



Planète Montessori  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

DATE	REVIEWED BY/ROLE	NEXT REVIEW DATE
Last updated: January 2024	DSL	July 2024

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**Statement on Safeguarding/Child Protection**

Planete Montessori International School is committed to providing a safe environment for all its members, as well as the promotion of everyone's physical, emotional and mental health. To support this, we are committed to act in the best interest of every child and adult in our care by providing an environment of inclusion, security and safety. Planete Montessori International School follows all national regulations and laws subscribing this, and we encourage everyone in our community to talk to a person of trust when they have a worry or concern. We are alert to signs of abuse and neglect and have procedures in place to deal effectively with these concerns for the wellbeing of our children and to make sure they are protected and supported.

This document entails these efforts and the regulations in place in our school, and thus this policy applies to all school staff and any community members working with children in and around our school.

In this policy, we understand safeguarding to be the actions we take for all children, as every child and young person has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status. It is linked to promoting welfare, and can be defined as:

- Protecting children and young people from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children and adults' health or development
- Ensuring children and young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

In this policy, we understand child protection as the actions taken to protect children and young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. Proper child protection reduces the need for action to protect children and young people from harm.

We believe this policy:

- has been reviewed thoroughly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make sure it stands up to scrutiny
- flows and is easy to follow
- is an essential part of our school
- supports staff in managing certain situations
- allows for a consistent application of values and principles throughout our school
- provides guidance, accountability and clarity on how the school operates

In line with this, we ensure that:

- All parties in the school understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities
- All parents/carers are made aware of the school's responsibilities regarding safeguarding and child protection by publishing of (extracts of) our policies on our school website

**Culture of Safeguarding**

To support safeguarding and child protection measures in the school, we encourage and underline a culture of safeguarding. This involves safeguarding measures throughout the layers of the school with clarity across the board of whom to go to, what to expect, how to deal with disclosures and how to report incidents and accidents properly. Consent is discussed, and concerns are handled using positive communication to resolve incidents properly. Children are offered clear means of accessing support, which includes discussing the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the school. This policy underlines these commitments, and informs all relevant parties about our commitments and practices to maintain a safe and comfortable environment.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is written in conjunction with, and works alongside, the following policies, to cover all aspects of safety, safeguarding and child protection:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Visitor Policy

This policy, and all other policies in place at Planete Montessori International School, are in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the national legislation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

**Roles and responsibilities**

Role	Name
Head of School (HoS)	Oussama Chraibi
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Rens van Lieshout

**Role of School Personnel and Volunteers**

School personnel will:

- be aware of the following names, understand the roles and know the contact information of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- recognise that safeguarding and child protection, alongside maintaining children's welfare, is their main responsibility and that they always have to act in the best interests of the child
- provide a safe school and classroom environment in which children can learn, ensuring that pupils:
  - > feel safe and protected
  - > feel safe to talk, and are listened to
  - > know how to assess risk to themselves and others
  - > know how to keep themselves, and others, safe
  - > know how to raise a concern or complaint
  - > know and recognise a trusted adult that they can go to and raise their concerns
  - > feel supported and protected when they raise a concern
  - > are kept informed of any actions that have been taken when they have raised a complaint
- ensure that no promise of confidentiality is made to any child, but to always act in the best interests of a child

**Role of Pupils**

Pupils must:

- feel safe and protected
- know how to assess risk to themselves and keep themselves safe
- know how to raise a concern or complaint, and know and recognise a trusted adult they could do so with
- feel supported and protected when they raise a concern
- be kept informed of any actions that have been taken when they have raised a complaint
- be made aware of the basic safeguarding procedures in school

**Role of Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers are:

- asked to work hard with the school to establish excellent home-school relationships
- aware that we have a responsibility for the welfare of all our pupils
- aware that they will be kept up to date with all our actions

**Types of Abuse**

As a school, it is important to recognise that there are many different forms of abuse, combined overall in four different, main categories; physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

We recognise that abuse can be done by anyone. This includes children and young people, adults in the school and adults outside of school.

Additionally, we understand that abuse can also take place anywhere. This includes at school, when playing outdoors, during extracurricular activities or while on educational visits, at a friend's place, at home, online, etc.

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils, be this through effective lines of communication, providing trusted adults, supporting pupils who are struggling or by generally providing an ethos of protection.

Therefore, the school will:

- establish a culture of safeguarding, which is understood and underlined by all staff and throughout our school policies
- ensure that children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are experiencing difficulty, in the form of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- provide opportunities to equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and know who they should turn to for help

Our school has a zero-tolerance against any form of abuse, harassment or violence, and will take action to protect any victim(s) involved.

**Incidents and Accidents**

It is important to distinguish between incidents and accidents when we discuss abuse.

Incidents are situations in which deliberate behaviour leads to harm, or can lead to harm. This can include one person, for example when involving self-harm, pupils amongst each other (child-on-child abuse) or an adult and a child. It can include all types and categories of abuse, including:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Accidents are situations in which unintentional behaviour leads to harm, which can include one or two individuals or a group of people. Though the prevention of significant risks, either by adults or children when they are playing, fall under the banner of neglect and are harmful, all accidental injuries need to be considered in the light of the age of the child, their stage of

development and their social background, as bumps and bruises can occur during regular, everyday play, in recess or during social interaction.

### **Abuse**

Abuse is mistreatment by any other person(s) that violates someone's human and civil rights. The abuse can vary, from treating someone with disrespect in a way that significantly affects the person's quality of life to causing actual physical or mental suffering.

When abuse happens specifically between children, this is known as child-on-child abuse, which is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, financial and/or coercive control exercised between children and young people.

Part of abuse, and often linked to sexual abuse, is grooming, which is the process of a young person being contacted on- or offline with the intention of meeting and potentially harming the child or young person, or encouraging a child to send images or videos of themselves.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, such as age and gender, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Something most often under the banner of harassment, though it can include, or build up to, abuse, is peer pressure. This is the pressure that friends/peers put on a person to do something or act in a certain way. Not complying with this can put the person at risk of becoming the victim of abuse or of experiencing social exclusion.

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm.

It can also include someone fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately inducing, illness, which is known as FII (fabricated or induced illness).

### **Emotional abuse**

Sometimes referred to as psychological abuse, emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person, such as to cause severe adverse effects on the child's health and emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child.

Emotional abuse can also include exploitation, which refers to a child or young person being used for someone else's gain and can involve sexual, abusive or manipulative behaviour. It normally occurs because of an 'imbalance of power', such as age, physical strength, gender, cognitive

ability or access to resources such as food, clothes and a place to stay, and can involve exploitation for money, gifts affection, status, etc.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves someone forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities. This may not necessarily involve a high level of violence and the child or young person may or may not be aware of what is happening. It can happen to anyone and can happen anywhere, including online, where it can involve sexting (the sharing of sexual messages or semi-nude or nude photos or videos of themselves or others). It can also happen between children (child-on-child sexual abuse) and can involve a group of children sexually assaulting or harassing a single child or group.

Sexual abuse may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (e.g. masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing)
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or producing sexual images or videos, watching sexual activities, inappropriate role play, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child or young person, including online

Sexual harassment is part of sexual abuse, and includes ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’. It can make a child feel embarrassed, offended and humiliated, and can occur online or offline.

Sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual jokes or provocations, including whistling and gesticulation
- Sexual comments, including sexualised nicknames, sexual remarks about appearance and personal or anecdotal sexual stories
- All forms of non-consensual touch, including deliberately brushing up against someone, hugging, grabbing and groping
- Non-consensual display or sharing of sexual drawings, photos and/or videos

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. It also includes the failure of preventing harm. Neglect can be caused intentionally, for example by withholding food, or unintentionally, also known as passive neglect. A child who is neglected will often be subjected to other forms of abuse.

### **Online Safety**

We want all pupils to feel safe at all times, including online. For this, we are adamant about providing online safety at our school. Online safety refers to the act of staying safe online, on whichever device connected to the internet. Being safe online involves protecting yourself or others from online harm and risks which may otherwise jeopardise personal information or affect mental health and wellbeing. It also involves being aware of possible threats that anyone could



encounter on the internet, such as security threats, data breaches, online reputation management and harmful or illegal content.

Online safeguarding issues can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- Content, which revolves around all forms of illegal and/or harmful content, such as pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, fake news, etc.
- Contact, which revolves around harmful online interactions with others, including peer pressure, commercial advertising, grooming or exploiting for personal gains
- Conduct, which revolves around personal online behaviour and can increase the likelihood of causing or experiencing harm, such as sending and receiving explicit images
- Commerce, which revolves around online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and financial scams

We work seriously to ensure pupils are safeguarded from potentially harmful experiences at school, and believe online safety:

- is an integral part of safeguarding
- must follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures
- will educate pupils about the benefits and risks of using technology
- will provide awareness and techniques for enabling pupils to control their online experience

We believe that all pupils, school personnel and other community members have a duty to:

- promote and model positive and appropriate online behaviour
- behave respectfully online and offline
- protect each other and the name of the school
- report any concerns or inappropriate behaviour to the DSL

**Academic Honesty**

One important part of online activity in school is the proper usage of information. To ensure this, pupils are guided by the staff in validating the accuracy of information and not simply believing everything. This is particularly important during research and essays, where it is important to organise their thoughts and present accurate information, coming to conclusions that make sense in light of the subject it is presented in.

Another vital part of online activity is plagiarism and copyright. An important topic taught in classes such as IT, but also in their regular environment when conducting projects and research, it is instrumental for their future educational careers and is addressed from the start. These teachings revolve around giving credit to the sources used and informing their audience of what information they have used, where they found it and when and how they used it. Without this, the topic of academic honesty and plagiarism is brought up, which can lead to invalidation of their work, resulting in a failing mark or a redo being required. Therefore, they are taught how to cite sources correctly, how to avoid plagiarism and copyrighted material and how to reflect on the validity of the source, ensuring that only valid, correct information is used. This helps protect the pupils from misinformation and academic misconduct, and avoids putting themselves at risk.

**Social Media**

Usage of social media is prohibited at school, except for those working on the school's social media profiles. However, we cannot deny that an integral part of pupils' and adults' internet experience is social media, and that this comes with safety risks.

If staff uses social media in a professional capacity:

- the account can be public or private
- appropriate images should be used
- private messages should never be sent to children they work with

## **Acceptable Use Agreement — Staff/Pupil**

To further professionalise our environment, we are working towards implementing an acceptable use agreement starting September 2024. The details of this are found below:

As a school, we recognise the value of technology both in our capacity as teachers, educating children, or as children, learning through online methods. Therefore, we recognise the role of technology and devices in our classrooms, and allow for its uses within our premises. However, this comes with responsibility, and thus the following guidelines are to be met at any point.

### **Guidelines**

By being a part of our school community, be this in the capacity of a pupil or an employed staff member, you agree to use any electronic device, whether owned personally or not, properly while at school. This means that during school hours, and whenever using school internet connections, you are required to use any device for educational purposes only. In case of pupils, this happens under supervision of the adults present.

In addition, you acknowledge awareness of the following:

- All activity over the network or while using school-owned property may be monitored
- Misuse of school internet or devices, or privately owned devices during school hours, may result in disciplinary action, such as a meeting with your superior or with parents/carers, or a ban on using devices within the school
- Users of the school internet are to alert a member of the administration immediately of any safety or security concerns while using the network

By signing this acceptable use agreement, you agree that you will:

- when at school, use technology only for school-related activities
- follow the same guidelines for respect as applied offline
- treat school resources, including the WiFi connection, carefully, and alert administration if there is a problem
- alert the DSL of any abuse taking place online, or if being shown anything inappropriate or harmful
- recognise that the provision of school resources, such as devices and connections, is a privilege, and treat it as such

By signing this acceptable use agreement, you agree that you will **not**:

- use school resources in a harmful way, or purposely cause harm
- attempt to find inappropriate images, videos, texts or other online content
- engage in cyberbullying, grooming and other forms of online abuse
- use school connections to send spam
- plagiarise content you find online
- agree to meet someone you meet online in real life
- use language that would be unacceptable in offline situations
- use school technologies for anything illegal
- attempt to hack any person or any website
- change the school computers' settings
- purposely gain access to other people's files or information
- do anything to bring the school in discredit

*By signing this document, I agree to the terms and conditions stated, and will ensure to follow the guidelines and use technology at school and during school hours in an acceptable way.\**

Your name and role/environment:

.....

Date + signature

.....

*\*In case of signage by a pupil, a copy of this document will be given to the parents/carers to provide transparency on the use of technology in our school.*

**Mental health**

We recognise that everyone has mental health, and that mental health is a continuum, not something that is either good or bad. We also recognise that good mental health is more than simply an absence of mental illness, and that even with good mental health, problems can occur.

Mental health for children and young people means, among other things:

- A capability to enter into, and sustain, mutually satisfying personal relationships
- Continuous psychological development
- An ability to play and learn according to age and intellectual level
- A degree of distress and maladaptive behaviour within normal limits
- A clear sense of identity and self-worth

As adults with regular contact with the children, we are well-placed to notice children struggling in any of these areas. Would this be the case, we realise the importance of not diagnosing, but instead breaking the stigma on mental health, observing, checking in with the child as a person of trust, being an active listener, being non-judgemental, being emotionally available, reflecting and, finally, reporting any relevant findings.

**Whistleblowing**

We understand whistleblowing as the reporting of (suspected) wrongdoing in the workplace by the adults, which we regard as making a disclosure in the public interest. We actively encourage all school personnel and visitors to school to report any serious concerns they may have about any aspect of the school, such as:

- health and safety concerns
- damage to the school property
- a criminal offence that has taken place or is about to take place
- the coverup of a wrong doing
- the conduct of our personnel or others acting on behalf of the school

We are committed to high standards of openness, integrity and accountability and aim to protect anyone making such disclosures on other people's professional work and actions, ensuring no repercussions for those disclosing regardless of their background, experience or protected characteristics, unless their disclosure was malicious.

**Staff Recruitment**

Aside from training all staff to be aware of best practices surrounding safeguarding, child protection and wellbeing, we are aware of the equally important responsibility of attracting safe staff through safer recruitment methods. Through careful consideration, checks and interviews, we ensure that those we ask to join our school are caring individuals that work in line with our school policies, procedures and practices, and work deliberately on maintaining a safe, positive and comfortable environment for all members of our school community.

**Consequences**

When less than appropriate behaviour occurs, this is followed with consequences to try and steer the behaviour in the right direction and avoid future incidents from occurring. Where this is not the case, further measures are taken for follow-up incidents.

Though exceptions and tailored consequences are implemented for incidents of a graver nature, such as heavy bullying, physical abuse, sexual abuse and other cases, the normal flow-through of consequences (for one off incidents, bullying, neglect, physical abuse, etc.) are as followed:

- First offence: no recess for one day. Parents/carers are informed via ManageBac or via phone call.
- Second offence: removal from all school events, included but not limited to MMUN, educational visits and events inside the school. Parents/carers are informed and involved via a face-to-face meeting.
- Third offence: suspension for three days. Parents/carers are informed and involved via a face-to-face meeting.
- Fourth offence: expulsion from the school. Parents/carers are informed and involved via one, or multiple, face-to-face meetings.

Consequences taken are put in writing and sent to the DSL. This is done via filling in the 'Actions taken' section of the Incident Report Form, detailing said consequences.

**Related Information**

This policy is reviewed annually at a minimum by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and is adapted based on past year's experiences, as well as updates to safeguarding and child protection practices and measures.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, alongside all other policies in place at Planete Montessori International School.

The next review date for this policy is July 2024.

Related policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Visitor Policy