# COGNITA

# Safeguarding Policy

<u>Middle East Regional Policy</u>

Kuwait

United Arab Emirates

December 2024

**KEY FACTS:**

**Purpose:**

This document is part of a group of safeguarding policies & procedures intended to keep children, staff, other adults and the wider organisation of Cognita Middle East safe. This document outlines our commitment to Safeguarding and Child Protection. Cognita Middle East colleagues should also read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Process document and the Safeguarding Knowledge document.
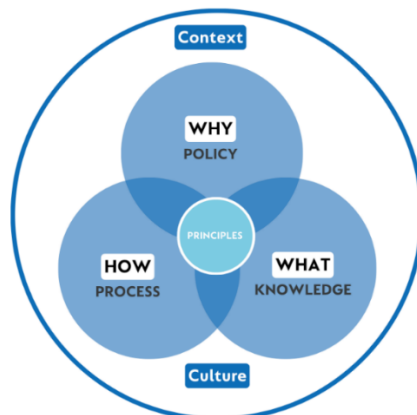


- WHY – Policy (this document)
  Our commitment and guiding principles to safeguarding.

- WHAT – Knowledge
  The knowledge we need to know to effectively engage with our safeguarding processes.

- HOW – Process
  The processes required to ensure effective safeguarding in our schools.

Whilst these areas provide the basis for our work, there are two other essential elements to consider: context and culture.

- Context
  Each school serves a distinctive community. Whilst there are universal principles and processes in safeguarding, an individual school community may also have specific contextual features that impact the safeguarding risks and considerations for children. These will in turn influence a school's approach to the implementation of policy.

- Culture
  School culture is the collection of values, expectations and practices that guide and inform the work of all members of a school community. Language, actions and behaviours tell you about the culture in a school. The safeguarding policy is important, but only when actively lived every day in the culture of the school. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility for every member of the school

community. Creating a strong safeguarding culture is essential to providing the most effective environment for children to thrive in all aspects of their development.

**Scope:**
This safeguarding policy and any referenced processes/documents apply to all children and adults in the school, including those in the Early Years.

This safeguarding policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, residential, pastoral, support, peripatetic, contract staff and ancillary staff, agency/supply staff, volunteers, non-school based Cognita staff and any other adults working at the school.

This safeguarding policy applies to all children and adults in the school, including when being educated off-site and undertaking an educational visit. It also applies to children who are on an exchange and being hosted by the school.

Please take the time to review this policy carefully.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with the Regional Safeguarding Lead.

This Policy aims to inform and guide our employees and Associated Persons about our safeguarding obligations. As a Group we are committed to providing the training and resources needed to support our employees in their understanding and compliance with this Policy.

Ian Wallace
Director of Education

## CONTENTS

## 1. Definitions

1.1 - Definition of safeguarding
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:
- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's physical and/or mental health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

1.2 - Definition of child protection
Child protection is defined for the purposes of this policy as:
- protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
- child protection is part of the safeguarding process
- each school will have child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

1.3 - Definition of child and children
Child(ren) is (are) defined for the purposes of this policy as:
- everyone aged 18 and under or those over the age of 18 who remain in full-time education.

## 2. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

In our school, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who encounters children and their families has a role to play. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, always, what is in the best interests of the child. No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who encounters them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

All staff have the following responsibilities:
- Contribute to providing a safe environment in which all children can learn and flourish
- Know what constitutes abuse and what to do if a child tells you that he or she is being abused, harmed, or neglected
- Know what to do if you are concerned about the behaviour or conduct of an adult in the school
- Manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality
- Refer any concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy DSL (DDSL) or in their absence the Regional Safeguarding Lead (RSL)
- Refer any safeguarding concern about the Principal to the Regional Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- Be aware of our child protection process and your role in it
- Read and understand this policy including all knowledge and procedure base documents

2.1 - Information sharing
Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Data protection does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe, provided it is shared in the proper manner in accordance with this policy. School staff should, therefore, be proactive in sharing information with the DSL as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to have child protection concerns. This includes the sharing of information by the DSL and Principal without parental consent where there is good reason to do so, i.e., the risk of harm to the child will be increased.

2.2 - Review
This policy is updated annually, drawing on feedback from staff, and is informed by the Group Policy Safeguarding Governance and Oversight. It is shared with all staff through the annual safeguarding declaration.

## 3. Commitment

We are committed to promoting the welfare of each child. It is our responsibility to ensure that all children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse and the right to feel safe. We create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive environment where each child may thrive and develop physically, socially, emotionally and academically.

Our principles of safeguarding are universal and apply to all Cognita schools. They have been developed by the Cognita Safeguarding Specialist Team and take account of the International Taskforce for Child Protection, the United Nations Rights of the Child and globally leading practice.

1. Everyone has a responsibility to support the protection of children.

2. Educate all staff in understanding the categories of abuse and the consequent duty of care they hold to notice any potential harm to children.

3. Empower all staff to act in the best interests of the child to protect them from harm or abuse and take appropriate actions if any concerns arise.

4. Know our children well and offer timely support to those who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, an adverse childhood experience.

5. Empower all children to be able to voice their opinion and to share their thoughts and beliefs within the safe environment of the school.

6. Educate and raise awareness in children of how to manage risk, identify harmful behaviours and seek help when needed.

7. Ensure that every adult who works with or for the school is safe to do so.

## 4. Governance

Governance is undertaken on behalf of the Cognita Board (Cognita Holdings Limited). Group-wide arrangements are in place and the Group Chief Education Officer holds responsibility for these arrangements. The above policy outlines clear lines of accountability and responsibility for all aspects of safeguarding. This is executed and reported in the following five ways:

School
- Reviews in individual schools by Independent Safeguarding Reviewer

Region
- Safeguarding reporting from each school to the regional team
- Regional Safeguarding Assurance Board Meetings

Group
- Regional Mid-Year safeguarding 'check-in' session
- Regional Annual Safeguarding Report and Annual Safeguarding Governance Meeting

## 5. Legal and Contextual Considerations

Our safeguarding and child protection policies, processes and knowledge base are built upon and support the 1989 international legal framework (as amended) - the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

5.1 - Specific legal and local context
Without exception, Cognita Middle East will adopt the relevant law governing the jurisdiction of the operating locality of the school. We understand that in the different countries in which Cognita Middle East operates (including the different emirates of the United Arab Emirates), subtlety of legal interpretation may exist. Throughout our safeguarding policies and practices, we have broadly accepted the principles and ethos of safeguarding from the United Kingdom, as this is believed to be some of the most robust legislation internationally. Keeping Children Safe in Education

commissioned and developed by the Department for Education England and Wales, is debatably the most robust educational safeguarding resource in current circulation.

5.2 - Related documentation
This policy should be read in relation to the most recent version of the following documents*:

- MOE National Child Protection Policy in Educational Institutions in United Arab Emirates*
- ADEK Student Protection Policy*
- The Kuwait National Child Protection Policy*
- Cognita Group Policy: Safeguarding Governance and Oversight
- Cognita Whistleblowing Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1)

*If applicable to your local context

## 6. Document Control

| Ownership and Consultation | |
|---|---|
| Document Sponsor (Role) | Director of Education |
| Document Author (Role) | Regional Safeguarding Lead |
| Legal Advice | Regional Legal Counsel |
| Document Review and Maintenance | Regional Safeguarding Lead |

| Compliance | |
|---|---|
| Compliant with | Group Safeguarding Policy |

| Audience | |
|---|---|
| Internal | All Cognita ME staff |
| External | All stakeholders |

| Document Application | |
|---|---|
| Regional | Cognita Middle East |

| Version Control | |
|---|---|
| Implementation Date | December 2024 |
| First Review Date | July 2025 |

| Related Documentation | |
|---|---|
| Related Documentation | Safeguarding Knowledge (Internal) Safeguarding Process (Internal) As per 5.2 |