



## **Child Protection Policy**

Acacia Waldorf School considers a peaceful school campus, and the safety and welfare of all our students, school personnel, parents and school community as our top priorities. Our school is committed to create and maintain a safe, secure, and supportive learning environment to enhance joyful student learning and allow our students to reach their fullest potential.

All our students, parents, faculty and employees, are expected to speak in a manner that is respectful and courteous, behave in a peaceful manner that upholds the dignity of each person, and maintain orderly conduct in the classrooms and school grounds during class trips and school activities, at all times during and after class hours. Every person is to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect, and not be subjected to any form of discrimination or harassment.

Acacia Waldorf School upholds the Department of Education's objective to promote a zero-tolerance policy for any act or form of child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, bullying. Our school strictly adheres to the Child Protection Policy of the Department of Education (DepEd), as referenced in DepEd Order (DO) No. 40, s. 2012, and the Anti-Bullying Policies in DO No. 55, s. 2013.

The Child Protection Policy in Basic Education applies to the protection of the rights of all children and students below 18 years old, who are enrolled in the Basic Education system. This now includes the Senior High School system, wherein the Department of Education has a zero tolerance policy for all forms of harassment, discrimination, violence and abuse against all students.

AWS has a Child Protection Committee who shall support and implement the school's Waldorf Steiner approach to process incidents of AWS students that fall under the Child Protection Policy. The committee is composed of the following members:

1. Executive Director/School Administrator/School Head (Chairperson and Co-Chairperson)
2. Guidance Counselor (Assistant Chairperson)
3. Child Care Committee Head and committee member/s
4. School Nurse, School Doctor
5. Senior Student representative/s (from Class 12/Senior High School)
6. Parent Council representative/s
7. Brgy. Don Jose local government representative/s

\* External child or student support, such as medical, psychological, or other similar consultants, members of the College of Teachers, and/or Waldorf/Steiner mentors may be consulted by the committee as needed.

**The tasks of the AWS Child Protection Committee (CPC) are as follows:**

- The Child Protection Committee shall draft an AWS Child Protection Policy based on the AWS Code of Conduct in the AWS Student Handbook. This is to be followed by every child, student, faculty and personnel, representatives of the school, and members of the school community, while on AWS grounds, during classes and breaks, when traveling to and from school, and during a school sponsored activity; whether inside or outside the school campus.
- The Child Protection Policy document shall be submitted to the Department of Education. This policy shall be reviewed by the AWS Child Protection Committee every year.
- The committee shall conduct capacity building activities for all its committee members regarding child protection, measures, processes and protocols.
- The committee shall conduct and assist in fact finding investigations and process AWS Child Protection cases, including mediation, conferences, co-create resolutions, recommend intervention, internal or external support, implement positive and peaceful consequential measures and actions; and shall maintain a record of such proceedings, including the immediate responses, incident reports, other reports and evaluations from other reporting channels.
- The committee shall coordinate with other local agencies and authorities for appropriate assistance, as needed, in order to address cases of the school and of the committee, such as child abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, harassment, bullying, and other similar acts.
- The committee shall communicate the school's Child Protection Policy to all students, faculty, personnel, parents, school representatives and members of our school community.
- The committee shall submit a copy of the school's Child Protection Policy and other related policies to the local Division Office of the Department of Education.

**Sanction and Support**

The school has curricular and extracurricular activities and guidance counseling programs that are designed to support and enhance harmonious relationships and prevent bullying behavior amongst students. These take several forms and include classroom and outdoor activities and instruction.

When it is determined that a student has participated in a bullying incident, the school shall immediately investigate, discuss resolutions and consequential measures and actions, and take disciplinary action that is deemed appropriate to the gravity of an action by the Child Protection Committee and Child Care Committee.

### **Prohibited Acts**

As specified in DO No. 40, s. 2012, the following actions are prohibited and shall entail informal or formal investigations, incident reports, mediation, and shall receive consequential measures and resolutions as are deemed appropriate to the gravity of an act, as referenced in the AWS Handbook and AWS Manual:

- Child abuse and retaliation
- Child exploitation
- Discrimination against children
- Violence
- Bullying and Harassment
- Corporal punishment
- Other forms of abuse or acts that may be similar to and/or related to the above

### **Handling Bullying Complaints and Other forms of Child Abuse**

It is expected that all students, faculty, school staff and visitors to the school comply with the school's Code of Conduct and immediately report verbally and in writing all acts of bullying and any form of child abuse, as described in the above situations, to a member of the school community in authority, such as the Executive Director, a Teacher, an Administration officer, Administration office personnel, security personnel, and/or administration staff.

The Executive Director, Teacher, and/or school office and security personnel shall assist and support students and school personnel to file an incident report and protect the student against any potential acts of retaliation. An investigation to determine the facts shall take place immediately to verify the validity and seriousness of a report.

The school adopts the following procedures to provide an immediate response to bullying and other forms of child abuse. (from Section 10b, Implementing Rules and Regulations or IRR of Republic Act No. 10627):

## **1. Reporting an Incident**

The victim or anyone who has witnessed or has personal knowledge of a bullying incident or retaliation shall immediately call the attention of any nearby school authority or school personnel, such as the Executive Director, School Head, School Administrator, a Teacher, security personnel, or Administration office staff.

## **2. Intervention**

The school authority or school personnel who was notified of a bullying incident or retaliation shall intervene, as follows:

- i. Stop the bullying or retaliation immediately.
- ii. Separate the students involved.
- iii. Remove the victim or, in appropriate cases, the bully or offending students from the site
- iv. Ensure the victim's safety by:
  - a. Determining and addressing the victim's immediate safety needs; and
  - b. Ensuring medical attention, if needed, and securing a medical certificate, in cases of physical injury.
- v. Bring the bully to the Guidance Office and/or to the immediate attention of a designated person in authority, such as the child's Main Teacher, Child Protection Committee, Child Care Committee, school security personnel or Administration office personnel.
- vi. Inform the child's Main Teacher, Guidance Counselor, and a member of the Child Care Committee or Child Protection Committee of a bullying or harassment incident in a prompt and timely manner.
- vii. Assist in filing an incident report and submitting this report to the School Administrator, Child Protection committee, Child Care Committee and the child's Main Teacher.
- viii. Submit one's written and verbal testimony or report of an incident promptly to the Administration Office, School Administrator, Child Care Committee, Child Protection Committee, and/or to the College of Teachers for the purpose of school records and for reference in an investigation process. Incident Report Forms are available at the Administration office.
- ix. Cooperate with the school and local authorities, and make oneself available for

an investigation process.

- x. The child's Main Teacher or a member of the Child Care Committee shall inform and liaise with the school's guidance counselor, Child Protection Committee, children's parents, the child's department and department Coordinator regarding an incident, investigation, resolution and implementation of consequential measures and sanctions as needed.

### **3. Self Reporting and Remediation**

When a student voluntarily comes forward with a personal abuse problem before any related infraction of a school policy has occurred, or when a faculty has information and/or concerns about a student's possible abuse problem, the school is committed to help the student. The following steps shall be taken:

1. For a Kindergarten or Grade School Student: If deemed appropriate, a meeting of the child's parents and guardians, school guidance counselor and relevant faculty members will be held. At this meeting, a plan of action will be determined and agreed upon.
2. For an Upper School student: A meeting between the student, school guidance counselor and relevant faculty member/s will be held. At this meeting, a plan of action will be determined and agreed upon.
3. The plan may require, but may not be limited to the following.
  - Mediation
  - Conference
  - Internal observation and evaluation by the child's teachers
  - Conversation and counseling with the school guidance counselor
  - External consultation with a recommended and approved anthroposophic medical practitioner or physician or extra lesson specialist; at the expense of a parent or guardian, upon recommendation of the school
  - Consultation with an external professional and/or assessment at an approved facility, if this is recommended by the school guidance counselor; this will be at the expense of the child's parents or guardian
  - Other external support such as extra lesson, individual and/or family counseling, consultation and therapy at the expense of the child's parents and/or guardian
  - Community service
  - Student and/or parent contract or agreement
4. All external professional counselling, consultations, doctor or other professional consultations, diagnostic and laboratory work and assessments are for the account of the child's parents and/or guardians.

5. A child's or student's parents and guardians are responsible to provide copies of all assessments, reports and evaluations in a timely manner from the counselor, therapist, clinic, laboratory or other professionals.
6. Follow-up conferences will be held with both the perpetrator and the aggrieved party, relevant school faculty and the school's guidance counselor.
7. The Child Care Committee and the Child Protection Committee shall assist, monitor, and facilitate in this process in any way that they can.
8. A child's or student's parents and guardians will be notified if and when there is a cause for concern.
9. If there is cause for **serious** concern, **both** the child's parents and guardians will be **required** to attend a Parent Conference with the school regarding an incident of child abuse. This will apply whether or not the child lives with one or both parents. Zoom or viber video conferencing will be used during the said Parent Conference, if one parent is not able to be physically present to attend a Parent Conference.
10. **Damages and Liability.** Any and all liability, injury and/or damages to school property or personal property of another party caused by a child's act of harassment, violence or abuse, are the responsibility of the child's parents and guardians, and are for the account of the child's parents or guardians.
11. **Restitution and recompense.** A child's parents or guardian may be asked to pay for the medical consultations, diagnostic and laboratory work, counselling and/or therapy sessions of an aggrieved party, as part of recompense for the hurt that their child has caused.

#### 4. Suspension

A suspension will be followed by a conference with the child's parents and/or guardians, and relevant faculty and/or College members. A student who has been suspended may be placed on probation, receive a student agreement or student contract, and must comply with all of the terms and conditions set in the parents and guardians conference and student agreement or student contract.

A student who is suspended does not have to attend actual classes during the period of his or her exemption. However, he or she is expected to study all materials and complete and submit all assignments, projects, and schoolwork on time to the respective teachers, just like the rest of his or her class.

Parents of a suspended or probationary grade school or upper school student are expected to supervise their child, and facilitate a tutor or study coach at their expense, if

this is recommended by their teacher, to facilitate lessons and on-time schoolwork submissions of their child. Middle School and Upper School students may submit their schoolwork to their respective teachers online.

A student may be suspended and/or expelled from a school activity or from attending the school, for non-compliance with the said terms and conditions stated in the conference and in the student contract or student agreement.

## **5. Expulsion**

Expulsion is the termination of a student's relationship with the school. The school shall determine whether or not, or when the student may reapply to the school.

## **6. Participating in An Incident**

A student or employee who is found to have participated in a bullying act, or who is aware about a bullying, harassment or similar incident that took place and failed to report the behavior to the appropriate school authorities in a timely manner, is considered to be in violation of the prohibition expressed in this policy. This person may be subject to a serious warning, reprimand, suspension, expulsion, and/or other consequential measure and/or disciplinary action established by our school's policy or practice.

## **7. Privacy Clause**

The Child Protection Committee, Faculty and Administration Team and the school's consultants and representatives shall maintain privacy and discretion regarding the details of an ongoing process, students and reporting parties, as is necessary, and shall maintain confidential records in the school, of all child abuse and Child Protection Committee cases.

The school shall keep the identity of a complainant confidential for both the accused and the accuser until such time as the misconduct is confirmed and consequential sanctions are imposed.

The school is required to share information and reports of all cases of child abuse with the appropriate students' parents, the child's Main Teacher, the school's guidance counselor, the College of Teachers, and/or the Child Protection Committee.

Relevant general information may be shared for the information and reference of the appropriate faculty, department/s, school committees and local authorities, if these are deemed relevant in a mediation or investigation, and/or if the information is deemed necessary for the safety and security of the students and the school community.

## **8. Disciplinary Action, Consequential Measures and Sanctions**

Disciplinary action, consequential measures and sanctions can range from the any of the following:

- Immediate removal of the child or person from the scene of an incident; a child's parent or guardian will be informed by a school authority and will need to pick up the child immediately
- Verbal reprimand and warning
- Letter of concern with or without a reprimand and/or warning
- Medical consultation at the parent's or guardian's expense, at the nearest medical facility or Emergency Room and filing of a medical report if there is manifestation of any physical injury
- Mediation
- Conferences
- Follow up conferences
- Guidance counselor sessions
- Therapy, individual or family counseling at the parent's or guardian's expense
- Community service
- Internal school evaluations by the child's teachers and guidance counselor
- Student contract or student agreement
- Parent agreement
- Probation
- Suspension
- Expulsion from attending classes and/or activities at our school, in accordance with the AWS existing Code of Conduct, and rules and regulations in the AWS Student Handbook.
- Compensation by a child's parent or guardian of medical expenses, diagnostics and therapy expenses of an injured party.
- Compensation for damages to an aggrieved person.
- Repair or replacement by a child's parents or guardian of damaged school or personal property directly or indirectly caused by a violent act of a child, family member, or employee, whether intentional or by accident.
- Filing of a police report, and/or barangay report, if necessary, as well as compliance with local government regulations.

### **Applications in Learning Modalities**

The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 10627 or the Anti Bullying Act of 2013 underscores the importance of a Child Abuse Prevention Program implemented in all schools and likewise requires the submission of the said Child Abuse Prevention Program in cyberspace.



This is incorporated in the Child Protection Policy of the school and the Department of Education, and is applicable to all forms of delivery of education, such as face-to-face learning, blended learning and online learning.

### **Prohibited Acts In the AWS Child Protection and Anti-Bullying Policy**

- Retaliation

AWS policy prohibits retaliation against any person who has made a complaint of intimidation, discrimination or harassment, has cooperated with an investigation of a complaint, or has acted as a witness or investigator during an investigation of a complaint. Please direct any questions regarding this policy to the Executive Director or School Head.

- Child Abuse

Child abuse refers to any act which can inflict physical, psychological, emotional or mental injury, cruelty or neglect and exploitation of a child.

Cruelty is any word or act that injures, debases, demeans, and degrades the dignity of the child or a person as an individual and as a human being.

Physical injury is considered child abuse if this causes severe injury and serious bodily harm to a child or a person, such as bruises, lacerations, fractured or broken bones, burns or internal injuries.

Psychological injury is considered child abuse when this harms a child's psychological or intellectual functions. This may be manifested by anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or outward aggressive behaviour or a combination of the said behaviours.

Child neglect is the failure of a parent or guardian to provide, for reasons other than poverty, adequate food, shelter and clothing, basic education, medical and health care, so as to seriously endanger the physical, mental, social and emotional growth and development of a child.

Child sexual abuse is the use of persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in, or assist another person to engage in sexual acts, intercourse, or lascivious conduct, molestation, prostitution, or incestuous acts on a child.

- Child Exploitation

This includes the hiring, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in any form of emotional or sexual harassment and abuse, as well as the grooming, recruitment and trafficking of children and students.

This also includes the persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage and perform in sexual acts, obscene exhibitions, indecent live or video shows, act as a model in pornographic videos and materials, and/or participate, promote, distribute or sell such materials. This includes sexting and any other mediums and media modalities.

- Discrimination against children

Acacia Waldorf School (AWS) prohibits and does not tolerate any form of discrimination against a child, student or any another person inside or outside the school campus or in any school activity or event. This includes social, racial, ethnic, political, religious, gender and age insults, sneers, slurs, defamation, slander, allegations, actions such as slamming a door on a person's face, and any other form of prejudice or differential treatment designed to hurt or derogate a child or a person.

- Bullying

This refers to any severe or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, a physical act or gesture, or any combination of these acts, directed at another student or member of the community, that has the effect to actually cause or place the other student or person in reasonable fear of physical, mental or emotional harm or damage to his or her person or property; create a hostile environment for another student or person; infringe on the rights of another student or person; or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a class or a school; such as, but not limited to, the following (from Sec.2 of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2012):

- Violence

This covers any unwanted physical contact between a bully and a victim, such as inflicting any form of severe or mild mental or emotional distress, applying physical force and/or violence on a student like fighting, grabbing, hitting, inflicting any kind of prank, kicking, mauling, pinching, punching, pushing, shoving, slapping, spanking, teasing, throwing things at a victim, tickling, using any object as a weapon against a victim, or similar acts that may cause damage to a victim's psyche, physical, mental or emotional well-being or both.

- Harassment

This includes any acts of mental, emotional or physical coercion, intimidation, or use of slurs, slanderous statements or accusations that caused a victim or a person undue emotional and/or mental distress, such as using emotional pressure, foul language or profanity, name-calling, tormenting, “jokes” or offensive comments directed on a victim’s or person’s actions, looks, body, clothes, friends, family, or property and the like.

- This includes cyber-bullying or any bullying done through the use of technology or any electronic means such as, but not limited to, texting, email, instant messaging, chatting, social networking, and/or other platforms or formats.
- Intimidating, threatening to coerce, or inflict danger or wrong on a student or person, and/or a student or person’s honor, family, friends or property.
- Stalking or constantly following or pursuing a student or other person in his or her daily activities with unwanted and obsessive attention.
- Publicly humiliating or publicly accusing a victim of committing an act, crime, vice or defect, whether real or imaginary, or any act, omission, condition, status, or circumstance that tends to cause dishonor, discredit, or expose a student or person to contempt.
- Deliberately taking without permission, destroying, defacing, or damaging a student’s or other person’s property.
- Demanding or requiring sexual or monetary favors, or extracting money or property from a student or other person.
- Restraining the liberty and freedom of a student or another person.
- Corporal Punishment

This includes inflicting bodily pain or suffering, or causing a person to physically, mentally or emotionally suffer or endure any kind of harm, injury or punishment in any way. This includes physical acts that may cause physical injury or harm to another person, such as scratching, biting, hitting, kicking, mauling, pinching, punching, pushing, shoving, slapping, spanking, teasing, throwing things at a victim, tickling, using any object as a weapon against a victim, injuring, maiming, twisting, lacerating, disfiguring, incapacitating, or breaking a student’s or person’s body part, or similar acts that may cause damage to a victim’s psyche, physical, mental or emotional well-being or both.

- Other acts similar to or related to the acts listed above.

## **AWS Campus Safety and Security**

All our AWS security guards, faculty, office and school personnel are guided by the school's safety and security policies and procedures to ensure a secure and peaceful school campus at all times and to provide full support to our children and AWS Child Protection Policies.

Authorized security guards are stationed at the drop off area at the main school entrance and/or at school gates and parking areas to maintain peace and order. Security guards and school personnel may walk around and patrol the school grounds at any time to secure and maintain the safety of our students, personnel, school community and facilities in our school campus.

Everyone is discouraged from lingering at the drop off areas. Greeters from AWS faculty and/or Administration office personnel are on hand to assist and greet students briefly at the school entrance in the mornings on regular school days.

Our AWS entrance procedures include:

1. Temperature check. (Validation of no fever and no illness.)  
\* A person with body temperature above 37.3 degrees even after a five-minute rest, will be asked to go home, or stay in a temporary holding area, and not be allowed to enter the school campus.
2. Face mask
3. Sanitation of footwear on a sanitized foot mat
4. Physical distancing of 1 meter or more between persons
5. Hand sanitation station
6. Validation of identity through presentation of a valid AWS I.D. card and/or gov.'t I.D.
7. Signing in the school logbook
8. Random or routine check of a person's bag/s
9. Duly accomplished Pet Clearance form for any pets or farm animals

In addition to the above, our AWS exit procedures include:

1. A child is not allowed to go home or leave the school campus with a classmate, teacher, tutor or any other person who is not authorized in writing by a child's parents.
2. A letter from a parent is needed to advise the school and the child's teacher of any change in a child's pick up schedule and authorized fetcher who will pick up a child.
3. A letter from a parent is needed for pick up of a student outside of one's own family.
4. A child's parents are responsible to inform the Administration office and the child's teacher if a child's previously authorized fetcher is not anymore connected with their family.

Absence of any of the above may result in non-entry or non-exit of a child or student from our school campus. AWS office personnel may contact a child's parent or guardian to verify an authorized fetcher, or any change in a child's departure or pick up arrangements.

A child's parent or guardian may drop off a student briefly at the school entrance or classroom, pick up or drop off distance learning materials, transact with the school office, attend a school or committee meeting, or a previously arranged appointment with faculty or school personnel.

A visitor, whether a family employee, fetcher, nanny or driver, shall not be allowed to enter the AWS campus to drop off or pick up a Kindergarten student, without a valid AWS identification card.

A visitor without an AWS I.D. will have to undergo entry protocol listed above, show a valid government I.D., undergo I.D. verification, sign the logbook and will be given an AWS visitors pass which needs to be worn visibly at all times while inside the school campus.

AWS identification cards for students, school faculty and staff, and authorized fetchers are issued at the beginning of each school year and are valid for 1 school year. To obtain an Authorized Fetcher's I.D., an enrolled child's parent fills out an Authorized Fetcher's I.D. form and submits this together with the fetcher's (2) I.D. photos at the AWS Administration office. Two weeks is the processing time for AWS identification cards.

Acacia Waldorf School and AWS security personnel shall refuse entry to a person for any of the following reasons:

- AWS follows the guidelines on school restrictions and closures, school gatherings and safety guidelines from the local government and Department of Education.
- Students will not be allowed to gather in the school campus if the school is closed.
- A person refuses to comply with AWS entry protocols.
- A person refuses to comply with AWS school policies and Code of Conduct.
- Non-compliance of the school's technology rules and/or dress code.
- A person who is ill.
- No face mask.
- A person whose body temperature reading is above 37.3 degrees, even after 5 minutes rest, after an initial body temperature reading.
- Lack of proper valid government I.D. or valid AWS school student, employee or fetcher identification card.
- Lack of endorsement of a school parent - this applies to authorized fetchers of enrolled students.

- An authorized fetcher or family employee is no longer connected with a school family.
- A student or school employee is suspended or is no longer connected with the school.
- A person has no valid reason to enter the school campus.
- A person is agitated, inebriated, has ingested prohibited substances, or is found to have a weapon and/or prohibited substances in his person.  
Weapons and prohibited substances shall be confiscated by security personnel and turned over to the Administration office and proper school authorities.
- A person has harassed, threatened, maligned, intimidated, abused or has caused extreme fear, anxiety, or violence to another child, student or person in our school and school community in any way, whether as an indirect or direct result of any implied or actual words, actions, threats, intimidation, harassment, abuse or violence to a child, student, school personnel or any member of the school community.
- Threats, harassment and intimidation include provoked or unprovoked offensive or violent actions or behaviour, false and/or malicious language or messages communicated through writing, text or email, in cyberspace, social media networks, print media, through one's actions, in a verbal, or non-verbal manner.
- Bodyguards and security personnel, whether wearing uniform or plain clothes, are not allowed to enter AWS school campus. They may wait in the designated huts along the school parking area.

## **Questions and Concerns**

Questions and concerns may be communicated directly to the Executive Director, School Administrator or AWS Administration office personnel at:

Acacia Waldorf School  
Hacienda Sta. Elena  
Sta. Rosa, Laguna

admin@acaciawaldorfschool.com  
Landline: (049) 559 6577  
Globe: (0917) 554 0435  
Smart: (0998) 980 8185

*(End)*