



PHILIPPINE-EMIRATES PRIVATE SCHOOL L.L.C.

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Introduction

Philippine Emirates Private School (PEPS) is dedicated to the safety and well-being of all our students. Our safeguarding policy aligns with the ADEK (Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge) guidelines and other relevant local and international regulations to ensure a secure and supportive environment conducive to learning and personal development. This policy outlines our commitment to protecting students from harm, abuse, and exploitation while under our care.

2. Policy Statement

PEPS is committed to:

- Ensuring that all students are safeguarded from any form of maltreatment.
- Providing a secure and nurturing environment where students can thrive.
- Implementing and adhering to robust safeguarding procedures and protocols.
- Training staff to recognize and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to:

- All staff members, volunteers, and external contractors associated with PEPS.
- All students enrolled at PEPS.
- All activities and events conducted under the auspices of PEPS, on or off the school premises.

4. Principles

- **Best Interests of the Child:** The welfare of the child is paramount in all decisions and actions taken.
- **Zero Tolerance:** PEPS maintains a zero-tolerance stance on child maltreatment,

including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect.

- **Inclusivity:** All students, regardless of their background or circumstances, have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- **Confidentiality:** Safeguarding concerns and incidents will be handled with strict confidentiality, sharing information only on a need-to-know basis.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** PEPS ensures transparency in safeguarding processes and holds all staff accountable for adhering to the safeguarding policy.

5. Definitions

- **Child Maltreatment:** Any act of commission or omission by a parent, caregiver, or another person that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child.
- **Safeguarding:** Measures taken to protect the health, well-being, and human rights of individuals, especially children, to ensure they live free from abuse, harm, and neglect.
- **Duty of Care:** The obligation of staff and volunteers to ensure the safety and well-being of students in their care.

6. Policy Elements

6.1 Safeguarding Committee:

The Safeguarding Committee at Philippine Emirates Private School (PEPS) is a dedicated team responsible for overseeing and implementing the safeguarding policy, ensuring a safe environment for all students. This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of each member within the committee.

| Safeguarding Committee | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Name | Designation | Role |
| Jeselle E. Fidelino | School Principal | Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) |
| Bernardo T. Cinco | Admin Director, Operations and HR Manager | Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) |
| Anthony A. Fidelino | Safety Officer | Governor of Safeguarding |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| | Officer | |
| Dennis S. Canicon | Vice-Principal | Pastoral Care Lead |
| El Jane Bernalyn M. Magsino | HR Assistant, Accountant | Safer Recruitment Officer |
| Jenalyn T. Senatin | Social Worker, Career Guidance Specialist, Deputy Head of Inclusion | Inclusion Lead |
| Ma Teresa A. Postadan, RN | School Nurse | Healthcare Specialist |

6.1.1 Roles and Responsibilities:

❖ *Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)*

Summary

This is the automatic chair of the committee, responsible for leading safeguarding efforts within the school. First point of contact for all with child safety concerns. They are responsible for investigating concerns, making referrals to social services, and liaising with other agencies.

Responsibilities

- Lead the development and implementation of the safeguarding policy.
- Act as the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Coordinate with external agencies, such as ADEK and local child protection services.
- Provide guidance and support to staff on safeguarding matters.
- Ensure all safeguarding records are maintained accurately and confidentially.
- Organize regular safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers.

❖ *Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)*

Summary

Acts as a backup to the DSL and supports them in their duties. Supports the DSL and assumes their responsibilities in their absence. Shares the responsibility of handling safeguarding concerns.

Responsibilities

- Support the DSL in their duties and act as a backup in their absence.
- Assist in the management and investigation of safeguarding concerns.
- Help maintain safeguarding records and documentation.
- Facilitate communication between the



safeguarding team and other staff members.

❖ *Governor of Safeguarding*

Summary

A designated governor or trustee who oversees the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. A designated governor or trustee who oversees the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

Responsibilities

- Ensure that the safeguarding policy is effective and compliant with relevant laws and guidelines.
- Oversee the school's safeguarding practices and procedures.
- Liaise with the DSL to monitor the implementation of safeguarding measures.
- Report to the school board on safeguarding issues and developments.

❖ *Pastoral Care Lead*

Summary

Someone with experience in supporting student well-being and mental health concerns. Provides expertise in student well-being and mental health. Often the first point of contact for students facing personal challenges.

Responsibilities

- Promote the emotional and social well-being of students.
- Provide support and counselling to students experiencing difficulties.
- Work closely with the DSL and DDSL to identify and support vulnerable students.
- Develop programs and initiatives to enhance students' mental health and well-being.

❖ *Safer Recruitment Officer*

Summary

Responsible for staff recruitment checks and ensuring staff suitability for working with children. Safeguards children by ensuring all employed staff are suitable for working with them. Conducts thorough background checks and reference verifications on prospective staff.

Responsibilities

- Ensure all recruitment processes comply with safeguarding standards.
- Conduct background checks and verify the suitability of candidates to work with children.
- Maintain records of all staff and volunteer vetting procedures.
- Train hiring managers on safe recruitment practices.

❖ *Inclusion Lead*



Summary

Supports students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) who may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect. Works closely with the DSL/DDSL to ensure these students' safeguarding needs are met. May require additional safeguarding training specific to SEN students.

Responsibilities

- Advocate for the rights and inclusion of all students, especially those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Work with staff to develop inclusive practices and ensure equitable access to education.
- Collaborate with the DSL to safeguard vulnerable and marginalized students.
- Monitor and support the progress of students requiring additional assistance.

❖ *Mental Health Care Lead*

Summary

Provides knowledge and support for students with mental health needs. Collaborates with the DSL/DDSL to assess safeguarding risks related to mental health issues. May identify students vulnerable to self-harm or exploitation.

Responsibilities

- Develop and implement mental health programs and support services.
- Provide direct support and counseling to students with mental health issues.
- Train staff to recognize signs of mental health concerns and respond appropriately.
- Work with the DSL to ensure that mental health considerations are integrated into safeguarding practices.

❖ *Healthcare Specialist*

Summary

School nurse or other health professional who can offer insights into student health issues. Offers insights into student health concerns, which may reveal potential safeguarding issues (e.g., malnutrition, unexplained injuries).

Responsibilities

- Monitor and manage students' health needs and medical conditions.
- Provide first aid and emergency medical care as required.
- Maintain accurate health records and ensure confidentiality.
- Educate students and staff on health and safety practices.
- Support the safeguarding team by identifying health-related safeguarding concerns.

6.2 Training and Awareness:

Training and awareness are crucial components of the safeguarding policy at Philippine

Emirates Private School (PEPS). This section outlines the comprehensive training programs and awareness initiatives designed to equip staff, volunteers, and students with the knowledge and skills needed to recognize, prevent, and respond to safeguarding concerns effectively.

6.2.1 Training Programs

| Training Program | Audience | Content | Frequency |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Induction Training | All new staff, volunteers, and contractors. | Introduction to PEPS's safeguarding policy, recognizing signs of abuse and neglect, reporting procedures, confidentiality protocols, and specific safeguarding roles. | Conducted within the first month of employment or engagement. |
| Annual Safeguarding Training | All staff and regular volunteers. | Review and update on safeguarding policies, new legislation, case studies, advanced safeguarding issues, and role-specific responsibilities. | Annually, with mandatory attendance. |
| Refresher Training | All staff and volunteers. | Updates on safeguarding policies and practices, reinforcement of key concepts, and introduction to new developments in safeguarding. | Biannually or as needed based on updates to policies or legislation. |
| Additional Training | All staff are encouraged | Continuous Professional Development - PEPS will support staff participation in external training and workshops, providing funding and time allowances where possible. | When and where possible |



6.2.2 Awareness Initiatives

| Initiatives | Method | Content | Audience |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Safeguarding Policy Communication | The safeguarding policy will be distributed via email, the school website, and printed copies available at key locations within the school. | Key points of the safeguarding policy, reporting procedures, and contact details of safeguarding officers. | All staff, volunteers, students, and parents. |
| Regular Briefings and Updates | Staff meetings, newsletters, and internal communication channels. | Updates on safeguarding issues, reminders of key procedures, and information on upcoming training sessions. | All staff and volunteers. |
| Student Education Programs | Integration into the curriculum through classes, workshops, and assemblies. | Age-appropriate education on personal safety, recognizing abuse, online safety, and how to report concerns. | All students. |
| Parent and Guardian Engagement | Information sessions, newsletters, and the school website. | Overview of the safeguarding policy, how to report concerns, and tips on supporting their children's safety. | All parents and guardians. |

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7. Safer Recruitment Process



Philippine Emirates Private School (PEPS) is dedicated to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and contractors are suitable to work with children. Our safer recruitment process aims to prevent unsuitable individuals from gaining access to students and to uphold the highest standards of safeguarding. This section outlines the comprehensive recruitment procedures and requirements.

7.1 Job Advertisement and Information

- ✓ Clear Safeguarding Statement: All job advertisements will include a clear statement about PEPS's commitment to safeguarding and the requirement for successful candidates to undergo vetting procedures.
- ✓ Job Descriptions and Person Specifications: Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and the required safeguarding qualifications and experience.

7.2 Application Process

- ✓ Application Form: All candidates must complete an application form that includes questions about their employment history, qualifications, and any gaps in employment.
- ✓ Safeguarding Declaration: Candidates must declare any criminal convictions, ongoing investigations, or previous allegations related to child protection.

7.3 Shortlisting

- ✓ Criteria-Based Shortlisting: Shortlist candidates based on their qualifications, experience, and suitability for the role, ensuring they meet the safeguarding criteria.
- ✓ Gap Analysis: Identify and seek clarification on any gaps in employment history.

7.4 Interviews

- ✓ Structured Interviews: Conduct structured interviews with questions designed to assess the candidate's suitability to work with children and their understanding of safeguarding.
- ✓ Panel Composition: Include at least one member trained in safer recruitment practices on the interview panel.
- ✓ Safeguarding Questions: Incorporate specific questions about safeguarding scenarios and the candidate's response to potential safeguarding issues.

7.5 Pre-Employment Checks

- ✓ Identity Verification: Verify the candidate's identity using original documents such as



a passport, national ID, or driving license.

- ✓ Qualifications and Experience Verification: Check original certificates and documents to verify the candidate's qualifications and employment history.
- ✓ Reference Checks: Obtain at least two professional references, including one from the most recent employer. Ensure references address the candidate's suitability to work with children.
- ✓ Criminal Record Checks: Conduct police clearance checks or equivalent background checks for all candidates, both local and international.
- ✓ Barred List Check: Check that the candidate is not barred from working with children.

7.6 Conditional Offer of Employment

- ✓ Offer Letter: Issue a conditional offer of employment, subject to satisfactory completion of all pre-employment checks.
- ✓ Additional Declarations: Require the candidate to sign a declaration regarding ongoing commitment to safeguarding and child protection.

7.7 Induction and Training

- ✓ Induction Program: Provide a comprehensive induction program that includes mandatory safeguarding training and familiarization with the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.
- ✓ Ongoing Training: Ensure continuous professional development (CPD) in safeguarding for all staff.

7.8 List of Requirements

- ✓ Application Form
- ✓ Proof of Identity
- ✓ Proof of Qualifications
- ✓ Employment References
- ✓ Criminal Record Check
- ✓ Barred List Check
- ✓ Health Declaration
- ✓ Safeguarding Declaration



- ✓ Proof of Right to Work
- ✓ Interview Notes

8. Digital Safety

At Philippine Emirates Private School (PEPS), the digital safety of our students is of utmost importance. We have implemented comprehensive digital safety regulations, aligned with ADEK's safeguarding policy, to protect our students from online risks such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and online predators. These regulations are mandatory and must be strictly adhered to by all members of the PEPS community.

8.1 Digital Safety Regulations

❖ Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

- *Policy Document:* The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the acceptable use of digital technologies, internet access, and school devices. All students, staff, and parents have read, understood, and signed the AUP at the start of each academic year.

❖ Internet Safety

- *Filtered Internet Access:* All internet access is filtered to block inappropriate content, harmful websites, and social networking sites not related to education.
- *Monitoring Software:* Monitoring software is installed to track and report inappropriate or suspicious online activities.
- *Internet Safety Education:* Internet safety education is integrated into the curriculum, teaching students how to recognize and respond to online risks.

❖ Use of School Devices

- *Device Management:* A record of all school-issued devices, including laptops, tablets, and smartphones, is maintained.
- *Security Measures:* Antivirus software, firewalls, and encryption are installed on all school devices to protect against malware and unauthorized access.
- *Regular Audits:* Regular audits of school devices are conducted to ensure compliance with digital safety standards and policies.

❖ Social Media and Communication

- *Staff Guidelines*: Guidelines for staff on the appropriate use of social media and digital communication with students are established, ensuring professional boundaries are maintained.
- *Student Guidelines*: Students are educated on the responsible use of social media, including privacy settings, sharing personal information, and reporting concerns.

❖ Cyberbullying Prevention and Response

- *Awareness Campaigns*: Regular awareness campaigns on cyberbullying, its impact, and how to report it are conducted.
- *Reporting Mechanisms*: Clear reporting mechanisms for students and staff to report cyberbullying incidents confidentially are established.
- *Response Protocol*: A response protocol for addressing cyberbullying incidents, including investigation, support for victims, and disciplinary actions for perpetrators, is implemented.

❖ Data Protection and Privacy

- *Data Handling Procedures*: Procedures for handling personal data, ensuring compliance with data protection laws and safeguarding regulations, are enforced.
- *Secure Storage*: All personal data is stored securely and access is restricted to authorized personnel.
- *Staff Training*: Regular training for staff on data protection and privacy best practices is provided.
- *Parental Consent*: Parental consent for the use of student data and images for educational purposes and school publications is obtained.

❖ Digital Literacy Education

- *Curriculum Integration*: Digital literacy education is integrated into the curriculum, covering topics such as online research, digital footprints, and critical evaluation of online content.
- *Workshops and Training*: Workshops and training sessions for students,



parents, and staff on digital safety and responsible online behavior are offered.

❖ Regular Review and Updates

- Policy Review: Regular reviews and updates of the digital safety regulations are conducted to reflect new technological developments and emerging online threats.
- Feedback Mechanism: A feedback mechanism for students, parents, and staff to provide input on digital safety practices and policies is implemented.

9. Parental Involvement

Philippine Emirates Private School (PEPS) believes that parental involvement and robust support services are crucial for the holistics development and well-being of our students. Aligned with ADEK's safeguarding policy, this section outlines comprehensive strategies and services to actively engage parents and provide essential support to students, ensuring a collaborative approach to safeguarding and education.

9.1 Parental Involvement

❖ Communication Channels

- *Regular Updates*: Use multiple platforms (emails, newsletters, school website, and social media) to provide parents with regular updates on school activities, policies, and their child's progress.
- *Parent-Teacher Meetings*: Schedule regular parent-teacher meetings to discuss student progress, address concerns, and set collaborative goals.
- *Open-Door Policy*: Maintain an open-door policy encouraging parents to meet with teachers, counselors, or school leadership to discuss any issues or concerns.

❖ Parent Education and Training

- *Workshops and Seminars*: Organize workshops and seminars on topics such as digital safety, mental health, child development, and positive parenting techniques.

- *Safeguarding Awareness*: Provide training sessions on the school's safeguarding policies, signs of abuse, and how parents can support their children's safety and well-being.

❖ Parent Volunteer Programs

- *Involvement Opportunities*: Create opportunities for parents to volunteer in school activities, events, and committees, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility.
- *Training for Volunteers*: Offer training sessions for parent volunteers to ensure they understand safeguarding protocols and their roles and responsibilities within the school.

❖ Feedback Mechanisms

- *Surveys and Questionnaires*: Conduct regular surveys and questionnaires to gather feedback from parents on school policies, programs, and their child's experience.
- *Suggestion Box*: Establish a suggestion box or online portal where parents can anonymously provide feedback and suggestions for school improvement.

❖ Parent Advisory Committee

- *Committee Formation*: Establish a Parent Advisory Committee consisting of parent representatives from each grade level to provide input on school policies and initiatives.
- *Regular Meetings*: Hold regular meetings with the Parent Advisory Committee to discuss school issues, gather feedback, and collaborate on solutions.

9.2 Support Services

❖ Counseling and Mental Health Services

- *School Counselors*: Employ qualified school counselors to provide individual and



group counseling services, addressing academic, social, and emotional needs.

- Mental Health Programs: Implement mental health programs and initiatives to promote well-being, resilience, and stress management among students.
- Referral System: Develop a referral system for students needing external mental health support, ensuring confidentiality and appropriate care.

❖ Academic Support

- Tutoring Programs: Offer tutoring and academic support programs to help students who need extra assistance in specific subjects or skills.
- Learning Support Services: Provide learning support services for students with special educational needs, including individualized education plans (IEPs) and specialized instruction.
- Study Skills Workshops: Conduct workshops on study skills, time management, and exam preparation to help students improve their academic performance.

❖ Health and Wellness Programs

- Health Screenings: Conduct regular health screenings and medical check-ups for students, ensuring early identification and intervention for health issues.
- Nutrition and Fitness Programs: Promote healthy eating and physical activity through nutrition education and fitness programs, including school sports and physical education.
- Health Education: Integrate health education into the curriculum, covering topics such as hygiene, disease prevention, and healthy lifestyle choices.

❖ Behavioral Support

- Positive Behavior Programs: Implement positive behavior support programs to promote good conduct, respect, and responsibility among students.
- Conflict Resolution: Provide conflict resolution and peer mediation services to help students resolve disputes and develop healthy interpersonal skills.
- Disciplinary Policies: Ensure clear, fair, and consistent disciplinary policies aligned with ADEK guidelines, focusing on restorative practices and behavioral improvement.

❖ Special Education Services



- Inclusion Programs: Develop inclusive education programs that cater to the needs of students with disabilities, ensuring they receive appropriate support and accommodations.
- Specialized Staff: Employ specialized staff, including special education teachers and therapists, to support the learning and development of students with special needs.
- Individualized Support: Create individualized support plans for students with special needs, involving parents in the planning and review process.
- ❖ Extracurricular Activities
 - Varied Programs: Offer a wide range of extracurricular activities, including sports, arts, clubs, and academic competitions, to support the diverse interests and talents of students.
 - Parental Involvement: Encourage parents to support and participate in extracurricular activities, enhancing the overall experience for students.
- ❖ Transition Support
 - Orientation Programs: Provide orientation programs for students and parents to facilitate smooth transitions between grade levels and to PEPS.
 - Transition Plans: Develop individualized transition plans for students moving from one educational stage to another, ensuring continuity of support and academic progress.
- ❖ Community Engagement
 - Partnerships with Local Organizations: Establish partnerships with local organizations and community services to enhance the support network available to students and families.
 - Community Events: Host community events and activities that bring together students, parents, staff, and local community members, fostering a strong sense of belonging and collaboration

10. Reporting Procedures

Philippine Emirates Private School (PEPS) is committed to ensuring all safeguarding



concerns are addressed promptly and effectively. This section outlines the comprehensive reporting procedures for staff, volunteers, students, and parents, detailing the progressive steps to be taken when a safeguarding concern arises.

Reporting Procedures

- ❖ Recognizing a Safeguarding Concern
 - *Indicators:* Physical signs of abuse, changes in behavior, disclosures from the child, or any suspicious circumstances.
 - *Action:* Stay calm, listen carefully, and reassure the child. Do not promise confidentiality but explain that the information will be shared with those who can
- ❖ Immediate Response
 - *Staff and Volunteers:* If you suspect or are informed of a safeguarding concern, you must act immediately.
 - *Students and Parents:* Report any concerns directly to a trusted member of staff or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- ❖ Initial Reporting
 - *Verbal Report:* Inform the DSL or Deputy DSL (DDSL) as soon as possible. If neither is available, report to the Safeguarding Committee member or a senior staff member.
 - *Written Report:* Complete a safeguarding concern form detailing the incident, observations, and any conversations with the child. Submit the form to the DSL within 24 hours.
- ❖ Recording the Concern
 - *Documentation:* The DSL will record the concern in the school's safeguarding log, ensuring all details are accurate and complete.
 - *Confidentiality:* Records will be kept securely and only accessible to those directly involved in managing the concern.
- ❖ Assessment and Decision-Making
 - *DSL Evaluation:* The DSL will assess the concern, considering the child's safety and well-being. They may consult with the DDSL or other safeguarding committee members if needed.



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Action Plan:</i> The DSL will decide on the immediate actions, which may include further investigation, contacting parents (if appropriate), or seeking advice from external agencies. |
| ❖ | <p>Referral to External Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Criteria for Referral:</i> If the concern involves serious harm or is beyond the school's capacity to manage, the DSL will refer the case to external agencies such as local child protection services or ADEK. ▪ <i>Process:</i> The DSL will complete the necessary referral forms and provide detailed information to the external agency. ▪ <i>Follow-Up:</i> The DSL will maintain contact with the external agency to monitor the progress of the referral and ensure ongoing support for the child. |
| ❖ | <p>Internal Follow-Up and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Support Plan:</i> Develop a support plan for the affected child, involving the Pastoral Care Lead, Mental Health Care Lead, and Inclusion Lead as necessary. ▪ <i>Monitoring:</i> Regularly monitor the child's well-being and progress, updating the support plan as needed. ▪ <i>Staff Involvement:</i> Inform relevant staff members about the situation on a need-to-know basis to ensure the child receives appropriate support. |
| ❖ | <p>Communication with Parents/Guardians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Informing Parents:</i> If appropriate and it does not put the child at further risk, inform the parents/guardians about the concern and the actions being taken. ▪ <i>Engagement:</i> Work with parents/guardians to support the child, providing resources and advice as needed. |
| ❖ | <p>Review and Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Case Review:</i> The DSL will periodically review open safeguarding cases with the Safeguarding Committee to ensure appropriate actions are taken and the child's needs are being met. ▪ <i>Feedback Loop:</i> Provide feedback to the initial reporter about the actions taken and any outcomes, maintaining confidentiality as required. |
| ❖ | <p>Documentation and Record-Keeping</p> |



- **Comprehensive Records:** Maintain detailed records of all safeguarding concerns, actions taken, and outcomes.
- **Confidentiality:** Ensure all records are stored securely and accessed only by authorized personnel.
- **Audit and Review:** Regularly audit safeguarding records to ensure compliance with the policy and identify any areas for improvement.

12. Document Review and Approval

| Function | Name | Designation | Date | Signature |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Final Approval | VERONICA FIDELINO | School Principal | 10-17-2024 | [Signature] |
| Document Review | BERNARDO C. NICO | Admin Director | OCT. 14 2024 | [Signature] |
| Document Note | ANNE FIDELINO | Compliance Officer | OCT. 14. 2024 | [Signature] |
| Document Producer | JANETTE S. NICO | Social Worker | OCT. 14, 2024 | [Signature] |