INTRODUCTION

All members of the school community are responsible for promoting and supporting safe behaviors in their home environment and adhering to robust safeguarding guidelines. At EFIA, we are committed to upholding the highest standards of safeguarding and student protection. Our primary goal is to promote safe practices and protect our students from harm, maltreatment, and exploitation, ensuring their development and growth as per their rights under Federal Law No. (3) Of 2016 Concerning Child Rights. This policy outlines our priorities and processes for safeguarding and promoting the welfare and security of our students. It details the procedures to follow when dealing with allegations of abuse and maltreatment.

PURPOSE

- **Set out ADEK's requirements:** We adhere to ADEK's guidelines regarding safeguarding and the promotion of student welfare.
- **Define accountability:** Establish a clear line of accountability within our school to ensure safeguarding protocols are fully implemented.
- **Identify and report maltreatment:** Define procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of student maltreatment.
- **Security requirements:** Outline the security measures necessary to ensure effective supervision, including the duties of security guards, school visiting and departure procedures, and a system for managing security breaches.
- **CCTV usage:** Set out ADEK's requirements for the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras within the school.
- **Training requirements:** Define training requirements to ensure all staff carry out their duties responsibly, effectively, and appropriately, fostering a safe environment for students to grow and learn.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of these guidelines are to:

- Develop and implement a Safeguarding Policy and communicate this actively to our entire school community.
- Ensure the statement of our overall safeguarding processes, procedures, and aspirations.
- Make sure that 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 our students.
- Develop a security policy that outlines how we intend to protect students from and during (in the event of) physical and digital security breaches.

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- Implement a mechanisms to measure and monitor the delivery of safeguarding practices to protect students from all types of harm to their health and development.
- Support School in ensuring the safety and wellbeing (social, emotional and physical) of all students in a learning environment;
- Ensure our school have appropriate policies, procedures, and trained staff to ensure the wellbeing and safety of students and teachers in a learning environment;
- Increase awareness and education of safeguarding learning environment for students, teachers and parents and their responsibilities in ensuring student safety;
- Ensure that the IT teams in our school is aware of potential issues and understand the technical requirements to support safeguarding.
- Ensure our school is aware of the necessity of understanding and adherence to the federal laws of the UAE as they apply to safeguarding
- Appointment of a Safeguarding Committee or Lead:
- Identification of resources provided to deliver safeguarding provisions for all students.

1. SAFEGUARDING SUPERVISION

- **Duty of Care and In Loco Parentis:** All our staff members have a duty of care towards our students and are responsible for their wellbeing, safety, and protection whilst they are under our supervision. The Principal accepts in loco parentis responsibility for all students whilst under our supervision.

2. APPOINTMENT OF A SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

We appoint a Safeguarding Committee with Designated Safeguarding Leads to oversee our overall safeguarding strategy. Through the Safeguarding Committee Lead, we:

- Annually monitor and review the effectiveness of our Safeguarding Policy to ensure it is known, understood, and practiced appropriately by our school community.
- Ensure the safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by our governing board are fully implemented and observed.
- With the Principal, ensure that all staff, volunteers, and invited visitors are informed of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure parents have access to our Safeguarding Policy and all supporting documents, through all appropriate means (e.g., our school website).
- Develop an induction and training strategy to ensure all staff and volunteers receive information on our safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure compliance with relevant processes set out in the EFIA Student Protection Policy.

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3. SAFEGUARDING AWARENESS:

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

- 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 School and Nurseries Handbook.
- Guarantee adherence to a zero-tolerance approach to student maltreatment and ensure that any visitor or member of our school community who has any maltreatment concerns about a student is aware and able to easily follow the processes set out in the EFIA Student Protection Policy.
- Monitor students known or thought to be at risk from harm, including students with additional learning needs, who could experience heightened vulnerability.
- 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.
- 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.
- Be vigilant of student safety in online spaces as per the EFIA Digital Policy.
- Ensure that no policy within our school shall adversely harm or jeopardize the health or wellbeing of a student (e.g., placing limitations on washroom breaks) in line with the EFIA Wellbeing Policy.
- 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 our school.
- 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 EFIA Student Protection Policy.

4. SAFEGUARDING AND THE CURRICULUM:

The School Curriculum: We ensure that our applied 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.

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- Enabling the development and improvement of communication skills and expression of consent.
- Developing an understanding of all aspects of risk including online behaviors 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 best be responsible for their own and others' safety.

5. SAFEGUARDING THE SCHOOL'S SECURITY:

5.1 Implementing a School Security System: EFIA School is committed to implementing a comprehensive security system to safeguard our assets, data, and people against any risk of harm. This policy outlines the measures that ensure the security of our school environment. School is equipped with integrated and fully functioning access and security systems, including security video surveillance cameras (CCTV systems).

1. **CCTV Systems:** EFIA School make sure that install and maintain CCTV systems via an MCC-licensed vendor, in compliance with the Manual of Surveillance Devices (MCC, 2022).

   a) **Contract Validity:** School shall maintain a valid maintenance contract at all times with an MCC-licensed vendor.
   b) **Coverage:** School ensure CCTV cameras shall provide coverage/restrictions of the following areas:

   - All entrances and exits of the school buildings and grounds.
   - All walkways and public areas (corridors, stairs, courtyard, sports hall, sports fields, canteen, libraries).
   - 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, labs, studios, maker spaces). Entrances to lavatories and changing rooms.
   - All blind spots within the school premises.
   - CCTV cameras shall not be installed inside lavatories, changing rooms, or any other areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.
   - School shall place signs within the school premises indicating to the public that the area is under CCTV surveillance.

c) **Regular Monitoring and Maintenance:** School is responsible to monitor the functioning of our CCTV cameras on a daily basis to ensure they are working and providing appropriate coverage. If any issues are identified that affect their functionality, School must inform the vendor immediately and ensure prompt action is taken to rectify the issue in line with the terms of our contract.

d) **Access to Footage and Recordings:** EFIA School shall restrict access to CCTV footage and recordings as follows:

- **Monitoring of CCTV Footage:** School shall have a monitoring and control room for the purpose of monitoring CCTV footage. Only the vendor-appointed CCTV specialist(s) shall monitor the footage.
- **Principal's Access:** The Principal is authorized to access live CCTV footage of the school premises from their office.
- **Access Permission for Staff:** The Principal and vendor-appointed CCTV specialist(s) are authorized to retrieve and view CCTV recordings. The Principal may permit other staff members to view CCTV footage on a need-basis at their discretion. School shall maintain a record of all individuals granted permission to view the footage, where applicable.
- **Access Permission for ADEK Personnel:** School shall provide access to CCTV footage and recordings to authorized 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.

e) **Escalation:** Where an incident captured in a CCTV recording requires clarification beyond the school level, the school shall immediately notify ADEK in order to deal with the incident.

f) **Deletion:** School shall retain CCTV recordings for a minimum of 180 days.

5.2 Security Guards: EFIA School shall ensure that security guards:

- Are present at any given time at all entry points/gates. They shall not leave their posts unless there is someone to replace them temporarily.
- Hold authorized licenses, as per the ADEK Staff Eligibility Policy.
- Remain alert and ensure safety and security on the school premises, supported by the school's security system.
- Maintain a visitor's log by recording the visitor's name, ID, signature, telephone number, purpose of visit, time of arrival, and time of departure.
- Issue visitors access passes only upon collection of a form of photo ID and verifying

that it matches the identity of the physical person. School are authorized to issue permanent access passes to registered visitors involved in the routine pick-up and drop-off of students (e.g., parents, nannies, and drivers). Security guards shall verify that each access pass matches the identity of the physical person and ensure that anyone whose permanent access pass has been canceled/revoked cannot enter the school with the invalid access card (they would need to sign in as would a general visitor).

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

5.3 School Visiting Procedure: School 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- Invited visitors shall remain under the supervision of a designated member of staff unless they are authorized 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 Authorized Personnel:** School shall provide authorized personnel (e.g., government inspectors) with access to our 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, School shall enable such personnel to monitor and interact with staff, students, and parents.

    - ➤ School must 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.
    - ➤ School shall ensure 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, Principals should 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. School shall

preserve these records in line with the requirements for administrative records, as per the EFIA Records Policy.
➢ Authorized personnel are authorized to be present on school premises without being accompanied by a member of staff.

5.4 School Departure Procedures: School must 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:

- Only parent-authorized persons are picking up students.
- For persons who are not pre-registered and have permanent access passes, parents shall inform the school in advance in writing and provide the ID of the nominated person.
- In sudden emergencies or late notice change of plans, parents shall call to inform the school of the name of the person picking up their child and the school shall log the conversation including the name of the authorized person and forward the names to the security guards and teachers/individual(s) supervising the concerned student.
- School shall check the identity of the nominated person at the gate (via presentation of a form of ID) and when handing over the student from the school's supervision.
- IDs are not required if the person is already a member of the school community (e.g., another parent), and the school already has their ID on record.

5.5 Acceptable School Drop-Off and Pick-Up Timings: School shall communicate to parents acceptable drop-off and pick-up timings.

- School shall ensure the supervision of students 45 minutes before the start of the school day and 90 minutes after school hours and must notify parents of their responsibility toward their children outside of these two periods.
- In instances where parents drop off children at the school without the school's knowledge, the school shall not be legally responsible for the safety of the child.

5.6 School Arrival and Departure Notification for Unaccompanied Cycle 3 Students:
Upon written consent by parents, students in Cycle 3 are authorized to arrive at and depart from school unaccompanied.

- School shall establish a system to record and notify parents of their arrival and departure times.
- Parents are authorized to request notification of arrival and departure times for accompanied students in any grade below Cycle 3, and School shall provide such notifications.

5.7 Special Events: School shall ensure that they have increased security measures in place for safeguarding the school during special events. School shall ensure that:

- Events are only open to the immediate family (parents and siblings of the student). Parents who wish to invite other guests must pre-register them with the school by providing a copy of a valid ID. Guests who are not pre-registered are required to register on arrival at the school gate and subsequently provide a copy of a valid ID.
- 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.
- All outside service providers and their employees are pre-approved, and contracts stipulate that they have undergone security checks. Service providers shall submit their trade license and a valid work permit for each employee.

5.8 Safeguarding the Privacy of the School Community: School shall ensure that they have measures to safeguard the privacy and identities of the school community in physical spaces (e.g., the reception area) and in digital spaces, (e.g., email lists, WhatsApp groups) as per the EFIA Digital Policy. School shall practice discretion with regard to the following:

- Keeping reception areas free of individually identifiable elements such as displaying timetables/ class schedules, or photographs and names of members of the school community.
- Avoiding sharing personal details i.e., emails and mobile numbers of students, parents, or teachers without consent, except as authorized by applicable laws and ADEK policies.

5.9 Managing Security Breaches: School shall establish systems for managing security breaches to prevent the occurrence of a dangerous/ harmful event, including intruders from gaining unauthorized access to the school grounds or confidential information. The following shall apply at a minimum:

- School shall establish a system to lock down the school (manually or automatically) which includes a security breach procedure and a response plan, led by the Safeguarding Committee or Lead, with appropriate reporting mechanisms in place.
- Ensure all school staff are aware of and have received training on the security breach procedure.
- The designated Safeguarding Committee or Lead (including deputies in their absence) shall fulfill requirements as stipulated in this policy including being of sound physical health.

- School shall maintain regular service of alert systems, if applicable, for vocal announcements and timed bells or alarms in line with local regular requirements.
- In line with the EFIA Digital Policy, School shall have the ability to respond to security breaches by backing up important data from the school IT system and activating their business continuity plan. School shall ensure that every digital incident is recorded, documented, and signed by the Principal and stored for auditing purposes, in line with the EFIA Records Policy.
- Conduct school emergency planning and subsequent drills, in line with the School's Health and Safety Policy.
- Comply with 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): School shall provide the following training and CPD to staff, at a minimum:

- Safeguarding training at induction, including for the governing board, staff, and volunteers. The staff training should include the following:

  a) Identifying signs of student maltreatment or other safeguarding issues including what to do if the staff or volunteer or someone else is worried about a student.
  b) Alerting staff to be vigilant to the specific requirements of students at risk of harm, including students with additional learning needs.
  c) Understanding the importance of not disregarding certain behaviors (e.g., banter, practical jokes), which can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviors in an unsafe environment, preventing students from coming forward to report them.
  d) Detailing written records of events in a secure and accurate matter and respecting confidentiality as per the School's Digital Policy.
  e) Taking necessary actions in emergency situations, to prevent harm and danger.
  f) Sharing information on a need-to-know basis only and not discussing the issue with colleagues or the parent community.
  g) Making support available for individual staff members who may be suffering from wellbeing-related concerns, as per the School's Staff Wellbeing Policy.
  h) Understanding of the school's security system and security breach protocol.

- While training is not required for invited visitors, school shall ensure that they have read and signed the school's Safeguarding Policy.

7. WHISTLEBLOWING:

7.1 Whistleblowing Mechanism: School shall implement a whistleblowing mechanism to enable any individual to raise concerns or allegations of organizational malpractice in confidence.

- For anyone who raises a concern, School shall protect their identity and ensure that they should not be made to feel ashamed for reporting the concern. In case their identity becomes known, School shall take measures to protect the individual from any negative repercussions such as harassment, reprisal, and stigmatization.
- For anyone who has a concern raised against them, the school shall, to the best of its ability, protect their identity where possible and protect them from any negative repercussions until any investigation process is completed.

8. INCLUSION:

8.1 Inclusive Provision: School 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. School 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 School's Inclusion Policy.

REFRENCE LINKS

- 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).

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