



SAFE WORKING PRACTICES FOR THE PROTECTION OF STAFF AND CHILDREN

This document has been prepared in accordance with current legislation and national standards for the care and education of children and young people. The aim is to:

- Ensure the safety of children and young people in our care;
- Put procedures in place to protect staff from false allegations;
- Set procedures to follow in various circumstances as outlined within this document.

This applies to all adults working in a paid or unpaid capacity at the Greek School of St Athanasios. These procedures and guidelines comply with and have been adapted from the requirements of EEA and KEA – the Greek and Cypriot Educational Missions.

For the purpose of this document the term ‘staff’ refers to teachers, volunteers, committee members and others involved in the care of the children and young people of the Greek School of St Athanasios.

Duty of Care

Staff have a duty to keep children and young people safe and to protect them from harm and should always act in the child's best interest.

Staff must ensure that children are supervised at ALL times; Children must never be left unattended at ANY time.

If a parent is late collecting their child(ren) at the end of the day, it is the responsibility of two staff or committee members to wait with the child(ren) for a period of up to half an hour. During this time the adults responsible should continue in attempting to contact the parent(s) and the appointed emergency contact. If it is not possible to reach any of the above and sufficient time has elapsed, then the chairperson (or committee officers) should be informed and a decision must be reached as to whether to inform the police of the uncollected child.

Confidentiality

Staff are expected to treat information about the children and young people discreetly and confidentially. However there are some circumstances when information must be shared, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, information should be passed to the designated Child Protection Officer of the School.

Behaviour

All staff should adopt high standards of personal conduct and act as a role model to the children in their care. Staff must not behave in a manner which could lead to the questioning of their suitability to work with children and young people. For example, they must not:

- Discuss their own personal relationships with or in the presence of pupils
- Discuss a pupil's personal issues in inappropriate settings

- Make sexual remarks to a pupil (including by email, text message, letter etc.)
- Make comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate pupils

Dress and Appearance

Staff should ensure that they are dressed appropriately for their role. They should wear clothing that is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or which may place them vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

Gifts

It is acceptable on occasions such as Christmas or at the end of the school year if children and parents wish to offer teachers small tokens of appreciation. It is unacceptable however to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Similarly it is inadvisable to give personal gifts to pupils, although small gifts as part of a reward system are acceptable.

Infatuations

Staff should report to the Head Teacher or Chairperson of the committee any indications that may suggest a pupil may be infatuated by a member of staff.

Social Contact

Friendships/social contact between families of staff and pupils are acceptable. However staff should not seek individual social contact with pupils. Staff should not give their personal details such as telephone numbers, home or email addresses to pupils, unless this is agreed by the Head Teacher.

Physical Contact

There may be occasions when it is necessary for staff to have physical contact with pupils but it is essential that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their role and taking into consideration the pupil's ages and stages of development.

Behaviour Management

All pupils and staff have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is illegal in all schools. Staff must not use any form of punishment that is degrading, demeaning or humiliating to pupils. Additionally they must not make any insensitive comments towards a pupil. Behavioural strategies to control inappropriate behaviour must be discussed with the pupil's parents on a regular basis.

In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent action must be recorded in the accident/incident book and reported to the parents on collection of the child.

Inappropriate Contact with Young People

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child or young person is illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour but are additionally protected by legislation regardless of consent.

One to One Situations

Staff working with children and young people in one to one situations may be vulnerable to allegations of misconduct. Staff should protect themselves and the pupils from this by always being in sight or earshot of others by keeping visual access or an open door if they are to be alone in a room with a pupil.

Transporting Children/Educational Visits

Children under 8 are to be accompanied by their parents.

A First Aider should be present and the travel first aid kit should be taken.

Parents must sign a permission slip for all children participating giving emergency contact details for the day of the trip.

First Aid and Administration of Medication

Only staff members with current first aid certificates should administer first aid or medication. If a child requires medication during school hours the parent must complete a medicine form giving full details of the procedure, time and dosage. Only medication prescribed to a pupil may be administered and the responsible staff member must complete their part of the form and return it to the parent when they collect their child.

Allergies and Medical Needs

Parents must inform the school of any allergies or medical conditions when completing the annual registration form for their child. They must also give full details of the protocol they require staff to follow in the eventuality of a reaction, e.g. asthma inhaler or EpiPen administration. Similarly if a member of staff has an allergy or medical need they must notify their colleagues of the procedure to follow in the event of a reaction.

Intimate Care

All pupils have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required, e.g. assistance with toileting. A care plan should be agreed with parents of children that may need intimate care on a regular basis.

Photography and Videos

The school occasionally takes photographs or records celebrations such as Christmas and National Holidays. Parents are asked to give their consent for photographic or video images to be taken of their children at these events for the sole use of the school by completing the relevant section of the registration form.

Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

All staff should be aware of the school's child protection procedures including dealing with complaints and allegations against staff. All staff should know who the designated Child Protection Officer is and take responsibility for passing concerns to this person.