



THE APPLE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

MISSING CHILD POLICY & PROCEDURE

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Suite

Policy Owner	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / School Principal
Executive Accountability	School Principal
Governance Oversight	Board of Directors / Governing Body
Applies To	All staff, students, parents/guardians, contractors, volunteers, visitors and transport personnel
Effective Date	31 August 2026
Review Cycle	Annually and immediately following any missing-child incident, significant near miss, regulatory change or identified control failure
Next Review Date	25 August 2027
Related Policies	Child Protection & Safeguarding; Health & Safety; Attendance & Registration; Educational Visits; Visitor & Site Security; Transport; Emergency/Crisis Management
Regulatory Alignment	KHDA requirements for Dubai private schools; Executive Council Resolution No. (2) of 2017; UAE Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 (Wadeema's Law); applicable UAE child-protection and emergency-reporting requirements

Safeguarding principle: no procedural timeframe or internal approval process shall delay action where there is reasonable concern for a student's immediate safety or welfare.



1. Purpose, Scope and Governance Principles

The Apple International School (AIS) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, dignity and security of every student in its care. This policy establishes the mandatory prevention, response, escalation, reporting and review arrangements to be followed whenever a student cannot be immediately accounted for while under the school's supervision or responsibility.

The policy applies on school premises, during arrival and dismissal, on school transport, during extracurricular activities, before- and after-school provision, educational visits, trips and any other school-organised activity. It applies across Early Years, Primary and Secondary.

This policy forms part of the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy Suite. It reflects the school's responsibility for student safety throughout the school day, on school buses and during school-organised activities outside the premises, and must be implemented alongside all applicable KHDA requirements and UAE child-protection legislation.

1.1 Non-Negotiable Governance Principles

- Student safety takes precedence over operational convenience, reputational considerations or internal approval processes.
- There is no minimum waiting period before a concern is escalated. The response begins as soon as a student's whereabouts cannot be immediately established when they should reasonably be known.
- Escalation is risk-based. Age, vulnerability, Students of Determination needs, medical needs, communication needs, suspected abduction, evidence of site departure and environmental hazards must be considered immediately.
- The Principal retains ultimate executive accountability for implementation and compliance. The DSL coordinates the operational safeguarding response.
- The Governing Body provides strategic oversight and assurance; it does not direct the live operational search.
- Significant incidents and near misses are subject to documented review and governance assurance.

2. Definition and Risk Classification

A student is considered missing for the purpose of this policy when their whereabouts cannot be immediately established at a time or place where the school reasonably expects to know their location. A report by any staff member, student, parent/guardian or third party that a student cannot be found must be acted upon immediately.

A student may initially be 'unaccounted for' during a rapid verification check; however, this distinction must never be used to delay safeguarding escalation. Where reasonable doubt remains after immediate verification, the missing-child procedure is activated.

2.1 Immediate High-Risk Indicators

- Very young age; significant SEND/additional needs; limited communication or safety awareness; medical vulnerability.
- Evidence or reasonable belief that the student has left the supervised area or school site.
- Suspected abduction, coercion, abuse, neglect, custody-related removal or other criminal concern.
- Extreme weather, traffic, water, construction, restricted areas or other environmental hazards.
- Any circumstance in which delay could reasonably increase the risk of harm.

3. Prevention, Supervision and Control Measures

3.1 Site Security and Controlled Access

- Entry and exit points are controlled, monitored and secured in accordance with the school's site-security arrangements. Unauthorised access or exit points must be reported and rectified immediately.
- Visitors sign in and out, display identification and are supervised in accordance with the Visitor & Site Security Policy.
- Perimeter fencing, gates, access controls, CCTV and other relevant security systems are subject to documented routine checks and maintenance.
- Early Years and Primary areas maintain age-appropriate physical controls and supervision arrangements.

3.2 Attendance, Supervision and Accountability

- Accurate registers are taken at the start of the school day and at defined points during the day. Student movement and transitions must be actively supervised and reconciled.
- Staff-to-student ratios and deployment arrangements must meet school and regulatory requirements. Adults counted for formal supervision must be appropriately appointed, vetted and authorised.
- Arrival, dismissal, lesson changeovers, breaks, assemblies, extracurricular activities, transport and trips are treated as higher-risk transition points and are subject to specific supervision controls.
- Authorised collectors are verified. Changes to collection arrangements must be confirmed through approved school communication channels.
- Off-site activities use documented headcounts at departure, arrival, transition points, before departure from a venue and on return.

3.3 Transport Safeguards

- The school retains accountability for student safety where transport is outsourced.
- Bus boarding and alighting records must be reconciled against expected students. Unexplained discrepancies are escalated immediately.
- Drivers and bus attendants/escorts follow approved handover and authorised drop-off procedures and must not leave a student at an unapproved location.
- A physical bus sweep is completed and recorded after each journey to confirm that no student remains on the vehicle.
- Any student who fails to board, is not met at an approved stop, or cannot be reconciled against the transport register is treated as an immediate safeguarding concern.



3.4 Training and Readiness

- All relevant staff receive safeguarding induction and annual refresher training on this procedure; attendance and competence checks are documented.
- Trip leaders, transport teams, reception/security staff and duty staff receive role-specific briefing.
- Scenario-based drills or tabletop exercises are used periodically to test readiness, communication, search zoning, accountability and escalation.

4. Missing Student Procedure - On School Premises

Any member of staff who suspects that a student is missing must act immediately. The remaining students must never be left unsupervised.

1. Raise the concern immediately with a nearby colleague and initiate a rapid verification of the student's expected location, register, last known movement and immediate surrounding area.
2. Notify the DSL and/or a member of SLT without delay where the student is not immediately located or where any high-risk indicator is present.
3. The DSL/SLT activates the coordinated school response: allocate defined search zones; secure and monitor gates/exits; check attendance, sign-out and movement records; and assign a leader to maintain a time-stamped incident log.
4. Authorised staff review relevant CCTV and access-control information promptly. Evidence must be preserved and access restricted to those with a legitimate safeguarding role.
5. The Principal or delegated senior leader is informed at the earliest stage of a confirmed missing-student response. Parents/guardians are contacted as soon as reasonably possible and must not be kept uninformed while an extended search continues.
6. Police (999) must be contacted immediately where there is reasonable concern that the student may have left the supervised environment, may be at risk of harm, or where the circumstances otherwise warrant emergency intervention. No fixed internal timeframe shall delay emergency escalation.
7. Where abuse, neglect, abduction or another child-protection concern is suspected, the DSL follows the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and applicable statutory reporting requirements, including use of the Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre channel (116111) where appropriate.
8. The search continues under the direction of Police or other competent authority once they are involved. Staff provide the student's last known location, description, clothing, relevant vulnerabilities/medical needs and other information necessary to support the response.
9. Once located, the student's immediate welfare and safeguarding needs are assessed before routine activity resumes. Parents/guardians and all agencies previously notified are informed that the student has been located.
10. The DSL and Principal ensure that the incident is formally recorded, safeguarding follow-up is completed and the post-incident review process in Section 8 is initiated.

5. Off-Site Visits, Trips and Transport Incidents

Educational visits and transport involve heightened transition risk. The Visit/Trip Leader or transport lead must maintain accurate student accountability and activate this policy immediately where a student cannot be accounted for.

1. Stop or restrict group movement where safe to do so; maintain supervision of the remaining students.
2. Immediately alert venue security/management or the transport control point and conduct a rapid check of the student's last known location.
3. Notify the school's DSL/SLT emergency contact without delay. The school activates the same risk-based escalation principles used for an on-site incident.
4. Parents/guardians are informed as soon as reasonably possible by the school through the designated senior contact.
5. Where the student may be in danger, may have left the supervised environment, or the circumstances otherwise justify emergency intervention, Police (999) are contacted immediately. Local emergency procedures are followed when outside the UAE.
6. Where there is a suspected child-protection concern, the DSL follows the safeguarding referral pathway and applicable statutory reporting requirements.
7. For transport discrepancies, the driver/escort must alert the school immediately and follow the school's authorised instructions. The transport provider must preserve route, attendance, GPS/CCTV and communication records where available.
8. After resolution, the incident is recorded, reviewed and incorporated into future trip/transport risk assessments.

6. Custody, Court Orders and Unauthorised Removal

- No student is released to an individual who is not verified through the school's authorised collection arrangements.
- Where the school holds a valid UAE custody, guardianship or restraining order, staff must follow the documented restrictions and immediately refer any uncertainty to the Principal/DSL.
- Any attempted or actual removal contrary to known authorised arrangements is treated as a safeguarding incident. Police are contacted immediately where there is suspected unlawful removal, threat, conflict or risk to the student.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for providing the school with current, valid documentation relevant to custody or collection arrangements.
- All such incidents are documented and escalated to relevant authorities in accordance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements.



7. Roles, Responsibilities and Accountability

Role	Mandatory Accountability
Board of Directors / Governing Body	Provides strategic safeguarding oversight; approves the policy; seeks assurance on implementation, significant incidents, near misses, trends and corrective-action closure; holds the Principal accountable for remediation.
School Principal	Retains ultimate executive accountability for implementation, compliance and institutional response; ensures appropriate parent, Police, regulatory and external-agency escalation; authorises formal stand-down and corrective action.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Coordinates the operational safeguarding response; ensures child-protection considerations, documentation, referrals, welfare follow-up, incident review and safeguarding records are completed.
Vice Principal / SLT	Supports command, search zoning, supervision, communications, site control and continuity of school operations under the Principal/DSL.
All Staff	Act immediately; maintain supervision; report concerns; follow allocated search/action instructions; preserve confidentiality and evidence.
Visit/Trip Leader	Maintains headcounts and student accountability; leads the immediate venue response and escalates to the school emergency contact.
Transport Lead / Provider / Driver / Escort	Maintains accurate boarding/alighting and handover controls; immediately escalates discrepancies; preserves relevant route and vehicle records; complies with school direction.
Security / Reception	Controls access/exit points, supports CCTV/access-record checks, verifies visitor/collection information and maintains communication logs as directed.
Parents / Guardians	Maintain accurate emergency contacts and authorised collection arrangements; promptly communicate changes and relevant custody documentation.

7.1 Governance Assurance

The Governing Body shall receive proportionate, anonymised assurance on significant incidents and near misses, recurring patterns, identified control failures and completion of corrective actions. Governance oversight must protect confidentiality and must not interfere with live safeguarding or Police activity.

8. Recording, Reporting, Review and Continuous Improvement

Every missing-student incident and significant safeguarding near miss, irrespective of duration or outcome, must be formally documented. The record must be factual, time-stamped, securely retained and accessible only to authorised personnel.

- Date, time, location, expected location and last confirmed sighting.
- Names/roles of supervising staff and those involved in the response.
- Timeline of verification, search, escalation, parent contact, Police/agency contact and recovery.
- Student's account, where age- and developmentally appropriate.
- Relevant vulnerabilities, medical/SEND considerations and risk factors.
- CCTV/access-control, transport, attendance or communication records considered or preserved.
- Contributing factors and identified control failures.
- Immediate and longer-term corrective actions, named owners, deadlines and evidence of completion.

8.1 Post-Incident Review

The DSL and Principal will complete an initial review within 48 hours wherever practicable. Significant incidents require a documented root-cause review covering: what happened; why existing controls did or did not operate effectively; whether supervision, security, attendance, transport, communication or training contributed; what must change; who owns each action; the completion deadline; and how effectiveness will be verified.

Where a genuine safeguarding concern exists, the matter is recorded within the school's central safeguarding system and referred or reported to the appropriate authority in accordance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements. The Principal/DSL must ensure that required notifications are made within the applicable timeframe. The school will not rely on an internal policy timeframe where law, Police direction or regulatory instruction requires earlier action.

9. Parent/Guardian Communication and Student Welfare

- Parent/guardian communication follows the escalation requirements in Sections 4 and 5 and must be timely, proportionate to risk and documented.
- The Principal designates one authorised family liaison to provide consistent factual updates and maintain the communication record.
- Following recovery, the DSL ensures appropriate physical, emotional and safeguarding support for the student.
- Following resolution, the family is offered an appropriate debrief on the response and preventive actions, subject to safeguarding, Police and confidentiality restrictions.



10. External Agencies, Confidentiality and Media

Where Police or another competent authority is involved, the school follows all lawful directions. Media enquiries are referred only to the Principal or authorised spokesperson. Staff must not publish or discuss the incident through personal or unofficial channels. The privacy, dignity and safeguarding interests of the student and family remain paramount.

11. Policy Monitoring, Approval and Review

The DSL and SLT monitor implementation through training records, incident/near-miss analysis, supervision checks, transport assurance, site-security reviews and lessons learned. The policy is reviewed at least annually and immediately following a significant incident, near miss, material control failure, regulatory change or updated safeguarding guidance. Amendments are submitted for formal Board approval.

12. Related Documents and Regulatory References

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy; Health & Safety Policy; Attendance & Registration Policy; Educational Visits Policy; Transport Policy; Emergency/Crisis Management arrangements.
- Executive Council Resolution No. (2) of 2017 Regulating Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai - including student safety/protection and school transport responsibilities.
- UAE Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema's Law).
- UAE Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre reporting channels, including 116111.
- Current KHDA guidance, inspection/quality expectations and other applicable UAE safeguarding requirements.