



## **SSIS Child Protection Policy**

Here at SSIS, it is every staff member's responsibility to become familiar with this Child Protection Policy. In addition, it is important to know who to communicate with in case of any concern with regard to the protection of the child - meaning any student in our care. Staff must also undertake the required Professional Learning in Safeguarding and follow all guidance on raising any concerns about the welfare or safety of any child and making an allegation against another member of staff. Confidentiality is essential and the lines of communication must be followed. Professional Sharing will include guidance on how to receive disclosure and record concerns.

### **1) PRINCIPLES**

Under the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and according to our Guiding Statements, we recognize that it is our duty to protect children from harm and respond to concerns of child abuse.

Every child, regardless of age, has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that may result in a compromise of their physical or emotional well-being. Whilst under our care, we have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the children in our school.

We strive to create an environment where parents and children will feel free to talk about any concerns and will view our school as a safe place. The views of the child will be taken seriously if he/she seeks help from a member of our staff. However, staff cannot guarantee confidentiality if concerns are such that a referral must be made to the appropriate agency or agencies in order to safeguard the child's welfare. We will also take appropriate action should we find that the welfare of a child has been compromised.

We hope to increase the awareness and decrease the possibility for the following four types of abuse:

- Neglect
- Physical
- Sexual and
- Psychological/Emotional

### **2) PROCEDURE**

Any member of staff who suspects the safety or welfare is compromised, should immediately report to the Designated Person for Child Protection (DPCP). For SSIS, the DPCP is usually the Divisional Principal. In the absence of the DPCP, staff should inform the matter to the Counsellors and/or the Principal.

Confidentiality is essential. Staff must feel confident that they will be supported if they report any concerns about a child. Staff will be expected to ensure that any reports surfaced about any safeguarding situation are child-centred, in the child's best interests, rooted in child development and informed by evidence.

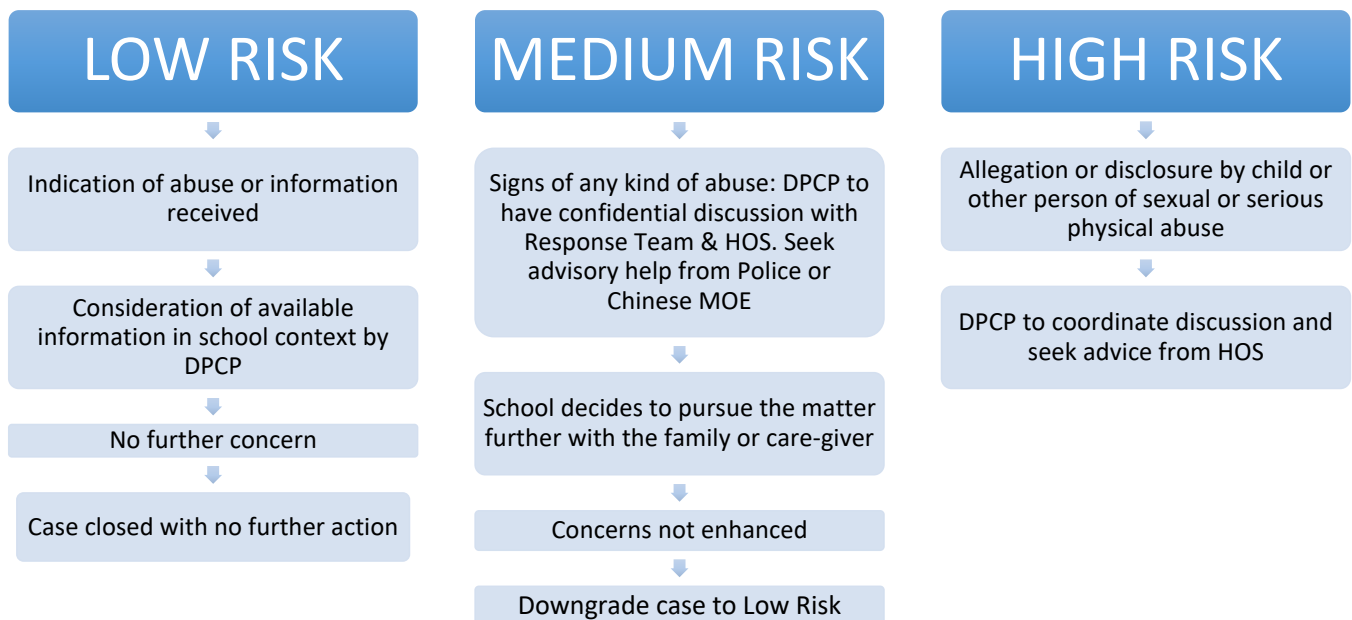
Thereafter, the DPCP will form a Response Team and the team will take over the matter immediately. The DPCP will appoint a Secretary for the Response Team.



Division	Designated Person for Child Protection (DPCP)
Preschool	Divisional Principal / Coordinator
Primary School	Divisional Principal / Counsellor
Senior School	Divisional Principal / Counsellor

### 3) CHILD PROTECTION FLOWCHART

Upon receipt of information, each case will be assessed dependent on its risk level as it pertains to the child. The appropriate course of action will then be taken accordingly in discussion with the relevant parties. With feedback and evaluation, each case could potentially be escalated or downgraded in terms of its risk level until appropriate resolution has been resulted.





**4) TYPES OF ABUSE**

TYPE OF ABUSE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES	SIGNS / SYMPTOMS
<b>NEGLECT</b>	The persistent or severe neglect of a child which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No caregiver for the child</li> <li>• Lack of meals</li> <li>• Lack of clean change of clothes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunger</li> <li>• Tiredness or listlessness</li> <li>• Poor hygiene or being unkempt</li> <li>• Poor school attendance or often late for school (or conversely not wanting to go home)</li> <li>• Poor concentration.</li> <li>• Demanding or attention seeking behavior</li> <li>• Stealing or scavenging compulsively</li> <li>• Anxiety due to the burden of pressure</li> <li>• Failure to achieve developmental milestones</li> </ul>
<b>PHYSICAL</b>	Physical injury to a child, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. It involves any non-accidental injury where adults physically hurt, injure or even kill a child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitting</li> <li>• Shaking</li> <li>• Squeezing</li> <li>• Burning</li> <li>• Biting</li> <li>• Giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs or alcohol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruising; inconsistent account of how bruising or injuries occurred</li> <li>• Bald patches</li> <li>• Burns or scalds</li> <li>• Fear of going home or parents being contacted</li> <li>• Fear of medical help</li> <li>• Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance</li> <li>• Violence or aggression towards others including bullying.</li> </ul>
<b>SEXUAL</b>	The exploitation of a child or young person for sexual gratification or any sexual activity between an adult and a child. Commonly occurs when the older person uses his/her power over the child/ young person to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual grooming</li> <li>• Inappropriate exposure to sexual acts or materials</li> <li>• Passive use of children and young persons as sexual stimuli for adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexually explicit play or behavior or age inappropriate behavior</li> <li>• Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching</li> <li>• Persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains</li> </ul>



TYPE OF ABUSE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES	SIGNS / SYMPTOMS
	<p>involve the latter in a sexual activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child and young person may be subjected to exhibitionist activities, voyeurism or be coerced into posing for pornographic materials</li> <li>• Inappropriate sexual contact or acts between older individuals and the child/young person Intercourse as a result of rape, assault and coercion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eating disorders</li> <li>• Attention-seeking behavior including sexual harassment or molestation</li> <li>• Regressive behaviour</li> <li>• Enuresis, soiling</li> <li>• Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately</li> <li>• Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming</li> <li>• Bruises, scratches in genital area</li> <li>• Lack of trust of a familiar or particular adult</li> <li>• Unusually compliant</li> </ul>
<p><b>PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL</b></p>	<p>The persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. This occurs where constant lack of love and affection, threats, verbal attacks, taunting, shouting, can lead to a child's loss of self-esteem. It can also include harassment or indifference on the basis of race, culture, gender or disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hostile rejecting /degrading (e.g. taunts)</li> <li>• Terrorizing (e.g. threats or acts that induce fear)</li> <li>• Actively isolating (e.g. locking a child in a room for extended periods of time)</li> <li>• Exploiting/corrupting (e.g. teaching a child to steal)</li> <li>• Denying emotional responsiveness (e.g. denying affection and displays of love)</li> <li>• Over-reaction to mistakes, continual self-deprecation</li> <li>• Delayed physical/ mental/emotional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rocking, banging head, regression</li> <li>• Self-mutilation, drug or solvent abuse</li> <li>• Fear of parents being contacted</li> <li>• Running away, compulsive stealing</li> <li>• Masturbation</li> <li>• Eating disorders</li> <li>• Soiling, smearing of faeces, enuresis</li> <li>• Sudden speech disorders, selective mutism</li> </ul>



## 5) STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

To ensure that children are protected while at our school, administrators and HR will:

- Carefully select, screen, train and supervise staff and volunteers
- Ensure that the candidate's identity has been checked to establish that information given by the candidate is accurate.
- Verify that the candidate's qualifications are genuine.
- Follow up at least one reference with a telephone call or personal contact, during which we will discuss the applicant's suitability to work with children, before the employment contract is signed.
- Obtain professional and character references before the employment contract is signed.
- Ensure that the candidate's health and physical capability are suitable to the position.
- Examine previous employment history and seek extra evidence to cover any gaps or lack of available police checks.

We recognize that some people who may be unsuitable for working with children may use volunteering as an opportunity to gain access to children. Thus, even for regular volunteers, in whatever capacity, the same consideration should be applied as contracted staff in regards to criminal record and identity checks.

## 6) SAFEGUARDING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING STRATEGY

All staff working in any capacity receive Professional Learning on Safeguarding Children, to be undertaken as soon as possible after taking up their position. This training will be called 'Orientation'. During which, adult - student boundaries are also clearly spelt with guidelines on communication with students. Refer to Section 8 for more details.

## 7) DIGITAL SAFETY

We do not deny that the use of devices and computers in the lives of our children. These devices are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

Cyber-bullying is the use of technology to humiliate, threaten, tease, manipulate and/or harass. A child should know if they encounter cyberbullying, they have a responsibility to put a stop to it – this means NOT to forward material to other friends or engage in harassment. Use the phrase:

- **Stop** and don't respond directly to the threat or encourage it
- **Block** by blocking the person/account, and then
- **Report** by saving the evidence and telling a safe adult as soon as possible

Depending on the material, it may be necessary to report to the website or app administrators, or even the police.

Cyberbullying will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed according to our Student Code of Conduct. Increasingly, student and parental feedback will be encouraged during the process of policy formulation and review.



Modelling digital citizenship, adults should:

- i) Model the behavior as a digital citizen as one would expect to see online from students.
- ii) Alert students to appropriate online behaviour and the proper use of comments and images.
- iii) Maintain professional persona by communicating with students electronically at appropriate times of the day and through established education platforms (for example, a web page dedicated to a school program, project or class rather than a personal profile).
- iv) Maintain a formal, courteous and professional tone in all communications with students to ensure that professional boundaries with students are maintained.
- v) Avoid exchanging private texts, phone numbers, personal e-mail addresses or photos of a personal nature with students.
- vi) Decline student-initiated “friend” requests and do not issue “friend” requests to students.
- vii) Notify parents/guardians before using social networks for classroom activities. Let them know about the platforms you use in your class to connect with students and consider giving them access to group pages. Understand privacy concerns
- viii) Operate in all circumstances online as a professional – as you would in the community.
- ix) Manage the privacy and security settings of your social media accounts. Privacy settings can shift and change without notice. Check the settings frequently
- x) Assume that information you post can be accessed or altered.
- xi) Ensure that the privacy settings for content and photos are set appropriately and monitor who is able to post to any of your social media locations. Students should not be among those who are allowed to view or post on it. Remember, no privacy mechanism is guaranteed
- xii) Monitor regularly all content you or others post to your social media accounts and remove anything that is inappropriate.
- xiii) Ask others not to tag you on any photo graphs without your permission.
- xiv) Ask others to remove any undesirable content related to you. Act professionally
- xv) Consider whether any posting may reflect poorly on you, your school or the teaching profession.
- xvi) Be transparent and authentic. Use your true professional identity at all times. Even if you create a false identity, courts can compel disclosure of your true identity
- xvii) Avoid online criticism about students, colleagues, your employer or others within the school community.
- xviii) Avoid impulsive, inappropriate or heated comments.
- xix) Ensure that your comments do not incite others to make discriminatory or other professionally unacceptable comments.
- xx) Respect the privacy and confidentiality of student information.
- xxi) Be aware of your employer’s applicable policies and programs regarding the use of social media/e-communications and take responsibility to exercise good judgment.



## 8) BOUNDARIES

All effective safety programs begin with education and understanding. Learning about personal boundaries is the first step to personal safety. Good boundaries yield a lifetime of healthy relationships. The more we know about boundaries and safety issues, the more that we can protect ourselves and others.

Boundaries:

- Are the limits defining one person as separate from others, giving a clear sense of self
- Empower us to promote and preserve personal integrity
- Provide a framework to function in relation to others and thrive

Boundaries may be physical, emotional, mental and behavioural. They can also involve language.

For the purposes of teaching personal boundary safety, safe friends and adults are people who:

- Won't hurt the child without a good reason (i.e. medical exams, vaccinations etc.)
- Won't intentionally confuse or scare a child
- Consistently respect the child's and the parent/caretakers' personal safety wishes and concerns. If someone behaves safely once, it doesn't confirm that he/she is safe.
- Exhibit behavior that is transparent and uses the **PAN** acronym, meaning **P**ublic, **A**ppropriate and **N**on-sexual in nature.

While prevention is the goal, sometimes situations do arise where boundaries are violated. We must teach children simple rules for when their boundaries are violated or unclear – or when they feel unsafe.

In Pastoral Care classes, simple strategies that can be taught against any adult or friend include:

- Say words that mean “No!” or “Stop!”
- Try to remove themselves from the situation, then
- Tell a parent or another safe adult as soon as possible
- Be assured that a safe adult will believe them and they will not be in trouble for saying “No!” and getting away from the adult or friend

At SSIS, in the interests of student safety, besides the boundaries between children and children, adults have been particularly advised to use their professional judgment about their own or others' activities. When meeting with students, members should, whenever possible, ensure that:

- classroom and office doors are left open
- a third party is present or aware of the meeting
- the student is not physically isolated from other observers, for example, behind closed doors

They should be mindful of these and other considerations:

- whether the activities are known to, or approved by, supervisors and/or parents or legal guardians
- whether the student is physically isolated from other observers, for example, behind closed doors
- whether the circumstances are urgent or an emergency
- whether the educational environment might be detrimentally affected by the activities
- whether the activity would reasonably be regarded as conduct intended to promote or facilitate an inappropriate personal relationship with a student



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- the extent to which the activities might reasonably be regarded as posing a risk to the personal integrity or security of a student, or as contributing to any student's level of discomfort
- whether the conduct would reasonably be regarded as being in the best interests of the student

### a) Adult - Child Relationships

Adults should avoid:

- i) inviting individual students to their homes
- ii) seeing students in private and isolated situations
- iii) exchanging personal notes, comments or e-mails
- iv) becoming personally involved in students' affairs
- v) giving personal gifts to students
- vi) sharing personal information about themselves
- vii) making physical contact of a sexual nature.

### b) Adult - Child Communication

Important questions for adults to ask oneself:

- When interacting with students electronically, am I using electronic communication and social media to enhance their learning or to satisfy a personal need?
  - What are my reasons for sharing this information with a student – are they professional or are they personal?
  - Is this picture or comment something I would be comfortable with my students, their parents/guardians, my supervisor, my family or the media seeing?
  - Would my peers or supervisors consider what I have posted as reasonable and professional?
  - Would I communicate this way in my community?