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# Safeguarding Handbook

## 2023–2024

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## Section 1 - Director's Forward

Dear Readers,

Please find included in this TKS Child Protection and Safeguarding Handbook, the Child Protection Policy adopted by the TKS Board of Education to guide our staff and families in supporting the health, safety and care of children at TKS.

This Child Protection Policy is based on Saudi Arabia's Child Protection Law (2014) and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by Saudi Arabia. Article 19 from the U.N Convention is the article most relevant to this policy:

### Article 19 - Protection from Abuse and Neglect

Children have the Right to be Protected from being Hurt or Badly Treated

By enrolling a child at TKS, you agree to work in partnership with us and abide by the policies adopted by the TKS Board. As a school we greatly value this partnership in providing for the safety and care of your children.

As part of our duty to create a safe environment where all can learn and grow TKS will:

1. Provide age appropriate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons for all grade levels to help students understand personal safety, needs and rights.
2. Support community parenting initiatives and offer parents the opportunity to seek clarity on our programs and policies.
3. Annually train faculty and staff to recognize and report issues of abuse and neglect.

By working closely together, we can all ensure that all children are treated with respect and dignity and so grow and learn, free from fear, in a safe and supportive environment.

I thank you for your support and invite you to contact the School Psychologist, myself, or your child's divisional principal, with any specific questions you may have in this regard.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michelle Remington  
Director

## Section 2 - Key Contacts for Child Protection at TKS (DSL - Designated Safeguarding Lead)



**Fatima Rehman**  
TKS School Psychologist



**La Tanya Weaver**  
KG DSL



**Lujain Ahmed Alafif**  
KG DSL



**Michael Vande Loo**  
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**Mahri Wooten**  
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**Bev Burns**  
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**Tara Madrigal**  
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**Adam Kuestermann**  
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**Nancy Remondi**  
MS DSL



**Zachary Berezowski**  
Director of Student Support Services



**Dr. Michelle Remington**  
TKS School Director





### Section 3 - Scope of TKS' Child Protection and Safeguarding Handbook

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the process of ensuring that children grow up being provided with safe, effective and nurturing care. It involves preventing the impairment of children's health and development, protecting them from actual abuse or neglect and optimising their life chances so they can enter adulthood successfully.

Schools by nature of their roles in society and their level of engagement with students are uniquely placed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. A school with a culture of safeguarding students is open and accountable, understands student needs, and makes their safety and security its highest priority.

A school which supports a culture of child safeguarding is one where:

- Concerns for student well-being are identified and responded to quickly.
- Students are educated and understand their personal right to safety.
- Staff are safely recruited, given safeguarding training, and then supported to work closely with designated personnel to provide positive outcomes for all students.

The TKS Child Protection and Safeguarding Handbook provides a framework for creating the safest learning environment possible for both children and staff. A child protection policy is a prerequisite to meeting the requirements of TKS' accrediting bodies: Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CES) and the Council of International Schools (CIS). The TKS policy and guidelines and this associated Handbook apply to all staff, students, parents and visitors to the school.

**Section 4 - TKS' Child Protection Policy (Approved by TKS Board of Education, March 2017)**

TKS is committed to ensuring the well-being of students in the school's care by creating a learning environment that is safe, effective and nurturing. This policy applies to all TKS students.

Staff, students, Board of Education members and visitors to TKS have a responsibility to ensure that TKS creates an environment of child well-being by:

- Enhancing students' health and development through the creation of a positive and respectful school culture, teaching, and pastoral support offered to students.
- Following approved guidelines to ensure staff are safely recruited, trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child safety concerns.
- Supporting students who may be vulnerable to abuse or neglect.



## Section 5: TKS' Child Protection Guidelines

### **(a) Enhancing students' health and development through the creation of a positive and respectful school culture, teaching, and pastoral support offered to students at TKS:**

(i) Positive and respectful School culture is actively promoted through specific programs, for example: House System, Student Council, Advisory, Social Skills training and Co-curricular.

(ii) Teaching philosophy will support student well-being through the IB learner profile, international mindedness, inquiry and project based skills, a focus on personalized learning, engagement in Physical and Education units and provision of a curriculum that is balanced across the Arts and Sciences.

(iii) Pastoral support is an integral part of TKS programming and begins at Orientation and continues through Transition Planning, College Counseling, Behavior Management, Developmental Programs, and in partnerships with parents (Partners for Learning), KAUST Health, and referrals to external specialists.

### **(b) Following approved guidelines to ensure staff are safely recruited, trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child safety concerns.**

(i) No staff member can work at TKS without being vetted<sup>[1]</sup> in advance.

(ii) All TKS staff attend orientation and training in the area of child protection.

(iii) Guidelines and procedures are published in the *TKS Child Protection and Safeguarding Handbook* and reviewed annually and includes processes and flow charts for reporting areas of concern related to children's social, psychological, physical well-being and environmental concerns.

### **(c) Supporting students who may be vulnerable to abuse or neglect (see section 4).**

(i) TKS staff supports students by

- Promoting whole school understanding and awareness of child well-being
- Having clear processes and procedures for identifying vulnerable students (e.g. through grade level meetings, staff referrals, and parent reporting)
- Building Parental Partnerships

(ii) The *TKS Child Protection/Safeguarding Team* ensures:

- Data gathering around concerns
- Reporting and referral

- Comprehensive documentation
- Monitoring of outcomes

(iii) TKS will refer students for specialist intervention or therapy, as required.

[1] Due diligence is exercised through:

- Deep Reference checks conducted by KAUST for all KAUST staff
- Background Investigation checks conducted by contractors employed by KAUST
- Use of employment agencies that ask specific children protection questions in their screening processes

## Section 6: Definitions of Abuse and Neglect (adapted from the International School of Paris), 2016 and WHO, 2018)

### Child Abuse

The World Health Organization, defines child abuse and neglect as ‘child maltreatment that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm’ (WHO, 2016).

A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm (act of commission), or by failing to act to prevent harm (act of omission). Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional (e.g. school) or community setting; children may be abused by individuals known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. Most child abuse is inflicted by someone the child knows, respects or trusts. Children may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, further complicating the problem.

To increase The KAUST School community's awareness, this Handbook outlines six categories of abuse experienced by young people (WHO, 2016) and provides basic information about the physical and behavioral signs associated with them.

#### (i) Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child (these symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as cutting and suicidal ideation).

#### (ii) Psychological Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child’s emotional development. It may involve: conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; that they are inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children; causing children frequently to feel frightened; or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

#### (iii) Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse and violence involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Children involved in commercial sex work are victims of sexual abuse, whether they perceive themselves as victims or not.



(iv) Neglect/Negligence

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

(v) Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Commercial sexual exploitation of children is a form of violence against children when an adult pays a child or adolescent, under 18 years of age, to engage in sexual activity. It is exploitative due to the age and power differential that exists between the adult and child. Examples include remunerating children in cash or kind for sexual activities, trafficking children for the purposes of sex, and the production, promotion, and distribution of child pornography.

(vi) Peer-on-Peer Harm

Peer-on-peer harm is physical, sexual or emotional harm that occurs in intimate relationships between students, in their friendships and among their peer groups. It occurs both inside and outside of school and is the most common type of harm that children experience. Examples include physical or threats of physical aggression, verbal abuse, relational aggression, social isolation, exclusion, sexual harassment, sexual violence, partner control, and discrimination based on gender, orientation, religious or political views, ethnic background etc.

**Signs of Abuse**

All people working with children have to be vigilant about gradual or sudden changes in the behavior of children in their care such as:

Changes in moods	Severe or frequent anxiety	Unexplained fears
Attention-seeking behaviors	Sudden under-achievement	Extreme passivity/aggression
Withdrawal from physical or emotional contact (towards strangers and non-strangers)	Unexplained physical injuries (bruises, broken bones, bites, burns, wounds, scratches)	Physical ailments - e.g. pain or irritation to genital area - without medical explanation
Improbable excuses given by parents/guardians/students, or refusal to discuss injuries	Developmentally inappropriate sexual content in artwork or language	Receiving special attention from an adult or a "secret" friendship with an adult
Changes in sleeping patterns	Absence pattern from School	Covering body even when hot
Refusal to go swimming	Delayed development	Intense emotional responses
Persistent tiredness	Sexually transmitted infections	Regression e.g. bed wetting
Enuresis and encopresis	Medical needs unattended	Lack of supervision

Consistent hunger	Inappropriate clothing	Poor hygiene
Inadequate nutrition	Extreme need for affection	Poor social relationships
Self-harm behaviors, and suicidal ideations/attempts	Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school	Conduct disorder: drug use, vandalism, stealing, lying etc.

Note: When children are abused they may exhibit one or more of the signs of abuse and neglect listed above. Whilst these potential signs of abuse must not be ignored, the school needs also to be mindful of the fact that some of these signs are exhibited in other contexts as well.

### Early Warning Signs of behaviors of Potential Offenders

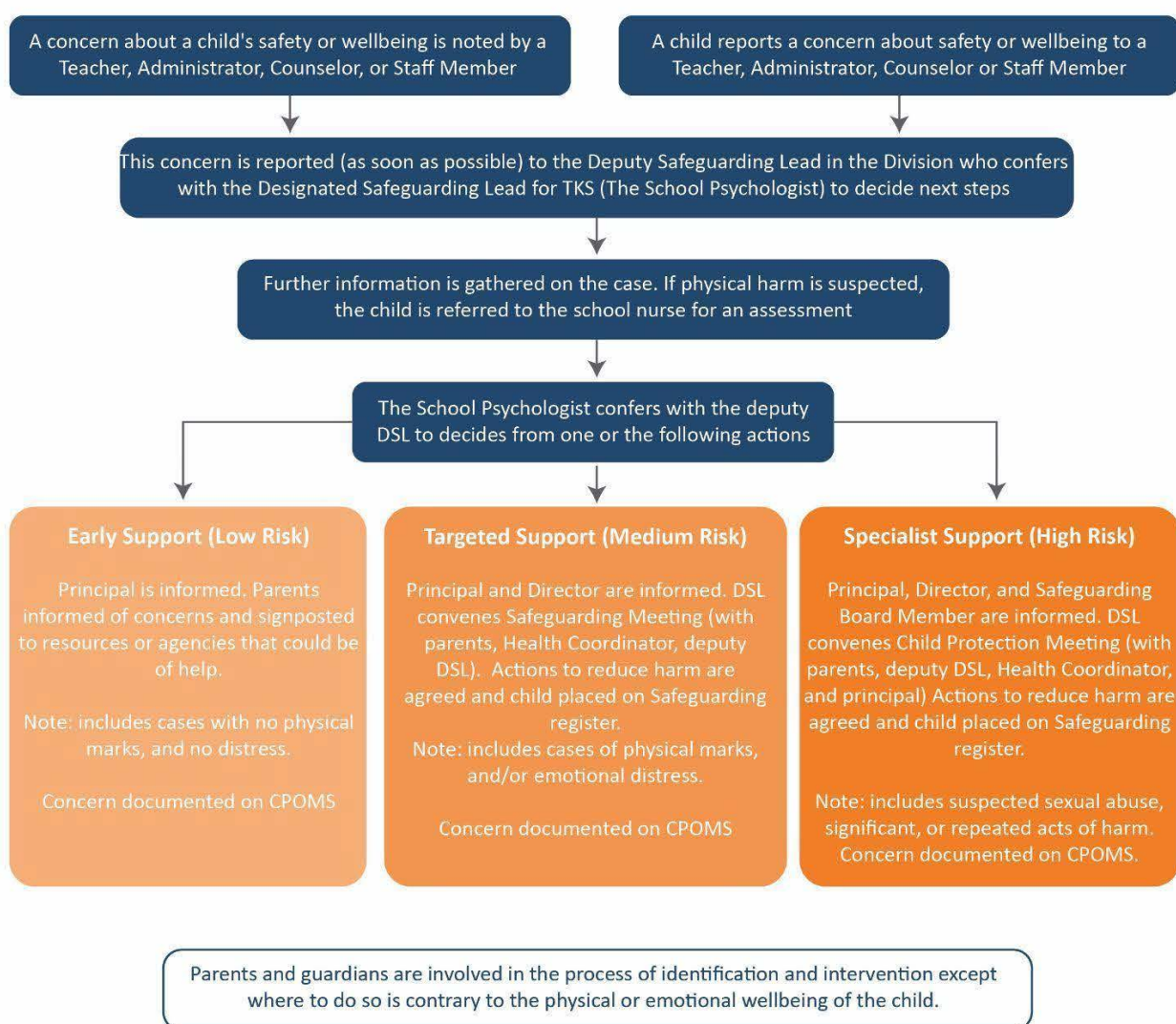
In addition to knowing the signs of victimization, below are some early warning signs of grooming behaviors to look out for in those who could potentially be offenders:

Early Offender Warning Signs (Students)	Early Offender Warning Signs (Adults)
Unusual interest in sex, sexualizing inanimate objects and activities	Inappropriate language, jokes and discussions about students/children
Does not stop sexual behavior when told no	Has “favorite” student or child
Uses force and coercion in social situations	Finds ways to be alone with children
Unusual intensity when discussing sex and sexuality	Sexualized talk in the presence of students/children
Socializes with children much younger	Seeks out vulnerable children to befriend
Gives unwarranted gifts, requires secrecy in relationships	Gives private gifts or has private chats on social media/internet

## Section 7: Well-being Decision Tree

This flow-chart outlined how safety and wellbeing concerns are dealt with at TKS. Regardless of whether a concern is raised by a staff member or a student directly, all concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (School Psychologist) who in consultation with the divisional Safeguarding Lead, decides on next steps. These next steps include notifying senior leadership, and signposting to services as well as offering targeted or specialist support.

### TKS Child Protection Flowchart and Map of Services



CPOMS = Child Protection Online Monitoring System. It is a digital platform used by the school to record any safeguarding concerns.



## Section 8: Adult Code of Conduct

Our Code, Our Expectations

### Adult Code of Conduct

Date of Issue: 18 October 2020

Latest Revision Date: 15 May 2023

#### Background to the TKS Adult Code of Conduct:

Adults at TKS hold a position of trust within our global, multi-cultural community at KAUST. This trust is preserved through our collective commitment to creating a healthy, safe, secure, and nurturing environment, and is exemplified when we live out our values of responsibility, inclusivity, adaptability, innovation, and diversity.

At TKS, we engage in respectful and collaborative relationships with students and colleagues, we actively promote the wellbeing of students by protecting them from harm, and we manage our assumptions and beliefs fairly and effectively.

The Code governs all professional and private interactions on-and off the TKS campus. For the purposes of the Code, the term “**Adult**” includes anyone connected to TKS who directly or indirectly works with children, e.g., staff, volunteers, visitors, student mentors, and third parties. For the purposes of the Code, a “child” is any TKS student.

The following standards and boundaries are not intended to be exhaustive but instead, represent key domains to be cognizant of, to ensure all students at TKS are protected from harm, and that adults maintain the highest standards of conduct at all times.

#### Standard 1 – Creating a Safe and Positive School Environment

Student wellbeing is our primary responsibility at TKS, and everyone at TKS is entitled to work and learn in an environment free from harassment and bullying, and to be treated with courtesy, care and respect. Adults at TKS have a duty to create this environment by ensuring that all activities are carried out with the highest regard for the health and safety of all, and by intervening when physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse and/or neglect, of any form, is witnessed or suspected.

For the purposes of the Code, the term “**neglect**” means not providing, or insufficiently providing for, the essential needs of a child or his or her health, emotional, psychological, educational, intellectual, social, cultural, and security.

Examples of harm include:

- Mistreatment;
- Sexual abuse;
- The use of obscene language that is degrading or disparaging to the child's dignity;
- Exposing a child to material that is immoral, criminal, or age-inappropriate content;
- Required participation in any race, sports or entertainment activity that may endanger health or safety; and
- Discrimination for any racial, social or economic reason.

## **Standard 2 – Obligation to Report Concerns and Cooperate with Investigations**

All adults at TKS are obliged to immediately report witnessed or suspected abuse or neglect to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is the **School Psychologist** at TKS, and cooperate with all follow-up measures or incident investigations that follow. All concerns shared in good faith are protected under [KAUST's Harassment Policy](#) and the [KAUST Whistleblower Policy](#). The Designated Safeguarding Lead in turn, is obliged to record each incident that occurs or is suspected and report incidents to the Director.

## **Standard 3 – Positive Language and Behavior**

Adults serve as role models for students within TKS, and as such, they must use appropriate language and positive behavior when interacting with others. The use of harsh, demeaning, or humiliating language, or physical punishment is unacceptable. Furthermore, adults must not use or ignore the use of any illegal substances. Additionally, it must be noted that TKS is a multicultural school with a diverse population, therefore conversations with students should be developmentally and culturally appropriate.

## **Standard 4 – Visibility and Transparency**

Adults must ensure that they are as visible as possible in all interactions with students. All one-to-one meetings with students should be linked to the Adult's specific role in the school, and occur in public areas. For the purpose of the Code, "**public space**" refers to a space in the building that has a broad window (allowing for all to have visibility from outside the room and from within the room). In addition, a public space is further defined in the Code as having more than two people in the room when physical contact is made with a student. When contact is necessary with a female student it is preferable that it is carried out by two female adults. When physical contact with a male student is required it is preferable that it is carried out by two male adults.

Adults should not transport students (other than their own children) to or from school events, without the prior permission of the student's parent or guardian if the student is a minor, and should avoid situations that give rise to the appearance of favoritism of a particular student. For the purposes of the Code, a "**minor**" means any person under the age of eighteen years old.

### **Standard 5 – Communication Platforms**

All communication with students should be on school platforms only, and adults should never use personal email addresses or social media accounts to communicate with students. All student images must be stored on school-based devices and particular care must be taken to ensure that TKS' Distance Learning Guidelines and Responsible Technology Use Guidelines in [ES](#) And [MS/HS](#) are adhered to. In regards to social media platforms, note the following:

1. All information regarding TKS and TKS students should be reposted from the official TKS social media platform. Adults are advised not to share students pictures or videos from individual social media accounts.

### **Standard 6 – Physical Contact with Students**

Adults at TKS must keep physical contact with students to a minimum, and if touch is necessary (e.g., to prevent injury or to instruct or to comfort a distressed child), this should occur in public, be brief, and be for a set purpose.

Emotional, romantic or sexual relationships between adults and students at TKS are strictly forbidden. Adults must avoid even the appearance of impropriety in interactions with students and must report any concerns about infatuation to their line manager. Furthermore, all adults at TKS respect student privacy, and promote independence, and thus must avoid carrying out personal care that students can do for themselves.

#### *Activities Requiring Physical Contact (Including Physical Education & Sports Coaching)*

Some staff such as those who teach PE and games, or who offer music or theater instruction, will on occasion have to initiate physical contact with students in order to support a student to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument, or to assist them with an exercise. [Coaches and staff may need to use physical contact to instruct, encourage, protect or comfort.](#)

Staff should always explain to a student the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take unless their safety is at immediate risk. This should be done with the student's agreement and awareness of the student's level of comfort.



Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and should take place in a visible environment. Staff must remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or nonverbally by the student and should consider alternatives when it is anticipated that a student might misinterpret any such contact. This could be by involving another member of staff, or through asking a less vulnerable student to assist in the demonstration.

Staff should only use physical contact if the aim is to:

- Develop sports skills or techniques
- Treat an injury
- Prevent an injury
- Meet the requirements of the sport

When physical contact is deemed necessary staff should consider the following:

- Minimize the need for physical contact. Consider if touching is necessary;
- Let students know why there is a need to demonstrate using a hands-on method;
- Explain what the physical contact will be and ask for volunteers, or ask students if they mind the teacher/ staff member demonstrating with them using a hands-on approach;
- At the beginning of a sport program such as gymnastics, explain that the teaching of it will involve spotting by the teacher and peers;
- Be explicit about what part of the body they will be touching, for example, around the waist or hips;
- Inform the students that if they fall or need unexpected assistance to avoid injury, the staff member may make necessary physical contact. Be explicit about the fact that in a safety situation touching may not proceed as planned; and
- Give the students verbal instructions at first. If they have difficulty, ask them if they would like to be shown how to do it. If they say no, respect that it is their choice.

### *Toilets, Showers & Changing*

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when going to the toilet, changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard students, satisfy health and safety considerations, and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the students concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment. Staff therefore need to be vigilant about their own behavior, ensure they follow agreed guidelines and be mindful of the needs of the students. The following should always be considered:

- Give explicit instructions and guidelines for behavior in change rooms;
- Ensure that there is one student in the changing stall or the toilet at a time.
- Set a routine for going into change rooms and keep to it;
- Announce to students when a teacher is entering the change room and allow time for students to cover up;

- Do not stand in change rooms as students have a right to privacy.
- Staff should avoid any physical contact when students are in a state of undress.
- Staff should avoid any visually intrusive behavior when they are in changing rooms.
- Sensitive students should be offered the opportunity to change privately.
- Staff should not change in the same place as students.
- Staff should only shower in staff-designated changing spaces.
- In settings with younger (Early Years and Year 1) students where supervision must be closer, students will change in individual changing rooms, one at a time, if assistance is needed the teacher/ teacher assistant remains outside the individual stall and assists by talking the student through the process.
- If a staff member needs to enter a student toilet or changing room to address a concern (e.g., to locate a missing student, concern a student is being harmed, concern a student is involved in inappropriate activity, etc.), the following considerations should be taken:
  - Knock (if applicable) and announce yourself loudly. Ask students to exit. If you need to enter, tell them that you'll be entering soon. Wait for students to prepare for your entrance. Announce again when you are entering the bathroom or changing room.
  - It is ideal to have another adult witnessing your interactions with students in either of these locations. If you need to enter, make every effort to have another faculty member join you.
  - Spend the least amount of time in the room as possible and do not touch a student unless medical attention is needed.
  - Divert your eyes when possible from the students in either of these locations.
  - Exit the toilet or changing room as quickly as possible.
- Carry out any follow-up conversations at a more suitable location (elementary office, secondary office, etc.).

## Standard 7 – Professionalism at Work

All adults are expected to abide by all KAUST Policies related to professionalism and ethics (e.g, KAUST's [Code of Conduct at Thuwal Campus](#), and [KAUST's Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy](#), and [Policy on Receiving Gifts](#)) and to adhere to the [TKS Dress Code](#).

Furthermore, adults are expected to act within their professional domains, and to follow all reasonable rules and instructions given by line managers and supervisors. All adults should be cognisant of Saudi Arabia's laws related to children and any law that has an impact of working at school, and with students. It is therefore imperative to note that LGBTQ+ is illegal in Saudi Arabia , therefore content at school should be monitored, such that all the laws of the country are upheld. Adults have a responsibility to apply a professional approach towards rules and laws such that respect and upholding of the law is maintained.

An additional aspect of maintaining professionalism is that adults must declare all conflicts of interest in decision-making and conflicts of commitment. TKS adults are required to participate in all mandatory training as and when scheduled by TKS.

### **Standard 8 - Confidentiality and Data Protection**

At TKS, adults have access to personal information about students that may be both sensitive and confidential in nature. This information must be treated with the highest level of confidentiality and such private information may be divulged only through proper channels to persons who have a need-to-know or a right-to-know, and when appropriate to do so. All confidential records must be stored in line with data protection best practice, and the written consent of the parents and/or guardians of minors and/or of majority-age students must be obtained before sharing sensitive information or confidential information with others.

Adults should note that photos and videos of students should only be taken using TKS devices to show students progress and performances with the purpose of sharing with parents.

In the case of Child Protection matters, particularly when reporting physical signs of abuse, no photographs of the student or of the bruises or injury should be taken. The adult should log the report on to CPOMS and use the body map on the student's profile to mark the places of injury.

Any conversation about a student should take place with only the relevant adults in a private space (eg: principal's office, in the classroom when there are no students or counselor's office). No conversations about particular students, using names, should be held in the teachers lounge or in a social context (Example, when having a staff lunch, etc.). Adults should not have conversations with students about other students' progress or any other confidential matters.

### **Standard 9 - Conduct Outside of Work**

TKS recognizes that TKS adults interact with children in multiple roles (e.g., teacher, coach, neighbor, parent, family friend, etc.) While conduct outside the workplace is not dictated by TKS, all TKS adults are expected to act, at all times, with the highest levels of integrity and to avoid any behavior in one setting, whether in or outside the workplace, that could be perceived to undermine their roles or standing with KAUST. Any unlawful, anti-social, or other misconduct, which jeopardizes the reputation of KAUST, TKS or the Adult's position, must be avoided and could subject the Adult to disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.

### **Standard 10 - Reporting**

In addition to reporting all child protection concerns, adults working at TKS are also required to disclose to their line manager, any charges, convictions or other outcomes of any offence they have been charged with, within one week of their occurrence.

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