



# Akademeia High School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## *The Safeguarding Team*

<i>Role</i>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>
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The responsibilities of the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** are:

- To support and advise all staff on matters of safety and safeguarding.
- To ensure the safeguarding policy is fit-for-purpose and updated annually or whenever necessary.
- To ensure the correct procedures for reporting child protection and safeguarding concerns are adhered to internally, as well as ensuring concerns are recorded and stored properly and securely.

The wider responsibilities of the **Safeguarding Team** are to:

- Make referrals for all cases of suspected abuse to the relevant authorities.
- Support children and families who are subject to a safeguarding concern.
- Contact the Police in cases where a crime might have been committed.
- Ensure all staff receive relevant information in order to carry out their responsibilities.
- Refer any issues with legal implications to the School's legal advisor.



## 1. Introduction

Akademeia High School takes its responsibilities in terms of safeguarding children seriously; in doing so we aim to act in reference to the highest standards required in Poland, as well as the UK. Our overriding aims are to ensure our students are protected from harm and feel safe, and all staff are aware of the potential risks to student welfare as well as the mechanisms available for reporting these. This policy has been agreed with senior management of Akademeia High School and takes account of UK government publications: *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)*

This policy is addressed to all members of staff, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of Akademeia High School and is applicable to operations that occur at the school both inside and outside (e.g. Summer Schools) of core term time dates.

### 1.1. Akademeia will:

- ensure the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance at all times and is the responsibility of all staff .
- fully co-operate with the relevant authorities and parents/legal guardians in relation to child protection and welfare matters.
- adopt safe working practices to reduce the chance of harm coming to students.
- respect confidentiality requirements when dealing with safeguarding concerns.

### 1.2. Safeguarding is defined as<sup>1</sup>:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment.
- preventing harm to children's health or development.
- ensuring that children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances .

Akademeia High School will take a preventative approach to keeping children safe, incorporating student health and safety; behavioural management and preventing bullying; providing emotional and medical support to students; supporting new students when they join the school.

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of safeguarding is sourced from:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/835733/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835733/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2019.pdf)



**Child Protection** is an important part of safeguarding and refers to actions that are taken to protect specific children who are suffering, or who are at risk of suffering, harm.

For the purposes of this policy and Akademeia's approach to safeguarding:

- **Staff** means all those working for or on behalf of Akademeia.
- **Parent** means birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role.
- **Child** means *all* students at our school *and* any child under the age of 18 who comes into contact with our school.

All staff at Akademeia, whether teaching or non-teaching, play an important part when it comes to safeguarding children. All staff must understand they have a responsibility to take appropriate action and report concerns or allegations of risk of harm to students.

To this effect, staff should:

- carefully read this policy and the mechanism for reporting safeguarding concerns effectively (Concern Reporting Form).
- be aware of the different abuse types and alert to signs of possible abuse.
- be comfortable dealing with a disclosure of abuse from a student.

Staff should *always* act on any concerns they have regarding the welfare of a child. If unsure, they should always speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or another member of the Safeguarding Team.

## 2. Definition of abuse

Akademeia recognises abuse as defined by UK government guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*. It includes<sup>2</sup>:

- **Physical Abuse:** 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 abuse may also involve fabricating the symptoms of, or inducing, harm to a child.

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<sup>2</sup>Sourced from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/779401/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard-Children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf)



- *Emotional Abuse:* The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child, such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- *Sexual Abuse:* Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in violent or non-violent sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex), or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- *Neglect:* The severe or persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter; protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, hunger, low opinions of self.

All staff members should be alert to signs of abuse, which could manifest itself in a range of ways. Although not necessarily an indication of abuse, all staff should be alert to children who:<sup>3</sup>

- become overly aggressive.
- become withdrawn and/or too attached.
- demonstrate a changeable personality.
- show fear of being in certain situations or environments.
- exhibit injuries (for example bruising).
- behave in an inappropriate sexualised manner.
- display other forms of inappropriate behaviour.

### 3. Specific safeguarding issues <sup>4</sup>

#### 3.1. Child Sexual Exploitation

is a form of sexual abuse. They might be given things like gifts, money or drugs, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation, enticement etc, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex and sexual bullying. It includes cyberbullying.

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<sup>3</sup> Sourced from: <https://www.nspcc.org/uk>

<sup>4</sup>Adapted from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/779401/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard-Children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf) and [www.nspcc.org/uk](http://www.nspcc.org/uk)



### 3.2. Radicalisation

refers to the risk of children becoming susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation might occur through many different methods (such as social media).

### 3.3. Peer-on-peer abuse

is where children abuse other children. All peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. It might take some of the following forms:

- bullying (including cyberbullying).
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- sexting.

Akademeia recognises peer-on-peer abuse is growing and there are specific challenges with monitoring and preventing it, especially as it often occurs in an online setting and away from school premises.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.4. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

is the term used to describe highly stressful, and potentially traumatic events or situations that occur during childhood or adolescence. It can be single event, or prolonged threats to, and breaches of, the young person's safety, security, trust or bodily integrity.

As with all forms of abuse, staff should be alert to changes in behaviour which could indicate abuse has occurred, or may be about to.

**Further guidance on the signs and symptoms can be found here: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>**

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<sup>5</sup> Sourced from <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2019/10/04/what-is-peer-on-peer-abuse/>



## **4. Procedures**

All Akademeia staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. We are equally committed to the protection and welfare of our staff, who are expected to adhere to high standards of professional behaviour.

Each member of staff is expected:

- to protect students from abuse.
- to be aware of the Akademeia's child protection procedures and to follow them.
- to keep a sufficient record of any disclosure.
- to report any matters of concern to the DSL, or another member of the safeguarding team.

### **4.1. Visitors**

All visitors must report to the main reception desk upon arriving at the school. Visitors are required to sign in/out form, wear a school Visitor ID card, and are to be accompanied by a staff member while on the school premises.

Scheduled visitors in a professional capacity (e.g. fire officer) are expected to provide evidence of their role when they arrive at school.

### **4.2. Recruitment**

Akademeia practices safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who work at our School. We take the following steps:

- Teachers and staff members who are to carry out activities related to the upbringing, education, leisure, treatment or care of minors must provide a certificate from the criminal records office check prior to the employment commencing and must be verified in the Register of Sexual Offenders. Where a new staff member joins from overseas, evidence of a clean criminal record check in their previous country of residence is required. The school director also verifies teachers in the Central Register of Disciplinary Decisions.
- At least two references will be sought before staff members commence their employment. One of these will always be the candidates current/previous employer.
- All staff members recruited will be subject to thorough interview procedures, including being interviewed by at least two members of staff. For all teaching roles the interview process will



involve an observed lesson.

## **5. Children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

Akademeia High School understands students with additional needs are more susceptible to abuse. Staff are expected to be aware of this, as well as the fact there may be additional communication barriers faced by SEND students. Staff should also be aware children with SEND might be disproportionately affected by bullying. To address these challenges, extra pastoral support is considered for children with SEND and they are also encouraged to discuss their concerns. The Wellbeing Department will work with all staff to identify students with additional communication needs.

## **6. Language Barriers**

Since Akademeia High School is an English-speaking school within Poland, the majority of pupils are L2 (or L3 or 4) speakers of English. Although the Safeguarding Policy is in English, the Concern Reporting Form is translated into Polish and any staff member who wishes to raise a concern can do so in English or Polish. Any student who wishes to raise a welfare concern, or disclose information, can do so in English or Polish. If a disclosure requires the assistance of outside agencies (in the opinion of the Safeguarding Team), this will be handled by a Polish speaking member of staff.

## **7. Mental Health**

Any concerns staff have regarding self-harm, eating disorders or suicidal thoughts must be raised with the Head of Wellbeing, who will liaise with other member of the Safeguarding Team. Dealing with mental health issues might include consultation with parents or referral to other outside agencies, which will typically be handled by the Head of Wellbeing. Akademeia employs three psychologists within the Wellbeing Department who support students with their mental health.

## **8. Mentor Groups/One-to-one Support**

All students at Akademeia High School are assigned a mentor, who is always a member of staff working at the school. Mentors are responsible for overseeing the personal and academic development of the student and meets with him/her in a weekly group setting and on a one-to-one basis as required. There are typically up to eight students assigned to one mentor. Any learning support, medical or welfare issues relating to the child is shared with relevant stakeholders by the mentor as part of our commitment to ensuring Akademeia focusses on the emotional and physical



wellbeing of student, in addition to academic achievement. Staff should not have unnecessary contact with students outside school and should not give students their home address, private phone number(s) or email address, unless agreed by a member of the school leadership team.

Akademeia also delivers one-to-one lessons (either for students studying along toward qualifications or as an additional support). All such meetings will occur on the school premises, in unlocked rooms with glass doors and/or external visual access to the room.

As a rule, staff should not have social media contact with, share personal telephone numbers with, or have any social contact with, current students of Akademeia outside of a professional setting. If any such contact does occur, it must only be at the express approval of the Headmaster, who will exercise professional judgement.

## 9. Accommodation Measures

Akademeia High School offers students a boarding option at Atos Hotel, ul. Mangalia 1, 02-758 Warsaw. Boarders will be provided with direct transportation from the Boarding House to School in the morning before the class and in the afternoon after school activities. Akademeia High School ensures steps are taken to safeguard and protect our students in their place of residence, liaising with our host location partners to provide a completely safe and secure environment for all boarders. A female and male supervisor uses the same accommodation and are responsible for the welfare of students when at residence. Floors of the hotel designated for the use by Akademeia students and staff are not accessible to outside persons, except for designated hotel employees while on duty. All rooms are ensuite, single sex and lockable.

## 10. Responding to Disclosures/Concerns/Allegations

All staff should record any concern about, or disclosure by, a student and report this to the DSL or another member of the Safeguarding Team via the **Concern Reporting Form**. Staff are expected to ensure this concern reaches the attention of a member of the Safeguarding Team as a matter of priority, including by verbal follow up if necessary.

### 10.1. Staff should not:

- Promise anything they can't deliver, including keeping secrets.
- Ask leading questions .



- Discuss the disclosure with anybody who does not need to know.
- Judge the student or make false promises.
- Conduct their own investigation into the disclosure.

#### **10.2. Staff should:**

- Listen carefully to the disclosure.
- Record what they are told as faithfully as possible, using the set template.
- Reassure the student and take the disclosure seriously.
- Report the disclosure only to a member of the safeguarding team.
- Place the immediate safety of the child before all other considerations.

### **11. Record keeping and information sharing <sup>6</sup>**

Akademeia will ensure written records of all safeguarding and child protection concerns are kept. Information about students at risk of harm is shared with members of staff on a “need to know” basis, with the Safeguarding Team making a judgement in each case.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers and will typically discuss initial concerns with them. However, we may not share information where there are concerns that if so doing would:

- place a child or staff member at increased risk of harm.
- prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime.
- lead to an unjustified delay in making enquiries about suspected harm.

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<sup>6</sup> Procedures based on information sharing guidance of: <https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Information-Sharing-Child-Protection.pdf>



## 12. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing refers to a situation when a staff member reports any case of suspected wrongdoing, which may put students' or other staff members' health (both physical and mental) and safety in danger. Staff can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school safeguarding procedures. In the first instance they should raise their concerns with the DSL, or another member of the Safeguarding Team. Otherwise, they can do so with reference to the Akademeia Complaints Procedure.

In order to report any concerns, staff members should use "Concern Reporting Form". The form should be completed and put in Safeguarding Box, located in Teachers' Room. Alternatively, they could send an e-mail to: [safeguarding@akademeia.edu.pl](mailto:safeguarding@akademeia.edu.pl) (only DSL has access to this e-mail address). Concerns may be reported anonymously.

Please see AHS Whistleblowing Policy for further details.

## 13. Allegations against staff

All staff must remember that the welfare of a child is paramount and must not delay raising concerns because of concerns relating to a colleague's career. Any allegation of abuse will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the student and supports the member of staff who is the subject of the allegation.

If any staff member suspects any other member of staff of behaving in such a way as to harm, commit an offence against or in relation to a child, or behave in an inappropriate manner towards a child, should report their concerns to the Headmaster. The following steps should be taken:

- Staff should record their concerns
- Staff should immediately report the issue to the Headmaster, who will lead an internal investigation, seeking evidence if necessary.

The same steps should be taken in case of former staff members and historical allegations.

Staff member who has been reported, will be asked to attend an official meeting with the Headmaster and another senior staff member to provide an explanation of the issues raised. The reported staff member may bring a witness to the meeting, if they wish. During the meeting, notes will be taken to prepare a formal document describing the course of the meeting. The document should be signed by all participants of the meeting.



Depending on the outcome of the meeting, further steps will be taken.

An independent external commission may be appointed by the Director to examine the matter. Findings and recommendations resulting from the commission's work may be the basis for taking further steps and decisions in the matter.

If allegations are found to be substantiated, the reported staff member will face disciplinary consequences (including written warning, and/or suspension or immediate dismissal). Where appropriate, external institutions (e.g. the police) will be informed. If allegations are found to be false, the case will be officially closed.

The circumstances should be kept strictly confidential and all parties involved should make every effort to ensure confidentiality while an allegation is under investigation, unless abuse should be referred to the police.

<b>Policy published (date):</b>	<b>28 June 2021</b>
<b>Next review (date):</b>	<b>June 2022</b>



Attachment no 1

## Concern Reporting Form

Staff member reporting:.....

Student name:.....

Student age:.....

Student's date of birth: .....

Type of concern (bullying, emotional distress etc): .....

Date and place of incident / observation: .....

Signed (by reporting member of staff): ..... Date: .....

### ***To be completed by reporting member of staff***

***Please give details below of: nature of the concern, relevant dates/times,  
any action taken/adults informed***

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**This section is to be completed by Safeguarding Team only**

**Action taken:** Have the following been informed / made aware of concerns relating to the student  
(please circle)

<b>Parents</b>	<b>Authorized</b>	<b>Mentor</b>	
<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>services</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Other (specify):</b>
	<b>Yes / No</b>		

Details of responses made to disclosure:

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Signed: .....