



AIS-Salzburg Child Protection and Safeguarding

A Guide for Parents and Guardians

1. A Message to Parents and Guardians

At AIS-Salzburg, the safety and well-being of every student are our first responsibility.

Parents and guardians place a high level of trust in the school, particularly because most of our students are full boarders and spend much of the academic year living away from home. We recognize that this responsibility extends far beyond classroom instruction. It includes residential life, meals, activities, athletics, transportation, excursions, educational travel, online communication, health care, and the many daily interactions that shape a young person's experience.

Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy establishes clear responsibilities and procedures for preventing harm, recognizing concerns, responding to disclosures, protecting students, and working with appropriate outside authorities. It applies to all enrolled students, including students who are 18 years of age or older, and to all employees, volunteers, contractors, coaches, drivers, activity providers, and other adults working with or on behalf of the school.

The principle guiding every safeguarding decision is direct: The welfare and safety of the student come first.

Safeguarding concerns are never treated as inconveniences, ordinary discipline matters, or issues that should be delayed for the sake of reputation, relationships, or administrative ease. When a safeguarding concern conflicts with an ordinary academic, residential, disciplinary, or administrative process, safeguarding requirements take priority. This guide explains how AIS-Salzburg works to protect students, how concerns are handled, and how parents and guardians can work with us.

2. Our Commitment

Safeguarding means more than responding when abuse or serious harm has already occurred. It includes the daily measures used to promote student welfare, prevent harm, identify risk, maintain professional standards, and create an environment in which students can live and learn securely.

AIS-Salzburg is committed to protecting students from:

- physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual abuse;
- neglect or inadequate care;
- exploitation or grooming;
- peer-on-peer abuse;
- bullying and cyberbullying;
- harmful sexual behavior;
- online and technology-facilitated abuse;
- discrimination and prejudice-related harm;
- self-harm and suicide risk;
- unsafe relationships; and
- retaliation after a concern has been raised.

Safeguarding applies equally to every student. Some students may require additional protection because of age, disability, medical needs, language, boarding status, isolation, family circumstances, prior trauma, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or dependence on others. These circumstances are considered when the school assesses risk and arranges support.

The school also recognizes the importance of student voice. Students should be listened to respectfully, informed about what will happen next, and included in decisions as far as their age, maturity, safety, and the law permit. A student's wishes are important, but they do not prevent the school from taking necessary action to protect them.

3. The Austrian Legal Basis

AIS-Salzburg operates as a private secondary boarding and day school in Salzburg and applies its safeguarding procedures in accordance with Austrian federal and provincial law. The Austrian Federal Constitutional Act on the Rights of Children provides that every child is entitled to the protection and care necessary for their well-being. It also requires the best interests of the child to be a primary consideration in decisions made by public and private institutions.

The school also recognizes the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including protection from physical or mental violence, abuse, neglect, maltreatment, and exploitation. Austrian civil law similarly requires the child's safety, emotional and physical well-being, protection from violence, stable relationships, and views according to age and maturity to be considered in decisions affecting minors.

Austrian child and youth welfare law requires institutions caring for or teaching children to report substantiated suspicions of serious harm to the responsible child and youth welfare authority when the danger cannot otherwise be prevented. This may include suspected physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, or another serious threat to a student's welfare. Professional confidentiality does not prevent a legally required report.

The school will also contact police, medical services, child and youth welfare authorities, or another competent authority when required by law or necessary to protect a student. Employees are not permitted to conduct an internal investigation that could interfere with the work of public authorities.

4. Safeguarding in a Boarding Community

Safeguarding at AIS-Salzburg must reflect the reality of an international boarding school.

Most students live on campus and spend much of their academic, social, and personal time under the school's care. Safeguarding therefore extends throughout classrooms, dormitory rooms, residence floors, meals, supervised study, athletics, activities, weekends, transportation, excursions, and educational travel.

Boarding students may be far from their parents or guardians, home country, first language, and usual support networks. Some students may find it difficult to recognize unsafe behavior or may hesitate to report concerns because they fear social consequences, disciplinary action, embarrassment, or disruption to boarding life.

The school's small size helps employees know students personally and notice changes across different settings. A concern that appears minor in one place may form part of a wider pattern involving classes, friendships, online activity, meals, roommate relationships, or residential life.

Employees are expected to remain alert to risks connected with:

- dormitory rooms, bathrooms, changing areas, and other private spaces;
- roommate relationships, friendship groups, exclusion, and peer pressure;
- nighttime and weekend supervision;
- one-to-one contact between adults and students;
- independent travel and off-campus leave;
- romantic or sexual relationships;
- online communication, private messaging, image sharing, and location sharing;
- homesickness, isolation, language barriers, and cultural adjustment;
- students aged 18 or older living alongside minors; and
- visiting adults, contractors, external instructors, and activity providers.

No cultural, religious, family, or national practice excuses abuse, neglect, exploitation, corporal punishment, discrimination, or conduct that places a student at risk.

5. How the School Works to Protect Students

5.1 Shared Responsibility

Safeguarding is the responsibility of every adult working for or with the school. It is not limited to the Headmaster, Child Protection Lead, or administrators. Every employee must act when they witness concerning conduct, receive a disclosure, observe possible indicators of harm, or form a reasonable concern about a student's safety or well-being. Employees are not expected to prove that abuse has occurred. A reasonable concern is sufficient to require reporting. They must not delay while trying to gather evidence, resolve the matter informally, or decide whether the student's account is accurate.

5.2 Clear Leadership and Oversight

The Headmaster has overall responsibility for implementing the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and ensuring that concerns are assessed and managed promptly.

The Child Protection Lead coordinates the operational response, including:

- receiving and reviewing reports;
- assessing immediate and continuing risk;
- arranging protection and support;
- coordinating contact with outside authorities;
- determining when and how families should be informed;
- maintaining safeguarding records; and
- coordinating follow-up plans.

The Dean of Students has particular responsibility for safeguarding in boarding and student life, including residential protection, supervision, rooming arrangements, peer relationships, weekend activities, and communication with Resident-Care staff members.

5.3 Safer Recruitment

The school applies safeguarding checks before adults are permitted to work with students.

These checks may include:

- verification of identity and qualifications;
- review of employment history;
- professional references;
- criminal-record information;
- child-protection clearances where applicable;
- equivalent checks from other countries; and
- assessment of professional suitability.

New employees receive safeguarding guidance before assuming independent responsibility for students. Volunteers, contractors, coaches, activity leaders, visiting professionals, and other adults are also subject to appropriate supervision and safeguarding requirements.

5.4 Professional Boundaries

Adults working with students are expected to maintain clear professional boundaries.

They must avoid favoritism, secrecy, dependency, inappropriate private communication, unnecessary physical contact, personal social-media relationships, inappropriate gifts, or conduct that could create an exclusive relationship.

Employees must use approved communication methods, respect student privacy while fulfilling supervisory duties, and report concerns about their own conduct or that of another adult. Romantic or sexual relationships between

employees and students are prohibited. Employees may not exploit their authority, request secrecy from students, or use their position for personal benefit.

5.5 Training and Review

All employees receive direction concerning disclosure response, reporting, professional boundaries, online safeguarding, boarding-school safeguarding, recordkeeping, and legal responsibilities. The Headmaster monitors implementation throughout the year. Safeguarding reports, patterns, staff training, recruitment procedures, residential safeguarding, online risks, and previous case recommendations may be reviewed to identify improvements. The full policy is reviewed annually or earlier if required by changes in Austrian law, accreditation standards, safeguarding guidance, or experience.

6. What Happens When a Concern Is Raised

Every safeguarding concern is taken seriously, whether it comes from a student, parent, employee, another student, an anonymous source, online material, or direct observation. A student may speak with any trusted employee. They do not need to decide whether the concern meets a legal definition before seeking help.

6.1 Immediate Safety

The first priority is to determine whether the student or another person is in immediate danger.

Where necessary, employees will:

- remain with the student;
- obtain assistance;
- separate the student from an immediate source of harm;
- arrange medical attention;
- contact emergency services; or
- move the student to a safe setting.

Emergency action will not be delayed while waiting for administrative approval.

6.2 Listening and Reassurance

A student who speaks about a concern should be listened to calmly and respectfully.

Employees are instructed to:

- allow the student to speak in their own words;
- take the concern seriously;
- thank the student for speaking;
- explain that the student is not to blame;
- avoid shock, anger, disbelief, or judgment; and
- explain that the information must be shared with the persons responsible for protection.

Employees must not promise secrecy, conduct an investigation, ask leading questions, or require the student to repeat the account unnecessarily.

6.3 Reporting and Recording

The concern must be reported immediately to the Child Protection Lead, Headmaster, Dean of Students, or alternative Child Protection contact. The employee must then make a written record that includes the basic facts, the student's own words where possible, questions asked, immediate action taken, available evidence, and the time and person to whom the concern was reported. The record must distinguish between direct observation, reported information, and professional concern.

6.4 Assessment and Protective Action

The Headmaster or Child Protection Lead will make an initial safeguarding assessment.

This assessment considers:

- immediate danger;
- medical or mental-health needs;
- the nature and seriousness of the concern;
- the age and vulnerability of the student;
- whether the alleged source of harm has continuing access;
- whether other students may be at risk;
- whether evidence must be preserved;
- whether the concern involves an adult;
- whether parents may safely be contacted;
- whether the conduct may be criminal; and
- whether an external report is required.

Protective action may be taken before all facts are known. Such action is precautionary and does not mean that an allegation has been proven.

6.5 External Authorities

The school will refer concerns to child and youth welfare services, police, medical services, or another competent authority when required by law or necessary to protect a student. Where an external investigation begins, the school will follow the authority's direction and limit its own action to immediate protection, student support, necessary operational decisions, employment or access measures, recordkeeping, and cooperation.

7. How Students Are Protected and Supported

Protective measures are selected according to the circumstances and may include:

- increased supervision;
- temporary separation of students or adults;
- changes to rooms, classes, schedules, transportation, activities, or seating;
- restrictions on contact or communication;
- temporary changes to off-campus privileges;
- removal of an adult from student contact;
- medical, psychological, or counseling support; and
- preservation of physical or digital evidence.

Whenever practical, protective arrangements should avoid unnecessarily disrupting the education, boarding life, or well-being of the student who may have been harmed. Measures are reviewed as circumstances change and remain in place only as long as necessary.

Safeguarding support does not end when the immediate concern has been addressed. Continuing support may include:

- contact with a trusted employee;
- academic support or reasonable adjustments;
- residential support;
- medical or mental-health services;
- counseling or referral to outside professionals;
- safety planning;
- review of friendships or boarding arrangements;
- family communication; and
- scheduled follow-up.

Students whose behavior caused harm may also require assessment and support. This does not remove accountability. The purpose is to prevent further harm and support healthy development.

8. Particular Areas of Safeguarding

8.1 Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Students can cause serious harm to other students. Peer-on-peer abuse may include physical or emotional abuse, bullying, cyberbullying, sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behavior, controlling relationships, hazing, blackmail, image-based abuse, exploitation, prejudice-related abuse, or retaliation. Such behavior will not be dismissed as banter, experimentation, romance, initiation, conflict, or normal boarding-school behavior.

The school considers the age and development of the students, differences in power or influence, whether conduct was coercive or repeated, the effect on the student harmed, the involvement of others, and any risk of retaliation.

All students involved are assessed for safety and support. Where necessary, concerns are referred to outside authorities.

8.2 Online Safety

Online harm may occur through phones, messaging services, social media, gaming platforms, shared accounts, cloud storage, or emerging technologies. Concerns may include grooming, sextortion, nonconsensual image sharing, sexual images of minors, manipulated or AI-generated sexual images, cyberbullying, threats, impersonation, stalking, location tracking, coercive control, or contact with unsafe adults or groups.

The school may respond to online conduct regardless of where it occurred or whose device was used when it affects student safety or school life. Employees are specifically instructed not to copy, forward, download, print, or store sexual images of minors. Such concerns must be reported immediately and handled in cooperation with the Child Protection Lead or police.

8.3 Self-Harm and Mental-Health Emergencies

Self-harm, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, and serious mental-health crises are treated as safeguarding concerns. A student at immediate risk will not be left alone. The school will arrange appropriate medical or psychiatric support and contact emergency services where necessary. A written safety and support plan may address supervision, access to harmful items, medical appointments, trusted-adult contact, boarding and academic arrangements, communication, and return to school or boarding after hospitalization or emergency treatment.

8.4 Missing or Unaccounted-for Students

A missing or unaccounted-for student is treated as a safeguarding concern. The school will act promptly when a student cannot be located, fails to return at the expected time, leaves without authorization, disappears during travel, or is absent in circumstances suggesting risk. The response may include immediate checks, contact attempts, review of records, notification of police and parents, and assessment of self-harm, exploitation, coercion, substance use, or unsafe relationships. When the student returns, the situation is reviewed as a safeguarding matter and not only as a disciplinary violation.

9. Communication with Parents and Guardians

AIS-Salzburg recognizes parents and guardians as essential partners in safeguarding. Parents will normally be informed promptly when their child is involved in a safeguarding concern. Communication will be timely, respectful, and appropriate to the circumstances.

There may be occasions when contact must be delayed or limited because:

- a parent or guardian may be involved in the concern;
- notification could place the student or another person at greater risk;
- an external authority has requested that contact not yet occur; or
- immediate protective action must take priority.

The Headmaster or Child Protection Lead determines when contact is appropriate and what information may be shared.

The school will explain procedures, protective measures, available support, and appropriate next steps. However, privacy and safeguarding duties may prevent the school from disclosing confidential information about another student, employee, or active investigation.

10. How Parents and Guardians Can Help

Parents and guardians can support safeguarding by:

- providing accurate information about their child's health, emotional needs, family circumstances, and previous concerns;
- informing the school promptly about behavior, relationships, online contact, injuries, threats, or disclosures that may affect safety;
- preserving relevant messages, screenshots, photographs, or other evidence;
- encouraging their child to speak honestly and seek help early;
- avoiding direct confrontation with another student, family, or employee;
- supporting agreed safety and support plans;
- reinforcing healthy boundaries, respectful conduct, and safe online behavior; and
- maintaining calm and respectful communication during a safeguarding process.

Parents should not delay reporting because they are uncertain whether a concern is serious enough. The school would rather receive a concern early and determine that no further action is needed than learn later that a student remained at risk.

11. Questions Parents and Guardians Often Ask

What happens if my child reports a concern?

The employee will listen, consider immediate safety, explain that the information must be shared, record the concern, and report it promptly to the appropriate safeguarding lead.

The school will then assess risk, arrange protection and support, and determine whether outside authorities must be involved.

Will I be contacted?

Parents and guardians are normally informed promptly. Contact may be delayed only when it could increase risk, interfere with an investigation, or conflict with instructions from an authority.

What if my child speaks to an employee before speaking to me?

Students may approach any trusted employee. The employee must report the concern through the safeguarding procedure. Parents will normally be contacted as soon as it is safe and appropriate.

Can my child ask for the matter to remain confidential?

A student may ask, but employees cannot promise secrecy. Information is shared only with those who need it to protect the student, manage the concern, provide support, or meet legal duties.

What if another student is involved?

Peer-on-peer harm is taken seriously. The school will assess the safety and needs of all students involved, take protective action, communicate with parents as appropriate, and involve outside authorities when required.

What if the concern involves an employee?

Concerns involving an employee or other adult are reported directly to the Headmaster and Child Protection Lead. Immediate protective or employment measures may be taken while the matter is assessed. If the concern involves the Headmaster, it is referred to the designated representative of the Board of Directors and, where appropriate, directly to the competent authority.

What if the concern occurred outside Austria?

The concern must still be reported immediately. The school will determine which Austrian or foreign authorities, legal advisers, embassies, or other organizations should be contacted. Uncertainty about jurisdiction will not delay immediate protection.

Will I be told what happened to another student or employee?

The school will provide information necessary for understanding the response and supporting your child. It may not disclose confidential disciplinary, employment, medical, or safeguarding information concerning another person.

What if I disagree with the school's response?

Parents should raise concerns with the Headmaster or Child Protection Lead. Concerns involving the Headmaster may be referred to the designated representative of the Board of Directors. The school does not tolerate retaliation against anyone who raises a safeguarding concern honestly and in good faith.

12. Contacting the School

Parents and guardians should report safeguarding concerns promptly to one of the following:

Headmaster

Name: Paul McLean
Email: pmclean@ais-salzburg.at
Telephone: +43 662 824617
Cell: +43 650 6116066

Dean of Students

Name: Laura Fox
Email: lfox@ais-salzburg.at
Telephone: +43 662 824617
Cell: +43 660 9288356

Child Protection Lead

Name: Determined and communicated at time of incident, as per policy.
Email: office@ais-salzburg.at
Telephone: +43 662 824617

In an immediate emergency, parents should contact emergency services and notify the school directly by telephone.

Final Statements

Every student deserves to feel safe, respected, valued, and heard. At AIS-Salzburg, safeguarding is not limited to a policy document or a small group of designated employees. It is a daily responsibility shared by every adult in the community. We are committed to preventing harm, recognizing concerns early, responding promptly, cooperating with Austrian authorities, supporting affected students, and working in partnership with parents and guardians.

This guide summarizes the school's approach. The full AIS-Salzburg Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy remains the governing document.