

# SAFEGUARDING HANDBOOK



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## Letter of Introduction from the Head of School

Dear Parents,

The Safeguarding Handbook guides our employees and families in matters related to the health, safety and care of students at ABA. At the beginning of each school year, it is important to review such policies to ensure that safeguarding is embedded into all areas of operations within the school. Our commitment to best practice for safeguarding in our international school environment is reflected in the whole-school strategic goals, which outline the purposeful and measurable actions taken to address the philosophies outlined in our Mission, Vision, and Values.

The ABA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies are based on international law and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which Oman is a signatory. These two key articles from the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child are important, and we wish to draw your attention to them:

**Article 19** - Protection from abuse and neglect

The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

**Article 34** - Sexual exploitation

The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

By enrolling your child at ABA, you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies of the school. All of us at ABA want you to know that we genuinely value our partnership with you in providing for the safety and care of your children. It is for this reason that ABA has endorsed a Child Protection Policy that defines the standards that all ABA students should be treated with respect and dignity at all times.

ABA will:

1. Assign and maintain well-defined roles and responsibilities of the various members of the Safeguarding team, including appointing a whole-school Designated Safeguarding Lead.
2. Provide age-appropriate lessons to help students understand personal safety, needs and rights.
3. Provide parent materials and information sessions.

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4. Annually train faculty and staff to recognize and report issues of abuse and neglect.
  5. Implement safe recruitment practices and protocols when hiring new employees, contracted vendors, and volunteers.
  6. Identify and implement initiatives that will strengthen Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Awareness (DEIB) in school operations and student learning.

Let's work together at home and school to ensure that our children are safe and are knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities to themselves and to each other. I thank you for your support of our efforts and invite you to contact the designated safeguarding lead, your school counselor, or sectional principal regarding any specific questions you may have in this regard.

**Policy 7.6.3**

ABA seeks to be a safe haven for all our students. Child Protection procedures derived from this policy will be stated in the ABA Safeguarding Handbook. This handbook will be communicated to all individuals who work with ABA students.

All staff employed at ABA must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse or neglect.

Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will be in accordance with Omani law and the child protection procedures resulting from this policy statement. The ABA administration shall be responsible for ensuring that screening and criminal background checks for staff are provided.

Sincerely,

Craig Williamson  
Head of School

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**INTRODUCTION:  
SAFEGUARDING  
PURPOSES, TEAM,  
AND PROCEDURES**

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## ABA Statement on Safeguarding and Child Protection

Child abuse and neglect are concerns throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to the child's education as well as to their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. ABA endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, Oman, is a signatory, as well as the Oman Child Law (2014).

Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of children. Schools need to ensure that all children in their care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop, both at school and away. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection. As such, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

ABA's commitment to Safeguarding and Child Protection is aligned with the employee and volunteer code of conduct (Appendix E) and the parent commitment declaration (see Appendix F), and applies to all faculty, staff, employees, and volunteers who represent the school and who interact with children or young people in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity.

In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, ABA will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process, keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority.

To fulfill the duty of care responsibilities towards all individuals in the school, ABA is also committed to embedding safeguarding policies, procedures, and guidelines for adults. When an interaction between staff members that makes an individual feel uncomfortable, disrespected, or harassed is disclosed, there will be an immediate follow-up investigation by the safeguarding team to determine appropriate action. Staff members should report behaviours that cause discomfort, especially if the behaviour is repeated.

All parents/caregivers are required to acknowledge the ABA safeguarding and child protection commitment as a part of the enrollment and re-enrollment process. It must be signed and explicitly stated that guardians of ABA students have read and accepted the policies and protocols in this handbook.

*For detailed information on the Convention on the Rights of Child see the following link:*  
[http://www.unicef.org/crc/index\\_30160.html](http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30160.html)

## Safeguarding Team: Members and Contact Information

<b>Head of School:</b> Craig Williamson cwilliamson@abaoman.org	<b>School-Wide Designated Safeguarding Lead:</b> Maria Trindade mtrindade@abaoman.org
<b>Assistant Head of School/ High School Principal:</b> Simon Walker swalker@abaoman.org	<b>High School Counselor:</b> Alli Hostetter ahostetter@abaoman.org
<b>Middle School Principal:</b> Richard Niles rniles@abaoman.org	<b>Middle School Counselor:</b> Claire Anthony canthony@abaoman.org
<b>Elementary School Principal:</b> Justine Smyth jsmyth@abaoman.org	<b>Elementary School Counselors:</b> Shari Dixon sdixon@abaoman.org Allison Clark aclark@abaoman.org
<b>School Nurse:</b> Laveena Tellis nurse@abaoman.org	<b>School Nurse:</b> Sumi Vinod nurse@abaoman.org
<b>Board of Directors Chairperson:</b> Puja Khimji pkhimji@abaoman.org	<b>Board of Directors Safeguarding Representative:</b> Hasnain Bokhari hbokhariji@abaoman.org

Roles are assigned on a case by case basis.

## Safeguarding Team: Roles and Responsibilities

Title	Responsibilities
<b>Head of School (HoS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supervise the Designated Safeguarding Lead and work in partnership on decision-making for high-level cases</li> <li>- Inform the Board of Directors Chairperson of high-level safeguarding cases</li> <li>- Maintain confidentiality of safeguarding cases</li> <li>- Ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed annually to meet the needs of the school community, adhere to the requirements of accreditation agencies, and comply with Omani Law</li> <li>- Provide budgeting for safeguarding training, resources, and materials</li> <li>- Contribute the annual review of the safeguarding handbook for any changes and additions made to fit global best practice</li> <li>- Ensure the annual completion of online training by all ABA employees through Educare</li> <li>- Organize and supervise a safeguarding committee consisting of members of staff and faculty as well as the Board of Directors Safeguarding Representative</li> <li>- If the HoS is absent, the Deputy Head of School will act as interim HoS for safeguarding and child protection concerns</li> </ul>
<b>Board of Directors Safeguarding Representative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attend monthly safeguarding committee monthly meetings</li> <li>- Keep board of directors informed of any relevant safeguarding information and/or changes</li> <li>- Maintain confidentiality of safeguarding cases</li> <li>- Contribute to the annual review of the safeguarding handbook for any changes and additions made to fit global best practice</li> </ul>
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure school safeguarding policies and procedures are being followed and appropriately documented</li> <li>- Support safeguarding team members with ongoing professional development opportunities and appropriate resources</li> <li>- Facilitate safeguarding committee monthly meetings to reflect on school procedures, share experiences, and discuss possible scenarios</li> <li>- Share any safeguarding disclosures or concerns with sectional Principal and/or Head of School, depending on the level of the case</li> <li>- Maintain confidentiality of safeguarding cases and of safeguarding team members action plans</li> <li>- Oversee the annual review of the safeguarding handbook for any changes and additions made to fit global best practice</li> <li>- Facilitate annual in-house training for all ABA faculty and staff with sectional Counselors</li> <li>- If the DSL is absent, the HoS will act as interim DSL for respective students and families in their school sections.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Sectional Principals, Sectional Assistant Principals, and Early Childhood Coordinator</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share reports and concerns for safeguarding cases with the DSL and Counselor(s)</li> <li>- Act on the safeguarding team for investigations, parent discussions, and student disciplinary measures when necessary</li> <li>- Provide documentation of information pertinent to safeguarding cases to DSL and Counselor(s)</li> <li>- Maintain confidentiality of safeguarding cases</li> <li>- Attend regular meetings with sectional Counselor to discuss child protection and safeguarding cases</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sectional Counselors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Receive reports and concerns for safeguarding cases and share with DSL, Principal(s), and Head of School</li> <li>- Act on the safeguarding team for parent discussions, social-emotional support for students, and liaise with external providers</li> <li>- Maintain up-to-date documentation of all safeguarding cases, oversee the implementation of student safety plans, and ensure follow up actions are taken when necessary</li> <li>- Maintain confidentiality of safeguarding cases</li> <li>- Oversee the Implementation of the Keeping Safe curriculum in their section by providing lessons for students and/or guiding homeroom/advisory teachers in their practice</li> <li>- Facilitate annual in-house training for all ABA faculty and staff with DSL</li> <li>- Attend regular meetings with sectional Principals to discuss child protection and safeguarding cases</li> </ul>
<p><b>School Nurse</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Report any observations and disclosures that may be concerns for safeguarding cases DSL and Counselor(s)</li> <li>- Provide documentation of information pertinent to safeguarding cases to DSL and Counselor(s)</li> <li>- Maintain confidentiality of safeguarding cases</li> </ul>
<p><b>Faculty, Staff and Contracted Employees</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Report any disclosures and concerns for safeguarding cases DSL and Counselor(s)</li> <li>- Provide documentation of information pertinent to safeguarding cases to DSL and Counselor(s)</li> <li>- Maintain confidentiality of safeguarding cases</li> </ul>

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## Safeguarding Reporting Procedures

At ABA we aim to focus our energy on implementing policies and procedures that prevent incidents of child abuse from occurring; however, the Child Protection disclosure flowchart below outlines the procedures we have in place for reporting and responding to suspected, observed or disclosed incidents of abuse.

Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report their suspicions to the Counselor, to the Principal, or the DSL. In all cases, the principal will be notified. It is the responsibility of the principal to inform the Head of School of the suspected case of child abuse or neglect.

All staff, faculty and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect. All ABA employees are also required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect must be made to the Principal, Counselor or the DSL within 24 hours for immediate response.

### Disclosures that Involve an ABA student:

#### Step 1: Reporting

When a child reports abuse or self-harm or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse, self-harm or neglect is occurring, the ABA teacher will report and follow advice from the appropriate ABA Principal, Counselor or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within 24 hours.

The DSL and/or counselor will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident and will form a school-based response team as needed (within 24 hours) to address the report. The response team will include at least the Principal/Assistant Principal, Counselor and DSL, and in some cases, the other Counselors, the School Nurse, and other individuals as the DSL deems necessary. In all cases, follow up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained.

*\*Note: in cases of observed or suspected injury/bruising, the child must be referred to the school nurse -Members of staff should not investigate further marks on a child's body. Under no circumstances it is acceptable for a member of staff to take a photograph of a body mark. The injury will be recorded on CPOMS and information will be shared with the school-based response team.*

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The team will use the following procedure:

1. DSL and/or Counselor interview staff member/reporter as necessary and document information relevant to the case on CPOMS.
2. Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school.
3. Report the status of the case to the Head of School.
4. Develop an action plan.

## **Step 2: Action Plan**

Based on the acquired information, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family.

Actions that **may** take place are:

- An email notification or phone call from the Nurse to parents in case of observed injury/bruising.
- Discussions between the child and counselor or DSL to gain more information. These discussions will be developmentally appropriate. The well-being of the child will be considered regarding further steps that may be taken, including discussions with parents and outside authorities.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, DSL, counselor, or administrator.
- Meetings with the family to present ABA's concerns.
- Support for the family and child.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling.

In cases of severe abuse or where outside authority and intervention is deemed necessary, a report made to the Child Protection Team may result in further investigation, and **one or more** of these possible actions may follow:

- Communication with the School Board.
- Consultation with a legal advisor.
- Consultation with the ROP Child Protection Liaison Officer.
- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concern with the child/family, or to the child welfare office at the family's home country.
- Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.
- Formal or informal consultation with local authorities.

## **Step 3: Follow up**

During this process:

- The team will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and

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- guidance as appropriate.
- The team will provide the principal and the Head of School with ongoing support and updates, as well as the child's teachers if appropriate.
  - The team will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use if necessary.
  - The team will maintain contact as needed and with parental consent, with any outside professionals and organizations involved in order to update the progress of the child in school.
  - The team is not responsible for providing in-depth counseling to the offender or victim.

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the child's confidential records file on CPOMS. Records sent to schools to which the student may transfer will state that there is a confidential file for the child. ABA makes every attempt to share this information to protect the child.

Many cases will be managed internally by the team, such as those involving:

- Student relationships with peers (minor conflicts).
- Bullying or Cyberbullying.
- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home.
- Student-Parent relationships.
- Health issues such as low self-esteem or grieving.

Some cases will be referred to outside resources, for example:

- Mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, self-harm, suicidal ideation.
- Severe and ongoing physical abuse or neglect.
- Sexual abuse and incest.

Note about Confidentiality:

Confidentiality is essential unless someone discloses that they or someone else is in danger or has come to harm. Then, it is the responsibility of the ABA Safeguarding Team to follow the necessary procedures to ensure the safety of the child.

### **Disclosures that Involve an ABA Employee:**

If an incident of child abuse is suspected, observed, or disclosed that involves an accusation made about an ABA employee, then additional steps and responsibilities are included in the investigation process. Consistent with the expectations of Child Protection reporting procedures, all staff, faculty, and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect that may involve an ABA employee. In these circumstances, all reports must be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or to the Head of School within 24 hours for immediate response.

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When an allegation is made against an employee, two aspects are carefully considered. First, looking after the welfare of the child is paramount to any Child Protection case and deeply rooted in ABA's values. The DSL and/or counselor is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk, informing parents and guardians, and providing appropriate support and/or external resources. Second, the process of investigating and supporting the individual subject to the allegation must be managed respectfully and without prejudice. A contact person from the safeguarding team and the option to appoint a representative to join investigation meetings are provided to ensure that the employee has adequate care and support throughout the process, while maintaining confidentiality. Access to external resources for the accused employee will also be provided by ABA to support their well-being.

### **Procedure for Student(s) Involved:**

The steps outlined in the reporting procedure above will apply to following up with any students involved, in which the counselor and relevant safeguarding team members will take initial steps to gather information relevant to the child(ren) in the reported incident, consult with school personnel to review the child(ren)'s history in the school, and maintain communication of the status of the case with the Head of School. Finally, the counselor and relevant safeguarding team members will create an action plan to support the family and child(ren) involved.

### **Procedure for Accused Faculty Member Involved:**

#### **Step 1: Reporting**

When a child reports abuse involving an ABA employee, or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect is occurring, the ABA teacher who receives the disclosure will report and follow advice from either the DSL, a counselor, the sectional Principal, or directly to the Head of School within 24 hours.

This report will be immediately shared with the Head of School. The Head of School and sectional Principal will work in partnership to collect information and further investigate any information relevant to the accused employee while maintaining confidentiality.

The Head of School and sectional Principal will use the following procedure:

1. Interview staff member/reporter as necessary and document information relevant to the case.
2. Inform the accused employee of the investigation. The employee will be provided with a contact person from the safeguarding team to communicate any necessary information, as well as the option for the accused employee to appoint a representative that will join them

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for any investigation meetings. All individuals involved in the process will sign the ABA safeguarding confidentiality agreement, which states:

*Any information in this process is considered to be confidential and only to be shared with the Head of School and/or the safeguarding team contact person (if required). I consent to releasing relevant documentation pertaining to this case to be shared with the investigating team members. Evidential information provided will remain confidential within the team during and after the case investigation.*

## **Step 2: Action Plan**

Based on the acquired information, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family.

Actions that take place are:

- The Head of School and sectional Principal will use initial investigation findings to determine if the allegation is a Child Protection issue. If it is not, then the case may be referred on to the employee's line manager to follow up and the whistleblowing policy may be used when relevant.
- If it is determined to be a Child Protection case, then the involved safeguarding team members will determine if the allegation meets the harm threshold. The harm threshold is met if evidence demonstrates that one or more of the following actions have been taken, hence posing a risk of harm if they continue to work in their current position, or in any capacity with children in a school or educational institution:
  - Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; and/or
  - Possibly committed a criminal offense against or related to a child; and/or
  - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
  - Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. This may include behaviour that has occurred outside of school that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children. This is known as transferable risk. Additional support may be required to assess transferable risk from local authorities or accreditation agencies.
- If the harm threshold is met, then the accused employee will be suspended from their role for the duration of the investigation and written notification of the suspension will be provided to the employee within 24 hours by the Head of School.
- If the harm threshold is not met, then the Head of School and sectional Principal will consider suspension of the accused employee for the duration of the investigation if there is reason to suspect that any individual may be at risk of harm or if the accused behaviour is grounds for dismissal.

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In cases of severe abuse or where outside authority and intervention is deemed necessary, a report involving an ABA employee may result in further investigation, and **one or more** of these possible actions may follow:

- Communication with the School Board.
- Consultation with a legal advisor.
- Consultation with the ROP Child Protection Liaison Officer.
- Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved individual.
- Formal or informal consultation with local authorities.

If relevant authorities are involved in the case, ABA will request any evidence from their investigations and follow up to be shared and will be utilized to inform the employee disciplinary process if necessary.

### **Step 3: Follow up**

During this process:

- The Head of School and sectional Principal will use all evidence and information gathered in the investigation process to decide if the employee is to be dismissed from their position, or provided disciplinary action, or if the case is dismissed.
- The employee will be provided with access to external resources to support their continued well-being. Details of this support will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

All documentation regarding the accused employee of the investigation will be kept in the safeguarding confidential records file located in the Head of School's office and a copy will be stored with the DSL. Documentation for students follows the process outlined in *Disclosures that Involve an ABA Student*.

### **Additional Information: Disclosures that Involve the Head of School**

If an accusation is being made against the Head of School, then it must be reported directly to the Board of Directors Chairperson. If the case requires investigation and possible suspension, then the Board of Directors Chairperson and Assistant Head of School will work confidentially in partnership to follow the steps outlined in *Disclosures that Involve an ABA Employee*.

### **Additional Information: Safeguarding Disclosures between Employees**

Policy 4.1.5. in the ABA Whole-School Handbook states that employees are expected to first discuss their complaints and grievances with their immediate supervisor. If a

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solution cannot be reached which is satisfactory to the employee, the employee has the right to present the problem for reconsideration to the next higher supervisor and HR. The right of redress may be carried ultimately to the Board, whose decisions are final in all complaints and grievances.

However, if an employee would like to report a safeguarding issue occurring between faculty or staff members (i.e. concerns of abuse, bullying or identity-based harm) this can be discussed directly with HR or Head of School. Relevant members of the safeguarding team involved in the investigation will work confidentially in partnership to follow the steps outlined in *Response to Disclosure Involving a Faculty of Staff Member* flowchart or in the Whistleblowing Policy depending on the nature of the concern.

### **Additional Information: (CP) Low Level Concerns**

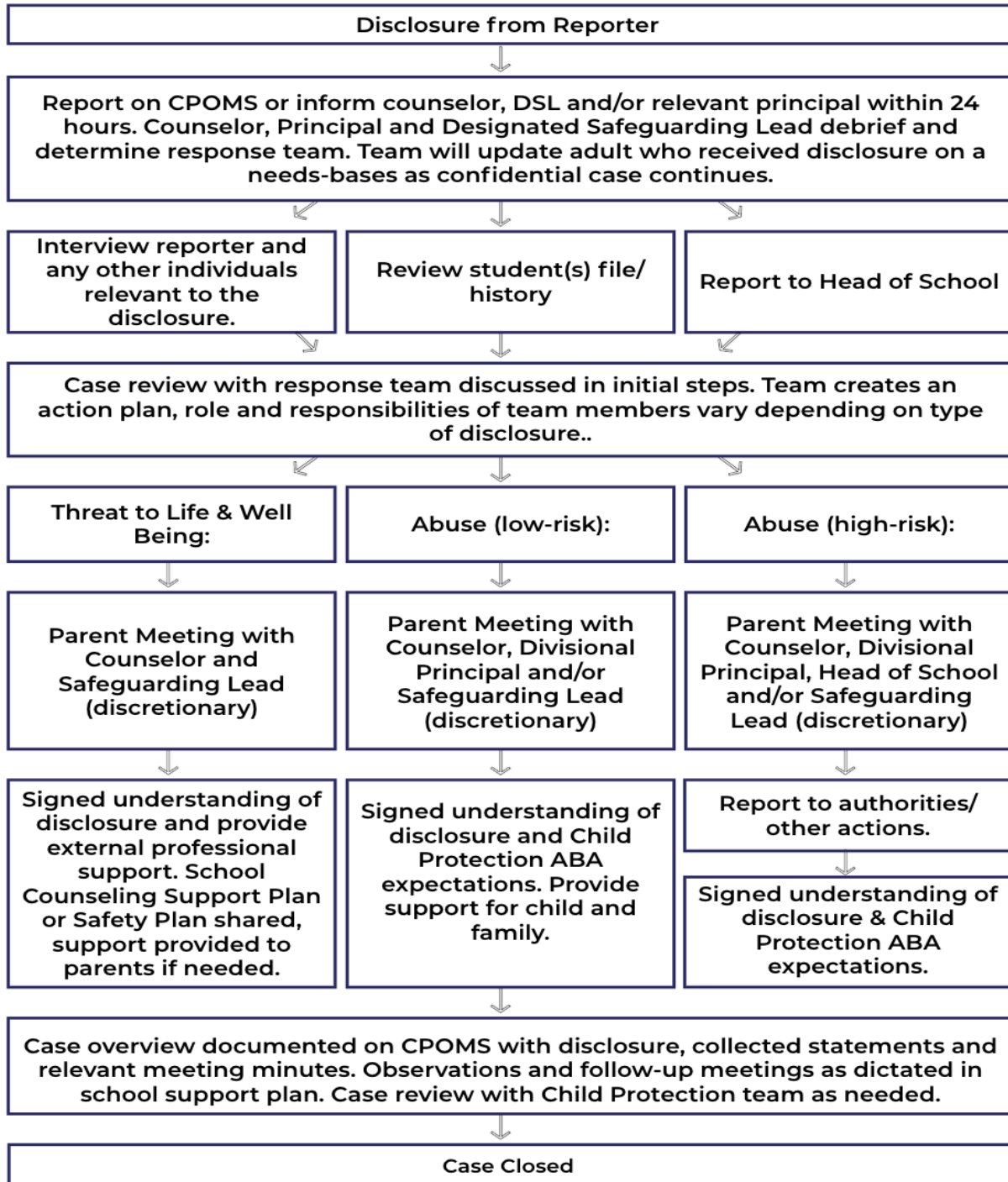
A low level concern is a confidential report disclosed about the behaviour of an ABA employee towards an ABA child that does not meet the harm threshold detailed in the *Response to Disclosure Involving a Faculty of Staff Member* flowchart. Such reports reflect observations or interactions with an adult working in the school that are inconsistent with the ABA code of conduct, however are not considered serious enough to warrant temporary suspension, termination, or reporting to local authorities. Such examples may include hostile or demeaning behavior towards children, uncomfortable friendly behavior with children, having favorites, taking photos of students without their knowledge or permission, engaging with students on a one-to-one basis in unseen areas or off-campus, and using inappropriate, sexual, intimidating or offensive language. Low level concerns remain confidential within the safeguarding team and are documented so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic, or inappropriate behaviour can be more easily identified.

### **Additional Information: Safeguarding Case Reviews**

Safeguarding and Child Protection investigation and follow-up processes may be reviewed by the members of the safeguarding team following the conclusion of a case to ensure best practice implementation of ABA policies. Case reviews may also guide the reevaluation process of safeguarding procedures to accurately reflect the appropriate response to high-level cases and availability of resources within the local community.

## Response to Disclosure Flowchart Overview: Student - Flowchart A -

### ABA Staff and Faculty Response to Disclosure (ABA Student) Overview:



# Response to Disclosure Flowchart Overview: Faculty Member

## - Flowchart B -

### Response to Disclosure involving a Faculty/Staff Member (including volunteers, substitute teachers, contractors, and vendors)



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## Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

ABA encourages a culture of safety and of raising concerns and will not tolerate malpractice. Members of the ABA community are advised to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about malpractice such as fraud, criminal offenses, miscarriages of justice, a failure to comply with legal obligations, or creating or ignoring a serious risk to health, safety or the environment (negligence), or unethical conduct.

A “whistleblower” refers to any individual who raises a genuine concern relating to suspected malpractice within ABA. This person may raise a concern with their sectional principal or direct supervisor, and if the matter is not resolved, it can be reported to HR through [whistleblower@abaoman.org](mailto:whistleblower@abaoman.org). It can also be reported directly to the Head of School when appropriate and . If a whistleblower does not feel able to approach the Head of School directly, then the Board Chairperson will be the next point of contact. The Board Chairperson can also be contacted if the matter concerns the Head of School. However, if the concern involves a child, and therefore is a Child Protection matter, the procedure should follow as described in Flowchart B (page 19). Whistleblowing concerns may also be shared anonymously, however, this can provide barriers to the investigative process in establishing credibility towards the allegations. No member of staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine and legitimate concern, providing that they do so in good faith and following the Whistleblowing procedures. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the principal, line manager, supervisor, HR, or Head of School immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you may raise it formally using the ABA Grievance Procedure.

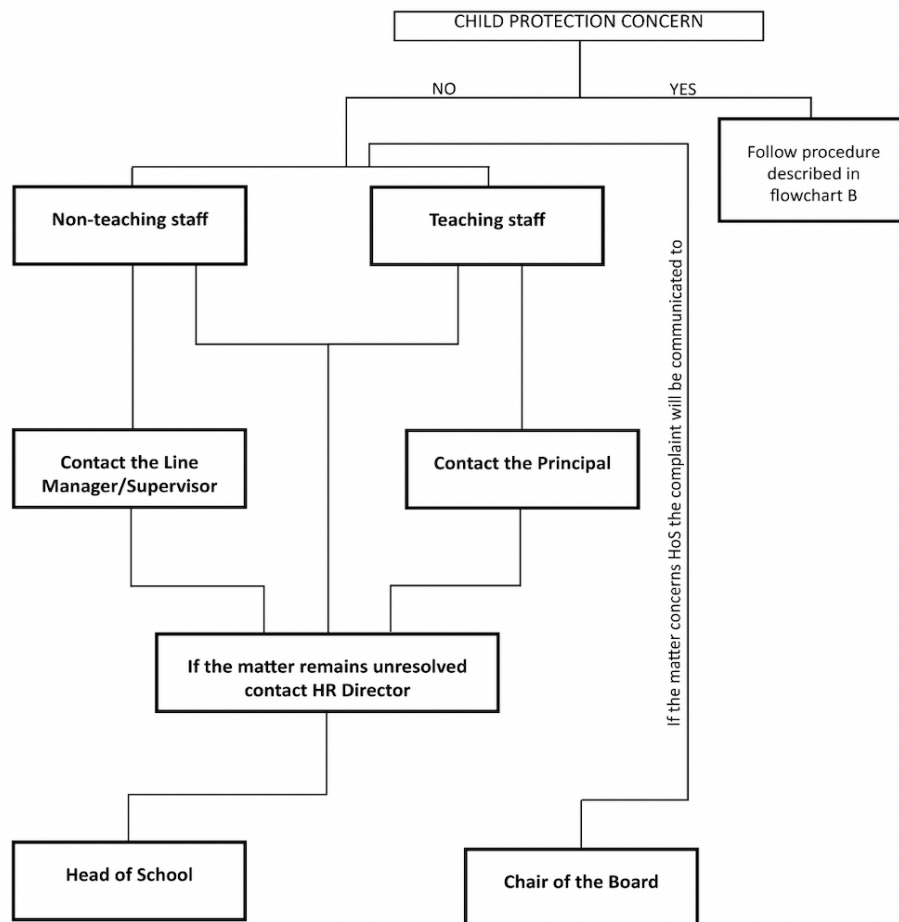
### Reporting Procedure

An initial meeting to share and discuss the concern will be arranged in a timely manner and the employee has the option to appoint a representative that will join them for this discussion and any follow-up meetings. If the disclosure is considered an appropriate malpractice concern, then the employee will be provided with a contact person from the investigating team to communicate any necessary information. All individuals involved in the process will sign the ABA confidentiality agreement. If there is evidence of criminal activity, then the Royal Oman Police (ROP) will be informed and provide guidance on investigative next steps. Whenever possible and subject to third party rights, the whistleblower will be informed of the resolution within the boundaries of appropriate confidentiality for all individuals involved.

If a member of the ABA community feels unable to raise an issue with ABA or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they may report their concerns to other whistleblowing channels, such as:

- Claims submission (Individuals), Directorate General of Labourers` welfare, Ministry of Labor (helpline: 00968 24766222 / 24766087, website: <https://www.mol.gov.om/manpowerallegeservices/details/claims-submission-individuals-215> ).
- Royal Oman Police, emergency hotline 9999 or 112 (in the event of low network coverage).
- Ministry of Social Development, (Child Protection Hotline: 1100 /Child Protection Department: 24182223)

## Whistleblowing Flowchart - Flowchart C -



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## Meeting Protocols

Meetings involving faculty and staff with parents, or external parties are an important part of school life. They provide opportunities to share information, resolve concerns, and strengthen the partnership between home and school. However, these interactions must take place in a manner that upholds the school's safeguarding commitments.

### **Safeguarding Responsibilities in Meetings**

The school's primary safeguarding responsibility is to protect the wellbeing of students and staff. This includes emotional and psychological safety during all school-related interactions, including formal and informal meetings.

All meetings must be conducted in a safe, respectful, and professional environment. Behaviour that creates distress, intimidation, or a sense of threat is considered a safeguarding concern.

### **Indicators of Inappropriate Conduct with Safeguarding Implications**

The following behaviours are examples of conduct that may trigger safeguarding concerns in the context of a meeting:

- Aggressive tone, shouting, or intimidating body language.
- Personal attacks or unfounded accusations against staff members.
- Attempts to undermine a staff member's integrity or professional judgement through distortion of facts or selective presentation of information.
- Persistent interruptions or verbal domination that prevent others from contributing.
- Use of recording devices without explicit consent from all present.
- Any direct or indirect threat, whether verbal, written, or implied, toward a staff member.

Any of the above may constitute a breach of safeguarding expectations, particularly if they cause a staff member to feel unsafe or unable to fulfil their role effectively.

### **Response Protocol for Inappropriate Conduct in Meeting**

If inappropriate behaviour occurs during a meeting:

- Any participant, regardless of their role, may raise a concern if they witness or experience inappropriate conduct.
- The meeting chair will intervene immediately to address the behaviour.

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- If the behaviour persists, the meeting may be temporarily suspended or terminated entirely.
  - The chair will clearly state the reason for the action taken.
  - Following a suspension or termination:
    - A written record of the incident will be created by the chair or staff member present, including the specific behaviours observed, the actions taken, and any impact on staff wellbeing.
    - This documentation will be shared with the designated administrators and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or safeguarding team.
    - The incident will be logged as a safeguarding concern, and appropriate follow-up actions will be determined.

### **Safeguarding Team Involvement and Follow-Up**

The safeguarding team will be involved in all incidents where meetings are terminated due to conduct involving parents or external parties. They will:

- Review the written report.
- Assess the impact on staff safety and wellbeing.
- Coordinate with school leadership to determine appropriate next steps, which may include:
  - Formal communication outlining expectations for future conduct.
  - Restrictions on meeting access or campus entry.
  - A follow-up meeting with safeguarding and leadership presence.
  - Referral to external authorities, if applicable.

### **Ongoing Protection and Support for Staff**

Staff who experience inappropriate conduct will be offered appropriate support. This may include:

- Access to counselling or wellbeing services.
- Adjusted future meeting arrangements to ensure safety.
- Ongoing monitoring and follow-up by the safeguarding team.

The school is committed to ensuring that unsafe or inappropriate conduct does not escalate or recur, and that all staff are protected in their professional interactions.

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## Child Protection Training for Employees

Mandatory and regular child protection training is provided to all faculty, staff, and contracted employees of ABA to ensure that all employees on campus have a comprehensive and consistent understanding of the aspects of child protection. This includes, but is not limited to, overall awareness and understanding of terms, signs and symptoms, prevention, disclosures and reporting procedures, and additional resources available within the community. Training requirements for ABA employees are as follows:

- All new faculty members complete Educare (<https://www.educare.co.uk/>) online *Child Protection for International Schools* (Level 2) training course, which provides detailed information and reflective practice on factors that contribute to the health and welfare of children and youth. Once completed, all current faculty members are required to complete the online Child Protection Refresher for International Schools training course on an annual basis. These courses have been developed in partnership with the Council of British International Schools (COBIS).
- All teaching assistants and contracted members of the ABA community complete Educare (<https://www.educare.co.uk/>) online Child Protection Basics for International Schools (Level 1) training course. Once completed, all current teaching assistants and contracted members are required to complete the online Child Protection Refresher for International Schools training course on an annual basis.
- All faculty members at ABA receive Safeguarding and Child Protection training with the DSL and counseling team annually that teaches and reviews the expectations, policies, and procedures specific to the school and host country. Once completed, employees are asked to sign and commit to the ABA safeguarding code of conduct.
- Further training is provided for the Designated Safeguarding Lead, members of the safeguarding team, and faculty in administrative positions. This may include courses and training provided by Educare, the International School Counselor Association (ISCA), and the Council of International Schools (CIS).
- The Board of Directors and Parent-Teacher Association will be provided annual in-house safeguarding training with the DSL to ensure their knowledge of school policies and procedures, as well as to understand the role of the Board of Directors Chairperson in high-level safeguarding cases and the role of the Board of Directors Safeguarding Representative in the safeguarding committee.

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## Safe Recruitment Policy

ABA utilizes several protocols during the recruitment process to ensure, as far as it is practicable, that potential employees are suitable to work with children.

- ABA uses recruiting agencies which apply internal protocols for verifying applications, to assess candidates and review references prior to completing interviews and offering employment.
- Candidates for teaching and/or leadership positions are required to provide complete personal interviews in which questions pertaining to their prior work history, professional boundaries, and safeguarding experience/understanding will be asked.
- Job offers are made conditional on satisfactory references from previous employers, which includes specific questions about the candidate's safe judgment and history of working with children. A reference must be provided from the candidate's current Director or Head of School to the ABA Head of School. As stated in the new employee contract, ABA has the right to revoke and void any offer of employment if background checks indicate cause for concern towards the safety of children or colleagues.
- Candidates sign a document stating that there is no history, circumstances, or reasons that would prohibit them from working safely with children.
- Candidates are required to provide criminal history background checks from their current country of residence and their home of record.
- The Human Resources department at ABA maintains records of all employees to ensure compliance to the above requirements.
- ABA will request for an external agency to complete a comprehensive background check on an employee when deemed necessary at any time throughout their employment.

In addition to this, all substitute teachers, volunteers, and outside contractors who may have direct contact with children are required to provide evidence of a valid police clearance (issued in the last six months) from local authorities or internationally, which includes review of criminal and sexual offender records. Contractors, vendors, and service providers operating during school hours on-site will not be left with unsupervised access to children.

Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in the information provided by a candidate or current employee may result in suspension or termination of employment or volunteer service at ABA.

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The graphic features a dark blue background with a complex, overlapping geometric pattern of lighter blue shapes, including triangles and polygons, creating a sense of depth and movement. The text is centered and rendered in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

**PROFESSIONAL  
CODE OF  
CONDUCT**

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## Safe Working Guidelines

ABA is committed to the safety and protection of all children. The Safeguarding Code of Conduct (Appendix E) applies to all employees, volunteers, and visitors who interact with students in both direct and/or unsupervised capacity and must be signed prior to beginning any work with children.

### The ABA Safe Working Guidelines are as follows: (4.1.1)

All adults will:

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Never be alone with children and/or youth at school activities without another adult being notified.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children – when necessary – only in ways that are appropriate, public, and non-sexual.
- Comply with the mandatory reporting regulations of ABA and with the ABA Child Protection procedures to report suspected child abuse.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

All adults will refrain from:

- Touching or speaking to a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Inflicting physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping or humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading children and/or youth.
- Using tobacco as well as using/possessing/under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs products while working with children and/or youth.
- Giving a child a ride home alone (except for emergency situations with parent consent).
- Accepting gifts from or giving gifts to children or youth without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- Engaging in private communication with children via text messaging, email,

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Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or similar forms of electronic or social media except for activities strictly involving school business.

- Using profanity in the presence of children.

### **Confidentiality and Duty to Report**

All employees, volunteers, and visitors who interact with children at ABA are expected to maintain a high level of confidentiality. This includes refraining from disclosing personal information pertaining to other families and/or children unless there are relevant child protection concerns (ie. risk of harm to self or others), avoiding photographing and videotaping students on school grounds, and ensuring that confidential records are kept secure. In addition, no statements can be made about a safeguarding concern to media or lawyers if approached without the consent of the Head of School and/or Board Chairperson.

ABA employees are provided consistent and appropriate training on the signs of abuse and mistreatment of children. As a result, these individuals are required to report any disclosures or suspicions of abuse towards children using the ABA Child Protection Reporting Procedures and will be protected from victimization, prejudice, and/or disadvantage when reports are made in good faith. If a concern is raised maliciously, disciplinary action may result (policy number. 4.3.19). Volunteers and members of the ABA parent community are strongly encouraged to also report any disclosures or child protection related concerns to a member of the safeguarding team.

### **Identifying Employees, Volunteers, Parents, and Visitors**

All adult employees, volunteers, parents, and visitors are required to wear identifying lanyards at all times while on school premises. Visitors on campus require pre-approval and scheduled visits. ABA faculty and staff will notify security of the visitor's arrival in advance. Visitors are required to sign in at the main entry prior to entering the campus by providing photo identification and by reading and signing the Safeguarding agreement form. They will receive a visitor's lanyard that must be worn at all times while on school premises. Visitors are not allowed to interact with students unless this directly relates to the purpose of their visit (ex. student workshop presenter, accreditation agency auditor, etc) and may only enter bathrooms designated for adults. Visitors must not take photos or videos of students, share or receive personal contact information of students, or bring in any weapons or illegal items into the school premises.

### **Parent Absentee Notification**

ABA requires notification in writing via email to either the homeroom/advisor teacher or the registrar if a parent or guardian intends to travel and will be away from their child(ren). If an ABA student is being cared for by a member outside of the immediate family (i.e. nanny or family friends), then contact information of this individual must be provided in

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case of emergency or support required for the child.

## **CCTV**

In accordance with guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education in Oman, CCTV cameras are installed throughout the campus and are able to view all public spaces occupied by students. These records may be accessed by members of the school leadership team or the director of technology in order to address and understand safety concerns occurring on campus. In such cases, parents or caregivers may also request to view the footage and will be provided supported access if their own child is the only student captured on the video. When a video contains footage of multiple students, the parent or caregiver can request a meeting with a member of the school leadership team to be informed of the contents of the video, however, they will not be permitted to view the recording directly. ABA does not release copies of footage to students, parents, or caregivers.

## **Professional Conduct with Students**

All members of the ABA community have the right to be treated with dignity and to feel safe while working and learning in the school. Adults employed by ABA must be aware of children's vulnerability and the importance of maintaining respectful boundaries while working together. It is the adult's responsibility to set and respect boundaries. When a child attempts to involve an adult in inappropriate behaviour, the adult must reject the overture.

ABA employees must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially children and youth, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration. Adults will avoid touching areas that are normally covered by swimming suits; breasts, buttocks, and groin. When hugging is appropriate, hug from the side over the shoulders, not from the front. ABA personnel and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child. Sexual jokes, comments of a sexual nature, kissing, sensual massages or sexual gestures are not appropriate behaviour for an adult staff member or volunteer.

One-on-one meetings with a child or young person are best held in a public area; in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed, or in a room with the door left open, and another staff member or supervisor is notified about the meeting. Scheduled meetings with groups of students outside of the school premises and school hours may occur with parental consent and approval from a direct supervisor.

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Some employees, such as those teaching PHE and sports activities, will occasionally be required to initiate physical contact with students in order for a child to perform a task safely or to utilize specific equipment and/or tools. Adults should always explain the reasons why physical contact will be necessary and request the child's permission. This form of contact should occur for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and in a visible location. If a student expresses discomfort either verbally or nonverbally, alternative methods must be provided to ensure the boundaries of the child are respected.

### **Physical Intervention**

There may be circumstances in which an ABA faculty or staff member may need to physically intervene in order to protect the safety of children and/or prevent a student from harming themselves or others. The employee will always attempt to de-escalate the situation with verbal instructions and discussions first and request help from another adult as soon as there are concerns for physical safety. In the case of necessary physical intervention from an adult, minimal restriction and force will be used for the shortest period of time possible. All incidents of this nature and follow up actions will be documented by the adults involved, the DSL, and relevant counselor.

### **Toilets, Showers, and Changing Rooms**

The privacy of children in situations such as toileting, showering, and changing clothes should be respected. When it is necessary to supervise children in these situations, at least two adults should be present and intrude only to the extent that the health and safety of the children require. Adults should preserve their own privacy in these situations also. Cameras, phones, and recording devices should never be taken into bathroom and/or changing room areas.

If adult intervention is required in a case where a student is in a bathroom with the door closed, the adult will knock first to inform students of their need to enter. For bathrooms designated to grades older than Early Childhood, adults will only enter bathrooms of the same gender and will inform a colleague nearby.

When maintenance staff are cleaning student bathrooms, clear signage will be posted outside of the bathroom and students are not permitted to enter during this time. ABA employees are not permitted to utilize designated student bathrooms on campus and will be provided clearly labeled adult bathroom facilities.

### **Early Childhood Bathroom and Changing Room Policy**

The following guidelines are applicable to ABA employees or volunteers working with Early Childhood students (Family Classes and Kindergarten):

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- For entry into Early Childhood Grades at ABA, it is an expectation that all students are toilet trained, reflected by an ability to go to the toilet independently or inform an adult of the need to use the bathroom facilities. Faculty members will work in partnership with the child's parents or caregivers if they are unable to do so and will create a plan for how the student can reintegrate into the regular school routine when they are ready.
  - The main entry door to the Early Childhood bathrooms must remain open and students will use the cubicles inside. One child is permitted to enter a cubicle at a time, and must exit the cubicle only when appropriately dressed. A student will receive verbal guidance from an ABA employee in the area if they are not fully dressed.
  - If a child requires support from an adult with toileting or changing, the adult will guide the child to dress themselves verbally while maintaining distance to respect the dignity and autonomy of the child. Whenever possible, employees should keep the toilet or changing room door open and remain visible. Another member of faculty should be notified when such care is provided.
  - If physical support is absolutely necessary to help a child wash or change, the child will be taken to the school health clinic facilities, and assistance will be provided with the child's consent by the nurse and in the presence of another adult.

## School Nurses

The school nurses have a health services location on campus where they provide care to students and ABA employees. For confidentiality and privacy purposes, they may close a door or curtain when assisting an unwell member of the community. The school nurses have the right to administer treatment and medication to a student with the consent of a parent or caregiver. This may include a necessity to physically touch a student in order to provide appropriate care, such as applying cream, ice packs, or administering vaccines. In this situation, the school nurse requires the child's consent before doing so.

## Communication

Communication at ABA is governed by the key safety concept of transparency. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between ABA parents, administration, teachers, personnel, volunteers, and students:

- Communications between ABA employees (including volunteers) and students that are outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship (teacher, coach, host, etc.) is prohibited.
- Where possible, email exchanges between a student and a person acting on behalf of the school are to be made using a school email address.

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- Electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.
  - Any form of online communications including social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and text messaging between faculty, staff, or volunteers and individual students is prohibited.
  - Group communication between faculty and High school students during designated field trips may be utilized with parental consent and permission from the sectional principal or Athletics Director when applicable. Any group communication must include every coach/teacher-in-charge and every student in the group/team. Students may share photographs of the event, which can be selected by the AIC to be posted on school-approved official social media accounts. All messages must be information pertinent to the school activity. Groups must be closed immediately at the end of the trip.

### **Data Protection and Information Security**

At ABA, we are committed to safeguarding every student's personal information and ensuring families' trust in how we handle data. Protecting details such as names, contact information, photographs, and any other identifying information is a responsibility we take seriously. We will only share a student's information with other parents or external parties when explicit consent has been provided by the student's legal guardian, in full compliance with the Personal Data Protection Law and the Law of the Child.

Data and information such as sensitive, valuable, or critical professional data, are required to be stored on ABA owned systems (including online such as ABA Google Drives). No personal data/information such as pictures, videos, medical information, scanned copies, documents of staff, students, or parents are to be kept outside ABA owned storage systems.

Photographs or videos captured of students during school activities or events need to align with the terms of consent provided by parents or caregivers during the enrollment process. Parents are not permitted to take pictures or videos of ABA students that are not their own children. Pictures and video recording are not allowed during instruction time in the swimming pool area. ABA employees are encouraged to document student activities and events using a school owned device whenever possible. If photos and/or videos are taken on employee personal devices, all data must be uploaded to an ABA owned storage system within 24 hours and then deleted off any personal device. ABA employees are not permitted to post information or imagery that is school or student related to their personal social media accounts without specific consent from the Head of School and the relevant student(s) parents or caregivers.

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ABA can monitor internet access and activity on their network, including but not limited to sites visited, content viewed and an email sent and received. In addition, the school may examine a student's device and search its contents if there is a reason to believe that school policies, regulations, or guidelines regarding access to the network or use of the device have been violated.

By signing the Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement Form, parents/guardians affirm their understanding and support of ABA's commitment to protecting student privacy and well-being.

### Field Trips, Excursions, and Hotel Stays

Field trips, excursions, and hotel stays that involve ABA faculty members, coaches, and/or parent chaperones supervising students outside of the school campus have guidelines for both student behaviour and adult responsibilities. All parties must agree to adhere to these requirements prior to departing for a trip. The guidelines for all individuals pertaining to safeguarding are listed below and more detailed Field Trip Policy.

#### **Guidelines for Teachers, Parent Volunteers, and Administrators-In-Charge (AIC) of School Trips:**

- The primary responsibility of the teacher, volunteer or administrator in charge is to look after the health and safety of all participants under his/her care.
- All accompanying adults, which are ABA staff and chaperones, including parents, must have a valid police clearance and completed [Safeguarding requirements](#).
- All adults accompanying students on trips - ABA staff and chaperones, including parents - must have completed Educare (<https://www.educare.co.uk/>) online Child Protection for International Schools training course (Basic version for non ABA staff/faculty).
- Parent chaperones who did not sign the Safeguarding Handbook Acknowledgement Form and the Parent Volunteer Safeguarding Agreement will not be allowed to accompany students on trips.
- All adults (including parents) accompanying students on trips must refrain from taking pictures or videos for personal use.
- Imagery produced (pictures and/or videos) of ABA students during field trips must be shared via the school's official communication avenues only.
- All adults and students must wear seat belts at all times during any form of travel.
- At least one adult must travel in the same vehicle as the students. If this is not possible (e.g., in a DoE convoy), an ABA adult should be positioned at the front and another at the rear of the convoy to ensure supervision.
- Headcounts must be conducted upon arrival and departure to and from any venue.
- ABA staff and chaperones supervision ratios:
  - Elementary: (1:10 for Grades 4-5; 1:6 for KG-Grade 3; 1:4 for Family Classes.

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- Middle & High School: 1:12 (minimum two adults per trip)
  - Selection of accompanying adults must help balance gender mix.
  - Smoking, drinking alcohol, drug abuse will not be permitted.
  - When supervising overnight activities, adults can not share sleeping quarters with children other than their own.
  - All passports, ID cards, tickets and visas must be in an ABA adult possession unless needed at the airport. These documents should be secured in the hotel room/facility safe and not left with students.
  - In the event that a student is required to return to Muscat for medical or disciplinary reasons, they must be accompanied by an ABA employee or chaperone of the same gender. Whenever possible, two adults should accompany the student(s). An adult in charge must also be prepared to stay with a student that is unable to return to Muscat because of a lost passport, visa difficulties, medical or injury. Parents will be arriving to take over duty of care as soon as they are able.
  - If a taxi is ever used, a teacher, coach, or chaperone must be with the students.
  - Trip Coordinators will arrange with the hotel to remove all contents from any minibars in the student rooms during hotel stays.
  - Public toilets should be inspected before students use them. Whenever possible, students should use single-occupancy bathrooms. If this is not feasible, risk-reduction measures must be in place, such as pre-briefing students, ensuring they go in pairs, or maintaining chaperone presence nearby.

### **Guidelines for Students During School Trips:**

- Smoking, drinking alcohol, drug abuse, cheating, deceit, flagrant curfew violations and violations of the “off-limits” areas as well as aiding and abetting any of the above will not be permitted during any ABA field trip and disciplinary actions will be taken.
- Exploration of the local environment will not be permitted without the knowledge and consent of the host school/site and the ABA chaperones.
- All laws of the host country must be observed. Guidelines are to be provided by the host school/Trip Coordinator as required.
- During overnight stays, students have a curfew of 10:00PM, but may be amended due to tournament schedule or relevant activity schedule.
- Students can not stay in a room overnight alone unless they are the only gender in their team and have parental consent. Twin, triples or four-bedded rooms are recommended.
- Under no circumstances can room assignments be changed without permission of the teacher in charge and the knowledge of the coach when applicable.
- Boys may not enter girls rooms/tents and girls may not enter boys rooms/tents during overnight trips. Where possible, students will be split into different floors and also by gender. Every effort will be made to have the girls’ rooms in a separate location to the boys’, but this may not always be possible.
- If the hotel swimming pool is used, a school adult must be present at all times while their students are in the water.

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- Behaviour expectations and Safeguarding procedures apply at all times.
  - Students who fail to adhere to these guidelines may be excluded from specific activities or, in severe cases, might be required to be collected from the activity by their parents or guardians.

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**CHILD  
PROTECTION  
POLICY AND  
PROCEDURES**

## ABA Child Protection Policy Statement

ABA seeks to be a safe haven for all students. All staff employed at ABA must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse or neglect.

Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will be in accordance with Omani law and the child protection procedures resulting from this policy statement. The ABA administration shall be responsible for ensuring that screening and criminal background checks for staff are provided.

To ensure common understanding of disclosures, incidents, or observations that may be managed under the Child Protection Policy, guidelines for understanding abuse and neglect are outlined in the section below. Definitions of abuse may vary across cultures according to common child-rearing practices, gender role and responsibilities, and overall expectations of children. ABA is committed to ensuring that every student in the community is safe from harm and to working together with families to promote positive and respectful interactions.

### Child Protection Concerns: Identification Guidelines

Forms of Abuse	Definition	Common Signs and Behaviour Indicators
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	Injury resulting from a caregiver or adult in charge physically harming a child or failing to adequately supervise a child. This may involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, hair pulling or otherwise causing intentional physical pain (these symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as cutting and suicidal ideation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts</li> <li>- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries or refusal to discuss injuries</li> <li>- Injuries that have not received medical attention</li> <li>- Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.</li> <li>- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains</li> <li>- Withdrawal from physical contact</li> <li>- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted</li> <li>- Showing wariness or distrust of adults</li> <li>- Being aggressive towards others</li> <li>- Being very passive and compliant</li> <li>- Chronic running away</li> </ul>

<b>Emotional abuse</b>	<p>Persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve: conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; that they are inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children; causing children frequently to feel frightened; or the exploitation or corruption of children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed</li> <li>- Highly anxious</li> <li>- Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder</li> <li>- Fear of new situations</li> <li>- Low self-esteem</li> <li>- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations</li> <li>- Extremes of passivity or aggression</li> <li>- Drug or alcohol abuse</li> <li>- Chronic running away</li> <li>- Compulsive stealing</li> <li>- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration</li> <li>- Attention-seeking behaviour</li> <li>- Persistent tiredness</li> <li>- Lying</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	<p>Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Children involved in commercial sex work are victims of sexual abuse, whether they perceive themselves as victims or not.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pain or irritation to the genital area</li> <li>- Vaginal or penile discharge</li> <li>- Difficulty with urination</li> <li>- Infection, bleeding, and/or STDs</li> <li>- Regressive behaviours, ex: bed-wetting or stranger anxiety</li> <li>- Excessive masturbation</li> <li>- Sexually provocative or curious</li> <li>- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting</li> <li>- Being unusually quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive</li> <li>- Suffering from what seem to be physical ailments that can't be explained medically</li> <li>- Showing fear or distrust of a particular adult</li> <li>- Mentioning receiving special attention from an adult or a new "secret" friendship with an adult or youth</li> <li>- Refusal to continue with school or usual social activities</li> <li>- Age inappropriate sexualized behaviour or language</li> </ul>
<b>Neglect and Negligent Treatment</b>	<p>Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frequent unexplained lateness and/ or absences from school</li> <li>- Poor personal cleanliness / hygiene</li> <li>- Lack of clothing or supplies to meet physical needs</li> <li>- Hoarding, stealing, or asking others for food</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caregivers can not be reached in cases of emergency</li> <li>- Lack of appropriate attention for medical, dental or psychological problems or lack of necessary follow-up care</li> <li>- Discussing that there is no one at home to provide care</li> <li>- Frequent destructive, risk-taking or attention-seeking behaviour</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grooming</b></p>	<p>Predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer. Young people are often 'groomed' before they are sexually abused. At first, they may be tricked into thinking they are in a safe and normal relationship so they may not know it's happening or may feel they have no choice but to be abused. It may be hard to identify when someone is being groomed until after they have been sexually abused, because grooming behaviour can sometimes look like 'normal' caring behaviour, however, this is not always the case.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving gifts or special attention to a child or their parent/ carer, making the young person feel special and/or indebted to an adult.</li> <li>- Making close physical contact sexual, such as inappropriate tickling and wrestling/play fighting.</li> <li>- Openly or pretending to accidentally expose the victim to nudity, sexual material and sexual acts (this in itself is classified as child sexual abuse but can also be a precursor to physical sexual assault).</li> <li>- Controlling a child through threats, force or use of authority making the child fearful to report unwanted behaviour.</li> <li>- Groomers may rely on mobile phones, social media and the internet to interact with children in inappropriate ways and will often ask the child to keep their relationship a secret. The grooming process may continue for months before the offender arranges a physical meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Signs of offenders (students)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unusual interest in sex, sexualizing inanimate objects and activities</li> <li>- Does not stop sexual misbehaviour when told to stop</li> <li>- Uses force and coercion in social situations</li> <li>- Unusual intensity when discussing sex and sexuality</li> <li>- Socializes with children much younger</li> <li>- Gives gifts, requires secrecy in relationships</li> </ul> <p><b>Signs of offenders (adults)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has "favorite" student or child</li> <li>- Attempts to find ways to be alone with children</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inappropriate language, jokes and discussions about students/children</li> <li>- Sexualized talk in the presence of students/children</li> <li>- Gives private gifts or has private chats on Facebook/internet</li> </ul>
<b>Identity-Based Harm</b>	<p>Any targeted harmful behaviour motivated by prejudice. For children and teens, this may involve calling someone names or humiliating them using racially offensive language, making fun of someone's religious customs or traditions, sending racially insulting messages or threats, making fun of someone's accent, clothes, the food they eat etc, excluding someone because of their ethnicity, and creating offensive graffiti or displaying racist symbols.</p> <p>More detailed information on ABA's Identify-Based Harm policy and procedure is included below.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negative attitude towards body image or ethnic identity relating to skin tone, hair texture, or the size and shape of facial and bodily features</li> <li>- Continuously low mood or depression</li> <li>- Refusal to attend school or social events with peers</li> <li>- Discussing or asking for more information about developmentally unusual language like racial and prejudicial slurs</li> <li>- Unexplained changes to sleeping or eating habits</li> <li>- Feeling worried or anxious about socializing with peers</li> <li>- Experiencing flashbacks or intrusive thoughts about a traumatic incident or social interaction</li> </ul>

**Mutual Respect Policy**

Accusations of peer-on-peer abuse, including forms of bullying, are taken seriously at ABA. Parents and students should become familiar with ABA's mutual respect policy and what to do in the event of a child being a victim of peer on peer abuse. Procedures are also clearly outlined in the ABA Behaviour policy.

ABA is committed to promoting positive behaviour between students and providing safe spaces for students and families to report incidents of peer-on-peer abuse, including bullying. This philosophy is embedded in the curriculum across the whole school, where students are equipped with knowledge and skills to recognize peer-on-peer abuse, advocate for themselves and others while being safe and respectful, and report to trusted adults in the ABA faculty and staff community. Reports can be made in private face-to-face,

in writing via email or seesaw, or through the student portal wellbeing link. All reports will be followed up promptly, sensitively, and effectively.

When planning follow-up actions to confirmed cases of child-on-child abuse, many important considerations must be made to create an individualized plan relevant to each case. As an inclusive and proactive school, ABA does not apply a standardized policy for disciplinary responses to instances of peer on peer abuse as each case is treated with detail for its unique circumstances. Follow-up actions may vary depending on the severity of the case, the developmental age of the children, and the frequency of incidents involving a child. ABA’s Child Protection curriculum *Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum (KS:CPC)* emphasizes the importance of student voice in this process, where specific value is placed on ensuring that children’s wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining next steps and possible disciplinary actions.

Follow-up actions and disciplinary measures provided to an ABA student are confidential in nature between the relevant members of the safeguarding team, the child, and their immediate family members. ABA is committed to prioritizing the dignity of every child, including those who may have caused harm, under the philosophy that the school is a place for every individual to feel safe and be provided support in growing and learning together. Public admittances of guilt and large-scale apologies following an incident are not in line with the fundamental values of ABA. Instead, research-based restorative practices emphasize the importance of children engaging in reflective work, taking accountability for their actions, and creating a reparation plan to heal relationships with peers.

Forms of Peer-on-Peer Abuse	Definition	Examples
<b>Bullying</b>	<p>Unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. The bully intends to hurt, embarrass, or intimidate the victim.</p> <p>When dealing with students on an issue of bullying or cyberbullying, the following questions are a good basis to ascertain whether or not bullying is taking place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is it a deliberate action?</li> <li>● Is it unfair?</li> <li>● Is it repeated over time?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical Bullying</b> may include repeated incidents of the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, tripping, slapping, spitting.</li> <li>- Throwing objects</li> <li>- Physically stopping someone from doing something</li> <li>- Damaging someone’s property</li> </ul> <p><b>Emotional Bullying</b> may include repeated incidents of the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Humiliating another student</li> <li>- Making nasty or threatening comments</li> </ul>

	<p>If all three indicators above are present in an incident, then it can be termed as bullying.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spreading rumours/talking about others behind their back</li> <li>- Stealing someone’s property</li> <li>- name-calling, slurs (See Identity-Based Harm below)</li> <li>- Excluding an individual and/or persuading others to exclude another pupil</li> <li>- Intentionally hurting someone’s feelings</li> <li>- Ganging up against another student</li> </ul>
<b>CyberBullying</b>	<p>Interactions in which one person or a group of people aim to repeatedly threaten, tease, or embarrass someone else by utilizing forms of technology and/or social media.</p> <p>See more information on cyberbullying signs and prevention strategies in Appendix I.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Text messaging bullying</li> <li>- Picture/video-clip via mobile phone cameras</li> <li>- Phone call bullying via mobile phones</li> <li>- Email Bullying</li> <li>- Chat-room Bullying or through instant messaging (IM)</li> <li>- Bullying via websites</li> <li>- Requesting and sharing youth produced sexual imagery</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship Abuse</b>	<p>Repeated acts or threats of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse perpetrated by an adolescent or teen against a current or former partner.</p> <p>Children who are harmed and children who harm should both be treated as children who may have care and support needs, and professionals should bear in mind that a child may be a perpetrator and also a victim of violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insults</li> <li>- Coercion</li> <li>- Social sabotage</li> <li>- Sexual harassment</li> <li>- Threats</li> <li>- Acts of physical or sexual abuse</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment</b>	<p>Sexual violence refers to sexual offences, which include rape, sexual assault, and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.</p> <p>Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature occurring between students</p>	<p><b>Sexual assault</b> covers a very wide range of behaviour, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- kissing someone without consent, or touching someone’s bottom /breasts /genitalia without consent</li> <li>- forcing someone to remove their clothing, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party</li> </ul>

	<p>face-to-face and/or online. This behaviour may violate a child's dignity, be intimidating and humiliating, and create a developmentally inappropriate hostile sexualised environment.</p> <p>It is important to note that young people who display harmful or developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour may have previously experienced harm from somebody else and often need help themselves.</p>	<p><b>Sexual harassment</b> includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sexual stories, jokes or comments about another person's clothing or appearance;</li> <li>- Physical behaviour such as intentionally brushing against someone, or interfering with someone's clothes</li> <li>- Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature</li> <li>- Sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos</li> <li>- Sharing of unwanted explicit content</li> <li>- Sexual comments and messages on social media</li> <li>- Sexual exploitation, coercion and/ or threats.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Initiation/ Hazing Violence and Rituals</b></p>	<p>Any humiliating, degrading, isolating, or dangerous activity expected of an individual in order to join a group, regardless of their willingness to participate. These challenges may include acts of servitude, periods of isolation, deprivation of certain privileges, or public humiliation. More extreme cases may include harmful behaviours such as coerced consumption of illegal substances or nonfood items, physical abuse, and other dangerous or illegal activities.</p> <p>Hazing or initiation acts are typically enforced by older or more seasoned members of a group as a rite of passage for new members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Describes engaging in activities with friends that would meet the definition of hazing, but refers to them as "traditions" or "initiations."</li> <li>- Chronic fatigue</li> <li>- Unusual photos or statements posted on social media</li> <li>- Changes in behaviour and communication that may correspond with the timing of a person becoming involved with a new friend group or an organization</li> <li>- Only associating with certain people</li> </ul>

**Identity-Based Harm**

**Definition of Identity-Based Harm:** Any targeted harmful behaviour motivated by prejudice based on an individual's identity markers such as race, color, ethnicity, caste, religion, gender identity, national origin, citizenship status, socioeconomic status, age, language, or ability. Such behaviour may include, but is not limited to, microaggressions, hate speech, online harassment, peer-on-peer abuse, physical violence, and social exclusion.

ABA recognizes that research indicates that marginalized identities are at particular risk for identity-based harm and are at higher risk of being targeted for sexual abuse. ABA is committed to ensuring clear systems of safety and support are in place to protect those who are most vulnerable to abuse. This is done by implementing responsive policies and proactive educational opportunities (see Appendix A) for students in order to prevent, interrupt, and correct identity-based harm. ABA also provides staff development training and resources on how to recognize and respond to identity-based harm.

ABA's response and procedures in cases of identity-based harm will be subject to the discretion of the Safeguarding team and will vary depending on severity, frequency, and developmental age of the children. Identity-based harm concerns may follow the peer-on-peer abuse procedures detailed above, or may be addressed using trauma-informed restorative practices when appropriate (See ABA Behaviour Policy). A restorative approach is intended to maintain agency and dignity for the person who is targeted, as well as to build responsibility and accountability for the person who has committed the harm. Restorative practices, as compared with exclusionary discipline, are intended to build community, strengthen relationships, repair harm, and build equity within our school.

## Threat to Life and Well-Being

Terminology	Definition	Common Signs and Behaviour Indicators
<b>Suicide</b>	Death caused by self-directed injurious behaviour with any intent to die as a result of the behaviour. If a student at ABA loses their life due to suicide, the School Crisis Team will plan a response	Warning signs of suicide in children and teens may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking about suicide or wanting to die or disappear.</li> <li>- Talking, writing, or drawing about death.</li> </ul>

	<p>for communication and support for the community.</p> <p>It is important to note that individuals who have attempted suicide before are very likely to try again. Those who have a history of self-harming are also at a higher risk of suicide.</p> <p>Stress may also contribute to suicide. This may be a singular overwhelming and immediate experience, or it may build up throughout a sustained period of time.</p> <p>Stressful circumstances that may contribute to or trigger a suicide attempt can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loss of an important person through death or divorce</li> <li>- incest or child abuse</li> <li>- bullying at school</li> <li>- A sense of failure at school</li> <li>- A sense of failure in relationships</li> <li>- A relationship break-up</li> <li>- The recent suicide of a friend or relative, or an anniversary of a suicide or the death of someone close to them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving away belongings.</li> <li>- Withdrawing from friends and family.</li> <li>- Being angry or hostile.</li> <li>- Engaging in risk-taking behaviour</li> <li>- Using alcohol or drugs.</li> <li>- Having changes in eating or sleeping patterns, such as eating less or sleeping more than usual.</li> <li>- talking or writing about death or about feeling trapped with no way out</li> <li>- feeling hopeless and withdrawing from family, friends and the community</li> <li>- increasing drug and alcohol use</li> <li>- Searching for and trying to obtain weapons, drugs, or other means ways to take their own life</li> <li>- Giving away personal possessions</li> <li>- Having delusions or hallucinations</li> <li>- Regularly engaging in self-harm</li> <li>- Significant change in mood.</li> </ul>
<b>Suicidal ideation</b>	<p>Thinking about, considering, or planning for self-injurious behaviour may result in death. A desire to be dead without a plan or intent to end one's life is still considered suicidal ideation and should be taken seriously. School response as per disclosure process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thinking, writing, drawing or talking about suicide, death, dying or the afterlife</li> <li>- Suggesting that others, such as parents or family, would be better off without them or better off if they weren't there</li> <li>- Talking about not being around in the future or "going away"</li> <li>- Doing online searches for suicide-related topics</li> </ul>
<b>Self-harm</b>	<p>A broad term that can be used to describe the various things that young people do to hurt themselves physically. It includes cutting or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unexplained cuts, bruises or burns, often on their wrists, arms, thighs and chest</li> </ul>

	<p>scratching the skin, burning/branding with cigarettes/lighters, scalding, an overdose of tablets or other toxins, tying ligatures around the neck, punching oneself or other surfaces, banging limbs/head and hair-pulling (Mental Health Foundation, 2006). School response is as per the disclosure process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consistently wearing long sleeves, and trousers or tights, even in hot weather</li> <li>- Refusing to get changed in areas where there will be other people, for example after PE or sports activities</li> <li>- Refusal to participate in athletic activities that require clothing that show their arms or legs, for example swimming or team sports with a t-shirt jersey</li> <li>- Recent hair loss or balding areas may indicate that a child has been pulling their hair out</li> </ul>
<p><b>Eating Disorders</b></p>	<p>Persistent eating behaviours that negatively impact a child’s health, emotions and / or ability to function in important areas of life. Most cases of disordered eating issues initiate from a focus on weight and body shape, leading to dangerous eating behaviours. These behaviours can significantly impact the body's ability to get appropriate nutrition. Eating disorders can harm the heart, digestive system, bones, and teeth and mouth, and lead to other diseases.</p> <p>The most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aversion to tastes or textures</li> <li>- Tantrums, especially during meal times or celebrations involving food</li> <li>- Excessive bowel movements</li> <li>- worry about body image</li> <li>- refraining from eating</li> <li>- reducing food portions</li> <li>- weight loss</li> <li>- lack of growth</li> <li>- thinning of hair</li> <li>- delay of puberty</li> <li>- constipation or digestion problems</li> <li>- hiding or hoarding food</li> <li>- fine hair growth on the body</li> </ul>
<p><b>Substance Abuse</b></p>	<p>Engaging in illicit substance use and abuse, such as alcohol, marijuana, or inhalants.</p> <p>Common risk factors for adolescent substance abuse include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A family history of substance abuse.</li> <li>- A mental or behavioural health condition, such as depression, anxiety or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unusually clumsy: stumbling, lacking coordination, poor balance</li> <li>- Periods of sleeplessness or high energy, followed by long periods of “catch up” sleep</li> <li>- Deceitful or secretive</li> <li>- Unable to focus</li> <li>- A sudden loss of inhibitions</li> <li>- Hyperactive or unusually elated</li> <li>- Secretive with the use of their phone</li> </ul>

	<p>attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impulsive or risk-taking behaviour.</li> <li>- A history of traumatic events, such as seeing or being in a car accident or experiencing abuse.</li> <li>- Low self-esteem or feelings of social rejection, seeking ways to feel included in a group of peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uses chewing gum or mints to cover up breath</li> <li>- Often uses over-the-counter preparations to reduce eye reddening or nasal irritation</li> <li>- Frequently asking for money</li> <li>- Stealing</li> <li>- Locking bedroom doors</li> </ul>
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For students who are observed or have disclosed suicidal ideation or significant mental health concerns, the school will assess the level of risk and provide ongoing support to support their safety and well-being. This may include conditions and/or restrictions for returning to school and participating in school-organized trips.

Crisis response team - Guidelines in the event of attempted suicide, suicide or trauma, on or off-campus. [Link to Toolkit for Schools: After a Suicide](#)

Crisis Response Team Members:

- Head of School
- ES Principal
- MS Principal
- HS Principal
- School Nurse
- Director of Human Resources
- EA to Head of School (minutes)

**Steps the Crisis Response Team will take following a report of attempted suicide, suicide or trauma:**

- Mobilize the crisis team - confirm the incident
- Assess the safety and security of students, faculty, support staff
- Gather all relevant information - document the facts
- Communicate as appropriate with various groups in the school community
- Provide resources to support members of the community
- Maintain an environment focused on normal educational activities
- Identify media accounts that may need monitoring and monitor peer reactions
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**Custody Disputes and Communication Protocols**

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At ABA Oman International School, our primary responsibility is to safeguard the safety, dignity, and well-being of every student. As an international school, we occasionally encounter complex family situations such as custody disputes or disagreements over access and decision-making.

It is important to note that ABA is not a legal authority and cannot interpret or enforce parental disputes. In such cases, we will seek legal guidance and act cautiously and in the best interests of the student.

When there is disagreement between parents or guardians, we require **official legal documentation** (e.g. custody orders or access agreements) before making changes to communication, access, or decision-making rights. In the absence of such documentation, ABA will continue to treat both listed guardians equally. This ensures we remain neutral and legally compliant.

If a student expresses concern or distress related to family conflict, this will be documented and reviewed sensitively by the Safeguarding team, and external support may be sought if appropriate.

Requests to withhold information from a parent must also be supported by legal documents. Until such evidence is provided, both parents listed in our records will receive regular school communications.

We encourage open dialogue and are willing to involve legal counsel to support resolution when needed. Our decisions are guided by documentation—not declarations—and always prioritize the student's best interests.

## Definition of Terms

**Safeguarding** refers to the policies and practices that organizations implement and follow to ensure children and adults are safe and promote their well-being. This can cover things such as recruitment of staff, recognising the signs of abuse, and ensuring that all staff are aware of legislation and safe practices.

Safeguarding is not to be confused with child protection. Child protection is what is in place to protect children who have already experienced harm, abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, or have otherwise been harmed. Safeguarding is to prevent harm; child protection is how we respond to harm.

**Child Protection** is a broad term used to describe philosophies, policies,

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standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In this document, the term “child protection” applies to the protection of children in international schools. **Please note that this definition also includes harm to self.**

**Child Protection Policy** is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to protecting students from harm (to self and from others) and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of students. It serves to create a safe and positive environment for children and to demonstrate that the school is taking its duty and responsibility seriously. This handbook considers that schools will provide appropriate child safety classes supported with a well-defined curriculum to increase children’s ability to understand abuse prevention.

**Child protection concerns** include suspected, alleged, self-disclosed, or witnessed abuse of a child by anyone associated within or outside the school which must be investigated and followed by appropriate action.

**Child Abuse** According to the World Health Organization, child abuse constitutes “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

## Acknowledgements

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- **Association for the Advancement of International Education:** Child Protection School Evaluation
- **Association of International Schools in Africa:** Child Protection Handbook for Teachers, Administrators, and Board Members.
- **Council for International Schools (CIS):** Child Protection Workshop
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

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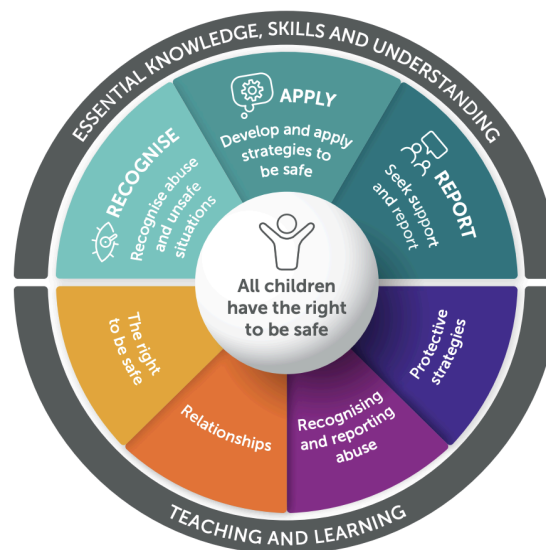
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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A - Whole School Child Protection Curriculum Overview Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum

'All children have the right to be safe' is at the centre of the KS:CPC. Through the teaching and learning across 4 focus areas, children and young people develop the essential knowledge, skills and understanding in an age appropriate way to recognise abuse and unsafe situations, develop and apply strategies to be safe and to seek support and report to a trusted source.



## Appendix B - Calendar of Safeguarding Activities for Parents and Faculty

Audience	August	September/October
Parent Information	<p>Parent-Child Protection letter for signature included in the start of year school information pack. Advise of parent information session in September</p> <p>Board of Directors and Parent-Teacher Association in-house safeguarding training with the DSL</p>	<p>September 2024: Parent information morning with the counseling team: intro to CP, common language, curriculum overview, reporting procedure. All parents invited to attend CP information session- revisit of previous information and targeted at parents new to ABA.</p>
Faculty Information	<p>August PD days. CP expectations, policies and procedures at ABA led by DSL, including: briefing on disclosure/suspicion and reporting procedures.</p> <p>Ensure access and signed</p>	

	<p>acknowledgement of the Safeguarding Handbook.</p> <p>All faculty and staff complete Educare (<a href="https://www.educare.co.uk/">https://www.educare.co.uk/</a>) online Child Protection for International Schools (Level 2) training course</p> <p>Returning staff complete Educare (<a href="https://www.educare.co.uk/">https://www.educare.co.uk/</a>) online selection of one (or more) courses relevant to their role at ABA.</p> <p>Sectional sessions led by Counselors on KS:CPC lessons for Homeroom teachers, Homeroom advisors and Student Life Teachers.</p>	
Student Information		October 2024: Child Protection Lessons for all students K3-Gr 12 (following parent information sessions)

## Appendix C - Myths vs Facts: Child abuse and Neglect in International Schools

**Myth:** *Child abuse is carried out by strangers.*

**Fact:** Research indicates that 90% of abuse is from domestic causes and is committed by individuals known to the child. International school communities tend to have families that move often and are separated from their extended families in their home-of-record. When abuse is within the family, the transient lifestyle then increases the risk to international school students who tend not to have access to outside resources, and therefore cannot get help.

**Myth:** *Learning about child protection is harmful to your children.*

**Fact:** Research indicates that developmentally appropriate education makes children more confident and able to react to dangerous situations. Teaching using a specific population context increases protective behaviour.

**Myth:** *Abuse education is sex education.*

**Fact:** Research-based programs prepare students to develop the skills and attitudes to keep themselves safe from perpetrators, and behaviours that include bullying, harassment and other forms of exploitation.

**Myth:** *Abuse is a matter of culture; physical or sexual abuse falls within the norms of some cultures*

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*and is acceptable.*

**Fact:** The reality is that there is no excuse for child abuse! No culture supports harming children.

**Myth:** *Child abuse is a result of poverty and happens in low socioeconomic circumstances.*

**Fact:** Research indicates that child abuse occurs in all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural sectors of society. A common characteristic of an abusive family is isolation, such as that commonly found in our international school families who move often or are separated from their extended families at home.

**Myth:** *International Schools do not have to report abuse to local authorities.*

**Fact:** International schools are bound by the laws of the host country and as such international schools must be knowledgeable and compliant with the child protection laws in their locale. Furthermore, international schools are legally and ethically liable for any violation of existing laws related to reporting of cases of abuse or neglect; there are cases now pending where schools are facing legal action regarding non-compliance.

## Appendix D - Safeguarding Employee and Volunteer Code of Conduct

ABA is committed to the safety and protection of children. This Code of Conduct applies to all faculty, staff, employees, volunteers and students who represent the school and who interact with children or young people in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity. As a measure of prevention and of setting clear expectations this is to be agreed to and signed by all school personnel and all volunteers who are part of the school community.

The public and private conduct of faculty, staff, employees, students, and volunteers acting on behalf of ABA can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact or can cause great harm if inappropriate. We must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work.

All ABA employees are required to report any disclosures or suspicions of abuse towards children using the ABA Child Protection Reporting Procedures and will be protected from victimization, prejudice, and/or disadvantage when reports are made in good faith.

We should be aware of our own and other persons' vulnerability, especially when working alone with children and youth and be particularly aware that we are responsible for maintaining physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in such interactions. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviours with those for whom we have responsibility. This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses. We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially children and youth, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration. ABA personnel and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child.

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One-on-one meetings with a child or young person are best held in a public area; in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed, or in a room with the door left open. When this is not possible, another staff member or supervisor must be notified about the meeting.

ABA is a smoke-free campus. Faculty, staff, employees, and volunteers should refrain from the illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs at all times, and from the use of tobacco products, alcohol and/or drugs when working with children. Adults should never buy alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, videos, or reading material that is inappropriate and give it to young people. Staff members and volunteers should not accept gifts from, or give gifts to children without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.

Any form of online communications including social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and text messaging between faculty, staff, or volunteers and individual students is prohibited. Email exchanges between a student and a person acting on behalf of the school are to be made using a school email address. Electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.

Sample behaviour practices that will protect teachers from false allegations:

- Avoid situations in which you are alone with a child. This includes not transporting youngsters alone in your car. When it is necessary to speak privately with a child, find a space out of earshot, but within sight of others for your conference.
- The privacy of children in situations such as toileting, showering and changing clothes should be respected. When necessary to supervise children, at least two adults should be present and intrude only to the extent that the health and safety of the children require. Cameras, phones, and recording devices should never be taken into bathroom and/or changing room areas.
- If adult intervention is required in a case where a student is in a bathroom with the door closed, the adult will knock first to inform students of their need to enter. For bathrooms designated to grades older than Early Childhood, adults will only enter bathrooms of the same gender and will inform a colleague nearby.
- Avoid touching areas that are normally covered by swimming suits; breasts, buttocks, and groin. When hugging is appropriate, hug from the side over the shoulders, not from the front.
- Sexual jokes, comments of a sexual nature, kissing, sensual massages or sexual gestures are not appropriate behaviour for an adult staff member or volunteer.
- When volunteering to supervise overnight activities, adults should not share sleeping quarters with children other than their own.

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- Revealing personal information about one's sex life by an adult volunteer or staff member is never appropriate.
  - Do not use corporal punishment in any form.
  - It is the adult's responsibility to set and respect boundaries. When a child attempts to involve an adult in inappropriate behaviour, the adult must reject the overture.

## **Appendix E - Employee and Volunteers Acknowledgement of the Safeguarding Handbook (completed annually)**

**Full Name:**

**Division/Section:**

**Email Address:**

### **Statement of Acknowledgement of Faculty Code of Conduct for signature**

I agree to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth participating in ABA programs.

#### **I will:**

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Never be alone with children and/or youth at school activities without another adult being notified.
- Wear identifying lanyards at all times while on school premises.
- Document student activities and events using a school owned device whenever possible. If photos and/or videos are taken on my personal devices, all data will be uploaded to an ABA owned storage system within 24 hours and then deleted off any personal device.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children – when necessary – only in ways that are appropriate, public, and non-sexual.
- Comply with the mandatory reporting regulations of ABA and with the ABA Safeguarding procedures to report suspected child abuse and low-level concerns.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

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- Ensure that parents/guardians of students in my care have notified either myself or the registrar if they intend to travel and will be away from their child. Contact information for the individual caring for the child during parent absence must be provided in case of emergency or support required for the child.

- Maintain the highest level of confidentiality during child protection cases and when reporting low-level concerns.

### **Statement of Acknowledgement of Faculty Code of Conduct for signature**

I agree to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth participating in ABA programs.

#### **I will refrain from:**

- Touching or speaking to a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Inflicting physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping or humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading children
- Using/possessing alcohol, illegal drugs or tobacco products while working with children and/or youth.
- Giving a child a ride home alone (except for emergency situations with parent consent).
- Accepting gifts from or giving gifts to children or youth without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- Engaging in private communication with children via text messaging, email, Facebook, Twitter or similar forms of electronic or social media.
- Posting information or imagery that is school or students on personal social media accounts.
- Utilizing designated student bathrooms on campus.
- Using profanity in the presence of children.
- Demonstrating demeaning, harassment, or bullying behaviour with my colleagues, including unwelcome sexual advances or communication.

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## Appendix F -Parent Commitment Form Policy 7.6.3

ABA seeks to be a safe haven for all our students. Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures derived from this policy will be stated in an ABA Safeguarding Handbook. This handbook will be communicated to all who work with ABA students.

All staff employed at ABA must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse or neglect.

Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will be in accordance with Omani law and the child protection procedures resulting from this policy statement. The ABA administration shall be responsible for ensuring that screening and criminal background checks for staff are provided.

### **Parent commitment**

We acknowledge that by enrolling our children at ABA, we understand and commit to upholding rights and protecting all children. We also recognize the importance of these values in the education of our children and agree to reinforce these values at home.

I / We undertake to:

- Support the ABA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and procedures included in the Safeguarding Handbook which is located within the Safeguarding tab on the ABA website.
- Be present in Muscat, and if we must leave, arrange a caretaker for our child/children, and inform the school of those arrangements, including emergency contact information, to the ABA Main Office. This caretaker must be able to serve in the capacity of in loco parentis, with full authority to make parental decisions to ensure appropriate supervision and to respond to a medical emergency.
- Share in the responsibility to bring forth information that supports the ABA Child Protection Policy with respect to the “Child Protection Disclosure Flowchart” found in the Safeguarding Handbook.

ABA Safeguarding Child Protection policies work for the child, for the family, and for our community. Research indicates that international communities are as prone to child abuse as communities in their home country. Child abuse is a multi-faceted issue that involves the dynamics of the child, the family, and the community. ABA Safeguarding Child Protection policies works to respond at all three levels.

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## Appendix G - Parent Acknowledgement of the Safeguarding Handbook (completed annually)

**Full Names of Parents/ Legal Guardians:**

**Contact Number:**

**Alternative Contact Number:**

**Email Address:**

**Please Specify the Name and Grade of your Child(ren) Currently Attending ABA:**

**I have read, understood and accept the following rules, concepts, procedures and policies as stated in the ABA Safeguarding Handbook:**

- ABA Statement on Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Safe Recruitment Policy
- Parent Volunteer Safeguarding Requirements
- Confidentiality and Duty to Report
- Identifying Employees, Volunteers, Parents, and Visitors
- Safeguarding Employee and Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Visitors Safeguarding Agreement
- Parent Absentee notification to school
- Field Trips, Excursions, Hotel and Home Stays
- ABA Child Protection Policy Statement
- Parent Commitment Form Policy 7.6.3
- Sultanate of Oman Child Protection Information
- ABA Responsible IT Use Guidelines
- Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum FC-12

**ABA Security Protocols:**

- I acknowledge, understand and commit to follow ABA Security Protocols as described above.

## Appendix H - Visitors Safeguarding Information



ABA seeks to be a safe haven for every member of our community by implementing a high standard of best practice for safeguarding and child protection on our campus. Our commitment to safeguarding in our international school environment is reflected in the whole-school strategic goals, which detail the purposeful and measurable actions taken to address the philosophies stated in our Mission, Vision, and Values. For further information on this, please view the safeguarding policies and procedures outlined in the ABA safeguarding handbook.

ABA requires all visitors on campus to acknowledge and adhere to the following safeguarding expectations:

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration.
- Wear your identifying visitors' lanyards at all times while on school premises.
- Adults do not use students' bathrooms. Adult designated bathrooms are labelled around the campus.
- Visitors are not permitted to capture photos or videos of any individuals on campus or of student work.
- Visitors are limited to use only spaces related to their respective visit/ work and are required to maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times with students.
- Never use/possess alcohol, illegal drugs, vape and/or tobacco products while on campus.

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- Use appropriate and positive language when in the presence of children and never use criticism, sexual language, and/or profanity.
  - Comply with the mandatory reporting regulations of ABA and with the ABA Safeguarding procedures to report suspected child abuse and low-level concerns.
  - Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children.

## Appendix I - ABA Responsible IT Use Guidelines

ABA teachers and administration believe that providing internet access through ABA network for users'

personal electronic devices will enhance the educational experience for ABA students. For this reason, ABA has set up a wireless network.

1. **Acceptable Devices.** Users may access the wireless network with any approved device. Users may only access the network with devices that are their own personal property or school-owned.
2. **Personal Responsibility.** The school assumes no responsibility for the loss of, theft of or damage to any personal device that a user brings to ABA or any information on that device.
3. **Security.** Users shall not impair the security of the network. This expectation includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Users are expected to maintain up to date antivirus and antispyware protection on all devices that are connected to the wireless network. Devices without up to date security programs may be denied access to the network.
  - b. Users are expected to safeguard all network passwords. Users should not share network passwords with others and should change passwords frequently. Users are expected to notify an administrator immediately if they believe their account has been compromised. Users are expected to log onto the wireless network only with their account and not to allow others to use their account or to use the accounts of others.
4. **Limited IT Support.** Users are responsible for setting up and maintaining personal devices that they connect to the network. IT support for user-owned devices may be sought to deal with wireless connectivity issues.
5. **Authorized Use.** Secondary students may use the wireless network when they are not in class. Students may not use the wireless network in class unless authorized by the teacher of that class.
6. **Inappropriate Use.** The wireless network is a shared and limited resource and all users have an obligation to use that resource responsibly. Users are provided access to the wireless network for educational purposes. Incidental personal use of the network is acceptable outside class for secondary students, but users should not use the network for personal activities that consume significant network bandwidth

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or for activities that violate school policy or local or international law. These include but are not limited to:

- a. Online gaming unless approved by a teacher.
  - b. Downloading software, music, movies or other content in violation of licensing requirements, copyright or other intellectual property rights.
  - c. Downloading, viewing or sharing inappropriate content, including pornographic, defamatory or otherwise offensive material.
  - d. Conducting any activity that is in violation of school policy or local, or international law.
  - e. Participating in political activities.
  - f. Conducting for-profit business unless authorized by the school administration.
  - g. Using hacking tools on the network or intentionally introducing malicious code into the School's network.
  - h. Using any software or proxy service such as VPNs to obscure either the student's IP address or the sites that the student visits.
  - i. Using peer-to-peer/torrent programs.
  - j. Disabling, bypassing, or attempting to disable or bypass any system monitoring, filtering or other security measures.
  - k. Accessing or attempting to access material or systems on the network that the student is not authorized to access.
7. **No Expectation of Privacy.** The School can and does monitor internet access and activity on the School's network, including but not limited to sites visited, content viewed and an email sent and received. The School may examine a student's personal device and search its contents if there is a reason to believe that school policies, regulations, or guidelines regarding access to the network or use of the device have been violated.
  8. **Disruptive Activity.** Users should not intentionally interfere with the performance of the School's wireless and wired network.
  9. **Unauthorized Networks.** Users may not create unauthorized wireless networks to access ABA's wireless network. This includes establishing wireless access points, wireless routers and open networks on personal devices.
  10. **No Use of Wired Networks.** Students may use only the ABA student wireless network for personal devices. They may not attach personal devices to the wired network.
  11. **Consequences of Inappropriate Use.** Students who misuse ABA's student wireless network will be subject to discipline which may include loss of access to student wireless or all internet access and/or other appropriate disciplinary or legal action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct

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## Appendix J - Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Ethical Guidelines

As artificial intelligence (AI) and digital content generation tools become increasingly accessible, ABA is committed to promoting the ethical and responsible use of such technologies. This commitment is closely tied to our existing Safeguarding, Behaviour, Responsible Use of Technology, and Whistleblowing Policies.

In the school context, AI refers to technologies capable of simulating human intelligence, including tools that generate images, text, video, and audio. While these tools offer exciting opportunities for learning and creativity, they can also pose safeguarding risks when used inappropriately.

Improper use of AI technologies can result in:

Deepfakes – digitally manipulated videos or audio clips that misrepresent individuals, potentially causing harm or reputational damage.

AI-Generated Student Images – the creation, modification, or distribution of student images without consent, which may lead to emotional distress or harassment.

Cyberbullying through AI – using AI tools (e.g., chatbots or automated messaging) to intimidate, harass, or deceive others.

Academic Misconduct – using AI to generate assignments or work in violation of academic honesty expectations.

### **Guiding Principles for Ethical AI Use at ABA**

- Obtain appropriate consent before creating or sharing digital content involving others.
- Do not create or disseminate content that is misleading, offensive, or harmful.
- Use AI tools for constructive, educational purposes aligned with school values.
- Maintain a respectful and responsible digital presence at all times.
- Follow age guidelines for specific AI tools (e.g. 13 years old to use Chat GPT)

All AI-related actions that cause harm, target others, or breach community expectations will be addressed under ABA's safeguarding and/or behaviour protocols.

## Appendix K - Further Information on Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying refers to interactions in which one person or a group of people aim to repeatedly threaten, tease, or embarrass someone else by utilizing forms of technology and/or social media.

### Cyberbullying Prevention Strategies for Families:

- Establish rules for interacting with people online or through any other form of technology.
- Identify problems that can be created when technology is misused.
- Protect passwords and personal information.
- Reinforce family values and expectations.
- Cultivate and maintain an open, candid line of communication.
- Recognize warning signs that something abnormal is occurring.

Warning Signs a Child May be a Victim of Cyberbullying if he or she...	Warning Signs a Child May be Cyberbullying Others if he or she.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unexpectedly stops using devices</li> <li>● Appears nervous or jumpy when an instant message is received, or phone message is received</li> <li>● Avoids answering his or her cell phone in front of you</li> <li>● Appears uneasy about going to school or outside in general</li> <li>● Appears to be angry, depressed, or frustrated after using the computer</li> <li>● Avoids discussions about what he or she is doing on the computer</li> <li>● Becomes abnormally withdrawn from usual friends and family members</li> <li>● Is being bullied at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Quickly switches screens when you walk by</li> <li>● Uses the computer at all hours of the night</li> <li>● Gets unusually upset if he or she cannot use the computer</li> <li>● Is using multiple online accounts or an account that is not his or her own</li> <li>● Laughs excessively while using the computer</li> <li>● Avoids discussions about what he or she is doing on the computer or becomes defensive</li> </ul>

What Should Students Do if They Witness Bullying or Cyberbullying?	What Should Students Do if They are Being Bullied or Cyberbullied?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Document what they see and when.</li> <li>● Don't encourage the behaviour.</li> <li>● Don't forward hurtful messages.</li> <li>● Don't laugh at inappropriate jokes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ignore minor teasing or name-calling.</li> <li>● Block messages from unknown people.</li> </ul>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't condone the act just to fit in.</li><li>• Don't silently allow it to continue.</li><li>• Stand up for the victim.</li><li>• Tell an adult they trust to support them.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't respond to the bully.</li><li>• Keep a log/journal of attacks.</li><li>• Keep all evidence of bullying.</li><li>• Talk to an adult they trust to support them.</li></ul> |
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## Appendix L - Sultanate of Oman Child Protection Information

Child Protection Hotline: 1100

Child Protection Department: 24182223

### **Convention on the Rights of the Child (Oman, 2016)**

The combined third and fourth periodic report of Oman under the Convention on the Rights of the Child can be read via the following link:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16945&LangID=E#sthash.p5u2AJU6.dpuf>

### **Corporal Punishment in Oman (2016)**

<http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/assets/pdfs/states-reports/Oman.pdf>

### **Access to justice for the child in Oman (2014)**

[https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/oman\\_access\\_to\\_justice.pdf](https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/oman_access_to_justice.pdf)