



**ST. ANN'S MATRICULATION HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL,
CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

AUGUST 2023

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

St. Ann's Matriculation Higher Secondary School ("The school") is committed to promote dignity and respect for children and their rights, thereby, committed to the principles of the POCSO Act of 2012.

The purpose of the Child Safeguarding Policy ("CSP") is to ensure that **the school** has guidelines in place to ensure children are protected from deliberate or unintended actions that place them at risk of child abuse, sexual exploitation, injury, discrimination, and any other harm by any member of the school or those visiting the premises of the school.

The scope includes all children who attend the school and its programs, and the school Child Safeguarding Consent Form (Appendix A below) must be signed by all members and non-members who engage with children to teach them or care for them. This policy applies to all the school representatives and anyone who have direct access to children or child data.

All the school representatives are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this commitment. Any violations of this policy will be treated as a serious infraction and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and any other legal response.

2. CHILD SAFEGUARDING

- Preventing Child Abuse: Minimize risks to children through awareness, good practice, and training, and take steps to protect children who are subjects of concern.
- Reporting Child Abuse: Ensure that all representatives know the steps to take and whom to contact when concerns arise regarding the safeguarding of

children.

- Responding to Child Abuse: When concerns arise regarding a child's well-being, employ actions that support and protect them and those who raise such concerns, investigate or cooperate with any subsequent investigation and take appropriate corrective actions to prevent the recurrence of such concerns.
- Promoting Awareness of Child Safeguarding Obligations: Ensure that all representatives are adequately trained and supported in preventing and responding to child safeguarding concerns and are aware of the expectations of this policy. The school will take all reasonable steps to make the school safe as it conducts its routine operations, program implementation, policy, and campaigning efforts

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Child: A child is anyone under the age of 18

3.2 Child Protection: The protection of children from all forms of abuse and exploitation everywhere; making the world safe for children.

3.3 Child Safeguarding: The responsibility of the school to make sure our representatives, guests, operations, and programs keep children safe and do not expose them to deliberate or unintentional acts violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation while in our care.

3.4 Child Abuse: Anything that individuals, institutions, or processes do or fail to do that directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. The main categories of Child Abuse are Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect.

3.4.1 Physical Abuse: Intentional use of physical force by another person that causes actual or likely physical injury or suffering (e.g., hitting, shaking, burning, female genital mutilation, torture).

3.4.2 Emotional Abuse: Harm to a child's emotional, intellectual, mental, or psychological development, including humiliating, degrading, or intimidating treatment (e.g., name calling, constant criticism, persistent shaming, threats, solitary confinement and isolation), failure to meet a child's emotional needs, rejection, ignoring, confining or terrorizing a child.

3.4.3 Sexual Abuse: The use of a child in a sexual act by another person, including indecent touching, voyeurism, and exhibitionism. Sexual abuse includes incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in pornography, and sexual slavery. Sexual abuse includes forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including the act of grooming a child with the intention of establishing a sexual relationship.

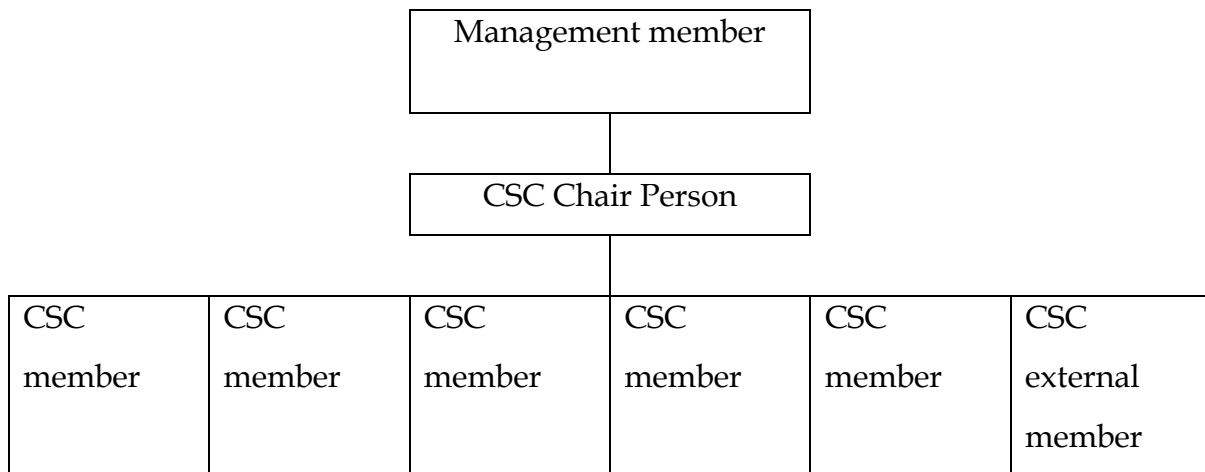
3.4.4 Neglect: Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs; for example, failing to provide adequate food, clothing and/or shelter; failing to prevent harm; failing to ensure adequate supervision; failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment; and failing to provide a safe physical environment (exposure to violence, unsafe programming locations, unsafe sleeping environment; releasing a child to an unauthorized adult; access to weapons or harmful objects, etc.).

4. CHILD SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE (CSC)

The CSC shall consist of six internal members and an External Counsellor/Social Worker/Psychologist who is not part of the school. The Correspondent/Principal will appoint the members. The CSC chair must be a woman who will be selected from within the six members and will be appointed by the committee or appointed under the care of the Correspondent/Principal.

Additionally, the committee may have representatives from different unrepresented stakeholders for the task of vigilance.

Note - The person can approach anyone on the committee and share their grievance, complaint, or experience. In turn, the committee must report the complaint to the Correspondent / Principal. If there is a complaint against the Correspondent / Principal, it will be reported to the Principal / Correspondent instead.



The committee members will consist of

- One management member (Correspondent / Head Mistress/Principal)
- Two staff (Male Teacher, Female Teacher)
- Two Parents (Male Parent, Female Parent),
- Two Children (1 Male and 1 Female from the Higher classes)
- One External member (Counsellor, Social Worker or Psychologist)

(The members of the committee can serve for a term of 2 years, which can be renewed or ended at the discretion of the school management)

Responsibilities of the CSC

- **Provide training** for all staff and volunteers working with the children on child abuse and the school policy. They must be trained before they begin work with children.
- **Review, Recommend and make amendments** to the Child Safeguarding Policy ensuring the continuing safety of the children; keeping the Correspondent/Principal informed as and when necessary. This should be done

especially when there has been an amendment/change in the law of the country or the POCSO Act.

- **Encourage** all members to be taught about the responsibility to safeguard our children at home, school, and other public places.
- **Meet** monthly with agenda to discuss prevalent issues, update vigilance system, schedule awareness/training sessions, etc with the aim to be continually active in creating a system of safety.
- **Follow up** with students monthly to monitor for any complaints.
- **Inquiry is conducted**, when an incident of abuse is reported, duly informing the Correspondent/Principal, an inquiry must be initiated and completed within a week.
- **Report** of the inquiry is submitted to the Correspondent/Principal of the school. The Report can include the recommendations based on the facts found.

(The details of the Committee members are to be displayed on the Notice Board)

5. CODE OF CONDUCT

Guiding principles from UN Convention of Rights of Children (as follows):

The school will abide by the following principles of UNCRC:

- Non-Discrimination
- Best Interest of child/children
- The Right to survival and Development
- Consider the views of the child.

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct

This Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students at the school. The Code serves to protect children, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to children, and promote child safety in the school environment. It provides guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. Where a staff member breaches the

Code the school management may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, dismissal of the staff.

The school has the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting with children within the school premises. This includes all staff, volunteers, third party contractors, external education providers and parents/guardians, members of the Management Committee etc. All of them must agree to and sign the Child Safeguarding Policy Agreement.

Following are the expectations to follow with regard to handling/engaging children inside or outside the school:

- Promote safety, welfare, and wellbeing of children
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to child safety and child protection issues,
- Provide age-appropriate supervision for children.
- Comply with guidelines established by the school with regard to treating children with love, care, and safety (physical and emotional protection)
- Treat all children with respect.
- Use positive and affirming language toward children.
- Encourage children to 'have a say' and then listen to them with respect
- Respect cultural, religious, and political differences.
- Help provide an open, safe, and supportive environment for all children to interact and socialize.
- Intervene and address the issue when children are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others.
- Behave as a positive role model to children.
- The school must be made barrier-free for children with disabilities. An elevator can be installed to make all the floors accessible. Alternatively, the ground floor can be used for all classes/programs that children with disabilities participate in. The children must also have barrier-free toilets to use.
- Children with intellectual disabilities must have a trained supervisor/staff-in-charge/counsellor/special educator to provide emotional and physical support

where needed. This staff must also be responsible to ensure the children's safety.

- Children with disabilities are more vulnerable to child abuse, hence special care and attention must be given to ensure their safety.
- Hold awareness programs for students, staff, teachers and parents on Child Safeguarding every year.
- Follow up and support will be conducted by Justice and Hope for a period of 1 year
- In the event of any breaches of this Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct, report to concerned authority (School Correspondent / Principal).
- Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child involved is safe. Respect the privacy of children and their families and only disclose information to people who have the right or specific authorization to know. Counsel these children in the presence of a guardian/ staff or privately, according to the preference of the child.
- The school must have counsellor/social worker to address the psychosocial concerns of the students.
- Any counselling session or private meeting of a teacher with a child must be done so in an open or easily accessible space
- When issues of sexual relations amongst children arise, the school must look into the matter with utmost confidentiality. When facts are confirmed, the children's parents must be addressed first. The children should be addressed in the presence of the parents. The action taken accordingly can be at the discretion of the school and committee members, as long as the safety and security of the children is ensured and no harm is done to them. The identity or information regarding the incident must not be disclosed to unrelated parties such as other staff, parents or students.

Following are methods that the school may adopt to ensure the safety of children:

- Two Approved Adults should be present with children when taken outside the campus for activities.
- Any online classes the child participating should be recorded with prior permission from the respective parents.
- Appoint a security to guard main gate or keep the main gate closed during the class hours.
- Have a register at the gate for visitors, so that a record is maintained of those who come into the school premises.
- There must be separate toilets for girls and boys of all classes, keeping them open for children to use.
- Appoint 2 staff near the bathroom for nursery and primary children to help them.
- On rotational basis, place 2 staff near main gate to assist the children in the morning and evening when they arrive to school and depart from school. The teachers must also ensure that the children are leaving schools only with their parents/guardians/assigned drivers.
- Have CCTV behind the school buildings.
- Have CCTV in the buses.
- Have CCTV near the staircase, especially those leading to the terrace.
- Check the working of the CCTV every 3 months.
- Display posters regarding child safety and Child helpline numbers around the school.
- Have separate, secure changing rooms for girls.
- Set up a medical room for sick children.
- Employ a nurse for the medical room to administer first aid.
- Equip the medical room with first aid required.
- Have awareness for emergencies and conduct drills for the same.
- Do not disclose personal information such as caste of the child.

- When addressing personal misdeeds of children (such as behaviour issues, physical/sexual involvement between children), to do so privately and not publicly to avoid humiliating the children.
- Do background checks and reference checks for every staff recruited to ensure they have no record or suspicion of perpetrating child abuse.

Following are the guidelines for any person involved with regard to children inside or outside the school:

- Do not engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards children or expose children to such behaviour.
- Do not use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with children
- Do not express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children nor discriminate any child based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Do not engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of children.
- Do not engage in any form of sexual conduct with any children including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Do not engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Do not engage in any form of physical violence towards children including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Do not use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control any child.
- Do not engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause any child serious emotional or psychological harm.

- Do not develop 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children, playing games with only one child).
- Do not engage in undisclosed private meetings with children that are not your own.
- Do not entertain any child to spend time alone behind closed doors at any time of the day.
- Do not engage in inappropriate personal communications with a child through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a child.
- Do not take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of children without the Management and the parents' consent.
- Do not post any information online about children like their full name, age, e-mail address, telephone number, residence, school, or details of a group they may attend.
- Do not send/take any child/children without the permission of the Management and parents to any place other than prearranged by the Management.
- Do not ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

6. NON- MEMBERS

The Strangers of the school who may be volunteers, visitors, external resource people, temporary workers in the school etc. must also sign the school Child Safeguarding Policy Agreement.

For further information on such Policies, contact Justice and Hope (95000 25000)

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Declaration by Employee:

I, _____(Full Name) working at St Ann's Matriculation Higher Secondary School in the position of _____ hereby declare that :

- I have no criminal proceedings initiated against me in the past or that are pending for the offences against me as a suspect or accused of child abuse or for any reason arrested by the police for investigation. I have no charges or cases pending in court against me.
- I will always respect all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity;
- I will support their right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- I will not employ any child as defined under Child Labour (prohibition and regulation) Amendment Act, 2016.
- I will always report any case of child abuse, exploitation and neglect which comes to my knowledge to appropriate authority and will not harm or abuse any child physically, emotionally or sexually.
- I will not watch pornographic material.
- I have read and am informed of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) guidelines.
- I am aware that the following offences/behaviours are punishable by law and it is my duty to abide by these laws:

Offences / Behaviours	Law
Sexual assault, sexual harassment, use of child for pornographic purpose	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012
Production dissemination and the use of child sexual abuse materials	The Information Technology Act 2000
Disclosing identity of the child victim to anyone other than appropriate authority	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, JJ Act 2015
Sale and procurement of children for any purpose including illegal adoption, trafficking of children for sexual exploitation, use of children by militant groups, giving children intoxicating liquor, narcotic drug or tobacco products or psychotropic substances, offences against disabled children, trafficking of children for sexual exploitation/exploitative labour / other reason and kidnapping.	JJ Act 2015: immoral traffic (prevention) Act 1956: human trafficking (Section 370 & 370 A IPC), after creation of specific section in IPC by the criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013
Corporal punishment in child care institutions	JJ act 2015
Corporal punishment in schools	Right of children to free and compulsory education act, 2009
Employment of children below 14 years in any occupation or industries	Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Amendment Act 2016)
Employment of children 15 -18 years in hazardous occupation or industries	Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Amendment Act 2016)
Marrying a child / promoting or solemnizing child marriage	Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006

Penetrative sexual assault – sexual assault by penetration	Section 3. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012
Sexual assault – non penetrative sexual assault	Section 7. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012
Aggravated Penetrative Sexual Assault and Aggravated Sexual Offense – sexual assault or offense when perpetrated by a person in authority or position of trust of the child	Section 5 & 9. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012
Sexual Harassment - Sharing sexual content with child, vulgar and obscene gestures	Section 11. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012
Abetment to commit an offense – when a person instigates another to commit crime, when a person is involved with others in conspiracy to commit crime, when a person intentionally aids crime of illegal omission	Section 16. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012
Attempt to commit sexual crime against child	Section 18. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012
Failure to report or record a sexual crime against a child	Section 21. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012

Name of the employee :

Signature of the employee :

Department :

Date :