

ABE Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

ABE Global Ltd (ABE) is a company limited by guarantee without share capital established in February 1973. Its core activity is the operation of an authoritative and internationally recognised exam and assessment system aimed particularly at the empowerment of entrepreneurs and business professionals in developing countries around the world, notably in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and South East Asia.

ABE recognises that good safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved with ABE's work, including staff.

Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out the safeguarding and child protection obligations of all employees, agents, and any third-party individuals or organisations working on behalf of ABE whose work may bring them into contact with children, young people, or vulnerable adults.

ABE believes that a child should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to perform in a way that protects them and fulfils the company mission of integrity, openness, and respect for others.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Equality and Diversity
- Complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Data Protection
- Discipline and Grievance
- Any other relevant staff policy (refer to staff handbook)

Definitions

Safeguarding is the right of every child and vulnerable adult accessing ABE services or attending ABE events to be protected from any form of abuse. Abuse occurs when the child's or vulnerable adult's rights are not respected.

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unknowingly causes them harm, endangers life, or violates their rights. It includes not only physical, emotional, and psychological ill treatment but also neglect (including self-neglect), financial or sexual abuse, and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development. It concerns the misuse of power, control and/or authority and can be perpetrated by an individual, group, or an organisation.

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

A vulnerable adult is someone of 18 years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of a mental or other disability or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

If working overseas, our staff, representatives and third-party contractors may find the national law in which they are working may have a different age at which a child is considered an adult or have a different age at which a child can give consent or is considered responsible.

However, ABE, wherever it operates, abides by the definition of a child according to UK and international law. This comes from the Children's Act, 1989 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989. The United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child is the international framework which sets out the specific rights of children.

It is the ABE's policy that:

1. Everyone working on behalf of ABE accepts that the welfare of children, who may come into contact with ABE in connection with its tasks and functions, is paramount, and that they will report any concerns about a child or somebody else's behaviour using the procedures laid down.
2. Its governance of safeguarding is robust and transparent with accountability to the ABE Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer.
3. There is a designated safeguarding person (DSP) within ABE who will take action following any expression of concern and the lines of responsibility in respect of child protection are clear.
4. The DSP know how to make appropriate referrals to statutory child protection agencies.
5. Information relating to any allegation or disclosure will be clearly recorded as soon as possible and there is a procedure setting out who should record information and the timescales for passing it on.
6. The Children Act 1989 states that the *welfare of the child is paramount*. This means that consideration of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to over-ride the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.
7. Anyone with access to children will be evaluated as to whether they involve 'regulated activity' or not and vetted appropriately for such roles.
8. It is part of ABE's acceptance of its responsibility of duty of care towards children that anyone who encounters child protection concerns in the content of their work on behalf of ABE will be supported when they report their concerns in good faith.

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure concerns about children, no matter how unclear, are passed on and assessed. ABE's workforce and appointed representatives should not undertake any investigations. The responsibility of the ABE workforce is to be vigilant, record and report only.

Safeguarding responsibilities for Accredited centres and Partners

All Accredited Centres and Partners must recognise their responsibility in identifying and responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children and young people, and vulnerable adults. Your Safeguarding Policy must be written in line with statutory guidance including:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2015) (UK)
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018) (UK)
- *Prevent Strategy* (2011) (UK)
- Centres overseas should work with local legislation and where no such legislation exists use UK documentation for guidance (see 3 bullets above)

There should be three main elements to your policy:

- Prevention through centre support offered to all learners and the creation and maintenance of an organisational-level ethos
- Protection by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are subjected to background checks prior to recruitment and they are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to concerns.
- Support for learners and centre staff who may have been abused.

You will need to set out your key aim, which can include: ***'Creating an environment that is safe and secure for students to disclose their issues to Centre staff'***.

To fulfil your aim, your policy needs to clearly indicate how you will meet the overall aim to protect learners, this may include:

- All staff and volunteers receiving training in safeguarding as part of their mandatory induction
- Regular training for staff on identifying safeguarding issues
- Embedding a robust recruitment policy that enables critical checks in line with safer recruitment (DBS, barred lists, prohibition order checks and references UK or equivalent in-country measures where they exist).

Your policy must indicate a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) who will be the key point of call for all reported allegations. The DSO will be responsible for investigating the raised concern through a set procedure.

The Accredited centre/Partner will need to develop a procedure and process to handle such allegations sensitively, which may include having an investigation panel chaired by the DSO.