



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Alexander Montessori School

Red Road Campus - 6050 SW 57th Avenue, Miami, FL 33143

Old Cutler Campus - 14400 Old Cutler Road, Miami, FL 33158

Palmetto Bay Campus - 17800 Old Cutler Road, Miami, FL 33157

Ludlum Road Campus - 14850 SW 67th Avenue, Miami, FL 33158

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Rationale

At Alexander Montessori School, we believe that children thrive in an environment where they feel safe, respected, and supported. Safeguarding is central to our Mission and aligned with the Montessori philosophy, which nurtures the whole child — academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. We are committed to protecting all students from harm and promoting their overall well-being.

Commitment and Compliance

Alexander Montessori School adheres to all safeguarding and child protection requirements in accordance with the laws and regulations of the State of Florida. We follow established procedures to prevent harm, respond to concerns, and support students and families appropriately.

Scope

This policy applies to all Staff, Administrators, volunteers, contractors, and visitors within the school community.

Forms of Abuse

We recognize and remain vigilant in identifying all forms of abuse and neglect, including:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional (psychological) abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Exploitation

All concerns are taken seriously and addressed promptly and appropriately.

Organizational Responsibilities

The school is responsible for:

- Providing a safe, secure, and nurturing environment
- Implementing and regularly reviewing safeguarding policies and procedures
- Ensuring safer recruitment practices, including background checks and screening in accordance with Florida law
- Appointing a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or equivalent
- Maintaining accurate, secure, and confidential records
- Working with external agencies when necessary

- Promoting a culture of vigilance and accountability

Individual Responsibilities

- **Staff and Faculty:** Maintain professional boundaries, use appropriate physical interaction at all times, remain vigilant, and report concerns immediately
- **Leadership Team:** Ensure compliance, oversee safeguarding procedures, and support staff training
- **Volunteers and Visitors:** Follow school safeguarding expectations and report concerns
- **Students:** Encouraged to speak up if they feel unsafe or concerned
- **Parents/Guardians:** Act as partners in promoting student safety and well-being

Safer Recruitment

Alexander Montessori School follows safer recruitment practices to ensure that all adults working with children are suitable. This includes thorough background screening, reference checks, and adherence to all state-mandated requirements.

Professional Conduct and Physical Interaction

All Staff are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Physical interaction with students must always be appropriate, age-appropriate, and in the best interest of the child. Any form of inappropriate contact is strictly prohibited.

Intimate Care

Alexander Montessori School recognizes that some students may require assistance with intimate care (such as toileting, changing, or personal hygiene), particularly in early childhood settings.

We are committed to ensuring that all intimate care is:

- Provided in a manner that respects the dignity, privacy, and independence of the child
- Carried out by trained Staff following established school procedures
- Developmentally appropriate and consistent with the child's needs
- Conducted in a safe and supervised environment

Where possible:

- The child's consent and cooperation will be sought
- Parents/guardians will be informed of routines and any concerns
- Two adults or appropriate supervision procedures will be in place when required

All Staff are trained to ensure that intimate care is delivered sensitively and appropriately, safeguarding both the child and the adult. Any concerns arising during intimate care must be reported immediately in line with safeguarding procedures.

Bullying, Technology, and Online Safety

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, including cyberbullying. We promote respectful behavior and digital responsibility.

The use of mobile devices, iPads, and other technology is monitored and guided to ensure safe and appropriate use. Students are taught responsible digital citizenship as part of their development.

Photography and Media

The school follows strict guidelines regarding the use of student images and media. Photographs or videos of students are only taken and used in accordance with school policy and with appropriate parental consent.

Training and Support

- All Staff receive mandatory safeguarding training upon hire and ongoing refresher training
- Designated Staff receive advanced safeguarding training
- Staff are trained to recognize signs of abuse, neglect, and changes in behavior
- Ongoing support and guidance are provided to ensure staff confidence in safeguarding responsibilities

Safeguarding Procedures and Reporting

All concerns regarding a child's safety or well-being must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or School Administration.

The school follows clear procedures for:

- Identifying and reporting concerns
- Responding to disclosures
- Escalating concerns when necessary
- Complying with Florida's mandatory reporting laws

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

All safeguarding concerns are recorded accurately and stored securely. Information is handled with strict confidentiality and shared only with those who need to know in order to protect the child. Record keeping follows legal and professional standards.

Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behavior Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use of Technology Policy
- Staff Handbook

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with current legislation, best practices, and the evolving needs of our school community.