



**POLICY NO : 5.209**

Approved :

Effective :

Amended :

Last Review :

Next Scheduled Review :

Reference Policies :

## **ALS Child Protection Policy**

### **Introduction:**

Advanced Learning Schools recognizes its responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment to the children and young in its care.

The main elements to the Child Protection Policy are:

- Prevention through the creation of a positive school atmosphere and the teaching and guidance support offered to the students.
- Protection by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.
- Support to students who may have been abused; either directly whenever possible through trained personnel or by referral to qualified professionals when needed.

### **The aims of this Child Protection Policy are:**

- to keep children safe while they are in school and to give them an environment where they feel secure and able to talk to an appropriate adult about issues around their personal safety or the safety of their friends
- to help the school maintain its ethos whereby staff, students and parents feel able to articulate concerns comfortably, safe in the knowledge that effective action will be taken as appropriate.

### **The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all members of the school community:**

- are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection
- know the procedures that should be followed if they have a cause for concern
- know where to go to find additional information regarding safeguarding
- are aware of the key indicators relating to child abuse
- fully support the school's commitment to safeguarding and child protection
- to ensure that all stakeholders are fully informed in order to ensure their own safety and protection

### **The designated members of staff**

The designated members of staff for safeguarding and protection in school are: **the school Superintendent, the Principals and/or the Counselors**

The designated people are key to ensuring that proper procedures and policies are in place and are followed with regard to child safeguarding issues. They will also act as dedicated resources available for other staff and volunteers to draw upon.

All members of staff and volunteers must be made aware of who these people are and what their role is.

The designated people will act as a source of advice and coordinate action within the school over child protection cases.

The designated people should act as liaison with other appropriate agencies.

They should possess skills in recognizing and dealing with child welfare concerns.

The designated people are responsible for referring cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies when necessary with the approval of the Chair of the Board.

**To be effective the designated people will:**

- Act as a source of advice, support and expertise within the school and be responsible for coordinating action regarding referrals by liaising with relevant agencies over suspicions that a child may be suffering harm.
- Cascade safeguarding advice and guidance within school.
- Ensure each member of staff and volunteers at the school, and regular visitors are aware of and can access readily, this policy.
- Liaise with the Board Chair to inform him of any issues and on-going investigations and ensure there is always cover for the role.
- Ensure that this policy is updated and reviewed every three years.
- Be able to keep detailed accurate secure written records of referrals/concerns, and ensure that these are held in a secure place.

The designated people also have an important role in ensuring all staff and volunteers receive appropriate training. They should:

- Attend training in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case.
- Have a working knowledge of how the relevant authorities operate to enhance the implementation of the Child Protection Policy.
- Attend any relevant training courses and then ensure that any new or key messages are passed to other staff, volunteers and Board.
- Make themselves known to all staff and volunteers (including new starters and substitute teachers) and ensure those members of staff have had training in child protection. This should be relevant to their needs to enable them to identify and report any concerns to the designated people immediately.

**Procedures for dealing with suspected or confirmed case concerns about child protection including the different elements of child abuse:**

Child abuse may be physical (non-accidental injury); sexual; neglect or emotional.

If a young person discloses to you that they are being abused or if you suspect they may be being abused, inform one of the designated people immediately. Concerns expressed by other students or parents should also be passed on to a designated person. Any notes taken by you should be as close to the exact words of the young person as possible. Sign and date your notes before passing them on to a designated person. Do not ask the young person questions or try to get them to elaborate on what they have said to you.

If a student asks you to keep something confidential, explain that this is not always possible because if they tell you something that you think might make them at risk of harm you need to get help and support for him or her and that you are obliged to do this.

Do not contact parents/carers regarding child abuse allegations until it is discussed with one or more designated people.

In cases where serious concerns have been raised about physical or sexual abuse the student will be seen as soon as possible. Where appropriate, further background information will be collected by the designated person in charge of the case. It is not appropriate to get young people to remove clothing, medical attention will be sought if appropriate and records of any injuries will be recorded. Any allegation of this seriousness should always be discussed with the Chairman of the Board as soon as possible.

Most cases involve continuing contact with the student on a daily basis at school. The designated person in charge will determine a teacher well known to the student to maintain this contact and monitor development.

### **Responsibilities and immediate action**

All adults working in this school (including visiting staff, volunteers and students on placement) are required to report any concerns that they may have around suspicions of child protection to one of the designated people.

When an individual concern/incident is brought to the notice of one of the designated people, he or she will be responsible for deciding if further advice should be sought from the Chairman of the Board.

In circumstances where a child has a suspicious injury, which requires urgent medical attention, the school nurse should be informed immediately. The referral process should not delay the administration of first aid or emergency medical assistance. If a student is thought to be at immediate risk, urgent Emergency Services and/or Police intervention can be requested after consultation with the Chairman of the Board.

### **Recruitment**

All staff recruited by the school will be subject to reference and Criminal Record checks. This school will only use agencies, which positively vet their staff. Staff coming to the school on a permanent or temporary basis will be made aware of the Child Protection Policy.

### **Staff Code of Conduct**

All staff (paid and voluntary) are expected to adhere to the school code of conduct in respect of their contact with students and their families. Children will be treated with respect and dignity and no punishment, detention, restraint, sanctions, or rewards are allowed outside those detailed in the school's Behavior Management Policy.

Staff are required to work in a professional manner at all times.

### **Complaints/Allegations made against staff**

ALS takes seriously all complaints made against members of staff. Mechanisms are in place for students, parents and staff to share any concern that they may have about the actions of any member of the school staff. All such complaints will be brought immediately to the attention of the Principals and/or Superintendent in order that they may activate the appropriate procedures.

If the complaint concerns alleged abuse by the Superintendent, this should be brought to the attention of the Chairman of the Board.

When evidence supports the allegation, staff who are formally disciplined for the abuse of students (or who resign before disciplinary action) will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

### **Records**

Brief and accurate written notes will be kept of all incidents or child protection concerns relating to individual students. Child protection records are not available to students or parents. The Superintendent securely keeps child protection records, separate from educational records. Only the Superintendent, Principals and counselors will be able to access these. If the allegation is against one of those mentioned, then they are excluded from accessing such files.

### **School Visitors**

The entrance to the school will be supervised. Authorized visitors to the school will be asked to wear a school visitor badges. Unidentified visitors will be challenged by staff or reported to the Senior Management Team or the school office. Security will be called if there are any concerns about unidentified visitors or intruders.

### **Confidentiality and information sharing**

The school, and all members of staff at the school, will ensure that all data about students is kept confidential.

Any member of staff who has access to sensitive information about a child or the child's family must take all reasonable steps to ensure that such information is only disclosed to those people who need to know.

Regardless of the duty of confidentiality, if any member of staff has reason to believe that a child may be suffering harm, or be at risk of harm, their duty is to forward this information without delay to one of the designated people for child protection.

### **Physical restraint and contact with students**

Members of staff may have to make physical interventions with children in order for children not to harm themselves or one another. Members of staff will only do this in line with school policy.

### **Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review**

All adults, in school will receive a copy of this policy. It will be discussed at least annually at staff meetings.

The effectiveness of the policy will be reviewed and evaluated by the school administration annually in light of any specific incidents or other guidance.

**Record of Concern: (to be filled on by the person reporting a concern)**

Child's Name :	Date:
Child's DOB :	
Date and time of concern :	
Your account of the concern : (what was said, observed, reported and by whom)	
Additional information : (your opinion, context of concern/disclosure)	
Your response : (what did you do/say following the concern)	
Your name :	Your signature :
Your position in school :	Date and time of this recording :
Action and response of the designated people:	
Feedback given to member of staff reporting concern:	Information shared with any other staff? If so, what information was shared and what was the rationale for this?

Further action recorded on separate sheets

**Checklist for designated people (to be printed on back of record of concern form)**

- Child clearly identified
- Name, designation and signature of the person completing the record
- Date and time of any incidents or when a concern was observed
- Date and time of written record
- Distinguish between fact, opinion and hearsay
- Concern described in sufficient detail, i.e. no further clarification necessary
- Child's own words used (Swear words, insults, or intimate vocabulary should be written down verbatim.)
- Record free of jargon
- Written in a professional manner without stereotyping or discrimination
- The record includes an attached completed body map (if relevant)