

Solan Public School

Child Protection Policy

Mission and Vision Statement of SPS

Vision:

Solan Public School provides affordable and quality education to students of all strata of society irrespective of cast, creed or gender. The aim will be to foster mind-set with values deep rooted in our Indian culture. The school is committed to instilling values of social justice, equality, knowledge and skills by providing unlimited possibilities for every child to realize their potential and fulfil their ambitions.

Mission:

Solan Public School imparts an integrated curriculum blended with experiential learning by providing tools with techniques of collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. The school will empower its students and staff with entrepreneurial and leadership skills to enable them to become well adjusted, environmentally conscious, future ready citizens of the world.

Introduction

Solan Public School is committed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. School wants to provide an environment in which students feel safe, secure, valued and respected. It will be a home away from home where they feel confident and will approach responsible adults when in difficulty.

Rationale

- Organizations working with children have a moral and legal responsibility to protection children under their care.
- Children are basically vulnerable and can't defend or protect themselves.

- Organizations need a strong policy to guide its stakeholders to diligently deal when faced with a crisis. When there is a crisis, it may be hard to think clearly. With a proper policy in place, we can respond in an informed way and avoid accusations of any biased responses.

WHO definition of Child Abuse

“Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.”

Child Maltreatment

Maltreatment sometimes referred to as child abuse and neglect, includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect & exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, development, and dignity. Within this definition, five sub types can be distinguished:

1. Physical Abuse:

It includes all physical injuries upon a child. The parents, teachers, and care-taker may not have intended to hurt the child. It may, however, be the result of over-discipline or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child’s age.

2. Sexual Abuse:

It is inappropriate sexual behaviour with a child. To be considered child abuse, these acts have to be committed by a person responsible for taking care of the child. If a stranger commits these acts, it would be considered sexual assault.

3. Emotional Abuse:

It may include verbal abuse and/or psychological maltreatment. It includes acts or the failure to act by parents or caregiver that have caused or could cause serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental trauma. This can also include parent or caretakers using extreme derogatory terms to describe the child; habitual tendency to blame the child or making him/her a scapegoat.

4. Neglect:

It is the failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Neglect can be physical or psychological. Physical neglect can include not providing adequate food or clothing, appropriate medical care, supervision or proper weather protection. Educational neglect includes failure to provide appropriate schooling or meeting special educational needs. Psychological neglect includes the lack of any emotional support or love, never attending to the child etc.

All children protection issues in India are addressed under the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection) Act, 2010.

5. Bullying:

Bullying can be defined as repeated or systematic harassment and attacks on others.

It can be perpetrated by individuals or groups. Bullying can take many forms including:

- Physical attack and violence
- Verbal taunts, name-calling, teasing, and put-downs
- Threats and intimidations
- Extortion of money or possessions
- Cyber-bullying
- Racial Slurs

Child Protection Training for adults working with children Clear ways of identifying a concern Recognising Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries, such as bruises, fractures or burns
- Injuries that don't match the given explanation
- Untreated medical or dental problems
- Bite marks, oval or crescent-shaped

Burns and Scars

- Circular burns
- Linear burns
- Burns of uniform depth
- Scars that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid

Fractures

- Delayed medical treatment

Recognizing Emotional Abuse

- Abnormal attachment between child and parent/care-taker/any other person e.g.; anxious, indiscriminate or no attachment
 - Aggressive behaviour towards others
 - Scapegoat within the family
 - Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-primary children
 - Low self-esteem; lack of self-confidence withdrawn or seen as a loner
 - Difficulty in relating to others
 - Delayed or inappropriate emotional development
 - A loss of interest or enthusiasm
 - Headaches or stomach aches with no medical cause
 - Avoidance of certain situations, such as refusing to go to school or ride the bus
 - Desperately seeks affection
 - A decrease in school performance or loss of interest in school
 - Loss of previously acquired developmental skills
 - Self-harming behaviour
 - Eating disorders
 - Suicidal attempts

Recognizing Sexual Abuse

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivity of the individual or family. Recognizing sexual abuse can be difficult unless the child discloses and it is believed. There may be no physical sign and indicators are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with Child Sexual Abuse are:

- Sexually explicit behaviours, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- Self-harm including eating disorders; self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Anxious, unwilling to remove clothes e.g. during sports events, cultural events etc.

Some physical indicators of sexual abuse in children are:

- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Trouble in walking or sitting or complaints of genital pain
- Abuse of other children sexually

Recognising Neglect

Some indicators of neglect in children are:

- Poor growth or weight gain
- Poor hygiene
- Lack of clothing or supplies to meet physical needs
- Taking food or money without permission
- Eating a lot in one sitting or hiding food for later
- Poor record of school attendance
- Lack of appropriate attention for medical, dental or psychological problems or lack of necessary follow-up care
- Emotional swings that are inappropriate or out of context to the situation
- Indifference

Recognising Bullying

It can be hard for adults, including parents, to know whether or not a child is being bullied. A child might not tell anyone because they are scared that the bullying will get worse. They might think that they deserve to be bullied, or that it's their fault.

You can't always see the signs of bullying. And no one sign indicates for sure that a child is being bullied. But you should look out for:

- belongings getting "lost" or damaged
- physical injuries such as unexplained bruises
- being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school not doing well at school

- asking for, or stealing, money (to give to a bully)
- being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- problems with eating or sleeping
- bullying others

Recognizing Online Abuse and Cyber-bullying

A child may be experiencing abuse online if he/she:

- spends a lot, much more or comparatively much less time online, texting, gaming or using social media
- is withdrawn, upset or outraged after using the internet or texting
- is secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- has many new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet

The Child Protection policy as a document in progress

Solan Public School will regularly review this policy on Child Protection to keep up with changes in the requirements of students and the perceived effectiveness of the policy. This policy shall be reviewed at the start of each new academic session.

The Committee will conduct two meetings in an academic year, one in each term. Minutes of all the meetings will be documented in a written form signed by all the members present for the meeting. The minutes should be available for management and to all stakeholders to see at all times.

Main tasks of the Committee

Sensitization

- Ensure that all Students, Teachers, Admin staff and auxiliary staff are sensitized about Child Protection Policy, No Touch policy and (POCSO Act, 2012). This will be done through workshops and interactions.
- PPTs/ Training will be provided by Counseling and Research Department (CRD).

Principal will ensure that relevant workshops are conducted through in house staff members.

- Sensitization drive will include Students Council members and will be conducted at least twice in the academic year.

Surveillance

- The Principal will ensure that all CCTV cameras installed are in working condition and all recorded footage is preserved and made available whenever needed
- Identify isolated / less frequented areas and ensure additional vigilance
- Same gender attendants to be appointed in girls and boys washrooms. (Pre-school washrooms to be attended by female staff only)

In addition to the above mentioned the committee will ensure that

- All child protection procedures are stringently followed
- All staff – teaching and non-teaching, visiting and regular, including transport and ancillary, etc. is aware of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures. If any staff joins in between the academic session, he/she has to be given an orientation to the same.
- Ensure that confidentiality of the reported cases (if any) is maintained and information is shared strictly on ‘need to know’ basis within the committee members and with the aggrieved parties
- Coordinate all the recommended actions where child abuse is suspected/ reported
- Maintain separate records of all the individual cases reported and document all related information/evidence
- The latest version of POCSO available till date, to be given to all the associated staff and acknowledgement to be taken that the recipient has read and understood it.

Role of the Principal

The Principal is in charge and holds overall responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. The Principal-

- needs to conduct meetings of the committee and maintain records
- will ensure that the first sensitization program is conducted at the beginning of the

academic year (preferably as part of staff induction program)

- will ensure that all new recruits teaching/ non-teaching staff are aware of CPP and are sensitized about the No-Touch Policy
- will ensure that after sensitization and after handing over the POCSO document, signatures of all staff member will be taken that they have read and understood the document. Principal to keep these documents in his/her custody.
- will assign the tasks of sensitization and surveillance to the committee members and supervise the same
- will ensure the installation of 'Help-Box' at a location easily accessible to all
- will appoint a committee member to check the Help-Box daily and address the issue, if any promptly
- in case any Parent, Student or member of the staff reports any form of abuse
- meet the person who has reported the incident
- meet the person who is allegedly abused
- keep a record of all the meetings
- lodge a police complaint in case of sexual abuse

Role of Teachers

- To assess the psychological, physical and medical impact of abuse on the child and its family, historically, currently and in the future
- To consider the social impact of the disclosure on the child and his/her family
- To consider the current and rehabilitation needs of that child
- To understand that it is best to listen to the child and consider the child's needs prior to taking any precipitate action
- To be aware of maladaptive responses and reflect how these behaviour are symptoms of abuse and how the child should be related in an understanding manner

It is the responsibility of the school to form a steering committee comprising the following to review the Child Protection Policy:

- Managing Director – Ms Preetee Kumar
- Headmistress – Ms Kiran Sharma

- Ms Suman Dhanta
- Ms Minakshi Devi
- Ms Anita Thakur
- Mr Kuldeep Thakur
- Ms Ritu Kanwar

Communicating the policy:

This policy would be made available to all stakeholders. All stakeholders are free to send suggestions to modify/improve the policy. You can email to: hm@solanpublicschool.com