

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Constitution of India guarantees several rights to children and enables the State to make provisions to ensure that the tender age of children is not abused. Child Abuse was and continues to be, one of the most heinous crimes designed and perpetuated by human beings against some of the most vulnerable and defenseless sections of the community. Globally, it has been recognized and seen as a particularly burdensome challenge. According to the World Health Organization, "Child maltreatment, sometimes referred to as child abuse and neglect, includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity. Within this broad definition, five subtypes can be distinguished – physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect and negligent treatment; emotional abuse; and exploitation".

• TYPES OF ABUSE

1. **Physical Abuse:** Includes hitting, kicking, punching, biting, burning, shaking, drowning, smothering and giving drugs or alcohol (includes corporal punishment)

Possible Symptoms:

- o Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, fractures, welts, burns or cuts
- o Depression and anxiety and/or aggression and violence.
- o Problems with relationships and socializing/ distant and withdrawn.
- o Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as a coat on warm days.
- o Running away
- o Sleeps in Class /appears drowsy

2. **Emotional Abuse:** Includes threats, humiliation, sarcasm, degrading punishments, undermining confidence

Possible Symptoms:

- o Possible delayed physical, emotional and mental development.
- o Being unable to play or socialize well with others
- o Fearful of making mistakes
- o Self-harm
- o Sudden speech disorders or neurotic behaviour such as rocking
- o Low self-esteem/ confidence
- o Crying inconsolably

3. **Sexual Abuse:** Includes kissing, touching genitals or breasts, vaginal or anal intercourse, oral sex, and encouraging to look at pornography, trading grades for sexual favors.

Possible Symptoms:

- o Aggressive behaviour, risk taking and missing school or running away.
- o Sleep problems and bed-wetting or soiling.
- o Negative thoughts / not looking after themselves / low self esteem
- o Displaying sexually inappropriate behaviour
- o Anal or vaginal soreness
- o Unexplained bleeding from private parts.

4. Substance Abuse : Includes intake of Psychoactive /alcoholic /narcotic substance /tobacco or engage in buying or selling of any above mentioned substance.

Possible Symptoms:

- o Aggressive behaviour, risk taking, missing school.

Stealing

- o Low self-esteem/ confidence
- o Unable to socialize well with others
- o Day dreaming ,lethargic

5. Neglect: Includes lack of food, medical attention, supervision, clothing etc.

Possible Symptoms:

- o Delayed development
- o Poor hygiene, unwashed clothes or inadequate clothes
- o Untreated medical conditions
- o Being hungry or tired all the time
- o Missing school or difficulties with school work o Poor

self esteem

- o Withdrawn and difficulty making friends and/or anti-social behavior

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

1. **Protection :** Safety and security of all children is integral to their well-being and children are to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, violence, maltreatment and exploitation in all settings including care institutions, schools, hospitals, creches, families and communities.
2. **Best Interest of the Child:** Best interest of the child is the primary concern in all decisions and actions affecting children, whether taken by legislative bodies, court of law, administrative authorities, public, private, social, religious or cultural institutions to ensure their personality development.
3. **Confidentiality:** Children's right to privacy and confidentiality should be protected in cases of abuse.
4. **Non-Stigmatisation and Non-Discrimination :** Each child irrespective of circumstances, as well as socio-economic, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds should be treated equally and in a dignified manner.

• TEACHER'S ROLE

Be familiar with your school's child protection policy, procedure and know who is the child protection lead in with your department. Ensure the students are also aware about reporting the abuse.

Disclosures:

- o Listen to the child, reassure them that they have been brave but do not investigate.
- o Explain to the child that you have to talk to the child protection lead as you need to see what can be done. Explain that you will only speak to people who need to know.
- o Act immediately and report to the child protection lead so an assessment of risk can take place. Any delay could leave the child in danger.
- o Keep records of all conversations and actions taken.
- o Be transparent with the child so that he/she can be involved at each stage.

Suspicious:

- Pass on all concerns to the child protection lead in your department. No matter how small.
- Keep records of any concerns.

- **GENERAL DO'S:**

Be vigilant at all times, in case of a discloser follow the given instructions:

- o Immediately tell the child that you believe in him/her.
- o Keep your own body language calm and composed.
- o Use the language in which the child is comfortable.
- o Acknowledge it is difficult to talk about such things.
- o Tell the child this happens to other children also and that he/she is not the only one.
- o Tell him/her that he/she is not responsible for what happened and did not deserve it.
- o Tell him/her that sometimes adults do things that are not OK (avoid saying that the offender is "sick").
- o Everything you can to support, comfort and reassure the child.
- o Explain to the child that the teacher needs to share the discloser with the concerned authorities in the benefit of the child.
- o **Make notes of facts of the disclosure after the child has left and fill the Child Protection Form.**

- **GENERAL DON'Ts:**

In case of a discloser follow the given instructions:

- o Do not investigate, JUST LISTEN.
- o Do not make the child repeat with the discloser.
- o Do not make notes or do recordings in front of the child.
- o Do not take confessions in writing.
- o Do not make false promises.
- o Do not share the incident with people who do not need to know about it.
- o **Do not delay reporting the incident to the authorities/departmental heads beyond 24 hours.**

ASPECTS OF CHILD PROTECTION

A child needs protection from people with unhealthy attitude present in the School campus. These include other School students, administrators, teachers and rest of the School staff (i.e., cleaning agency workers, office staff, security workers, etc). Child protection can be ensured through appropriate action against bullying; corporal punishment; any sort of physical, verbal or sexual abuse and indiscipline, violence or substance abuse. Therefore, Child protection policy includes sub-policies namely-

- ▶ Anti Corporal Punishment Policy
- ▶ Anti Bullying Policy
- ▶ School Discipline and Substance Abuse Policy

ANTI CORPORAL PUNISHMENT POLICY

The Right of children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE, 2009), clearly states that no child shall be subject to "physical punishment or mental harassment" in schools. Those officials that contravene this provision shall be liable for disciplinary action under service rules applicable to them.

It is not easy to define corporal punishment as it involves humiliation and insult which a child feels as a subject. Considering the millions of ways in which punishment is perpetrated on children in contemporary times, it is impossible to exhaust all the forms of insinuations and violence. However, following behaviour has been categorically put under Anti corporal policy of the school.

1. Physical punishment is understood as any action that causes pain, hurt/injury and discomfort to a child, however light. Examples of physical punishment include but are not restricted to the following:

- a) Causing physical harm to children by hitting, kicking, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling the hair, boxing ears, smacking, slapping, and spanking or with any implement (cane, stick, shoe, chalk, dusters, belt, whip, giving electric shock etc.)
- b) Making children assume an uncomfortable position (standing on bench, standing against the wall in a chair-like position, standing with schoolbag on head, holding ears through legs, kneeling etc.)
- c) Forced ingestion of anything (for example: washing soap, mud, chalk, hot spices etc.)
- d) Detention in the classroom, library, toilet or any closed space in the school.

2. Mental harassment is understood as any non-physical treatment that is detrimental to the academic and psychological well-being of a child. It includes but is not restricted to the following:

- a) Sarcasm that hurts or lowers the child's dignity; Calling names and scolding using humiliating adjectives, intimidation;
- b) Using derogatory remarks for the child, including pinning of slogans;
- c) Ridiculing the child with regard to his/her background or status or parental occupation or caste;
- d) Ridiculing the child with regard to his/her health status or that of the family – especially HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis;
- e) Belittling a child in the classroom due to his/her inability to meet the teacher's expectations of academic achievement;
- f) Punishing or disciplining a child, not recognizing that most children who perform poorly in academics are actually children with special needs. Such children could have conditions like learning disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, mild developmental delay etc.
- g) Using punitive measures to correct a child and even labeling him/her as difficult; such as a child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder who may not only fare poorly in academics, but also pose a problem in management of classroom behaviors;
- h) 'Shaming' the child to motivate the child to improve his performance and
- i) Ridiculing a child with developmental problems such as learning difficulty or a speech disorder, such as, stammering or speech articulation disorder.

3. Discrimination is understood as prejudiced views and behaviour towards any child because of her/his caste/gender, occupation or region and non-payment of fees or for being a student admitted under the 25% reservation to disadvantaged groups or weaker sections of society under the RTE, 2009. It can be latent; manifest; open or subtle. It includes but is not restricted to the following:

- a. Bringing social attitudes and prejudices of the community into the school by using belittling remarks against a specific social group or gender or ability/disability;
- b. Assigning different duties and seating in schools based on caste, community or gender prejudices for example, cleaning of toilets assigned by caste; task of making tea assigned by gender; admission through 25% reserved seats under the RTE; or non-payment of any prescribed fees;
- c. Commenting on academic ability based on caste or community prejudices and
- d. Denying a facility like library books or uniforms or sports facilities to a child or group of children based on caste, community, religion or gender.

CODE OF CONDUCT

INAPPROPRIATE/OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR OF STAFF AND EMPLOYEES

1. **Hit** or otherwise physically assault a child.
2. Use language that will mentally or emotionally abuse the child.
3. Act in any way that intends to embarrass, shame, humiliate or degrade a child.
4. Show discrimination of race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, political persuasion or any other status.
5. Develop a sexual relation with a child.
6. Kiss, hug, fondle, rub or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way.
7. Initiate physical contact unless initiated by the child (e.g. holding hands).
8. Suggest inappropriate behaviour or relations of any kind.
9. Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other.
10. Stand aside when they see inappropriate actions inflicted by children on other children because it is frequent and commonplace.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY TEACHERS

As teachers **if one is concerned that one of the child has any signs of abuse it is vital to report to the Principal** who will keep a written record of any factual statement of concern regarding a child.

CHILD PROTECTION IS ALSO ABOUT YOUR OWN PROTECTION SO PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE TO ONLY REPORT THE INCIDENT AND NOT TAKE ANY ACTION AFTER DISCLOSURES.

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Bullying is behaviour by an individual, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group. It can be in the physical, verbal, emotional or cyber domain. It is any act or gesture (written, verbal, graphic, or physical) that is reasonably perceived as being dehumanizing, intimidating, hostile, humiliating and threatening and likely to evoke fear of physical harm or emotional distress.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying,
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying,
- Bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum
- where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying

Bullying undermines and dilutes the quality of education. Research shows that bullying can have short and long-term effects on the physical and mental well-being of pupils, on engagement with school, on self-confidence and on the ability to pursue ambitions and interests. Therefore, the policy aims to create an environment where students can grow and flourish without fear.

An anti-bullying policy should always endeavor to complement a school's policy on behavior and discipline. There is also a need to regularly reinforce and review the policy so that newcomers to the school understand the school's stance on bullying and so that existing pupils and parents are reminded that bullying, in whatever form, will never be tolerated.

POLICY GUIDELINES

- a) The Head of the Institution will be responsible to determine whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy.
- b) The Policy prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying or harassment or cooperates in the investigation.
- c) The policy prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of bullying or harassment.
- d) School officials will disseminate the policy annually to all school staff, students, and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all applicable acts of harassment if bullying occurs on school property, at school-sponsored functions, or on a school bus.
- e) Involvement of parents through regular meetings with HM/Class teacher/Counselor. The school recognizes the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.

CODE OF CONDUCT Behavior

protocol for children

- i. Respect all staff, teachers, parents and outsiders
 - ii. All relevant information should always be given to the concerned staff
 - iii. Share information and learning with other children
 - iv. Never physically assault or sexually abuse another child
 - v. Never tease another child or call out nicknames
 - vi. Never threaten another child
 - vii. Never spread rumors about another child, or details about the child which could be socially humiliating
 - viii. Never force another child to give away his/her personal belongings
 - ix. Never use abusive language
- This protocol must be encouraged by staff among children.

Expected Behavior of school staff

- i. The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- ii. The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- iii. Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behavior by any member of the school.

The following are **some practical tips** for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate .

- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behavior looks like, acts like.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behavior by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behavior and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behavior and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media, mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules actively and tackle bullying behavior.

- Involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff must watch out for signs of bullying behavior.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.

DISCIPLINE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

School discipline is the system of rules, punishments and behavioural strategies appropriate to the regulation of children and the maintenance of order in schools. Its aim is to control the students' actions and behaviour. An obedient student is in compliance with the school rules and codes of conduct. These rules may, for example, define the expected standards of clothing, timekeeping, social behaviour and work ethic. The term *discipline* is also applied to the intervention that is the consequence of breaking the rules. The aim of discipline is to set limits restricting certain behaviours seen as harmful for the child or others around him. In general, a system of school discipline can be called effective if it clearly communicates to both students and staff what are acceptable and unacceptable boundaries of behavior and what are the consequences of misbehavior will be.

Objectives of A Discipline Policy/Plan

- To enable students to manage and control their behavior.
- To enable the students follow rules, respect them and participate positively in learning process.
- To eliminate physical and psychological violence from school.
- To ensure a general wellbeing of students and staff in school. The

above-mentioned objectives can be achieved through the following steps-

- A firm consistent discipline plan.
- Entire school (i.e., all heads, teachers, students and parents) is aware of the plan and follows consistently.
- The plan is implemented strictly by VP/HMs and counselor (when required for referral).
- Have a few pages in diary for indisciplinary notes from teacher (so that each parent can ensure about their child's behaviour by going through those pages).
- Enhance parent participation by
 - A) having regular age appropriate workshops (e.g., Mont-I, class I, VI, IX and XI) B) valuing parent participation(e.g. dads vs. lads matches)
- Appropriate and respectful behavior is modeled by teachers and administrators.
- Appropriate behavior in students is appreciated and encouraged through formal and informal means.

It is vital that the behavior policy is clear, that it is well understood by staff, parents and pupils, and that it is consistently applied.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Definition of misbehavior

- Misbehavior includes disrespect to teachers all members of the School Staff, Irregular attendance, habitual idleness, disobedience, bad conduct, stealing, using unfair means in examination, teasing fellow students, etc.
- Students are not allowed to bring two wheelers to school or drive a four wheeler to school.
- No books, periodicals, comics, newspaper or printed matter of an objectionable nature, must be brought into the school.
- Unauthorized object that may cause harm to self /others /School building .e.g. Sharp objects ,fire crackers etc must not be brought to School.
- Cell phones, digital watches and diaries, toys, calculators, video games, portable audio and video devices and any mass storage devices are forbidden in the school.
- Any damage to school property must be made good by the student concerned.
- The school uniform is a sacred and prized possession of a student. It symbolizes the ethos and culture of the school, of which the student is an integral part.
- Uniform includes proper shirt, skirt/trousers, socks, belt, shoes, tie and blazer (in winters). Shirts should be properly tucked in and skirts/trousers worn on the waist and not low waist. Any violation of its sanctity calls for firm disciplinary action.
- School time needs to be respected. Gates to be closed at 7.45 am
- No child enters unless parents accompany with valid reasons.
- It is responsibility of parents to ensure child's safe return to home if he /she reaches late and gates are closed.

REPORTING

- An episode of indiscipline can be reported by a student, teacher, a support staff or administrator.
- The complaint must be brought to the notice of Class teacher /counsellor and the Head Mistress; who would decide for next action as per the severity of indiscipline.

Once rules have been communicated, fair and consistent enforcement helps maintain students' respect for the school's discipline system. Consistency will be greater when fewer individuals are responsible for enforcement.

The School will review this policy annually to reflect new legal and regulatory developments and ensure best practice.