

POLICY TITLE:	Safeguarding Policy
DEPARTMENT:	Academic
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INTRODUCTION

At Excel International School (EIS), we 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

The purpose of this Safeguarding policy is:

- To set out ADEK’s requirements in relation to safeguarding and the promotion of student welfare
- To define a clear line of accountability within EIS to ensure safeguarding protocols are fully implemented
- To define procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of student maltreatment
- To outline the security requirements at EIS to ensure effective supervision and duties of security guards, school visiting and departure procedures, and an established system for managing security breaches
- To set out ADEK’s requirements in relation to the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras at EIS
- To define the 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	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). 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
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	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.
At Risk of Harm	The inability to safeguard one's own wellbeing
Authorised Personnel	Personnel who are authorised by ADEK or other relevant government entities to visit a school and access its premises and resources for a specific purpose.
Behaviours of concerns	Any pattern of behaviour, or perception of behaviour, 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-organised activities off-campus)
Governing Board	The governing board 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 "on 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 20216 Concerning Child Rights.
Safeguarding	The protection of students from the risk of harm, including maltreatment and other types of risks that impact their overall health and development, wellbeing, and safety.
Safeguarding Lead (or Committee)	An individual (or group of individuals) responsible for the implementation of the safeguarding policy and practices and ensures compliance by the school community. This position can be filled by any relevant position in the school such as the Child Protection Coordinator, School Counsellor, social Worker, Head of Wellbeing, etc.
Security Breach	An incident that compromises or results in an unauthorised disclosure of or unlawful access to protected space, persons, systems, and/or information. Security breaches stemming from accidental or deliberate action have the potential to cause damage (financial. Legal, or school wide consequences, etc) to school assets or reputation and includes both confirmed and suspected incidents.
Staff	An individual employed by a school on a remunerated contractual basis regardless of employment mode (internal, external/ third-party, etc.)
Student	A resident who is enrolled in an educational institution in Abu Dhabi

Student Protection	Synonymous with child protection, all measures, steps, and actions that must be taken to prevent, protect, and support students from risk of maltreatment while they are under the supervision of the educational institution.
Supervision	The state of being responsible, having the duty of care, and keeping watch over an individual in the interest of their and others' security while under the care of the school or an individual employed at the school, whether onsite, while utilising its systems, and /or taking part in all activities organised by the school offsite.
Visitor	For the purpose of this policy, a visitor is any temporary visitor (e.g., a parent or a relative of a student, prospective student and their parents, inspectors, contractors, etc.) entering the school premises. An invited visitor is anyone visiting the school on a temporary basis to interact with students (i.e., a speaker, career fair representative, etc.) and includes volunteers, who are engaged by an educational institution on a non-remunerated basis to interact with students (e.g., parent chaperones, etc.)
Whistle blowing	An instance where an individual passes on information about organisational malpractice (e.g., fraud, corruption, miscarriage of justice, risk of serious harm to an individual, risks or damage to the environment and other actions against public interest) taking place at or near, their place of employment or education.

Policy

1. Safeguarding Supervision

1.1 Duty of Care and In Loco Parentis: All members of staff in EIS have the duty of care towards the students and are responsible for their wellbeing, safety, and protection whilst they are under the school's supervision. The Principal and the Head Teacher accepts In Loco Parentis responsibility for all students whilst under the school's supervision.

2. Safeguarding Policy

At Excel International School, we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all our students. This Safeguarding Policy outlines our processes, procedures, and aspirations in line with the guidelines set by the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). Our goal is to create a safe and supportive environment where every student can thrive.

2.1 Policy Requirements: EIS has developed a Safeguarding Policy and communicates this actively to the whole school. The policy includes the following elements:

- **Statement of the School's Overall Safeguarding Processes, Procedures, and Aspirations**
 - **Commitment to Safeguarding:**
 - ✓ We are dedicated to protecting all students from harm and ensuring their well-being.
 - ✓ Our safeguarding processes are designed to be comprehensive, inclusive, and proactive.

- **Processes and Procedures:**
 - ✓ We have clear protocols for identifying, reporting, and managing safeguarding concerns.
 - ✓ Our staff is trained to recognize signs of abuse and respond appropriately.
 - ✓ We ensure confidentiality and sensitivity in handling all safeguarding matters.

- **Aspirations:**
 - ✓ To create a safe and nurturing environment for all students.
 - ✓ To continuously improve our safeguarding practices through regular training and updates.
 - ✓ To engage the whole school community in promoting student well-being.

- **School Safeguarding Practices in Line with ADEK Wellbeing Policies**
 - **Alignment with ADEK Policies:**
 - ✓ Our safeguarding practices are developed in line with ADEK's wellbeing policies.
 - ✓ We ensure that all safeguarding matters are handled professionally and supportively.

 - **Practices Include:**
 - ✓ Regular training for staff on safeguarding and child protection.
 - ✓ Clear reporting procedures for safeguarding concerns.
 - ✓ Support services for students, including counselling and mental health resources.
 - ✓ Collaboration with external agencies when necessary to ensure student safety.

- **Security Policy**
 - **Physical Security:**
 - ✓ Implementation of secure entry and exit points to monitor access to school premises.
 - ✓ Regular security drills and emergency procedures to prepare for potential threats.
 - ✓ Surveillance systems in place to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

 - **Digital Security:**
 - ✓ Policies and procedures to protect students from digital threats, including Cyberbullying and online predators.
 - ✓ Regular updates to our digital security measures.

- ✓ Education for students on safe internet use and digital citizenship.
- **Mechanisms to Measure and Monitor Safeguarding Practices**
 - **Monitoring Mechanisms:**
 - ✓ Regular reviews of safeguarding practices by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
 - ✓ Feedback mechanisms for students, parents, and staff to report concerns and suggest improvements.
 - ✓ Use of data and reports to track the effectiveness of safeguarding measures and identify areas for improvement.
 - **Identification of Resources for Safeguarding Provisions**
 - **Human Resources:**
 - ✓ Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsible for overseeing safeguarding practices.
 - ✓ Trained staff members to support the DSL and handle safeguarding concerns.
 - ✓ Access to external experts and agencies for additional support when necessary.
 - **Material Resources:**
 - ✓ Secure infrastructure, including surveillance and access control systems.
 - ✓ Digital security tools and software to protect against online threats.
 - ✓ Educational materials and resources to raise awareness about safeguarding.

2.2 Appointment of a Safeguarding Committee or Lead: School has designated a person as a Safeguarding Lead, to oversee the school's overall safeguarding strategy. At EIS the Safeguarding Lead shall:

- Annually monitor and review the effectiveness of the school's Safeguarding Policy to ensure it is known, understood, and practiced appropriately by the school.
- To ensure that the safeguarding policies and procedures are adopted by the school's governing board and are fully implemented and observed.
- With the Principal, to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and invited visitors are informed of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding procedures.
- To ensure parents have access to the school's Safeguarding Policy and all supporting documents, through all appropriate means (e.g., the school website).
- To develop an induction and training strategy to ensure all staff and volunteers receive information on the school's safeguarding arrangements.

3. Safeguarding Awareness

3.1 Safeguarding Awareness Strategies: At EIS we adopt strategies for safeguarding including the following elements, at a minimum:

- **Safe and Caring Environment:**
 - We provide a safe and caring environment where all students can learn, thrive, and develop the confidence to voice their ideas, feelings, and opinions.
- **Zero-Tolerance Approach:**
 - We adhere to a zero-tolerance approach to student maltreatment. Any visitor or member of the school community who has concerns about a student's well-being can easily follow the processes set out in the Student Protection Policy.
- **Monitoring At-Risk Students:**
 - We monitor students known or thought to be at risk from harm, including those with additional learning needs who may experience heightened vulnerability.
- **Responding to Incidents:**
 - Our staff is trained to respond to safeguarding incidents appropriately, reassuring victims and/or witnesses who make a disclosure that they are being taken seriously and supported.
- **Positive and Transparent Environment:**
 - We foster a positive and transparent environment where students and staff feel comfortable liaising with members of the Safeguarding Committee or Lead regarding any concerns about the behaviour of a student, staff member, or visitor.
- **Online Safety:**
 - We are vigilant about student safety in online spaces, following the E-Safety & Acceptable Use Policy.
- **Health and Wellbeing Policies:**
 - We ensure that no school policy adversely affects or jeopardizes the health or well-being of a student, in line with the Wellbeing Policy.
- **Support and Counselling:**
 - We provide accessible, judgment-free support and counselling for all students, ensuring they know whom to turn to for advice and support within the school.
- **Compulsory Education:**
 - We ensure every parent understands their obligation to enrol their child in school as per Federal Law No. (39) of 2022 Concerning Compulsory Education. 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: At EIS we ensure that the curriculum addresses safeguarding measures by:

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

5. Safeguarding the School's Security

5.1 Implementing a School Security Systems: At EIS we have implemented a comprehensive security system to safeguard the school's assets, data, and people against any risk of harm.

- At EIS, we have been equipped with integrated and fully functioning access and security systems, including security video surveillance camera (CCTV systems).
- **CCTV Systems:** We have installed and maintain CCTV systems via an MCC licensed vendor, in compliance with the Manual of Surveillance Devices (MSS, 2022).
 - **Contract Validity:** We maintain a valid maintenance contract at all times with an MCC-licensed vendor
 - **Coverage:** School ensures that the CCTV cameras provide coverage / restrictions of the following areas:
 - ✓ All entrances and exits of the school building and grounds
 - ✓ All walkways and public areas (corridors, stairs, sports field, play areas, canteen, library).
 - ✓ Student pickup and drop off areas for private vehicles and buses.
 - ✓ Security areas (e.g., control room) and hazardous areas.
 - ✓ Exterior areas surrounding the school grounds.
 - ✓ Learning spaces (e.g., classrooms, Curiosity labs, labs, discovery forest).
 - ✓ Entrances to lavatories and prayer rooms.
 - ✓ All blind spots within school premises.
 - ✓ CCTV cameras are not installed inside lavatories, or any other areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.
 - ✓ School have placed signs within the school premises indicating to the public that the area is under CCTV surveillance.
 - **Regular Monitoring and Maintenance:** School monitors monitor the functioning of their CCTV cameras on a daily basis and ensure they are working and providing appropriate coverage. In case any issues are identified that affect their functionality, schools shall inform the

vendor immediately and ensure prompt action is taken to rectify the issue in linewith the terms of their contract.

- **Access to Footage and Recording:** School restricts access to CCTV footages and recording as follows:
 - ✓ **Monitoring of CCTV Footage:** School have a monitoring and control room for the purpose of monitoring CCTV footage. We ensure that only the vendor appointed CCTV specialist monitor the footage.
 - ✓ The Principal and the Head Teacher are authorised to access live CCTV footage of the school premises from their office.
 - ✓ **Access Permission for Staff:** The Principal, Head Teacher and vendor appointed CCTV specialist are authorised to retrieve and view CCTV recording. Principal and Head Teacher are authorised to permit other staff members to view CCTV footage on a need basis at the Principal's and Head Teachers discretion. School maintains a record of all individual granted permission to view the footage, where applicable.
 - ✓ **Access Permission for ADEK Personnel:** School will provide access to CCTV footage and recordings to authorised ADEK personnel upon request.
 - ✓ **Copying and Distribution:** The copying or distribution of CCTV recordings is strictly prohibited and punishable by law in line with the Federal Decree Law No. (5) of 2012 on Combating Cybercrimes.
- **Escalation:** Where an incident captured in a CCTV recording requires clarification beyond the school level, the school will immediately notify ADEK in order to deal with the incident.
- **Deletion:** School will retain CCTV recording for a minimum of 180 days.

5.2 Security Guards: The security guard in the school shall:

- Be present at any given time at all entry points / gates. They will not leave their posts unless there is someone to replace them temporarily.
- Hold authorised licenses, as per the Staff Eligibility Policy.
- Remain alert and ensure safety and security on the school premises.
- Maintain a visitor's log by recording the visitor's name, ID signature, telephone number, purpose of visit, time of arrival, and the time of departure.
- Maintain a communication link between the security guard at the entry gate and the school reception / administration to authorise the entry of unknown persons.
- Provide with the appropriate handover procedures to facilitate the transition in the event of the school changing security providers.

5.3 School Visiting Procedures: School has developed procedures for visiting the school. The Principal and the Head Teacher have the right to deny or allow visitors in the school with good cause. The procedure for the visitors includes the following:

- All visitors to the school need to sign in at the security gate and obtain a visitor's access pass in exchange for a valid form of ID.
- Visitors must display their access passes, which are to be visibly worn at all times whilst on the school premises. Visitors are not authorised to enter classroom unless

invited.

- Invited visitors remain under the supervision of a designated member of staff unless they are authorised personnel whilst on the school premises.
- 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.
- Granting Access to Authorised Personnel: School provides authorised 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. School enables such personnel to monitor and interact with staff, students, and parents.
 - School verifies the identity of the personnel and ensure they have a valid purpose for their requests, prior to providing access to the school's premises of resources
 - School ensures that any access granted is in line with the requirements and purpose of the personnel's visit.
 - Where access is provided to any school reports and records, Principal and the Head Teacher keeps the record of the personnel to whom the access was provided, the reports and records accessed by them, and the purpose for providing access.

5.4 School Departure Procedures: School has established school departure procedures to verify that student departures follow the parent-authorised methods for transitioning student supervision from the school to the home, such ensuring that:

- Only parent-authorised persons are picking up students.
- In sudden emergencies or late notice change of plan, parents need to call to inform the school of the name of the person picking up the child and the school logs the conversation including the name of the authorised person and forward the name to the security guards and Phase Coordinators / teachers concerning the student.
- Security guard checks the identity of the person who has come to pick the students instead of the parent (as informed by the parent to the school) at the gate when handing over the student from the school.

5.5 Acceptable School Drop-Off and Pick-Up Timings: School has communicated to the parent acceptable drop-off and pick-up timings.

- School has ensured the supervision of students 45 minutes before the start of the school day and 90 minutes after school hours.
- School has notified the school gate closure time in the morning hours and after that time students will not be permitted inside the school without a valid reason.
- School notifies parents of their responsibilities towards children regarding the drop-off and pick-up during the parent orientation, circulars, etc.
- In instances where parents drop off children at the school without the school's knowledge, the school will not be responsible for the safety of the child.

5.6 Special Events: At EIS, we ensure that the school has increased security measures in place of safeguarding the school during special events. School ensures that:

- Events are only open to the immediate family (parents and siblings of the student). Parents who wish to invite other guests inform the school by informing the school whom they are inviting and knowledge the form.
- Signage indicating accessible areas for visitors within the school premises is clearly displayed.
- Increased security is present when a larger number of visitors are expected.

5.7 Safeguarding the Privacy of the School Community: At EIS, we have measures to safeguard the privacy and identities of the school community in physical spaces (e.g., the reception area) and in the digital spaces like email lists, WhatsApp groups). School practices discretion with regard to the following:

- The school reception area is free of individually identifiable elements such as school timetables / class schedules, or photographs and names of members of the school community.
- School avoids sharing personal details i.e., email and mobile numbers if students, parents, or teachers without consent.

5.8 Managing Security Breaches: School has established system for managing security breaches to prevent the occurrence of a dangerous / harmful event, including intruders from gaining unauthorised access to the school grounds or confidential information. The following apply in our school:

- All school staff are aware of and have received training on the security breach procedure
- The designated Safeguarding Lead fulfil requirements as stipulated in this policy (see Section 2.2) including being of sound physical health.
- School conducts school emergency planning and subsequent drills by the OSH officer
- School has the ability to respond to the security breaches by backing up important data from the school IT system
 - Every digital incident is recorded, documented, and signed by the Principal / Head Teacher and stored for auditing purposes
- Comply with the local regulatory requirements and report any security breach incidents to ADEK and / or appropriate authorities

6. Training

6.1 Training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD): At EIS we provide the following training and CPD to staff:

- Safeguarding training at induction, including for the governing board, staff, and volunteers. The staff training includes the following:
 - Identifying signs of student maltreatments or other safeguarding issues including what to do if the staff or volunteer or someone else is worried about a student.
 - Alerting staff to be vigilant to the specific requirements of the students at

risk of harm, including students with additional learning needs.

- Understanding the importance of not disregarding certain behaviours (e.g., banter, practical jokes), which can lead to culture of unacceptable behaviour in an unsafe environment, preventing students from coming forward to report them.
- Detailing written records of events in a secure and accurate matter and respecting confidentiality.
- Taking necessary actions in emergency situations, to prevent harm and danger.
- Sharing information and a need-to-know basis only and not discussing the issue with colleagues or the parent community.
- Making support available for individual staff members who may be suffering from wellbeing-related concerns.
- Understanding of the school's security system and security breaches protocol.

7. Whistleblowing

7.1 Whistleblowing Mechanism: School has implemented a whistleblowing mechanism to enable any individual to raise concerns or allegations of organisational malpractice in confidence.

- For anyone who raises a concern, school protects their identity and ensure that the person not made to feel ashamed for reporting the concern. In case their identity becomes known, school takes measures to protect the individual from any negative repercussions such as harassment, reprisal, and stigmatisation.

8. Inclusion

8.1 **Inclusive Provision:** We ensure that the Safeguarding Lead works closely with the Social Worker / Counsellor, Inclusion Teacher, Health and Safety Officer as well as other relevant stakeholders (e.g., teachers, coordinators, parents) to promote the safeguarding and security of all students. We ensure the safeguarding practices and associated policies and initiatives take into account the individual needs, communication and behaviour styles and engagement of students with additional learning needs, in line with the Inclusion Policy.