



# Children's Academy

## Group of Schools

### Child Safety Policy

#### Statement of Commitment:

Children's Academy Group of Schools is committed to acting in the best interest of the children at all times.

- ✿ Has zero-tolerance for child abuse and is committed to providing a safe environment for all children.
- ✿ Actively works to listen to and empower children.
- ✿ Has systems to protect children from abuse, and will take all allegations and concerns very seriously and responds to them consistently in line with the organisation's policies and procedures.
- ✿ Is committed to promoting physical, emotional and cultural safety for all children.

#### Definitions:

- ✿ CHILD for the purposes of this document – A 'child' is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- ✿ CHILD ABUSE according to the World Health Organisation – 'Child abuse' or 'maltreatment' constitutes 'all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.'
- ✿ CHILD PROTECTION – A broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In the current context, it applies particularly to the duty of organisations and individuals associated with those organisations towards children in their care.
- ✿ DIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN – Being in the physical presence of a child or children in the context of the organisation's work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long term.
- ✿ INDIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN – Having access to information on children in the context of the organisation's work, such as children's names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies.



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### Responsibilities of Staff:

Children's Academy Group of Schools expects all adults who work with children to have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare. The public, employers, parents have the right to expect professionals who work with children to behave in a certain standard and to always maintain and protect children.

Children's Academy Group of Schools requires staff to;

- ✿ Always act and to be seen to act in the best interest of the child.
- ✿ Avoid any conduct which would lead to any person to question their conduct, motivation and intentions.

The Principal of each school of Children's Academy Group of Schools holds the responsibility for child protection. He / She is referred to as the designated person for child protection or the child protection coordinator.

### Safe Recruitment of staff:

Children's Academy Group of Schools recognizes that the single most effective time at which an organisation can minimize the possibility of abuse to children in its care is the appointment of new staff.

Children's Academy Group of Schools ensures that all staff working with children, coming in direct or indirect contact with children, paid, contractual and voluntary, have been appropriately vetted and screened.

### Staff Awareness:

Children's Academy Group of Schools recognizes that it is critical for each employee to be aware of schools' policy on Child Abuse, Child Protection and the POCSO Act.

- ✿ All staff including the new recruits attend a session that requires them to read and understand specific material and information about child abuse and protection policy. This session is conducted in the first week of June or in the first week after the academic year begins.
- ✿ The child abuse and protection policy have been translated in Hindi and the Principal designates a teacher from the Hindi department to explain the policies to the Class IV employees, bus drivers, conductors and lady attendants. This session is conducted in the first week of June or in the first week after the academic year begins.





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- ✿ The Child Protection Policy is a part of the Teachers Manual for easy reference. Reference to the policies is made on a regular basis in staff meetings and training sessions, so that staff remains familiar with and up-to-date with the policy statements and procedures.
- ✿ At the end of the session, the staff is expected to respond to children affected by child abuse and family violence.
- ✿ Children's Academy Group of Schools will ensure that such knowledge is kept up-to-date and relevant.

### **Educating Children:**

- ✿ Children's Academy Group of Schools recognizes that it's very important for the children to be educated about prevention of abuse through life skill programme.
- ✿ This programme starts in Kindergarten and continues till Grade X. It is delivered by experts and counsellors.
- ✿ The Life skill programme is aimed at improving self-esteem and interpersonal skills.
- ✿ The school informs parents and encourages the participation of parents in such training programmes.

### **Role of counsellors:**

- ✿ Children's Academy Group of Schools understands the important role played by counsellors in schools.
- ✿ The counsellors of Children's Academy help to facilitate the training of staff in identifying abuse as well as help in educating children of various age groups through training programmes of Life skill development.
- ✿ Counsellors of Children's Academy Group of Schools are instrumental in early detection of abuse as well as counselling children, post-detection of abuse.

### **Safe working practices:**

Children's Academy Group of Schools believes that as far as possible, staff working with children and families should keep their personal and professional lives separate, and does not encourage close personal relationships outside the work environment.



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- ✿ All members of staff, whether paid, voluntary or contractual, are expected to follow guidelines that clarify appropriate behaviour. Children's Academy Group of Schools will review these regularly with staff to ensure that the guidelines meet the needs arising from ever-changing environments and situations.
- ✿ All staff members are to have a clear understanding of and to agree to the Children's Academy Group of Schools Code of Ethics.

### **Confidentiality:**

Children's Academy Group of Schools expects its staff to maintain full confidentiality in information which they have about a child. This information may be highly sensitive and private information about the child or about the family. Care and responsibility must be taken with the sharing of the information. It is important that if a child is at risk of, or suffering abuse then that information is passed to the appropriate person to take action.

### **Dealing with allegations against Staff:**

Any allegation that a member of staff has behaved in an inappropriate or unsafe way is taken seriously and handled in an appropriate manner that ensures the child's safety.

- ✿ Children's Academy Group of Schools will respond to suspicions and allegations of child abuse by a member of staff in a manner which best ensures the child's or young person's immediate and long-term safety and will treat suspicions or allegations against a staff member with the same seriousness as suspicions or allegations made against any other person.
- ✿ Children's Academy Group of Schools will not act alone and will refer all suspected situations of child abuse to Police. The safety of the child will be the primary consideration, and no person in this organisation will collude to protect an adult or an organisation.
- ✿ When abuse is suspected, staff will follow the process for Responding to Suspected Child Abuse included in Children's Academy Group of Schools SOP on Dealing with Disclosure of Child Abuse.





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### **Sharing of information:**

Children's Academy Group of Schools recognizes that all staff members must act within the POCSO ACT 2012 and the IPC ACT. The acts have provisions within each of these acts for sharing information needed to protect children and enable other people to carry out their legitimate functions. In general, staff will not share information if they believe that by doing so this will endanger the child.

### **Transmission of images:**

Children's Academy Group of Schools shall ensure that;

- ✿ Children are not exposed to unsuitable material on the internet
- ✿ The movies, films or material, shown to children are age-appropriate

### **One-to-One Situations:**

Children's Academy Group of Schools understands that it is not realistic to expect that one-to-one situations should never take place. It recognizes that working in a one-to-one situation with children may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. When one-to-one situations are unavoidable, reasonable and sensible precautions are taken. If any such situation rises the employee is expected to inform the Principal or Supervisor and ensure that the meeting is not in a secluded part of the school. If it is an unscheduled meeting then the employee is expected to be aware of the policy of the school and move immediately to a public area or an area covered by the Closed Circuit Cameras.

### **Physical Interaction with Children:**

Children's Academy Group of Schools advocate a NO –TOUCH policy. When physical contact is made with a child this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development and gender.

### **Sexual Contact:**

All staff members of Children's Academy Group of Schools clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with children. Intimate or sexual relationships between children and the adults who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is also unacceptable. Any sexual activity between an adult and the child or young person with whom they work will be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary and legal action.



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### Working with children off-site:

There are occasions when work with children takes place outside of the normal work environment. This can be due to field trips, camps, educational tours or any number of reasons. Special care is taken to ensure that safe practices are maintained.

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