

NADI SANGAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

State Parties shall protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, Article 19)

INTRODUCTION

All staff members of Nadi Sangam Primary School or volunteers have a common commitment to the prevention of child abuse and the protection of children.

This policy outlines common values, principals and beliefs and describes steps that will be taken to ensure that children are protected during all activities undertaken by Nadi Sangam Primary School where a member of staff or volunteers has a serious concern regarding the welfare of treatment of a child.

In this document, 'children' refers to anyone under the age of 18. 'Staff' refers to any PSC (MOE) Employee at Nadi Sangam Primary School or volunteers, consultants or any other person brought into direct contact with children as a consequence of activities organized by Korokadi Primary School.

OUR COMMITMENT TO PROTECT CHILDREN

1. Our values, principals and beliefs

- All child abuse involves the violation of children's rights.
- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- The situation of all children must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the rights of the Child and other human rights instruments. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
- Child abuse is never acceptable.
- We have a commitment to protecting children with or for whom we work.

2. What we will do

We will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse through the following means:

Awareness: we will ensure that all staff members of Nadi Sangam Primary School are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.

Prevention: we will ensure through awareness rising and good practice, that staff minimize to children.

Reporting: we will ensure that all staff of Nadi Sangam Primary School is clear on what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.

Responding: we will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

In order that above standards of reporting and responding are met staff will also ensure that they;

- Take seriously any concerns raised
- Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns.
- Support children who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns.
- Act appropriately and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation.
- Are guided through the child protection process by the principle of 'best interests of the child'.
- Listen to, and take seriously, the views and wishes of children.
- Work in partnerships with parents, legal guardians and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

3.How we will ensure our commitments above are met.

- * All staff of Nadi Sangam Primary School will sign up to, and abide by the Rules of Behaviour.
- * All staff will have a copy of the Child Protection Policy and will sign an undertaking to follow the policy and procedure.
- * Staff of Nadi Sangam Primary School is briefed on the Child Protection Policy. Any child protection concerns and complaints should be reported to the Child Protection Officer or if he / she is not available, the Head Teacher, who will handle them in strictest confidence.
- * Nadi Sangam Primary School Staff members will establish a process to investigate possible abuse, once reported and to deal with it in accordance with this policy.

4. Rules of Behaviour

Nadi Sangam Primary School staff must sign up to, and abide by these Rules of Behaviour.

Staff, and others associated with them, must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
- Develop relationships with children who could any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Act in ways that may be abusive.
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abusive.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- Permit or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetuate any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behaviour that may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour. In general it is inappropriate for staff to:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others.
- Take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.

I have read and accepted this policy and procedure document and undertake to follow it in at Nadi Sangam Primary School activities undertaken with children.

Signed- _____

Date- _____

SUPPORTING MATERIALS, GUIDANCE and RESOURCES

HOW TO RAISE CONCERNS – A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

If you are concerned about the safety of a child, i.e.

You see or suspect abuse

An allegation of abuse is made

A child discloses abuse

Discuss your concerns Child Protection Officer- [Telephone 9718646]

If your Child Protection Officer is not available at the centre of your concerns, discuss with Head Teacher [Telephone: 9718646]

Discussions should focus on:

Nature of concerns

Risks to Children

Action/ Next steps

Concerns should normally be reported in the same working day. Ensure detailed written records are made of all events and what the child has said in their own words (where this applies on the attached form which should be given to the Head Teacher within 24 hours

The Child Protection Officer receiving a child protection referral from a staff member must treat it with the highest priority by-

Developing an immediate action plan to ensure the safety of the child, advise the member of staff concerned accordingly and consult the Head Teacher as soon as possible to agree subsequent action

Where serious concerns exist there is immediate risk to the child

ACT!

It is essential to avoid delay as inaction may place the child at further risk.

Child Protection Report Form

Date

Time

Name of Staff

Your role within Nadi Sangam Primary School (Job Description)

What is your relationship to the
Child?

Name of Child

Male/female and age/s

Address:

Who does the child live with?

How did you come to have concern; was abuse observed or suspected? Was an allegation made? Did a child disclose abuse?

Date, time and place of any incidents?

Nature of concern/allegation:

Observations made by you: (child's emotional state, any physical evidence)

Write down exactly what the child said and what you said: (continues on a separate sheet if necessary)

Any other relevant information? (Disability, language etc.)

Were other children involved or aware of this incident, is any other child at potential risk?

Are the parents, carers or any other Child Protection Personnel or Agencies already aware of this incident?

Yes

No

Time and date of reporting:

Person/s to whom report was made:

Advice given:

Action Taken:

Is further action required?

Yes / No

Name of person completing form and signature:

Further Action Required:

Signature and date of C.P.O

Signature and date of Class Teacher

Signature and date of Head Teacher:

NADI SANGAM PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE

What is child abuse?

There are a number of circumstances in which Nadi Sangam Primary School staff may suspect that child abuse has occurred. These include-

- A child 'disclosing' abuse by telling someone they have been abused.
- A child having an injury for which there is no satisfactory explanation.
- A child behaving in a way that causes concern.
- A child that Nadi Sangam Primary School is in contact with being suspected of abusing another child.
- A member of Nadi Sangam Primary School staff abusing a child, either one of their own children or one they are in contact with through work.

There are also different kinds of abuse-

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse

The symptoms of abuse can include one, or a combination of, the following-

- Sudden, unexplained, changes in the child's behaviour.
- Becoming aggressive or withdrawn.
- Running away.
- Self harming
- Age inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour
- Low self – esteem.

Responding to your concerns

Recognising and responding to abuse can be complex. In a straight forward situation a child may have a bruise and tell you that they have been hit by someone. However the situation will usually be more complicated by-

- The child being anxious about the consequences of making disclosure
- The child wanting to protect the abuser
- The evidence of injury or from the child's behaviour suggesting abuse has taken place but there are substantial doubts.

Staff can also be reluctant to act on their concerns because of-

- A fear of being mistaken.
- A concern that reporting their concerns may have an adverse effect on them or the child
- Uncertainty about what will happen if they make a report.
- A misguided sense of loyalty to a colleague.
- A concern that the matter may be seen to be too trivial.
- A belief that abuse doesn't occur in families that they know.

Things that you should do if you suspect abuse has occurred

- Support and respect the child at a particularly difficult time.
- Inform the child involved about our child protection policy, the actions you must take, and the implications for them.
- Act quickly – giving this situation priority over any thing else you had planned to do.
- Keep the child informed of progress and developments.
- Provide longer term support for the child.
- Report the situation to your C.P.O of the H.T as soon as possible.
- If you suspect the involvement of you C.P.O or the H.T in the case go to the next level, contact a senior staff.

Things you should not do if you suspect that abuse has occurred

- Do not panic- this will distress the child further and will probably mean that they will talk to you further about the incident.
- Do not inquire into details of the abuse any further than the child is willing to tell you about. Detailed questioning is the duty of the Police or a Child Protection Specialist.
- Do not promise to keep any secrets. [Many people who work with groups of children who they judge to be at risk of abuse will inform the children of their duties under the child protection policy when they first start working with them, so that the child knows staff have a duty to report abuse if they are informed about it].
- Do not fail to report your concerns to the C.P.O. the most difficult decision when you suspect child abuse is to decide to do nothing, you must share that decision with someone else more senior to you in the organisation or the Head Teacher.

The Responsibilities of the Head Teacher

The two principle duties of the Head Teacher being informed of a potential child protection situation is to decide if a report should be made to the Police, Social Welfare or another external organisation and to ensure that the child is concerned safe.

There is no clear boundary for deciding when a decision to make a report should be made, it is matter of judgement. The general principle in deciding if there should be compulsory intervention into family life is that there is reasonable evidence the child has experienced 'significant harm'. This is a complex and imprecise concept, one that in a case of doubt should be left to expert investigation by child protection or medical specialists to determine.

In discussing the concerns of the member of staff there are some factors that will make it clear that a referral to an external organisation is required-

- The child has disclosed that abuse has occurred
- The child has a suspicious injury for which there is no satisfactory explanation.
- There are real grounds for concern and the child is reluctant or anxious about returning home to their parents or carers.
- A child is known to have abused another child.
- The child [or another child] is at immediate risk.
- Medical treatment is required.
- There are strong grounds for believing a member of Korokadi Primary School staff has abused a child.

The Head Teacher should use his judgement and be cautious where a member of staff is advising-

- A child is acting in a way which might or might not be symptomatic of abuse.
- A child is saying things to staff member which indicate there are problems in the child's life but they are not saying anything which points conclusively to abuse.
- The child has a minor injury for which there is a reasonable explanation.
- A member of staff is acting in a way that is unprofessional, possibly in breach of the Rules of Behaviour, but is not abusive towards children.

In the situation where the Head Teacher decides not to make referral, they may decide to seek further information of clarification over a period of time to either allay concerns or to make a more substantial referral to an external organisation later. The Head Teacher should only make the decision to seek further information or a decision to take no further action, after consultation with C.P.O. A written plan should then be prepared which states-

- The reason why this decision has been made to investigate further.
- What further information is required, from whom and on what timescale?
- What the review or decision making process will be.

A decision will also be required about informing the child's parents where a referral is being made to an external organisation. The guiding principle should be to inform the parents unless doing so places the child at further risk. In practice the child only is at further risk if parents are implicated in the abuse and are likely to chastise the child or place the child under emotional pressure to retract what they have disclosed. If you are in doubt over this you should consult the external organisation when you make the referral.

The Head Teacher should also ensure that the support needs are met for all concerned including the child, the parents and the member of staff concerned.

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