


The Lawrence School, Lovedale
Policy Document on Child Protection

Document Identification and Version Control		
Issuing Authority	Head of School	
Effective from	May 2017	
Version No	LSLPD04/052017	
File Name	Policy and process for Child Protection	
Release Date		
Authored By	Name	Signature / Date
	Lt Col (Retd) Sudhakara Babu Thota ; Bursar Mr V Karthikeyan HR Consultant	17.05.2017
Reviewed By	Head of School	17.05.2017
Approved By	Board of Governors	


Headmaster
The Lawrence School
Lovedale-643 003.
Ooty, The Nilgiris (TN)



Child protection policy

Policy statement

The Lawrence School, Lovedale believes that every pupil in its care should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment.

The Lawrence School, Lovedale is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.

The School will take all reasonable measures to ensure that we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff (including staff employed by another organisation) to work with children and young people.

The purpose of 'Child Protection Policy' is to protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil;

- Be alert to signs of abuse both in the School and from outside;
- Deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse;
- Design and operate procedures which promote this policy;
- Design and operate procedures which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations;
- Support children who have been abused in accordance with the child protection policy.
- Be alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions;
- Support pupils in using technology safely and ensure that they adhere to the terms of the Acceptable Use of IT policy;

The Designated Person

The School has appointed a member of staff of the school with the necessary authority to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. Parents are welcome to approach the Designated Person if they have any concerns about the welfare of any child in the school, whether these concerns relate to their own child or any other. If preferred, parents may discuss concerns in private with the child's teacher or the Housemaster or Housemistress or the Headmistress who will notify the Designated Person in accordance with these procedures.

The main responsibilities of the Designated Person are:

- To be the first point of contact for parents, pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters of child protection and to provide support, advice and expertise on all matters concerning safeguarding the child.
- To co-ordinate the child protection procedures in the School and to review and update regularly the procedures and implementation of the procedures, working with the management as necessary;
- To maintain an ongoing training programme for all School employees on Child rights.

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- If the Designated Person is not the Headmaster, keep the Headmaster informed of all actions unless the Headmaster is the subject of a complaint, in which case the matter shall be informed to the BOG.
- If the Designated Person is unavailable his duties will be carried out by the Deputy Designated Person, who has received appropriate training.
- The Designated Person and the Deputy Designated Person have undertaken basic child protection training and training in inter-agency working and will attend refresher training regularly.

Types and signs of abuse

Abuse can be:

- Physical abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Neglect.

Please see **Appendix 1** for explanations of the types of abuse and possible signs of abuse.

Duty of employees

Every employee as well as every person who assists the School is under a general legal duty:

- to protect children from abuse;
- to be aware of the School's child protection procedures and to follow them;
- to know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary;
- to keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event in accordance with this policy;
- to report any matters of concern to the Designated Person.

Whistleblowing: All staff are required to report to the Headmistress, any concern or allegations about School practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. In the event of her unavailability, concerns should be reported to the Designated Person. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided that it is done in good faith. See Appendix 2 for full details of the procedures to be followed in relation to allegations against staff.

Senior pupils: Senior pupils who hold positions of responsibility over other pupils will be briefed on appropriate action to take should they receive any allegations of abuse.

Procedures

Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the School will be taken seriously and action taken in accordance with this policy.

Guidance for staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse



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If a member of staff is concerned that a student may be suffering harm or is at risk of suffering harm, the matter should be referred to the Designated Person as soon as possible. If a member of staff suspects or hears a complaint of abuse he / she:

- must ensure that the child is kept safe
- must listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place;
- must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer;
- must reassure the child but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality.

The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the Designated Person who will ensure that the correct action is taken; must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the Designated Person as soon as possible.

Preserving evidence: All evidence (for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers), must be safeguarded and preserved and passed to the Designated Person.

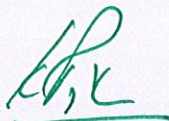
Reporting: All suspicion or complaints of abuse must be reported to the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person as soon as possible, unless it is an allegation against a member of staff in which case the procedures set out in Appendix 2 should be followed.

Allegations against staff or visitors to the school: The School has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (and visitors to the school) that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and visitors from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures are set out more fully in **Appendix 2**.

Allegations against pupils: A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the Student Code of Conduct will apply. Any incident of bullying will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm.

The School will take necessary precautions on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the pupil or pupils accused of abuse. If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, the School will ensure that parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupil is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult.

Informing parents: Parents will normally be kept informed as appropriate of any action to be taken under these procedures. However, there may be circumstances when the Designated Person will need to consult the Headmaster or the policy before discussing details with parents. See also Appendix 2 for details about the disclosure of information where an allegation has been made against a member of staff or visitor at the School.



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Confidentiality and information sharing

Confidentiality and information sharing: The School will keep all child protection records confidential, allowing disclosure only to those who need the information in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, taking into account the CBSE Rules.

Monitoring

Any child protection incidents at the School will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the School and a prompt report to the BOG. Where an incident involves a member of staff, the BOG will assist in this review to determine whether any improvements can be made to the School's procedures.

In addition, the Designated Persons will ensure that this policy is reviewed annually and its procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, working with the Headmistress as necessary. The Designated Persons will also make an annual report to the BOG.

Members:

Designated person – School Counselor

Deputy Designated Person – Mistress In charge of Girls school

Committee Members:

1. Headmaster
2. Deputy Headmaster
3. MIC Girls school
4. MIC Junior School
5. MIC Prep school
6. Dean of Activities
7. Dean of Studies
8. Housemaster/Housemistress of the concerned student

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Appendix 1

Types of abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Keeping children safe in education defines the following types of abuse.


Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Child sexual exploitation: involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation


Headmaster
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or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming.

However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

Signs of abuse

Possible signs of abuse include, but are not limited to:

- The pupil says he / she has been abused or asks a question or makes a comment which gives rise to that inference.
- There is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a pupil's injury, the injury is unusual in kind or location or there have been a number of injuries and there is a pattern to the injuries.
- The pupil's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour, or there is a sudden or significant change in the pupil's behavior.
- The pupil asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons.
- The pupil's development is delayed, the pupil loses or gains weight or there is deterioration in the pupil's general wellbeing.



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Appendix 2

Allegations against staff

The School has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and visitors that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and visitors for false or unfounded allegations. These procedures will be used where the member of staff or visitor has:

behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if he or she works regularly or closely with children.

All such allegations must be dealt with as a priority so as to avoid any delay. These procedures will be applied with common sense and judgment.

Reporting an allegation against staff or volunteers

Allegations against staff: Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Designated Person or any other member of the school community, staff or a visitor, the matter should be reported immediately to the Headmistress or to the BOG if the allegation or complaint is made against the Headmistress.

Where appropriate, the Headmistress will consult with the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person and all allegations will be discussed with the BOG before further action is taken

Action to be taken against the accused

Support: A school has a duty of care towards its employees and as such, it must ensure that effective support is provided for anyone facing an allegation. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, following the School's policies, unless external agencies object to this. A representative will be appointed to keep him or her informed of the progress of the case and to consider what other support is available for the individual, as appropriate.

Suspension: Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation and should only be considered in a case where:

there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the School is or are at risk of significant harm; or the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

Suspension will not be automatic and consideration will be given to whether the result that would be achieved by suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements.

A member of staff will only be suspended if there is no reasonable alternative. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification will be recorded and the member of staff notified of those reasons in writing within one working day.

Criminal proceedings: The Headmistress will consult with the BOG following the conclusion of a criminal investigation or prosecution as to whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and if so, how to proceed. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case, including the result of the police investigation or trial and the standards of proof applicable.

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Return to work: If it is decided that the person who has been suspended should return to work, the School will consider how to facilitate this, for example, a phased return may be appropriate and / or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance in the short term. The School should also consider how to manage the contact with the child[ren] who made the allegation.

Timescales: All allegations must be dealt with as a priority so as to avoid any delay. Where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious, the case should be resolved within one week. It is expected that most cases of allegations of abuse against staff will be resolved within one month with exceptional cases being completed within 12 months. If the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Headmistress should institute appropriate action within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, it should be held within 15 working days.

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations: Where an allegation by a pupil is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Headmistress will consider whether to take disciplinary action in accordance with the CBSE Rules.

Where a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation the Headmistress will consider whether to require that parent to withdraw their child or children from the school on the basis that they have treated the school or a member of staff unreasonably.

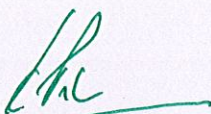
Whether or not the person making the allegation is a pupil or a parent (or other member of the public), the school reserves the right to contact the police to determine whether any action might be appropriate.

Record keeping

Allegations that are found to be malicious will be removed from personnel records.

Details of an allegation will be recorded on the employee's file and retained at least until the employee reaches the normal retirement age or for a period of ten years from the date of the allegation, if this is longer.

An allegation proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious will not be referred to in employer references.



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