

مدرسة الوحدة العربية

ARAB UNITY SCHOOL



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

AY 2024-2025



Policy No.	AUS School Policy_Academics_04
Date reviewed	September 2024
Next update	September 2025
Reviewed by	Executive Leadership Group
Approved by	Governor of Child Protection and Safeguarding, Ms. Amna Al Mutawa

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is that Arab Unity School aims to provide a stimulating, inclusive learning environment that challenges our students into discover their potential and develop into respectful, reliable, resilient and purposeful leaders of the global community.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide an affordable education with a solid foundation of knowledge, technology and life skills enabling our students to be socially conscious and responsible individuals.

CORE VALUES

<p>Character Building</p> <p>Morally accountable Diligent Trustworthy Self-regulator Caring</p>	<p>Progressive Thinking</p> <p>Technologically competent Collaborative Adaptable Enquiring Creative</p>
<p>Global Commitment</p> <p>Environmentally conscious Persevering Tolerant Effective Participant</p>	<p>Leadership Skills</p> <p>Inspiring Motivating Decisive Consistent Team player Reflective Learner</p>

Safeguarding at AUS

AUS, Dubai believes in being proactive in creating a safe and nurturing environment for all its children. Hence, safeguarding procedures are in place and must be always followed by all AUS staff.

Staff at AUS are trained to ensure the safety, security, and welfare of all the children at all hours during the school term. A clear policy ensures that child protection concerns, referrals and monitoring may be handled in the best possible manner.

We seek always to work in ways that are culturally sensitive and that respect the diverse nature of the children we work with.

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Key personnel

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): DHANYA AUGUSTUS
Email: dhanya.augustus@arabunityschool.ae Telephone: 055-5691096

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DDSO): POOJA HARIKUMAR
Email: pooja.harikumar@auschool.ae Telephone: 056-4477735

The Health & Safety officer to lead: MR. YAMEN SHAABAN
Email: yamen.s@arabunityschool.ae Telephone: 050-9740052

Policy statement and principles

Arab Unity School, Dubai, prioritizes creating a safe and supportive environment where every child can flourish and learn. This Child Protection Policy is a cornerstone of our school's commitment to safeguarding student well-being.

Our core safeguarding principles are unwavering:

- Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility at Arab Unity School.
- Protecting and promoting student well-being is our top priority.
- Safer children become more successful learners.
- Representatives from our entire school community, including students, parents, staff, and governors, will be involved in both the development and review of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually, with the possibility of interim reviews in response to specific incidents, new legislation, or updated guidance.

Child Protection Statement

We acknowledge our ethical and legal obligation to safeguard and promote the well-being of all students. We strive to create a secure and welcoming environment where every child feels respected and valued. We actively seek out signs of abuse and neglect and follow established procedures to ensure children receive the support, protection, and justice they deserve.

The procedures outlined in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers, and governors, and they align with local safeguarding partner arrangements.

Policy Principles

- **Child's Best Interest:** The welfare of the child is paramount in every situation.
- **Equal Rights to Protection:** All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, background, language, religion, or sexual orientation, deserve equal protection.
- **Responsibility to Act:** Every staff member has a duty to act upon any suspicion or disclosure that suggests a child might be at risk.
- **Taking Concerns Seriously:** All staff will reassure children that their concerns and disclosures will be taken seriously, and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- **Providing Support:** Students and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.

Policy Aims

- To equip all staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfill their child protection responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent implementation of safeguarding practices throughout the school.
- To demonstrate Arab Unity School's unwavering commitment to child protection to our students, parents, and all other partners.

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

DSO refers to the designated safeguarding officer at the school

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents and adoptive parents.

Laws we follow at AUS

- UAE Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on children's rights (Wadeema's Law)
- UAE Department for Health, School Health Guidelines for Private Schools 2011
- UAE School Inspection Framework 2016, Section 5, The protection, care, guidance and support of student

Federal Law No. 3 (2016) - Wadeema's Law

A law to protect children from abuse and neglect, supporting their right to safety, healthcare, and education. Anyone in contact with a child can be held accountable for causing harm and is legally obliged to report cases of suspected abuse. If a child's life is in danger, the government now has the authority to remove the child to safety. Anyone who breaks the law faces a fine of up to Dh 50,000 and up to 10 years in prison for physical/sexual abuse or criminal negligence of children.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):

- Takes responsibility for leading safeguarding and child protection in the school.
- Acts as a source of support and expertise for the school community.
- Develops a culture of listening to children and taking their feelings into account.
- Is alert to the specific needs of children, especially students of determination.
- Has a working knowledge of relevant UAE law and education inspection processes.
- Ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.
- Ensures that the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated annually, working with the whole school community, including children, parents, staff, volunteers, and governors.
- Conducts monthly Safeguarding Committee meetings.
- Keeps a record of staff attendance at health, safety, and child protection induction training.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DDSO):

In the absence of the DSO, the DDSO carries out the functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children.

In the event of the long-term absence of the DSO, the deputy will assume all of the above functions.

Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct

Good practices to meet and maintain our responsibilities are included in the staff code of conduct towards children, which includes:

- Treating all children with respect.
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.
- Involving children in decisions that affect them.
- Encouraging positive, respectful, and safe behavior among children.
- Being a good listener.
- Being alert to changes in children's behavior and to signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Recognizing that challenging behavior may be an indicator of abuse.
- Reading and understanding the school's child protection policy and staff code of conduct.
- Asking a child's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, providing physical support during PE, or administering first aid.
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children, and avoiding the use of derogatory language.

- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- Referring all concerns about a child's safety and welfare to the DSO or, if necessary, directly to the Police or Children's Social Care.
- Following the school's rules regarding communication and relationships with children, including via social media.

Children Who May Be Particularly Vulnerable

To ensure that all of our children receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- Students of Determination.
- Affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse, and violence, or parental mental health needs.
- Vulnerable to being bullied or engaging in bullying behaviors.
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations.
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or sexuality.

Support for students of determination will involve the child and family, as well as all the professionals who are working with them.

Attendance

AUS recognizes that regular attendance and punctuality at school are important to the well-being and safety of all our students and enable them to access the opportunities made available to them at school. Attendance is monitored closely, and action is taken where concerns are raised. An attendance policy that is reviewed regularly by the school leaders, and Governors monitor the impact of the policy in securing good attendance and punctuality.

Where a student has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps* have been taken by the school to establish the whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral.

*Reasonable steps may include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts.
- Emails to parents.
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered.
- Enquiries to friends, neighbors, etc., through school contacts.

Assisting Children to Keep Themselves Safe

The DSIB Framework instructs governing bodies and administrators to ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a 'broad and balanced curriculum.'

Children are guided right from Early Years to understand and manage risk through our Moral Social Cultural lessons, other integrated lessons, and all aspects of school life. Our curriculum approach is designed to help children think about risks they may encounter and, with the support of staff, work out how those risks might be reduced or managed. Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. They are also reminded regularly about internet safety, the risks of sharing content and images online, and tackling bullying. We promote an ethos of respect for children, and they are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.

Children are alerted to the risks and issues associated with young people sending, receiving, and/or disseminating indecent images of themselves and others.

Support for Children, Families, and Staff Involved in a Child Protection Issue

At AUS, we support children, their families, and staff by:

- Taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously.
- Responding sympathetically to any request from children or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety.
- Maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with external agencies.
- Storing records securely.
- Offering details of helplines, counseling, or support, if needed.
- Cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

Allegations Against Staff

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague, including visitors and volunteers, toward a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Types of Allegations:

- Allegations of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or neglect.
- Inappropriate behavior or conduct towards children, including actions that could harm a child's welfare or violate their rights.
- Breaches of the school's safeguarding or child protection policies.
- Any behavior that may be deemed as grooming or exploitation.

Reporting Procedures:

- Allegations must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).
- If the allegation concerns the DSO, it should be reported to the Head of School or a senior leader.
- The DSO will determine whether to involve internal or external authorities.

Confidentiality:

- The identity of all involved parties will be protected.
- Information will only be shared with those directly involved in the investigation and decision-making process.

Support for the Accused:

- The accused staff member will receive fair treatment and may be suspended pending the investigation outcome.
- Access to legal representation and counseling services will be provided.

Outcomes:

- Disciplinary action, dismissal, or referral to authorities if allegations are substantiated.
- Reinstatement and possible support measures if allegations are unfounded.

Safeguarding Culture:

- A zero-tolerance approach to abuse and misconduct.
- Continuous training and updates on safeguarding policies and practices.

Safer recruitment

At AUS, we are committed to upholding the principles of safer recruitment in education to ensure the safety and well-being of all students. Our recruitment processes are designed to thoroughly vet all candidates before employment, in line with our comprehensive Safer Recruitment Policy. For detailed information regarding the specific procedures and requirements of safer recruitment at AUS, all inquiries should be directed to the school's HR Manager. The Safer Recruitment Policy provides a complete overview of the pre-employment checks and expectations that are rigorously followed to maintain the highest standards of child protection.

Internet Safety

The school's **internet safety policy** explains how we try to keep children safe in school and protect and educate children in the safe use of technology. Cyberbullying and sexting by children will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Serious incidents may be managed in line with our sexual exploitation policy or child protection procedures.

Child Protection Procedures

Recognising Abuse

To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behavior constitute abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, such as through physical violence, or by failing to act to prevent harm, such as by leaving a young child home alone. Abuse may be committed by adult men, women, or by other children and young people. The categories of abuse are defined in line with local and international guidelines, as set out in Appendix One, along with indicators of abuse.

Bullying

While bullying between children is not classified as a separate category of abuse, it is a very serious issue that can cause significant anxiety and distress. All incidents of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying, should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures, which can be accessed through the school administration office or on the school's website.

Taking Action

Key points for staff to remember when acting are:

- Report your concern as soon as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSO), definitely by the end of the day.
- Do not start your own investigation.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only—do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends, or family.
- Complete a record of concern.
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

If You Are Concerned About a Child's Welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a child may be at risk. The child's behavior may have changed in these circumstances, staff should try to give the child the opportunity to talk and ask if they are okay or if they need help in any way.

Staff should use the welfare concern form to record these early concerns. If the child does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. After an initial conversation with the child, if the staff member still has concerns, they should discuss these with the DSO.

Staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognize their experiences as harmful. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or threatened, which could be due to their vulnerability, disability, or language barriers. This will not prevent our staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSO if they have concerns about a child.

If a Child Discloses to You

If a child talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or well-being, the staff member should, at the appropriate time, let the child know that in order to help them, they must pass the information on to the DSO. The point at which they tell the child this is a matter for professional judgment. During their conversations with the child, staff should:

- Allow them to speak freely.
- Remain calm and not overreact.
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort—e.g., “I’m so sorry this has happened,” “I want to help,” “This isn’t your fault,” “You are doing the right thing in talking to me.”
- Not be afraid of silences.
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions—e.g., how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what the child’s parents think about it.
- Avoid automatically offering any physical touch as comfort.
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things like “I wish you had told me about this when it started” may be interpreted by the child as having done something wrong.
- Tell the child what will happen next.
- Report verbally to the DSO even if the child has promised to do it themselves.
- Seek support if they feel distressed.

Child Protection & Safeguarding Reporting Procedures

Child Protection records are kept securely and separately from the Child’s school file. All cases pertaining to child protection are reported directly to the DSO/DDSO through a link which is available in Edunation or with pastoral head.

Notifying Parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents. This must be handled sensitively, and the DSO will contact the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion, or disclosure.

Our focus is the safety and well-being of the child. Therefore, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from safeguarding governor and/or the local authorities before parents are contacted.

Confidentiality and Sharing Information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSO, Head of School, or School Governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and where:

- It is necessary and proportionate to do so.
- The information to be shared is relevant, adequate, and accurate.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

Forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility, and any electronic information will be password-protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the child's school file, and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

The DSO will normally obtain consent from the child and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSO may share information without consent and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

If any member of staff receives a request from a child or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the DSO.

Making a referral to Children's Social Care

The DSO/ DDSO will make a referral to UAE agencies, and the police, if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering harm.

The child and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child or create undue delay.

Staff reporting directly to child protection agencies

Any staff member can refer their concerns directly to UAE agencies, or the police if:

- The situation is an emergency and the DSO, the deputy DDSO, School Principal and/or the chair of governors are all unavailable
- They are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the child's safety.

Staff should inform the DSO and/or Headteacher at the earliest opportunity that they have done so unless in their judgement doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child.

External involvement Dubai Foundation for Women and Children (DFWAC)

UAE's first licensed non-profit shelter for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, child abuse and human trafficking. It was established in July 2007 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to offer victims immediate protection and support services in accordance with international human rights obligations. DFWAC aims to protect physically, sexually and emotionally abused women and children, prevent ongoing abuse and the escalation of violence and promote social awareness through education and outreach.

DFWAC provides:

- A safe shelter
- Case management
- Medical care
- Psychological support
- Counselling
- Legal, consular and immigration assistance
- Helpline 800 111 or email help@dfwac.ae
- Website – www.dfwac.ae

Our Governor for Inclusion, Child protection and safeguarding at AUS in our Board of Advisory is Ms. Amna Al Mutawa is from DFWAC.

Dubai Police contact number: [999](tel:999)

Al Ameen Reporting (Dubai & Federal Police)

The Al Ameen Service officially launched in September 2003. Using this service, the people of Dubai can communicate confidentially with the authorities to keep abreast of developments in Dubai, and on issues that concern them. www.alameen.ae/en/

Key Contacts (Within Local Area) Dubai Police Child Protection Hotline

Contact Number: 800-243 www.dubaipolice.gov.ae Community Development Authority Contact

Number: 800-988Al-Ameen service

Contact Number: 800-4-888

Dubai Police Human Rights Department 24/7 Duty Officer 056 6862121

Latifa Hospital Child Welfare Unit

Tel: 04 2193000

Fax: 04 3241717

PO Box 4115 Dubai, UAE Working Hours: 24 Hours

Community Development Authority (Centre)

Any child in Dubai who needs help, protection from abuse, or advice can pick up the phone and dial 800988 any time. Four social workers and psychologists at the Child Protection Centre in Al Barsha are on standby to assist residents under 18 years of age to ensure their rights are protected and upheld. The recently opened centre under the Community Development Authority

(CDA) is part of CDA's comprehensive strategy to make Dubai the most secure and ideal environment for children to live. It is tasked with rehabilitating, providing counselling, visiting and assisting children in need.

Related safeguarding portfolio policies at AUS

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Contract
- Inclusion Policy
- Policy of Internet Safety

All concerns/referrals for Child's safety and welfare during school hours should be immediately reported to DSO/DDSO or any accessible Safeguarding Team (as mentioned above) at AUS, Dubai.

Appendix - A

What is abuse?

- A form of maltreatment of a child.
- Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.
- Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g., via the internet).
- They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

The four major categories of Child Abuse:

Neglect:

- Persistent or significant overlooking of a child's needs, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of child's health or development
- Medical – the withholding of medical care including health and dental.
- Emotional – lack of emotional warmth, touch and nurture
- Nutritional – through lack of access to a proper diet which can affect in their development.
- Educational – failing to ensure regular school attendance that prevents the child reaching their full potential academically
- Physical – failure to meet the child's physical needs
- Lack of supervision and guidance – meaning the child is in dangerous situations without the ability to risk assess the danger.

Physical:

- Physical injury to a child whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly
- A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child

Sexual:

- The sexual exploitation of a child or a young person for an adult's or another young person's own sexual gratification, the involvement of children or young people in sexual activities of any kind or exposure to pornography, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles.
- The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children

Emotional:

- Persistent or significant emotional ill treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects of the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.
- Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
- It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on the child.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.

Indicators of abuse

- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections
- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in education
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions (often new mobile phones)

Note:

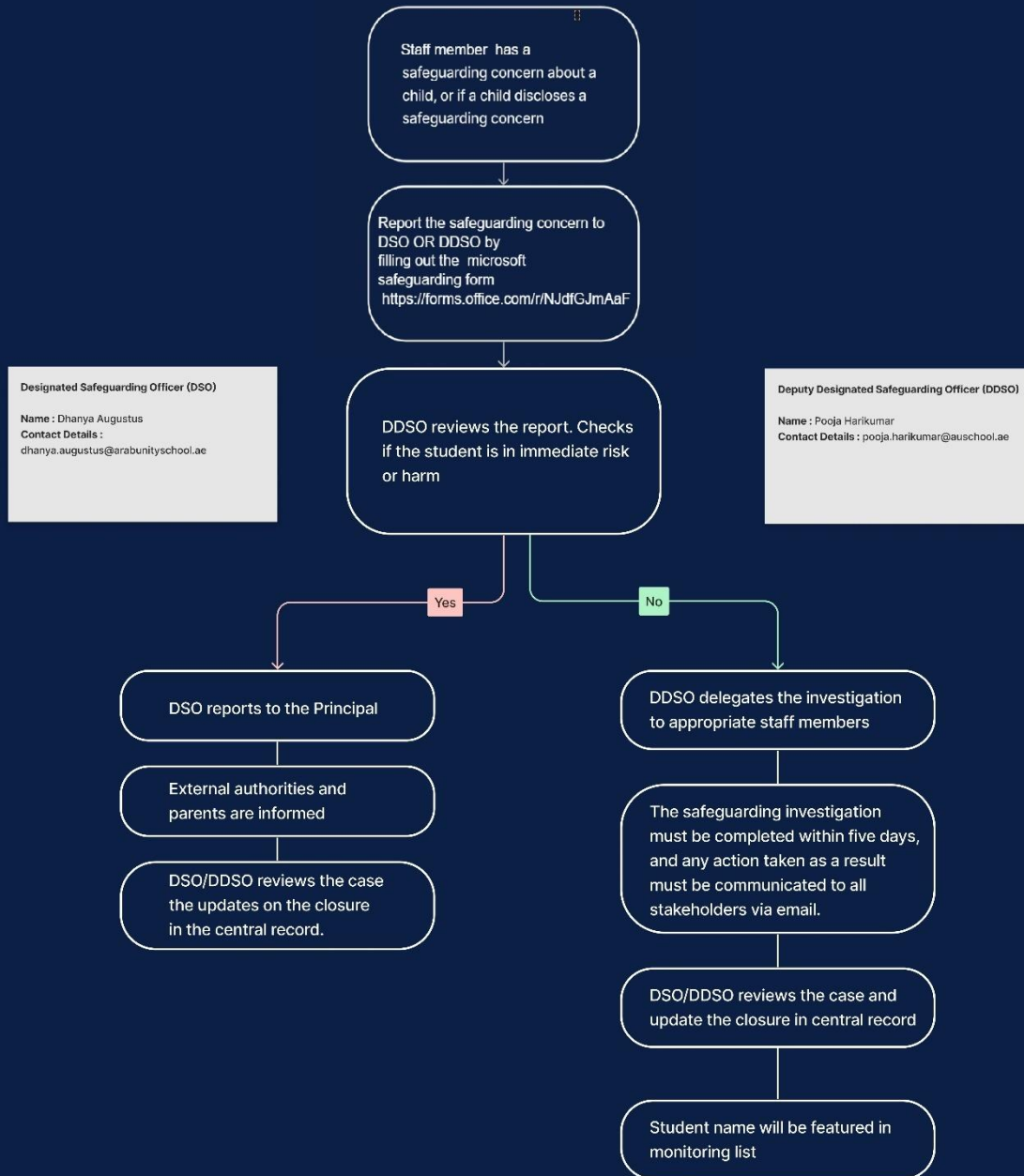
- It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.
- It is very important that staff report all of their concerns, however minor or insignificant they may think they are – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.
- Any child in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of "It could happen here".

Bullying

All incidences of bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying, should be reported and will be managed through the sanctions stated in our school's Behaviour Management Policy. The subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in Value Education and Moral Social and Cultural lessons.

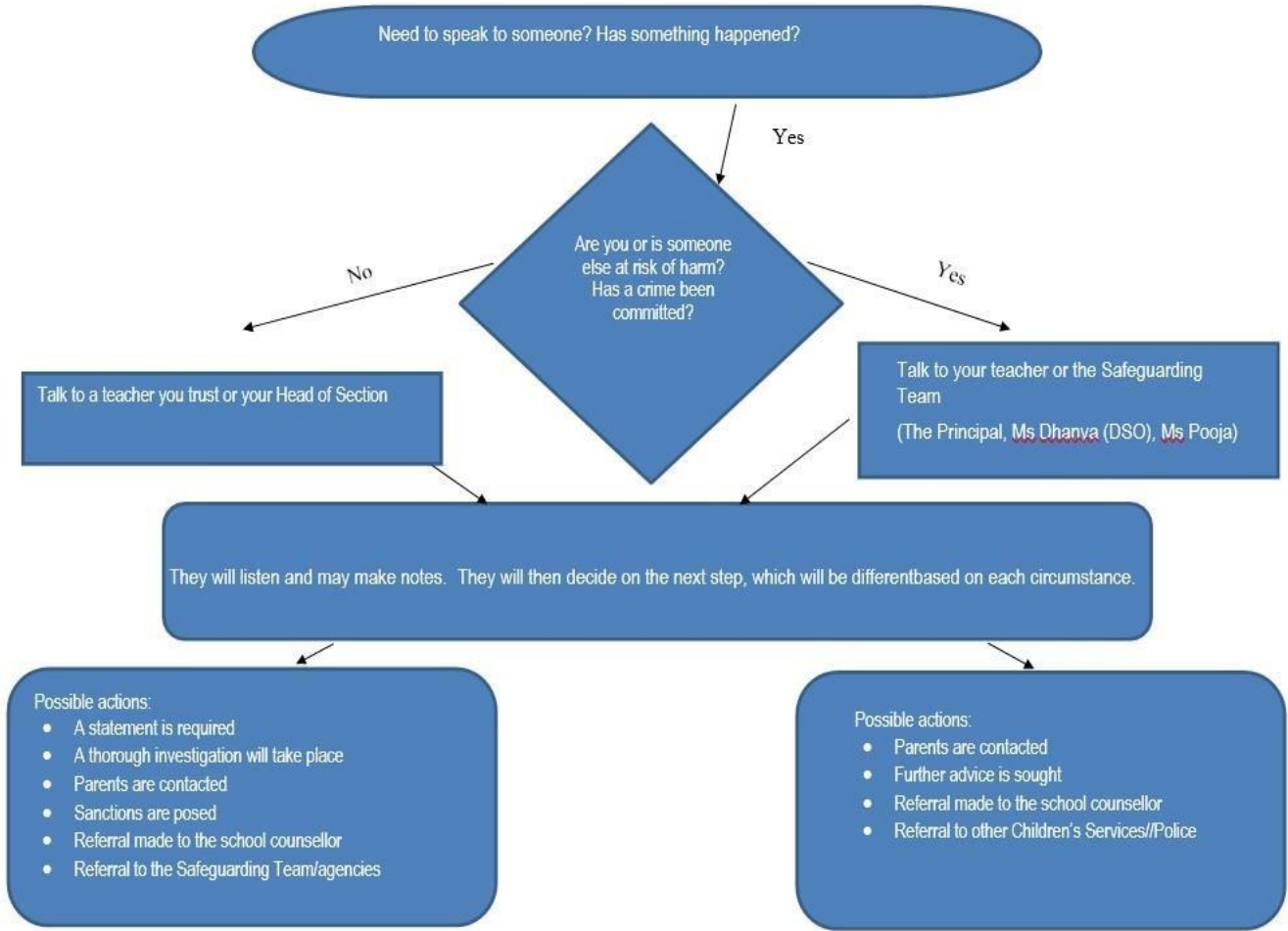
Appendix B

Flowchart of procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns



Appendix C

Student friendly guide to making a safeguarding disclosure



Appendix D

GUIDELINES IF A CHILD GOES MISSING

While children are in school, we have a responsibility for duty of care to the children and act in loco-parentis by taking steps that are reasonable to ensure safety and well-being.

If a child goes missing out of school, the following steps should be taken:

- Gather other children together
- Allocate staff to search the immediate area and alert local security. If a child is missing for more than 20 minutes,
- Contact school to say which measures have been taken
- Ensure that there is good two-way communication established with a range of phonelines
- Notify the police / security.

If a child continues to go missing,

- Send other children accompanied by staff back to school (if possible), in bus, cabs asking school to send transport, and additional staff to help search.
- School alert parents after 30-45 minutes and keep them posted

If a child goes missing in school, the following steps should be taken:

- Let the security personnel/teachers/ HOS know immediately.
- One member of staff must go to the roadside to search
- One member of staff must circumnavigate the grounds
- One member of staff must ensure all rooms are searched
- Let all these people know when the child has been found
- If the child remains missing, the school should alert parents after 30 – 45 minutes and keep them posted

Signed by:

Date: 19/08/2024



Ms. Dhanya Augustus
Designated Safeguarding Officer



Ms. Susan Varghese
Internal Governor for Child Protection and Safeguarding



Mr. Nigel McQuoid
Principal

(Sgd.)
Ms. Amna Mutawa
Governor for Inclusion, Wellbeing & Safeguarding