



CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

We are a **respectful, inclusive, and learning-focused community** where every student is encouraged and inspired to achieve their full potential and develop into an **ethical, confident, responsible, and globally aware citizen of tomorrow.**

1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- The purpose of this Policy is to:
- Establish a clear framework for child protection and safeguarding appropriate to the School and its context.
- Provide clear definitions and guidance to help identify signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other safeguarding concerns.
- Establish clear procedures for reporting, responding to, recording, and managing child protection concerns.
- Define the responsibilities of all adults working in or on behalf of the School, including teachers, staff, volunteers, and other authorised personnel.

This Policy applies to all adults working in or on behalf of Mount Dev International School and is intended to promote the safety, dignity, welfare, and best interests of every child.

2. AIM OF THE POLICY

- The School aims to ensure that every member of the school community contributes to keeping children and young people safe by:
- Providing a safe, supportive, inclusive, and child-friendly learning environment.
- Taking appropriate and timely action whenever a child protection or safeguarding concern arises.
- Identifying children who are suffering, or may be at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or significant harm.
- Promoting awareness and responsibility for child safeguarding throughout the School and wider community.
- Communicating the School's commitment to protecting the rights, safety, dignity, and well-being of every child.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is an integral part of the School's Mission, Vision, and Core Values.

The School recognises that child abuse, neglect, exploitation, harassment, and violence are serious violations of a child's rights and can adversely affect their education, health, safety, and physical, emotional, psychological, and social development.

Mount Dev International School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, inclusive, and nurturing environment in which every child is protected from harm and treated with dignity and respect.

The School supports the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and will implement appropriate child protection and safeguarding practices in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and statutory requirements in India.

4. REPORTING OF SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

All faculty, staff, administrators, volunteers, and other persons working in or on behalf of the School have a responsibility to report any known, suspected, or disclosed child protection concern.

- Concerns may include physical or psychological violence, bullying, harassment, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or physical or sexual abuse.
- Safeguarding concerns should be reported immediately or as soon as reasonably practicable to the Principal or designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer.
- Where immediate action is required to protect a child from harm, the concern must be reported without delay.
- Staff should not conduct their own investigation or make promises of confidentiality to a child. The concern should be recorded accurately and referred to the designated authority.
- Serious cases shall be dealt with in accordance with applicable legal and statutory requirements and, where necessary, referred to the appropriate competent authorities.

5. CHILD PROTECTION

Child Protection is a broad framework of policies, standards, procedures, and practices designed to protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, harassment, and other forms of intentional or unintentional harm.

For the purpose of this Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding include measures taken by the School to promote the safety, welfare, dignity, and best interests of every student, both within the School and in situations connected with School activities.

The School is committed to continuous improvement of its safeguarding systems and to ensuring that all concerns are handled promptly, fairly, sensitively, confidentially, and in the best interests of the child.

CHILD ABUSE

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), child abuse includes physical or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligent treatment, or exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to a child's health, development, safety, or dignity within a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.

Child abuse may be committed by a person known to, trusted by, or responsible for the child. Therefore, all members of the School community must remain alert to possible safeguarding concerns and understand that a child may find it difficult to disclose abuse due to fear, shame, confusion, threats, emotional dependence, or concern about the consequences.

For safeguarding purposes, the School recognises the following broad categories of abuse:

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse involves deliberately causing, or attempting to cause, physical harm to a child. It may include hitting, punching, kicking, shaking, pushing, throwing, biting, burning, scalding, poisoning, drowning, suffocating, or other acts of physical violence.

Some injuries or behaviours may also indicate self-harm or other serious safeguarding concerns and should be treated appropriately.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

The following signs may indicate physical abuse; however, no single sign should be treated as proof of abuse:

- Unexplained or repeated bruises, burns, cuts, bites, sprains, or dislocations.
- Injuries with inconsistent, unlikely, or improbable explanations.
- Injuries that appear untreated or repeatedly occur.
- Injuries to areas of the body that are not normally exposed during ordinary play or accidental falls.
- Recurrent unexplained physical complaints, such as stomach pain or urinary problems.
- Reluctance or refusal to discuss injuries.
- Fear or withdrawal from physical contact.
- Wearing clothing that consistently covers the body, even in unusually hot weather. Fear of going home or anxiety about parents/guardians being contacted.
- Unusual fear, wariness, or distrust of adults.
- Self-destructive or self-harming behaviour.
- Unusual aggression towards others.
- Excessive passivity, compliance, or fearfulness.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse refers to the persistent pattern of emotional ill-treatment that may seriously affect a child's emotional, psychological, or social development. It may include repeatedly making a child feel worthless, unloved, inadequate, unwanted, or valued only for meeting another person's needs.

It may also involve imposing expectations that are inappropriate for the child's age or development, causing the child to live in fear, or exposing the child to behaviour that may exploit, manipulate, or seriously harm them.

Emotional abuse may occur on its own or alongside other forms of abuse.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- The following may be indicators of emotional abuse, although no single sign should be considered proof:
- Delayed physical, emotional, social, or developmental progress.
- Persistent anxiety, fearfulness, or insecurity.
- Delayed speech or sudden changes in speech.
- Fear of new situations or unusual reluctance to participate.
- Low self-esteem or lack of confidence.
- Inappropriate or extreme emotional responses.
- Extreme passivity, withdrawal, or aggression.
- Sudden changes in academic performance or concentration.
- Attention-seeking or unusually dependent behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness or lack of energy.
- Obsessions, phobias, or significant behavioural changes.
- Persistent lying or other unusual behaviours.
- Risk-taking or self-destructive behaviour.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves engaging or attempting to engage a child in sexual activity or exposing a child to sexual behaviour, whether or not the child understands what is happening.

It may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts, as well as non-contact activities such as exposing a child to sexually explicit material, involving a child in the creation or viewing of such material, sexual exploitation, or encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour.

The School recognises that a child may be unable to understand, consent to, or safely communicate about sexual abuse. Any concern, disclosure, allegation, or suspected incident of sexual abuse must therefore be treated seriously and reported immediately to the designated safeguarding authority in accordance with applicable law and School procedures.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, educational, or medical needs, where this may result in serious harm to the child's health, safety, development, or well-being.

Neglect may include inadequate supervision, nutrition, hygiene, clothing, medical care, emotional support, or protection from unsafe situations.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF NEGLECT

The following may indicate possible neglect:

- Unattended or repeatedly unmet medical needs.
- Inadequate supervision or lack of appropriate care.
- Persistent hunger or inadequate nutrition.

- Poor or consistently neglected personal hygiene.
- Inappropriate clothing or living conditions.
- Persistent fatigue, tiredness, or lack of energy.
- Failure to thrive or unexplained developmental difficulties.
- Extreme loneliness or an unusual need for affection.
- Low self-esteem or significant withdrawal.
- Poor social relationships or difficulty interacting with others.
- Self-destructive or risk-taking behaviour.
- Frequent lateness, unexplained absence, or non-attendance at school.
- Behavioural or academic changes without an apparent explanation.

IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDING NOTE

These signs and indicators do not, by themselves, establish that abuse or neglect has occurred. They should be considered in the context of the child's circumstances and any other relevant information.

Any member of the School community who has a reasonable concern, receives a disclosure, or observes signs that may indicate abuse or neglect must report the concern promptly to the Principal or designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer. Staff should not attempt to investigate the matter themselves or make promises of secrecy to the child.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

The School shall follow the following procedure for all Child Protection and Safeguarding concerns:

Identify & Report: Any concern, disclosure, or suspected case of abuse or neglect must be reported immediately to the Principal or designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer.

Ensure Safety: Immediate steps shall be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

Listen & Record: The concern or disclosure shall be listened to sensitively and recorded accurately, using the child's own words wherever possible.

Do Not Investigate: Staff must not conduct their own investigation, confront the alleged person, or promise secrecy to the child.

Assessment & Action: The designated authority shall assess the concern and take appropriate action in accordance with School policy and applicable laws.

External Referral: Serious cases shall be referred without delay to the appropriate competent authority, wherever legally required.

Confidentiality: Information shall be kept confidential and shared only with authorised persons on a need-to-know basis.

Parent/Guardian Communication: Parents/guardians shall be informed where appropriate and where doing so does not place the child at further risk.

Follow-Up & Support: The School shall provide appropriate support and monitor the child's safety and well-being following the incident.

Documentation: All reports, actions, referrals, and outcomes shall be properly documented and securely maintained.

ONLINE ABUSE AND CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying carried out through social media, online games, mobile phones, messaging platforms or other digital technologies. It may cause emotional distress, fear, humiliation or harm to a child.

Cyberbullying may include:

- Sending threatening, abusive or intimidating messages.
- Creating or sharing embarrassing, humiliating or harmful photographs/videos.
- Trolling, harassment or sending disturbing messages through social media, chat rooms or online games.
- Creating hate groups, pages or websites targeting a child.
- Encouraging or pressuring a child to self-harm. Conducting abusive or humiliating online polls.
- Creating fake accounts, impersonating a child, or misusing their identity.
- Sending or requesting sexually explicit messages, photographs or videos (sexting).
- Pressuring or coercing children to share sexual images or engage in sexual conversations.

ONLINE GROOMING:

Online grooming occurs when an adult or another person deliberately develops a relationship or emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purpose of sexual abuse, exploitation, trafficking or other forms of harm.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ONLINE MAY INCLUDE:

- Sending, requesting or sharing sexually explicit images of a child.
- Engaging a child in sexual activities through a webcam, smartphone or other digital platforms.
- Engaging a child in inappropriate or sexual conversations through text, social media or online platforms.

PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE

Peer-on-peer abuse occurs when a child or young person is bullied, exploited, threatened, harassed or harmed by another child or young person of a similar age. Such abuse may occur physically, emotionally, sexually or through digital platforms.

- It may include, but is not limited to:
- Bullying, intimidation and harassment.
- Physical violence or threats.
- Sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Sharing intimate or inappropriate images without consent.
- Online bullying and cyberbullying.
- Social exclusion, humiliation or spreading harmful rumours.
- Coercion, manipulation or exploitation.
- Pressuring another child to engage in unsafe, harmful or inappropriate activities.

PHYSICAL ABUSE (CHILD IN DANGER)

Physical abuse is the intentional use of physical force that causes, or may cause, injury or harm to a child. It includes hitting, punching, kicking, shaking, throwing, biting, burning, scalding, poisoning, drowning, suffocating, choking, or any other deliberate act causing physical harm.

Signs of physical abuse may include unexplained injuries, bruises, burns, fractures or sudden changes in behaviour. Similar signs may also indicate self-harm, including cutting or suicidal thoughts.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE (CHILD IN DANGER)

Emotional abuse is persistent behaviour or treatment that seriously affects a child's emotional well-being and development. It may include:

- Making a child feel worthless, unloved or unwanted.
- Constantly criticising, humiliating, threatening or intimidating a child.
- Making inappropriate demands that are not suitable for the child's age or development.
- Causing a child to feel frightened, unsafe or rejected.
- Controlling, manipulating, exploiting or deliberately isolating a child.
- Exposing a child to behaviour that may seriously affect their emotional development.

Emotional abuse may occur on its own or alongside physical, sexual or other forms of abuse.

SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE (CHILD IN DANGER)

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is forced, pressured, manipulated, or persuaded to participate in sexual activity, whether or not the child understands what is happening. It may involve:

- Sexual touching or other physical contact, including penetrative acts.
- Forcing or encouraging a child to engage in sexual acts.
- Exposing a child to sexual content or pornography.
- Involving a child in creating, viewing or sharing sexually explicit material.
- Encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour.
- Online sexual exploitation, grooming or sexual communication.
- Commercial sexual exploitation or trafficking of a child.
- on its own or alongside physical, sexual or other forms of abuse.

NEGLECT (CHILD AT RISK)

Neglect is the persistent failure to provide a child with adequate care and basic physical, emotional, medical, educational or developmental needs, resulting in, or placing the child at risk of, serious harm to their health or development.

Possible signs of neglect or abuse may include:

- Persistent hunger, poor hygiene or inappropriate clothing.
- Unattended medical or developmental needs.
- Persistent tiredness or frequent illness.
- Lack of adequate supervision or care.

- Frequent lateness, unexplained or repeated absence from school.
- Poor concentration, sudden under-achievement or developmental delays.
- Anxiety, unexplained fears, mood changes or emotional withdrawal.
- Extreme passivity, aggression or attention-seeking behaviour.
- Unexplained injuries or injuries that have not received appropriate medical attention.
- Vague, inconsistent or improbable explanations for injuries.
- Changes in sleeping patterns or regressive behaviours such as bedwetting.
- Poor social relationships or significant changes in behaviour.
- Self-harm, suicidal thoughts or attempts. Age-inappropriate sexualised behaviour or language.
- Substance misuse, including alcohol or drugs.
- Compulsive lying, stealing, vandalism or aggressive behaviour.

Important: These signs do not necessarily prove abuse or neglect and may have other causes. Staff should remain vigilant and report significant, sudden or persistent changes in a child's behaviour, appearance, attendance or wellbeing through the school's safeguarding procedures.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF POTENTIAL OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR

A. Students / Young People: Possible concerning behaviours may include:

- Persistent sexualised behaviour or inappropriate sexual interest.
- Continuing sexual misconduct despite being instructed to stop.
- Using force, threats, manipulation or coercion towards others.
- Unusually intense or inappropriate discussions about sex and sexuality.
- Seeking relationships primarily with significantly younger children.
- Giving inappropriate gifts or creating relationships that involve secrecy.

B. Adults / Staff / Other Persons: Possible safeguarding concerns may include:

- Showing inappropriate favouritism towards a particular student or child.
- Repeatedly seeking opportunities to be alone with children without a legitimate reason.
- Using inappropriate sexualised language, jokes or discussions around students.
- Engaging in sexualised conversations in the presence of children.
- Giving private or inappropriate gifts to students.
- Maintaining inappropriate private communication with students through social media, messaging apps or the internet.
- Attempting to establish secretive or inappropriate personal relationships with students.

CHILD PROTECTION AT SCHOOL

Additional Guidance for Teachers: These procedures are designed to protect children from abuse and neglect. Child protection concerns may arise from suspected, alleged, self-disclosed or witnessed abuse or neglect and must be taken seriously and followed up with appropriate action.

TYPES OF ABUSE

- The school recognizes the following principal forms of abuse:
- Physical Abuse
- Psychological/Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Students will receive age-appropriate child protection education through the curriculum. They will be taught how to recognize inappropriate behaviour, respond assertively, seek help and report concerns to appropriate school personnel and/or trusted family members.

IF A STUDENT CONFIDES IN YOU

Teachers and staff should follow these principles when a child discloses a concern:

- **Do not promise secrecy.** Explain that you may need to share the information with the appropriate safeguarding authority to keep the child safe.
- Reassure the child that their information will be handled sensitively and confidentially on a need-to-know basis.
- Listen carefully and allow the child to speak in their own words.
- Do not lead, pressure or repeatedly question the child for details.
- Remain calm and respond in a supportive, respectful and non-judgmental manner.
- Do not make judgmental or disparaging comments about the alleged person responsible for the abuse.
- Do not make promises that everything will be resolved or that nothing will happen.
- Do not confront the alleged abuser.
- If the child says that they are afraid to go home or do not want to return home, treat this as an urgent safeguarding concern and immediately inform the designated safeguarding authority/well-being team. Staff must not take the child home themselves.
- Explain to the child, in an age-appropriate manner, that the information must be shared with the appropriate person so that help and protection can be provided.
- Where appropriate, explain that another safeguarding professional may need to speak with the child and why.
- Give the child as much appropriate involvement and choice in the process as possible, while ensuring their safety remains the priority.

IF YOU HAVE A SUSPICION

If a teacher or staff member has a reasonable concern that a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect, even when the child has not disclosed anything, the concern must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Authority/appropriate school authority in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and applicable procedures.

The safety, dignity and best interests of the child must remain the primary consideration at all times.

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM VULNERABILITY

Professional Boundaries for Staff and Volunteers: All interactions between adults and students must be professional, appropriate and transparent. Staff and volunteers must maintain clear boundaries to protect children and themselves from inappropriate situations or allegations.

Staff and Volunteers Must:

- Avoid being alone with a child wherever possible. Do not transport a child alone in a personal vehicle.
- When a private conversation is necessary, use a place that is within sight of others, while ensuring reasonable privacy for the child.
- Respect the child's privacy during toileting, changing, showering and other personal-care situations.
- Use physical contact only when necessary for preventing or treating injury, ensuring safety, providing instruction, meeting legitimate sports requirements, or appropriately comforting a distressed student.
- Never use corporal punishment or any form of physical punishment.
- Never use sexual jokes, sexually inappropriate comments, gestures, massages or inappropriate physical contact with students.
- During overnight activities, staff/volunteers must not share sleeping accommodation with students, except their own children.
- Maintain strict privacy settings on personal social-media accounts and avoid inappropriate or unnecessary contact with students through social media, gaming platforms or online forums.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries in all face-to-face and online interactions.

Adult Responsibility: It is always the responsibility of the adult to establish, maintain and respect appropriate boundaries. If a child attempts to involve an adult in inappropriate behaviour, the adult must clearly refuse the behaviour and report the incident to the Designated Authority.

REPORTING STUDENT DISCLOSURES OR SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

- All faculty, staff and administrators have a responsibility to report concerns or incidents involving:
 - Physical or psychological violence.
 - Aggression or harassment.
 - Physical abuse.
 - Sexual abuse.
 - Any other child-protection or safeguarding concern.

Reporting Procedure

1. Take every concern seriously and do not ignore suspected or disclosed abuse.
2. Report the concern to the Designated Authority as soon as possible.
3. The source material specifies that reporting should occur within the next school day and, at the latest, within 48 hours.
4. The Principal responsible for student well-being should receive the report.
5. If the Principal is unavailable, the concern should be reported to the School Counsellor or Head of School.
6. Safeguarding concerns may be reported at any time and are not restricted to normal working hours.
7. Information should be shared sensitively and only with those who need to know for the protection and welfare of the child.

SCHOOL TOILETING AND INTIMATE CARE GUIDELINES

These guidelines apply to all school staff who may need to provide intimate care to a student, including Early Years teachers, the School Nurse, PE teachers and staff supervising overnight or residential activities.

Definition of Intimate Care: Intimate care refers to any care involving washing, touching or assisting with personal-care procedures involving intimate areas of the body. It may arise in connection with toileting, accidents, personal hygiene or other bodily functions.

All intimate care must be provided in a manner that:

- Protects the child's dignity, privacy and confidence.
- Minimizes distress, embarrassment, discomfort or pain.
- Encourages the child to remain as independent as possible.
- Respects the child's individual needs and circumstances.

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF:

- Where a child requires assistance with toileting or has a toileting accident, inform another staff member that you are assisting the child.
- Wherever possible, staff should remain visible to other staff members and avoid unnecessary isolation.
- Encourage the child to undertake as much of the toileting or personal-care activity independently as they are able to do.
- Provide only the assistance that is reasonably necessary for the child's safety, hygiene and wellbeing.
- For Early Years students, where a child is not toilet trained or experiences regression, inform the parents/guardians and work with them to understand the child's needs and appropriate support arrangements.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times.
- Any concern arising during intimate care must be reported through the school's safeguarding procedures.

SCHOOL NURSE / MEDICAL CARE

The School Nurse may provide medical or personal care in the school infirmary. Privacy may be provided where necessary for confidentiality and appropriate medical care; however, professional safeguarding standards and appropriate boundaries must always be maintained.

LONG-TERM IMPACT OF CHILD ABUSE

The effects of child abuse may continue long after the abuse has occurred. While some children demonstrate resilience and recover with appropriate support, unresolved abuse can have significant long-term effects on a child's health, emotional wellbeing, development, relationships and education.

Possible long-term impacts may include:

- Poor educational achievement.
- Difficulty completing responsibilities or achieving personal goals.
- Difficulty with independent self-care. Difficulties in cooperating and maintaining healthy relationships.
- Low self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Difficulty expressing or accepting affection.
- Ongoing physical or health problems.
- Mental health difficulties.
- Depression and anxiety.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- Attachment and relationship difficulties.
- Eating disorders.
- Poor peer relationships.
- Self-injurious behaviour, including suicidal behaviour.

WHAT TO DO WHEN A CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE

When a child discloses abuse or a safeguarding concern, staff must remain calm, listen carefully and respond sensitively.

Stay Calm Do not overreact, show shock, anger or disbelief, even when the information is difficult to hear.

LISTEN, HEAR AND BELIEVE

- Listen carefully and take the child seriously.
- Allow the child to speak in their own words.
- Do not make assumptions or suggest alternative explanations.

GIVE THE CHILD TIME TO SPEAK

Use open and supportive prompts such as:

- "Tell me about it."
- "Please explain."
- "Describe what happened."

REASSURE THE CHILD

- Tell the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Explain that the information will only be shared with those professionals who need to know in order to protect and support the child.

RECORD THE DISCLOSURE

- Record the disclosure as soon as possible.
- Use the child's own words and record the information as accurately and objectively as possible.
- Complete the appropriate Child Protection/Disclosure Form.
- Record any action taken following the disclosure.

REPORT THE CONCERN

Report the concern promptly to the Designated Authority/Designated Safeguarding Person in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and applicable procedures.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OFFENCES (POCSO)

The school is committed to maintaining a safe, secure and child-friendly learning environment and to protecting all students below the age of 18 from sexual abuse, sexual harassment, exploitation and other sexual offences.

The school shall implement its POCSO-related responsibilities in accordance with the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, applicable rules, CBSE directions and other relevant child-protection requirements.

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the POCSO Policy is to:

- Protect children from sexual assault and sexual harassment.
- Prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Protect children from grooming, stalking and inappropriate contact.
- Prevent the exposure or involvement of children in pornography or sexually explicit material.
- Establish clear mechanisms for reporting, responding to and addressing child-protection concerns.
- Promote a safe, supportive and child-friendly school environment.

SCOPE OF PROTECTION

Child sexual abuse may involve a person engaging a child in sexual activities for sexual gratification, exploitation or commercial purposes.

Safeguarding concerns may include:

- Using words, sounds, gestures, objects or other conduct with a sexual intent directed towards a child.
- Inducing or compelling a child to display their body or any part of it.

- Showing pornographic or sexually explicit material to a child.
- Repeatedly following, watching, contacting or attempting to communicate with a child directly or through electronic, digital or other means.
- Threatening or blackmailing a child using real or fabricated images, videos or representations involving the child or sexual acts.
- Enticing, grooming or exploiting a child for pornographic or sexual purposes.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The school management shall:

- Ensure that all employees are made aware of the provisions and prohibitions relating to child sexual abuse and POCSO.
- Establish an appropriate complaint and reporting mechanism for child sexual abuse concerns.
- Constitute and maintain a POCSO/Child Protection Committee as applicable.
- Display the committee details and relevant contact information prominently on the school notice board and website.
- Display the applicable Child Helpline information prominently for students and staff.
- Include child-protection and POCSO-related requirements in staff conduct rules and disciplinary procedures.
- Conduct appropriate background checks and police verification for staff, including contractual employees, as required.
- Establish clear professional boundaries for staff–student interactions.
- Ensure that staff do not unnecessarily isolate themselves with students, including during personal-care situations.
- Conduct regular staff orientation and safeguarding awareness programmes. Conduct age-appropriate child-protection and awareness programmes for students.
- Maintain an environment in which children feel safe and supported to disclose abuse or concerns.
- Provide necessary facilities and information required for appropriate handling of complaints and safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure that complaints and reports are addressed and documented promptly in accordance with applicable procedures.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

Recording a Child's Statement

Where a child's statement needs to be recorded, the following safeguards should be followed:

- Preferably, the statement should be recorded by a trained female member where appropriate.
- The child should be in a safe, comfortable and child-friendly environment.
- The statement should be recorded in the language spoken and understood by the child.

- The statement should be written or typed as close as possible to the child's own words.
- Audio/video recording may be used where legally permissible and appropriate.
- The recorded statement should be reviewed/read back to the child where appropriate.
- The child and/or family should be provided a copy where required by applicable procedure.
- The child should be given appropriate breaks and emotional support.
- The child's dignity, privacy, safety and protection must be maintained throughout the process.
- Counselling or psychological support should be arranged where required.
- Necessary medical care should be provided promptly.
- Where medical examination is required, it should be arranged promptly in accordance with applicable law and procedure.
- Appropriate child-protection authorities/helpline services may be contacted where required.
- The matter should be reported to the appropriate authorities in accordance with applicable law and the nature of the concern.
- Any disciplinary action within the school should be taken in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and applicable rules.

CORE PRINCIPLE

The safety, dignity, privacy and best interests of the child must remain the highest priority at every stage of disclosure, reporting, investigation and support.