

Al Akhawayn School of Ifrane

Child Protection Policy



ASI Mission Statement

ASI prepares and graduates students who are equipped with critical thinking skills, holistic knowledge, and socio-emotional skills necessary to thrive in multicultural environments and access the best universities and post-secondary study in Morocco and the world.

ASI Vision Statement

By the end of 2022 ASI aspires to be a world class Early Years to Secondary education institution in Morocco driven by excellence in teaching, learning, and extracurricular experiences that empowers our students with the needed skills and intellect to be 21st century global citizens.

Child Protection Policy, People, Procedures, and Accountability Policy

Values Statement

Every child, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, creed, or cultural background, in the care and supervision of ASI Faculty, Staff, and Volunteers has the right to be protected from maltreatment in any form. As mandated reporters, ASI employees shall safeguard and advocate the best interests of all enrolled students at ASI at all times.

Making decisions and taking actions that affect children's' best interests shall be the top priority of all stakeholders working in and out the school. ASI fully recognizes and embraces its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all enrolled children and young people in our care, and that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility as mandated reporters. This responsibility encompasses the following principles:

- To protect children from harm (maltreatment) in any form including physical, mental, verbal, sexual, or exploited.
- To prevent impairment of children's health and development by intervening as necessary and appropriately.
- To treat the interests of our children as paramount while taking into consideration their disability, culture, religion and history.
- Every child shall be treated equitably, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background shall be protected.
- Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times,
- ASI's educational program must encourage the development of every child's personality, talents, and abilities to the fullest. The school shall encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

ASI's Definition of Child Protection

Child protection is the protection of all children in the care of ASI from abuse (physical or sexual), neglect, bullying, malnourishment, or any other maltreatment that would cause physical, mental, or social-emotional harm to a child or young person.

ASI Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

ASI has researched and implemented *mandated reporting training and practice* within the school this academic year. A mandated reporter is any person in our school (teachers, staff, administration, and volunteers) that works with our students and is required by the school to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the relevant authorities. By placing this expectation and procedure within our community the clarity now is in place to prevent or end any possible child abuse or neglect at the earliest possible stage. All school employees and volunteers are required to participate in online training and then take an online quiz to verify their understanding and acceptance of their responsibility as a mandated reporter. Being a mandated reporter entails the following roles, responsibilities, and understandings:

- Stakeholders understanding their legal obligations as a mandated reporter.
- Define the types of child abuse and neglect.
- Recognize signs of child abuse and neglect.
- Identify groups of children who may be at a higher risk for abuse or neglect.
- Learn how to respond to a child who discloses abuse or neglect.
- Know how to prepare for and make a report of child abuse/neglect.
- Understand the process that occurs after a report is made.

Leadership

ASI has several stakeholders involved with the review and leadership of child protection and care. First, as mentioned prior, it is everyone's responsibility to lead the safeguarding of children and understanding and valuing their role and community expectations. The Director of the school and the School Counselor play a large role in monitoring and advocating for the school's child protection and care policies and procedures. The ASI's Board of Governance approves this policy and it is annually reviewed by them, as well as the school's handbooks that include policies and procedures. Further, Al Akhawayn University may support ASI by deploying and making available counseling support and collaboration with workshop trainings available. The School Counselor is responsible to review, maintain and implement initiatives supporting child welfare and protection. The Culture Coordinator also is responsible to reach out to organizations and support partners in helping the school develop and review its thinking about child protection.

Recruitment Practices

Another important child protection measure is our approach to vetting faculty and staff to work within our school. The process by which ASI hires its employees follows internal practices and University mandated practices. After a thorough and rigorous interview process any offer of employment is pending until acceptable reference checks from prior employees are verified in addition to the submission of a police background check.

Code of Conduct

ASI faculty and staff will protect the rights of all students. School adult stakeholders are expected to be fair and respectful to all their students and not to take advantage of their position in any way. Adults who work in ASI are expected not to push their personal beliefs on students because they are a "captive audience" and have a professional relationship with all students and not let it get too casual and familiar. Adults will not abuse the power of their position over students. All adult stakeholders will protect students' safety and wellbeing and not believe that this is someone else's job. All adults in ASI who work with children are mandated reporters and will be responsible to exercise this role with integrity and urgency. These expectations for conduct are confirmed when completing annual mandated reporting.

ASI Students shall treat one another with dignity and respect, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, creed, or home language and culture. ASI students will be "up-standarders" and not "by-standarders" meaning that students shall not be passive in watching acts of unkindness, including bullying, and/or inappropriate behavior; Instead ASI students will be up-standarders by reporting unsafe and all harmful behaviors to adults for intervention, and where appropriate, students will intervene with their peers to challenges unsafe, bullying, or any other unwelcome behavior.

Procedures - Reporting Maltreatment

All trained mandated reporters in the school would submit a confidential incident report form that documents and archives any reported incidents. The School Counselor will review all reported cases and **will not disclose the name of the mandated reporter** to any families. If legal or institutional considerations are needed then the Director will report the case to its owner, Al Akhawayn University, for their considerations of next steps which could include a disciplinary panel being called, and or the contacting of the local authorities. The University will not disclose the name of the reporter. Regardless of the outcome, the incident is archived in the schools e-database.

Partnerships

The Kingdom of Morocco has taken many important steps to realize the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and to meet international standards of adequate protection for children. However, a concern has persisted amongst practitioners and professionals working with children in Morocco that the national child protection strategy has mixed results in realizing its mission. Child protection and partnership is an emerging practice for schools in Morocco and ASI is working to better develop such partnerships. On a preliminary level the school has identified organizations that it currently is contacting to better understand their services and to explore areas of collaboration:

Moroccan Associations for Child Protection
Association Bayti

Tel.: +212 522 756966
contact@association-bayti.ma

Moroccan Children's Trust

Tel.: +44 7877268156- info@moroccanchildrenstrust.org

Protection Measures Integration

ASI protection measures are integrated within school systems such as recruiting, curriculum design (advisory), funding for adequate onsite medical and accidental insurance, and performance management (all students submit mid-year anonymous survey of all their teachers). We plan for the health and well-being of children with highly trained medical and clinical professionals from the University and strategically implement counseling support and workshop training. ASI's Board of Governance approves this policy and it is annually reviewed by them, as well as the school's handbooks that include policies and procedures. ASI's facilities are fit for their intended purpose and follow an annual review by the local fire department via inspection.

Accountability

Child protection accountability is shared across all stakeholders and is held to the highest expectations in line with the compliance of the legal, ethical, and cultural expectations and requirements in the context of the Kingdom of Morocco. ASI faculty, staff, and volunteers understand their role as mandated reporters and that failure to comply with the school and community expectations could result in employee disciplinary actions, including dismissal from the school.