



SAN SILVESTRE SCHOOL

NAME OF POLICY	STUDENTS OF DETERMINATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES
APPROVED BY	HEADMISTRESS
DATE APPROVED	November 2 nd , 2020
DATE OF REVIEW	February, 2021
RELATED POLICIES	

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Rationale

San Silvestre is committed to providing and promoting the safety and welfare of all young people and children in their care. Our institution strives to be an environment in which students can develop and thrive socially, emotionally and physically, regardless of culture, age, ability, religion, sexual preference or race. We pledge to protect our students from possible abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) or neglect from parents, members of staff, peers, or others. Abuse is considered as any action that intentionally harms or injures another person, while neglect is the failure to care for properly (see Appendix 1). All members of the community, be they full-time or part-time employees, parents or members of the Governing Body share a responsibility to participate actively ensuring that a safe environment is maintained.

This policy has been developed as a framework to ensure that:

1. Children and young people are protected, and their well-being is promoted within the institution and outside of it;
2. Staff and members of the community are protected and have a clear understanding of how they are expected to conduct themselves;
3. Provide guidelines to follow in case there are any concerns about the safety of a child;
4. Protect the institution and its reputation, while working at its best practice.

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads

The Headmistress and the Peruvian Director are the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads. Their role is to:

- Promote a caring and secure environment for all students and staff.
- Commit to and understand the implementation of the contents of this policy to ensure the prevention and detection of abuse.
- Promote a listening culture in which students and staff feel free to express their opinions in relation to the contents and implementation of this policy.
- Take care when hiring applicants to review their references closely before they are appointed as members of staff.
- Make sure this policy is reviewed regularly.
- Guarantee that any disclosed information is kept in secure files.
- Ensure that staff receive training about safeguarding and child protection before they have contact with students after being hired, and yearly after that.
- In situations of serious concerns that abuse or neglect may be occurring, they have a legal obligation to inform the public ministry of such concerns to allow them to carry out their own investigations.

Guidelines and responsibilities:

Teaching and Administrative staff

1. General expectations:

As a girls' only school, we need to prepare our students for a mixed gender world in which they are able to be independent, respectful and confident in their relationships. Therefore, all members of staff and the community must aim to develop healthy, respectful relationships with our students, respecting and protecting their dignity to contribute towards preparing them for life.

High professional standards are expected at all times and the following expectations should be met:

- Safeguarding and protecting children is everyone's responsibility.
- The first priority for all staff should be the safety and wellbeing of the students.
- Ensure that students are listened to with an open mind.
- Encourage students to reach their full potential.
- Staff must always dress appropriately, in accordance to the RIT (Art.11 - Dress code).
- All members of the school community should be treated with consideration and respect, even when behavior may be challenging.
- Each student is an individual, and staff must make the necessary adjustments to meet individual needs.
- Take care not to conduct themselves in a way that could be interpreted as any of the following: degrading, humiliating, intimidating, undermining, threatening, abusive, sexual or inappropriate in any other way.
- Take care to avoid favoritism, avoiding biases towards any one student.
- Avoid giving students any personal or contact details. Online interactions with students should be held solely through their school e-mail addresses or education-oriented platforms. There should be no interactions through any type of social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.
- Should a student show that they are attracted to a member of staff then this should be handled sensitively, always protecting the student's dignity. A written report must be made of any incident or evidence of such a situation.
- Staff should seek appropriate support if they feel there is an issue that might have an adverse effect on their professional practice.
- Ensure that any medical or psychological reports about a student are treated with the utmost confidentiality and shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.
- Staff must not transport students in their cars except in an emergency or when parental consent has been provided.
- The Institutional Image Department is the only one that has parental consent for taking pictures or creating videos. Any other regarding these media must be communicated to parents to obtain their consent. Care must be taken to ensure that photographs or videos do not violate the dignity of students or members of staff.
- Be alert to, and report accordingly any suspicion or behavior that might indicate that a student is at risk.
- Members of staff should avoid being in an enclosed office or classroom on their own with a student. If the meeting is a necessity then the door must be left open at all times.

- Members of staff should not invite students to their home unless they are the parent of a fellow student.

2. Physical Contact

Culturally there is a tendency for physical contact to occur as part of a natural relationship between two people. All staff should be professional at all times and there needs to be an awareness that physical contact should not be used if it makes a student or teacher feel uncomfortable.

- All contact should be appropriate to the child's age and emotional understanding.
- When dealing with younger students, physical contact may occur when holding their hand while taking them to another class or comforting them while being emotionally distressed.
- Students should not strap around the waist of any adult.
- Unless there is an emergency, students should be carried or lifted.
- Teachers should never physically restrain a student unless it is strictly necessary to prevent physical injury to another child, teachers, members of staff or themselves.
- If a member of staff has to administer first aid then, if possible, they should try to have someone else present.

3. Personal and Intimate Care

These guidelines and procedures apply to changing a child, for example:

- Has vomited or has been vomited on, or has wet or soiled herself due to not having reached continence (may be as part of a medical condition or developmental delay).
- Has become dirty or wet from participating in play activities, such as painting or water play.
- Requires support and assistance changing for physical activities.

Personal care consists of providing assistance to students who are unable to dress or groom themselves. Intimate care refers to tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions and personal hygiene.

- Younger students must be encouraged to go to the toilet on their own. There should be no wiping children.
- The privacy of children in situations such as showering and changing clothes should be respected.
- When assistance is necessary, someone else should be present, and only to the extent that the health and safety of the children require.

4. Sports and Music Lessons

- Physical contact may be justified only in exceptional circumstances for example when guiding a student when playing an instrument or supporting them during a gymnastics routine.
- When teaching body posture for music performance, or while correcting a playing position, the teacher must ask the student if it is alright for the teacher to demonstrate it while touching her. Only if the student agrees, then the teacher may proceed.
- When teaching breathing exercises, teachers must never touch the chest, diaphragm, ribs or legs of a student.
- Sports coaches should provide an induction for new members and their parents covering guidance about any physical contact that will be required as part of that activity.

- Sports teachers must ensure that there is always a female member of staff to supervise changing rooms. At no time should students be left unsupervised.

5. Mental Health

San Silvestre is committed to helping all students build resilience and promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all children and young people. We understand that children and young people go through ups and downs during life, but with the right support, nurture and education these difficulties can be overcome. There are occasions when some students may face significant life challenges or events, which could have a profound impact on their emotional wellbeing and cause mental health challenges. In addition, we are aware that these problems can sometimes be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse or neglect. Even though we understand that only external professionals can make a formal diagnosis of a mental health condition, staff will still remain vigilant to any warning signs, which could indicate if a student could be experiencing psychological or emotional issues.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child, they should contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

6. On-line Safety

Most students will use mobile phones, laptops or tablets during lessons or while doing homework. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, some people will use these technologies to harm children through inappropriate texts, e-mails, comments, photographs or videos.

- Students must be supervised during their use of the internet during school hours to ensure they do not access inappropriate web sites or images.
- The school commits to making every effort to educate students and parents about the associated risks of the internet, and the proper use of technology: secure passwords, positive digital footprint, among others.
- The school will ensure that there is a reduced risk of students accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content by applying filters that minimize their possibility to connect to them.
- Cyber-bullying via texts and emails will be treated seriously and with zero tolerance, just as any other type of bullying.

Roles and Responsibilities of Parents

The primary responsibility of safeguarding and protecting a child rests with parents. However, they should feel confident about raising any concerns they have in relation to their child. Parents can play their part in safeguarding by informing the school about:

- Changes in arrangements about who brings or picks up their child to and from school.
- Absences.
- Changes in the child's living arrangements (change of address, contact details, parental custody, etc.).
- Medical or special educational needs.
- Court orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a child or parent.

In case of disclosure or suspected abuse or neglect, the school may take action by referring a case to external agencies for further investigation.

Teaching students about safeguarding

The school teaches students about safeguarding through the curriculum, PSHE, and other activities which include guidance and where positive messages are reinforced as part of assemblies and tutorial or pastoral activities. These aim to promote adjusting their behaviour to reduce risks, building resilience, protecting themselves and their peers from any harm, the safe use of technology, and providing information about who they should turn to for help.

Dealing with a disclosure from a child

If a child discloses that he or she has been a victim of abuse or neglect in some way, the member of staff should:

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully and be welcoming.
- Let them take their time; talking about these situations is very difficult to do.
- Make her feel safe and secure.
- Reassure her by telling her that what has happened is not her fault.
- Only ask questions to clarify the facts; it is not your role to ask for details.
- Stress that it was the right thing to look for help and tell.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next.
- Never promise a child that they will not tell anyone. Explain that the information will be treated sensitively and respectfully, but must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- Make a written report by filling out the Safeguarding Concern Form as soon as possible (within 24 hours). By doing this, you will be contacting the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads (Ruth Percival and Brenda Seoane) immediately.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The school will maintain confidentiality when an allegation has been made or is being investigated or considered. Sometimes information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling abuse and neglect, or identifying patterns of behaviour. Fear about sharing information must not stand in the way of promoting the welfare and protecting the safety of children. However, regularly we work under the premise that information must only be shared on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about an allegation, as this may not be in the child's best interests. Anyone who receives information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only with the DSLs, using the Safeguarding Concern Form. Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding, and all allegations are expected to be reported within 24 hours.

Record-keeping

Well-kept records are essential to good safeguarding practices. San Silvestre is clear about the need to record any concern about a student or students within our school, the status of such records and confidentiality.

Any member of the school community (including parents and carers) receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse or neglect, must make an accurate record as soon as possible, preferably within the next 24 hours, noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context. If in doubt, report. These reports are kept in confidential files. In the same way, notes are kept of any student who is being monitored for safeguarding reasons.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the safeguarding team and approved every 2 years by the Safeguarding Committee for diffusion to parents, students and staff. It will be implemented through the school's staff induction program, during workshop weeks at the beginning of every year, and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the DSLs and the Safeguarding Committee.

Appendix 1

I. EFFECTS OF ABUSE

Child abuse is a form of maltreatment. The harm caused by this abuse may be intentional or not, and it may happen within the home or outside of it. Children may be abused within their own family, educational settings, and communities, or, more rarely, by others. Abuse is more common in households where one parent has problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health. Evidence also shows that younger children, as well as those with special needs or disabilities are more vulnerable to suffering abuse. Child abuse causes suffering to children and their families and can have long-term consequences. Children who are victims of any type of abuse have deep detrimental effects as they grow up on their physical development, their sense of self-worth, behaviors, how they form relationships, and mental health. Therefore, it is very important to always be alert to any warning signs that may arise.

II. TYPES OF ABUSE:

1. Physical abuse: is deliberately hurting a child physically, and it may include one or more of the following: hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
 - Behavioral signs of physical abuse: flinching when touched, being aggressive or withdrawn, sad or frequently crying, showing reluctance to go home, avoiding changing for sports or other activities along with others, wearing long sleeves even on hot sunny days, not recalling how injuries occurred.
2. Emotional abuse: is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, and is sometimes also known as psychological abuse. It can have severe adverse effects on a child's emotional development on the short and long term. This type of abuse may include constantly telling a child they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or important only as long as they meet the needs of others; not giving them the chance to express themselves, silencing them, mocking them, what they say or how they feel, act, or what is important to them. Emotional abuse may also include overprotecting a child, limiting their learning, exploration, or preventing their social interaction. All of these cause the child to feel constantly frightened, insecure, or in danger.
 - Behavioral signs of emotional abuse: having self-harming behavior, erratic growth or weight patterns, difficulty forming relationships or being withdrawn, constantly showing inappropriate attention-seeking behaviors, sleeping disturbances.
3. Sexual abuse: involves using, forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of it or not. The activities may include physical contact (including assault or penetration, rape, oral sex), and non-penetrative acts such as inappropriate touching, masturbating, kissing, or rubbing. Other acts may include non-contact activities such as forcing children to look at sexual images or activities, making them behave in

sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. These acts may be perpetrated by one or more adults, adolescents and even children older than the victim.

→ Behavioral signs of sexual abuse: a sudden change in behavior, self-harming behaviors, sexual knowledge which is not expected for the child's developmental age, avoidance of being left alone with a particular person, being withdrawn, avoiding changing for sports or other activities along with others, sexualised drawings, sleeping disturbances.

4. Neglect: is a persistent failure to provide proper care for a child's basic needs (food, clothing, hygiene, supervision, shelter, protection from danger, adequate access to medical care or treatment). It may also include neglect or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs. Children who are neglected usually suffer from other types of abuse.

→ Behavioral signs of neglect: showing a constant need of attention and affection, constantly missing school or being late or sick, being emotionally withdrawn, difficulty making friends, stealing or taking food from others, low self-esteem, poor social relationships, developmental delays.

Sources:

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