



Safeguarding

Who we are

Imani Academy & Co is a well-established youth development consultancy with years of experience specialising in youth leadership & character development. We are passionate about building on character strengths to support young people through life transitions, ultimately empowering them to advocate for themselves.

We use a participatory methodology, from co-designing leadership programmes for organisations, schools, and communities with young people to bringing in specialist associates ('& co'), we lead by example to demonstrate the importance of citizenship and what it means to be a valued and active citizen in society.

We are committed to excellent safeguarding, recognising the importance of

- Protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Promoting the wellbeing of everyone involved in our work
- Protection of everyone from all harm and abuse

What we do

At Imani Academy & Co, our training and workshops serve as platforms for bringing together adults from various organisations, both online and in-person. Occasionally, we also facilitate gatherings that include young people

and children. Additionally, we provide online spaces for training, learning, and accessing resources.

Our utmost priority is to ensure the safety and protection of everyone present in our spaces. This commitment extends to children, young people, and adults alike. We maintain robust safeguarding measures to create an environment where all individuals feel secure and protected.

Furthermore, we strive to go beyond mere safeguarding by fostering an emotionally and physically supportive atmosphere within Imani Academy & Co. We recognise the importance of promoting well-being and offering assistance and encouragement to individuals in need. By doing so, we aim to cultivate an environment where everyone can thrive and reach their full potential.

The purpose and contents of this document

This document is designed to inform and support organisations, contractors and participants to think about the protection and wellbeing of everyone in Imani Academy & Co spaces, both online and offline. This document and our practice can and should evolve over time - we encourage criticism and feedback that can help us do better. We strive to make environments inclusive and accessible and review our practice regularly through training and consultation with experts on inclusivity and accessibility.

Our approach

All young people and/or vulnerable adults have the fundamental right to be protected from all forms of abuse including mental, physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as abuses of trust, financial manipulation, or discrimination because of a disability or other factor that makes them vulnerable.

Our approach to our work:

- Supports the social model of disability

- Anti-racist
- Feminist
- Trans-inclusive and supportive of the rights and recognition of all LGBTQIA+ people
- Supports people who identify as working class or have done so in the past
- Supports those experiencing the hostile environment (including migrants, refugees and those seeking asylum)
- Welcoming of people of all faiths and none

2. Definitions

Young people: Young people are all those under the age of 18. Sometimes we may include young adults up to 25 years old.

Children: The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) defines a child as everyone under 18 unless, “under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.”

Vulnerable adults: Vulnerable Adults are all persons aged 18 years of age and older who are or may be in need of community care services because of mental disability or other disability, age or illness, and who may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Harm: Under the Children Act, 1989 “harm” means: Ill treatment or the impairment of health or development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

- Development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development
- Health means physical or mental health
- Ill treatment includes sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical e.g. emotional abuse.

Abuse: There are 4 recognised types of abuse. Most types of child abuse can take one or several of these forms, for example bullying and domestic violence are often both physical and emotional forms of abuse.

Physical	This is when a child is hurt or injured by a child or an adult. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It also includes giving a child harmful drugs or alcohol. Female genital mutilation is a form of physical abuse which is illegal in the UK. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or
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	deliberately causes ill health to a child they are looking after. Bullying, racism and other types of discrimination are forms of child abuse. Like other kinds of abuse they can harm a child physically and emotionally.
Emotional	This is when adults deny children love or affection, or constantly threaten or humiliate them. Sarcasm, degrading punishments and ignoring a child are all forms of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
Sexual	This is when a child is used sexually by an adult or young person. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic magazines or videos is also sexual abuse. Sexual abuse includes sexual exploitation, such as forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution. Children of all genders can be sexually abused by people of other genders, by adults and by other young people.
Neglect	Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of substance abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers) or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

3. How we work

Points of Contact

For every event, workshop or training led solely by Imani Academy & Co and attended by young people and vulnerable adults, we will provide contact details for the safeguarding lead in attendance whom participants can contact during the session if there is a concern around protection or wellbeing. When

working with external partners, we will follow the safeguarding protocol of the organisations leading the work unless agreed and specified otherwise.

Our designated Safeguarding Officer is Imani Clough-Brown.

Duty of care

Good practice shall be used wherever possible in interpersonal dealings with all people, including young people and vulnerable adults. It is important that those in a position of trust have a clear understanding of the responsibilities this carries and clear guidance, which can be found below, to ensure they do not abuse their position or put themselves in a position where allegations of abuse, whether justified or unfounded, could be made.

It is the our duty and intent to protect the fundamental rights of all those we work with and comply with the principles enshrined in laws and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, through ensuring that responsibilities for the protection of young people and/or vulnerable adults are effectively assigned, accepted and fulfilled at all levels within the organisational structure.

Conduct

Every person working with Imani Academy & Co must:

- Treat all those we work with equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Treat all information and data (including photographs and video footage) pertaining to a young person or vulnerable adult with sensitivity
- Avoid being alone with a young person or cause someone else to be alone with a young person or because of your actions e.g. being late
- Be sensitive to the needs of young people and vulnerable adults
- Respect the right to privacy of young people and vulnerable adults
- Encourage everyone to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour that are inappropriate

- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- Be aware that any physical contact with a young person or vulnerable adult can be misinterpreted and should always be avoided
- Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with young people and vulnerable adults
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (Imani Clough-Brown)
- Operate within our Safeguarding Procedures in the event of any disclosure/concern
- Try to ensure that feedback is enthusiastic and constructive
- Always work in an open environment and avoid private or unobserved situations
- Try to use appropriate facilitation to make spaces safe, to honour participants and encounter conflict honestly and with integrity
- Explicitly seek to set out guidelines and boundaries from the outset of the session to promote the involvement of all, and to elevate voices that might be least likely to be heard
- Remind staff and young people to think about what they feel comfortable sharing – it is their right to share or not share, and we will employ a variety of ways to do this
- Remember professional and sector language can often exclude different groups of people. We hope to learn and practice ways of expressing and explaining things in clear language and descriptions, which may take different forms

Every person working with Imani Academy & Co must not:

- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks in front of young people and vulnerable adults
- Have inappropriate contact or verbal contact with young people and vulnerable adults
- Be under the influence of alcohol or other substances when working on activities involving young people and vulnerable adults

- Take photographs of young people without express permission from relevant staff
- Transfer the personal data of young people to third parties without express permission from relevant staff, the young person or vulnerable adult, or their family
- Allow your own priorities to compromise the care, happiness or well-being of young people and vulnerable adults
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues
- Rely on your good name or that of the organisation to protect you
- Believe “it could never happen to me.”
- Give out personal contact details to children or vulnerable adults
- Arrange any contact with children or young adults met through Imani Academy & Co outside of those activities

Working online

When meeting online, we will ask all participants to give us their names and associated organisations. This may be captured through chat or another means. We will send pre-event reminders to include information on keeping safe online.

Wellbeing

Imani Academy & Co supports organisations and community groups to lead change on issues of systemic inequalities and injustice. The kinds of conversations that can arise at Imani Academy & Co can therefore touch on personal experiences, positive and negative, and raise strong feelings and emotions.

We recognise that there will be power differentials in a room. We will remind participants at our training to think about what they feel comfortable sharing – it is their right to share or not share, and we will employ a variety of ways to do this. We will frame participation on issues of care and wellbeing as an invitation and when there is a tool that requires everyone to speak (e.g. coaching sets) participants will know this in advance of the session.

Recording information and safe use of data (inc. photos)

No persons information not already in the public domain may be removed from the Imani Academy & Co premises by any person other than the person themselves or an Imani Academy & Co associate or employee unless written or noted verbal permission has been given by the person.

All reasonable effort will be made to avoid funding and contracts that will require excessive levels of intrusion into persons records.

All persons information will be kept while the person remains a client of Imani Academy Ltd. When someone no longer works with Imani Academy & Co their details will be archived and kept for seven years after which time it will be removed. Personal data will only be held for the purposes specified in the Imani Academy & Ltd's Data Protection Register entry. All subjects have the right to access any data held.

4. Safeguarding procedures

Disclosure/reporting

Disclosure is when someone tells you something about what happened to them, or is happening to them, which could put them - or others - at risk or lead them to them being harmed in some way. Examples of this are a young person telling you that they are being physically, sexually, emotionally abused or neglected.

How we care for our participants during training and facilitation activities will make a difference to the atmosphere, integration and success of the entire event. Some of the issues which might be raised by participants will simply need sensitivity and a common sense approach to alleviate the problem. However, where there is cause for concern, some issues must be escalated on to Imani Clough-Brown in order to protect the participant, trainer/facilitator and possibly Imani Academy Ltd.

Your Role

You are not a councillor so never try and attempt to do something you are not trained to do. You will end up doing more harm than good. As a trainer/facilitator, you can listen and support the young person, but it is essential you pass on the situation which you can not deal with and pass this on to Imani Clough-Brown who has the specific knowledge and skills to respond appropriately and is the designated safeguarding lead.

The first indicator of a young person in danger may not necessarily be the presence of severe injury or them telling you.

Indicators can present themselves in a number of ways; by remarks made by the person or their friends; by changes in the person's behaviour or demeanour; or, by a series of events which, while not necessarily of concern in themselves, are significant if viewed together.

Although a first situation may not seem serious it should be remembered that prompt help could prevent minor issues escalating into something more serious.

A key principle of child protection and safeguarding is the safety and welfare of the young person overrides all other considerations. Advice should be sought or a referral made as soon as the concern comes to light.

If a young person/vulnerable adult asks if they can tell you something or you feel that they are about to disclose; It is important to convey to the person that if they tell you something that you feel could harm them or anyone else you have to tell someone. That someone will be an appropriate person with the authority and skills to help.

You must never promise to keep anything secret.

In the light of this information, the young person may choose not to tell you. They have the right to do this and will hopefully choose to tell you another time when they are ready. **You should never pressure them.**

If they choose not to tell you, you should still inform Latifa Akay.

If a young person accepts that you may have to pass on any information they give you and still goes ahead, you must contact Imani Clough-Brown immediately. You must never tell anyone else about this conversation before or after speaking with Imani Clough-Brown.

What to do if abuse is disclosed

1. Look at the child or adult directly.
2. Accept what the child or adult says.
3. Be aware that the child or adult may have been threatened.
4. Do not adopt a critical approach. Do not press for information.
5. Reassure the child or adult they are right to tell you, and that you will take what they say seriously.
6. Follow the receive, reassure, react protocol
7. Do not promise to keep information the child or adult has disclosed a secret.
8. Let the child or adult know what you are going to do next, whom you are going to tell, and why, and roughly what will happen.
9. Finish on a positive note.

As soon as possible afterwards, make hand written notes of exactly what the child or adult said and the date and time.

Action

1. Do not delay.
2. Do not act alone.
3. Do not start to investigate.
4. Inform the Safeguarding officer of the position immediately.
5. The Safeguarding officer will consult with others relevant to the incident
6. The Safeguarding officer will meet with the staff member who has been present and take a written record of the facts.
7. The Safeguarding Officer will then inform the social services of the disclosure who will then liaise with the relevant departments on a

need-to-know basis and will, if appropriate, inform the police. It is the responsibility of the authorities to investigate whether an abuse has occurred.

Receive	Reassure	React	Respond
Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.	Reassure the person, but only so far as it is honest and reliable. For example, don't make promises you might not be able to keep, such as "I'll stay with you," or "everything will be all right now."	Do not give your opinion or pass any judgement on what you have been told.	Do not delay.
Accept what is said but do not comment on it.	DO NOT promise confidentiality	Do not ask leading questions, for example "what did they do next?" Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the person's) in any later prosecution in court.	Do not act alone.
Disclosures come in all shapes and sizes: suicidal thoughts are as much as disclosure as physical abuse from a parent.	DO reassure and alleviate guilt, if the person refers to it.	Do not criticise the perpetrator; the young person may love them. Your criticism could be confusing and reconciliation may be possible.	Do not start to investigate.

<p>Record the information as soon as possible. Ensure that you include the circumstances that led up to the disclosure. Write exactly what the person has told you, not your interpretation.</p>		<p>Immediately after the conversation contact the Designated Child Protection Officer Imani Clough-Brown.</p>	
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Complaints procedure

1. Name of child or adult.
2. Parent/carer's details.
3. The child or adult's address.
4. Relevant phone numbers.
5. What is said to have happened, or what was seen.
6. When it occurred.
7. Who else was there.
8. What was said by those involved.
9. Whether there is any actual evidence eg. bruises, bleeding, changed behaviour.
10. Who has been told about it.
10. Who was concerned.
11. Was the child or young adult able to say what happened?
12. Whether the parents have been advised.

5. Recruitment

Vetting

Imani Academy Ltd believes in good recruitment practices and abides by the Police Act of 1997, which makes it a criminal offence for an employer not to check an employee working with young persons and/or vulnerable adults,

and/or to knowingly give a job to someone who is inappropriate to work with such persons.

We are committed to the use of good practise with regard to professional development. So far as is reasonably practicable, relevant development and training shall be undertaken and relevant persons shall be provided with such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to secure the protection of young persons and/or vulnerable adults who come into contact with (us), the safety of others who may be affected

Safer recruitment

A written application form is to be completed for applicants to all posts. On the form we ask for any past convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings, as well as any pending cases. We also ask applicants if they have ever had any complaints of abuse against them. Face-to-face interviews are held with anyone we may want to appoint, which involve more than one person and use a transparent scoring system. Applicants must provide two referees; proof of identification; and original copies of any necessary qualifications before appointment.

If they will be caring for, in sole charge of, or supervising children, all workers will need an enhanced DBS check. All new workers have an induction and will work for a trial period before their appointment is confirmed. New staff and volunteers are given copies of this policy and receive training about it to ensure they have an understanding of safeguarding.

Supervision and support of all volunteers and staff include monitoring of safeguarding practice and reviews of progress. Imani Academy Ltd staff access further training and learning about safeguarding issues when these are relevant and required.

All staff and others working for Imani Academy Ltd. will be made aware of the Safeguarding Policy and will be required to sign up to the Policy as part of their contract. We will use every endeavour to ensure that they understand their responsibilities, and the procedures concerning appropriate responses to any

concerns relating to possible abuse. Imani Academy Ltd. acknowledges that subconscious or unintentional barriers may exist that deter the optimum level of participation from the widest section of society. Additionally, we are aware that these barriers are part of larger cultural and societal issues. Imani Academy Ltd is committed to creating an environment that challenges these barriers and this discrimination.