



St John's
Educational Trust

Safeguarding Policy

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Safeguarding Policy

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1 **St John's Education Trust (hereinafter "SJET"), comprising St John's College, Preparatory and ECD**, as an Institution based on the teachings of Christ, recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount and is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. As a Christian Foundation, it recognises its responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse, and exploitation. All children have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. This policy applies to all children and young people who are pupils at all the three aforementioned schools. Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents and carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- 1.2 **SJET** is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and care of its pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment as embodied in our values which are Respect, Integrity and Empathy.

2. PURPOSE OF POLICY

- 2.1 To provide protection for the children and young people who receive SJET's services, including the children of adult users.
- 2.2 To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing (or be at risk of) harm.
- 2.3 This policy applies to all staff, including Senior Managers, Boards of Governors, Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone acting on behalf of SJET.



3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 **This Policy must be read together with the Constitution governing the St John's Trust Schools.**
- 3.2 In the event of a conflict or inconsistency between this policy and the Constitution then the latter shall prevail.
- 3.3 In addition, this Policy is subject to the following:
 - 3.3.1 Education Amendment Act 2019.
 - 3.3.2 Education Amendment Act 2020.
 - 3.3.3 The Trust Schools' own Code of Conduct governing staff and pupil behaviour.

4. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES OF RELEVANCE TO SAFEGAURDING.

SJET will take all reasonable measures to:

- 4.1 Ensure that suitable staff and volunteers are recruited to work with pupils, including character references (and if necessary, police clearance) before employing or engaging such staff and/or volunteers.
- 4.2 Be alert to signs of abuse both at SJET and elsewhere.
- 4.3 Do all that is possible to protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil.
- 4.4 Deal appropriately, expeditiously, and exhaustively with every suspicion or complaint of abuse.
- 4.5 Support pupils who have been abused.
- 4.6 Design and operate procedures which ensure that teachers and others, who are innocent, are not prejudiced by false allegations.
- 4.7 Be alert to the needs of pupils with medical conditions and learning difficulties/differences.
- 4.8 Operate clear policies on drugs, alcohol, and substance abuse.
- 4.9 Teach pupils about safeguarding through the curriculum and specifically through Life Skills lessons.



- 4.10 Take all practicable steps to ensure that SJET's premises are as secure as possible and ensure the safety of pupils when taken beyond SJET's premises for school activities.
- 4.11 Ensure that the school has its own security system.
- 4.12 Ensure that all visitors to SJET's premises are checked in and out.

5. THE SAFEGAURDING OFFICER (SO)

- 5.1 SJET shall employ a full time Safeguarding Officer (SO) in each school. The SO has overall responsibility for matters relating to pupil protection and welfare.
- 5.2 The SO will be given the time, funding, training, and resources to enable him/her to support/train other staff on safeguarding matters.
- 5.3 Parents should approach the SO if they have any concerns about the welfare of any pupil in the school.
- 5.4 The Responsibilities of the SO are:
 - 5.4.1 To be the first point of contact for parents, pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters relating to Safeguarding and to provide support, advice and expertise on all matters concerning safeguarding.
 - 5.4.2 To co-ordinate the pupil protection procedures at SJET and to review and regularly update the procedures and implementation of the procedures working with Senior management when necessary.
 - 5.4.3 To ensure that all members of staff and volunteers receive the appropriate training on Safeguarding.
 - 5.4.4 To advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to him/her.
 - 5.4.5 To keep the Headmaster/Headmistress informed of all actions unless a Headmaster/Headmistresses is the subject of a complaint.
 - 5.4.6 To ensure the SJET Safeguarding Policy is available publicly to parents and pupils and that it is updated regularly.
 - 5.4.7 To train all staff in matters relating to Safeguarding.



6. DUTY OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

- 6.1 Every employee or volunteer who works or assists at SJET is under a general duty to protect pupils from abuse.
 - 6.1.1 Be aware of the relevant Safeguarding Procedures and follow them.
 - 6.1.2 Know how to access and implement the relevant Safeguarding procedures, independently if necessary.
 - 6.1.3 Keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation, or event in accordance with this policy.
 - 6.1.4 Report any matters of concern to the relevant SO.
- 6.2 Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside SJET will be taken seriously, and action will be taken in accordance with this policy.

7. TYPES OF ABUSE

- 7.1 **Physical abuse:** A form of abuse which may involve and include hitting, shaking, throwing, assaulting, poisoning, burning, or scalding or otherwise causing physical harm to a pupil. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a pupil.
- 7.2 **Emotional abuse:** Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical, and/or behavioural development of a child. It can also include the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child; or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve the child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. Verbal bullying is also emotional abuse.
- 7.3 **Neglect:** The actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold,



heat or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive, the persistent failure to meet a pupil's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the pupil's health or development. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

- 7.4 **Cyber abuse:** This bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. This can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content.
- 7.5 **Pupil sexual exploitation:** This refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel, and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimisation, oppression, or ill-treatment. This usually 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) for 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. Even if a pupil has reached the legal age of consent, any sexual relationship between a teacher and a pupil is forbidden. If enrolled as a SJET pupil, the Code of Conduct applies. 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, or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyber bullying and grooming. It is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.
- 7.6 **Sexual abuse:** This involves forcing or enticing a pupil or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the pupil 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 kissing, rubbing and inappropriate touching outside of clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving pupils in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging pupils to behave in sexually



inappropriate ways, or grooming a pupil 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 pupils.

8. SIGNS OF ABUSE

Possible signs of abuse include:

- 8.1 The pupil says he/she has been abused or asks a question or makes a comment which gives rise to that inference.
- 8.2 Injury where 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 those injuries.
- 8.3 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 behaviour.
- 8.4 The pupil asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reason.
- 8.5 The pupil's development is delayed, the pupil loses or gains weight or there is deterioration in the pupil's general wellbeing.
- 8.6 The pupil appears neglected, i.e., dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed.
- 8.7 The pupil is reluctant to go home or has been openly rejected by his/her parents; and inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or any other person working with pupils; for example, the use of inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one to one attention or inappropriate sharing of images



9. GUIDANCE FOR STAFF ON SUSPECTING OR HEARING A COMPLAINT OF ABUSE FROM A PUPIL

9.1 Action staff must take

A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse must:

- 9.1.1 Not appear shocked as a strong reaction may affect the child's comfort level.
- 9.1.2 Demonstrate compassion and patience, and listen to the child calmly and sympathetically.
- 9.1.3 Praise the child for revealing what has happened to him or her if self-disclosing. It is not up to the educator to determine if the child is telling the truth.
- 9.1.4 Listen carefully to the pupil and keep an open mind.
- 9.1.5 Refrain from asking leading questions. Let the child tell his or her story without probing for information that the child is unwilling to give.
- 9.1.6 Reassure the pupil but not give a guarantee of confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the relevant SO who will ensure that the correct action is taken.
- 9.1.7 Keep a sufficient written record of the conversation, which should include:
 - 9.1.7.1 The date and time.
 - 9.1.7.2 The place of the conversation.
 - 9.1.7.3 The essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence.
- 9.1.8 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 relevant SO as soon as possible.
- 9.1.9 Keep any evidence, for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers, of relevance and pass it on to the relevant SO.
- 9.1.10 The staff member must always remember that he or she is a mandated reporter, and this should be explained to the child in an age-appropriate way.



- 9.1.11 The need to safeguard the child is of a great importance, therefore confidentiality is crucial.
- 9.1.12 All suspicions or complaints of abuse must be reported to the relevant SO as soon as possible, unless it is an allegation against a member of staff in which case the procedures set out under the heading “Dealing with allegations against staff”.

10. DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

- 10.1 The procedures for dealing with allegations made against a member of staff will be used when the member of staff or volunteer has:
 - 10.1.1 Behaved in a way that has harmed a pupil or may have harmed a pupil.
 - 10.1.2 Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a pupil.
 - 10.1.3 Behaved towards a pupil or pupils in a way that indicates he/she would pose a risk of harm if he/she work regularly or closely with pupils.
- 10.2 All such allegations must be dealt with as a priority so as to avoid any delay.

11. REPORTING AN ALLEGATION AGAINST STAFF OR VOLUNTEER

- 11.1 When an allegation or complaint is made against any member of staff or volunteer, the matter should be reported immediately to the relevant SO. The SO will raise the matter with the Headmaster/Headmistress as a matter of urgency.
- 11.2 When an allegation or complaint is made against the Headmaster/Headmistress or SO it should be reported directly to the Chairman of Board of Governors.



12. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

- 12.1 The Headmaster will inform the accused person having met with the relevant SO. SJET has a duty of care for its employees and will therefore ensure that effective support is provided for anyone facing an allegation. In addition to being informed of the allegation, individuals will be given an explanation of the likely course of action and offered appropriate support.
- 12.2 The Parents of the pupil involved shall be informed of the allegation as soon as possible by the Headmaster/Headmistress unless the allegation involves the Headmaster/Headmistress in which case the Chairman of the Board shall inform the parents. Parents will also be kept informed of the progress of the case, including the outcome of any disciplinary process.
- 12.3 The identification of a teacher who is the subject of such an allegation will not be disclosed to the press or in public by the School.

13. SUSPENSION

- 13.1 Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation and will only be considered to facilitate an investigation in a case when:
 - 13.1.1 There is reason to believe that a pupil is at risk of significant harm.
 - 13.1.2 The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.
- 13.2 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.

14. RETURN TO WORK

- 14.1 If it is decided that the person who has been suspended should return to work, SJET will consider how best to facilitate this e.g., arranging a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term.
- 14.2 SJET will also consider how best to manage the contact with the pupil who made the allegation.



15. CEASING TO USE STAFF

- 15.1 If SJET ceases to use the services of a member of staff or volunteer because he/she is unsuitable to work with pupils the matter will be reported to CHISZ/ATS and, if necessary and following legal advice, to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and/or police.
- 15.2 If a member of staff or volunteer tenders his/her resignation, or ceases to provide his/her services, any pupil protection allegations may still be followed up by SJET, depending on the circumstances and the nature of the allegation, in accordance with this policy.

16. TIMESCALES

- 16.1 It is imperative that allegations against staff are dealt with as efficiently as possible to:
 - 16.1.1 Minimise the risk to the child.
 - 16.1.2 Minimise the impact on the child's academic progress.
 - 16.1.3 Ensure a fair and thorough investigation for all parties.
- 16.2 All allegations will be dealt with as a priority and within the timescales detailed in the Code of Conduct for Salaried Staff or according to the NEC Regulations for non-salaried staff.
- 16.3 If a disciplinary hearing is required it will also be dealt with in accordance with the SJET Code of Conduct for Salaried Staff or according to the NEC Regulations for non-salaried staff.

17. UNSUBSTANTIATED OR MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS

- 17.1 When an allegation by a pupil is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Headmaster/Headmistress will discipline the pupil concerned; it is likely that the disciplinary sanction will be exclusion from SJET.
- 17.2 When a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation it is highly likely that the Headmaster will require the parent to withdraw his/her son/daughter from SJET.



- 17.3 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.
- 17.4 Details of allegations found to be malicious will be removed from personnel records.
- 17.5 An allegation proven to be false, unsubstantiated, or malicious will not be referred to in employer references.

18. DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PUPILS

- 18.1 SJET recognises that pupils can negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and under such circumstances it may be necessary to deal with them under the school's disciplinary policies. Occasionally allegations may be made against pupils by other pupils, which related to safeguarding e.g., physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation.

Under such circumstances it is likely that the allegation:

- 18.1.1 Is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil.
- 18.1.2 Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence.
- 18.1.3 Indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this pupil.
- 18.1.4 Indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this pupil.
- 18.2 Examples of safeguarding issues against a pupil could include:
 - 18.2.1 Physical abuse
 - 18.2.1.1 Violence, particularly pre-planned.
 - 18.2.1.2 Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol.
 - 18.2.2 Emotional abuse
 - 18.2.2.1 Blackmail or extortion.
 - 18.2.2.2 Threats and intimidation.
 - 18.2.3 Sexual abuse
 - 18.2.3.1 Indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults.



- 18.2.3.2 Forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting.
- 18.2.4 Sexual exploitation
 - 18.2.4.1 Photographing or videoing other pupils performing indecent acts.
 - 18.2.4.2 Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.
- 18.3 When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern.
- 18.4 If there is a safeguarding concern the relevant SO should be informed. A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt should be made to investigate the circumstances without first referring the matter to the relevant SO.
- 18.5 If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence may have taken place once an initial investigation has been completed the matter will be reported, following legal advice, first to the parents of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator and then with the consent of the victim's parents to the police.
- 18.6 It may be appropriate to suspend the accused pupil, whilst the matter is being investigated.

19. FIREARMS AND WEAPONS

- 19.1 Firearms and weapons are strictly prohibited on SJET premises. In accordance with Zimbabwean law and school safeguarding protocols, only authorised law enforcement officers or formally appointed security personnel may carry a firearm on campus. Any visitor, parent, or staff member found in possession of a weapon on school property will be required to remove it immediately and the matter may be reported to the relevant authorities.

20. DISTRIBUTION AND CHANGES TO THIS POLICY

- 20.1 The SJET will make this policy available to all parents, members of staff and government officials. The SJET reserves the right to amend this policy document from time to time.

