Safeguarding - Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding (sometime referred to as Child Protection) is at the foundation of OxfordAQA's work, and we are committed to the welfare of everyone we work with and serve – particularly children and young people.

Safeguarding means protecting people's health and wellbeing, alongside ensuring they can live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Everyone who works for or on behalf of OxfordAQA, such as staff, associates or partners, has a responsibility for support the care and protection of children and adults at risk of abuse and exploitation.

Safeguarding / child protection is not to be confused with health and safety (such as evacuation procedures or infection control) or student conduct (such as student behaviour, rules on uniform, lateness etc.)

2. A safeguarding policy is not a mandatory requirement of schools in my country – do I still need to provide one?

Yes. All countries will have their own national legislation in relation to the protection of children. Sometimes this legislation specifically sets out what legal responsibilities schools have even if having a safeguarding policy isn't one of them. Further, every country we operate in is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. ARTICLE 19 of this states: *The state must do all it can to protect children from violence, abuse, neglect, bad treatment or exploitation by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.*

OxfordAQA values the safety and wellbeing of every student and requires assurance from the schools we work with that if we raise a safeguarding concern, it will be dealt with promptly and appropriately. Therefore, a safeguarding policy is a requirement in our approval process.

3. Can OxfordAQA provide a safeguarding policy template?

A safeguarding policy sets out how your centre responds to safeguarding concerns. It is not possible for us to provide a template for this as it will differ in every school, in every country. It is possible to view safeguarding policies that other schools have drafted online, to gain insight into what good practice looks like. However, we would advise against adopting another school's policy in its entirety as it is unlikely that another school's policy will reflect what would happen in your school, especially if it is from a school in a different country or a different context.

4. Where can I get help with writing a safeguarding policy?

You will already have strategies for safeguarding at your school, though you may not refer to the term 'safeguarding', or have all of the relevant information gathered in one document.
A good place to start is to ask yourself:

- Who would I go to if I was concerned that a student was being harmed?
- What would happen after I raised my concern?
- What are the local arrangements or laws to keep children safe from harm and abuse?
- How do we ensure the staff we employ are safe to be around students?
- What would I do if I was worried about another staff members behaviour towards a student?

The answers to these questions will form the basis of your safeguarding policy.
If you require any further support or clarification on what is required, please email safeguarding@aqa.org.uk

5. Do you contact us about safeguarding after the approval stage?
During exam series, and especially in the summer, the AQA safeguarding team are alerted to issues which may need passing on to your centre Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). We will email your DSL using the information you have provided. The email contact may come from our Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, or it may come from one of the seasonal staff members we employ to help us process these concerns. If we are unable to contact your DSL or fail to get a response we will then contact your Head of Centre.

If you are unsure whether the contact is genuine, and wish to check, please email safeguarding@aqa.org.uk

Useful links/resources
Association of Child Protection Professionals
https://www.childprotectionprofessionals.org.uk/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwsp6pBhCfARIsAD3GZuac5n NdfbPLzpygGDW-jJFqMsogpdpqepKpsm6G8CBOyLJDA5BwuK4aApbNEALw_wcB

Council for International Schools
Council of International Schools | International Education Organisation (cois.org)

International Taskforce on Child Protection
https://www.cois.org/about-cis/news/post/~board/perspectives-blog/post/international-taskforce-on-child-protections-new-areas-of-focus-a-call-for-volunteers

Council of British International Schools
https://www.cobis.org.uk/