today and tomorrow.