

Afrikaya Safeguarding Policy

Updated January 2026

Policy Statement

Afrikaya is fully committed to safeguarding the **security, privacy, and dignity** of every child who attends Afrikaya Nursery School, including all children participating in the Afrikaya Sponsorship Programme.

While Afrikaya welcomes individual child sponsorship, we take every possible step to ensure that no child is ever placed at risk of harm.

1. Child Security

What do we mean by child security?

Every child has the right to feel — and be — completely safe from abuse, exploitation, or inappropriate contact with adults.

For the purpose of this policy, “adult” includes:

- Afrikaya staff
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Members of the School Management Committee (SMC)
- Sponsors
- Visitors, contractors, consultants, government representatives, or any other person connected with Afrikaya

Together, these individuals are referred to as **Afrikaya Associates**.

Afrikaya promotes child-safe practices at all times and takes active steps to prevent anyone who poses a risk to children from becoming involved with the school. Any Afrikaya Associate who harms a child will face immediate action, including legal proceedings where appropriate.

Corporal punishment

Although Gambian law does not fully prohibit corporal punishment, **Afrikaya Nursery School does**.

Any staff member who uses physical punishment will be dismissed immediately.

The United Nations defines corporal punishment as:

“Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light.”

Afrikaya's approach is grounded in the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)** and the **Gambia Children's Act (2005)**. All decisions are guided by the principle of the best interests of the child.

Responsibilities of an Afrikaya Associate

Every Afrikaya Associate must:

- Be aware of situations that may present risks and take steps to avoid or minimise them
- Help create an environment where children understand their rights and feel safe to speak up
- Ensure, wherever possible, that interactions with children take place in public spaces
- Avoid being alone with a child
- Report any concerns or suspicions of abuse immediately to the **Head of Teaching** and **Head of School**, who will inform the UK trustees without delay

Conduct that constitutes child abuse

Child abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Physical or verbal abuse
- Emotional ill-treatment
- Neglect
- Commercial or other forms of exploitation

Abuse may be deliberate or may result from failing to act to prevent harm

2. Child Sponsorship and Child Security

To protect children participating in the Sponsorship Programme:

- Sponsors receive only the child's name and a short description ("pen picture").
- No additional personal information is shared.
- Visits to the school by sponsors require prior approval from the Afrikaya trustees.
- Visits to individual sponsored children must be arranged **only through Afrikaya**, with written applications submitted at least **one month in advance**.
- Sponsors must not attempt to contact a child, their family, or their community outside the communication channels approved by Afrikaya.
- All letters or parcels for sponsored children must be sent to the UK trustees, who will open and review items before forwarding them to the school. Afrikaya may withhold any material not considered in the child's best interests.

Protecting children's identities

Afrikaya Associates must:

- Never disclose information that could identify a child or their family, including surnames
- Use images of children sensitively and responsibly, especially on social media

These standards apply to **all** Afrikaya Associates, whether working, volunteering, sponsoring, or visiting the school.

Unlawful or inappropriate behaviour — even outside school hours — that violates this policy or harms Afrikaya's reputation will not be tolerated.

3. Child Privacy

Children and their families must be confident that Afrikaya protects all personal information shared with the public, including photographs.

Privacy also means ensuring that families are shielded from unwanted or inappropriate contact.

How the sponsorship process protects privacy

- Downloading, copying, or reproducing any child's photo or information from the Afrikaya website without written permission is strictly prohibited.
- Only a first name and a brief description of the child's circumstances are shared publicly.

Example:

“Omar is 5 years old and lives with his parents and six older siblings. His father is currently out of work and his mother sells vegetables in the local market.”

4. Child Dignity

Afrikaya is committed to portraying children, families, and communities with **accuracy, dignity, and respect**.

Children are not objects of pity — they are partners in a shared journey of educational, social, and community development.

How we uphold dignity

Afrikaya:

- Works collaboratively with families and communities to ensure respectful representation

- Seeks full, informed consent from parents or guardians before a child joins the Sponsorship Programme
- Accepts children into the programme only through a clear, criteria-based application process led by parents or guardians

Contact

If you have any questions about this policy, please email:
afrikaythecharity@gmail.com
