

Safeguarding Children Policy



1 Policy Statement

1.1 This policy has been authorised by the Principal of Clever Kids Learning Hub ("the Hub"), is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and will be discussed with parents before their child joins the Hub. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with children even where this is away from the Hub, for example at an activity centre or on an educational visit.

1.2 Every child should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment.

1.3 Clever Kids Learning Hub is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Clever Kids Learning Hub will take all reasonable measures to

- ensure that we practise safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers (including staff employed by another organisation) to work with children and young people in accordance with regulations and guidance from the Children's Act 38 of 2005;
- protect each child from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another child;
- be alert to signs of abuse both in the Hub and from outside;
- deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse;
- design and operate procedures which promote this policy;
- design and operate procedures, which, so far as possible, ensure that facilitators and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations;
- support children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan;
- be alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions;

- operate robust and sensible health & safety procedures;
- take all practicable steps to ensure that the Hub premises are as secure as circumstances permit;
- consider and develop procedures to deal with any other safeguarding issues which may be specific to individual children in our Hub or in our local area.

1.4 Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the Hub will be investigated in accordance with the guidelines set out in Section 15 of the Child Care Amendment Act: “any person who has anything to do with caring for children - for example teachers, social workers, and doctors - and who suspects that a child has been abused, must report this to the provincial Department of Social Development. The Prevention of Family Violence Act No 133 of 1993 (Section 4) says that suspected child abuse must be reported to a police officer or a child welfare officer or social worker.”

Useful Contacts

Various organisations can help in child abuse cases:

- [Rapcan](#) - child abuse prevention: tel 021 712 2330, fax 021 712 2365
- Childline South Africa: 24-hour toll-free helpline - 0800 055 555
- Childline Western Cape: tel 021 762 8198/021 461 1114
- [LifeLine/Childline Western Cape](#) Lifeline Western Cape: tel 021 461 1113
- Southern Africa: 24-hour crisis intervention service ([Directory](#) of Life Line centres and programmes)
- [Rape Crisis](#) Cape Town: tel 021 447 14672

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The Designated Person

2.1 Each Hub has appointed a senior member of staff with the necessary status and authority (Designated Person) to have lead responsibility for matters relating to safeguarding children. Each Hub has also appointed a senior member of staff with the necessary status and authority to act as a Deputy for matters relating to safeguarding children (Deputy Designated Person). The main responsibilities of the Designated Person are:

to be the first point of contact for parents, children, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters of safeguarding children;

to co-ordinate the safeguarding children procedures in the Hub;

to maintain an ongoing training programme for all Hub employees;

to monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to safeguarding children;

to liaise with the safeguarding children officer appointed by the Department of Social Development.

2.2 The Designated Person for each of the Hubs are as follows:

Clever Kids Learning Hub, Durbanville: Lieze Puren

She will:

- advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to her;
- keep the Principal informed of all actions unless the Principal is the subject of a complaint. In this situation, the Designated Person should consult with the Social Worker appointed by the Department of Social Development.
- liaise with the Department of Social Development and other agencies on behalf of the Hub.

2.3 If the Designated Person is unavailable or is herself the subject of a complaint, her duties will be carried out by the Deputy Designated Person,

who has received appropriate training.

2.4 The Designated Person has undertaken safeguarding children training and training in inter- agency working and will attend refresher training at two yearly intervals.

3 Signs of abuse

3.1 Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- the child says s/he has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference;
- there is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a child's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries;
- the child's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the child's behaviour;
- the child's development is delayed;
- the child loses or gains weight;
- the child appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed;
- the child is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by his/her parents or carers.

4 Duty of employees and volunteers

4.1 Every employee, as well as every volunteer who assists the Hub, is under a general legal duty:

- to protect children from abuse;
- to be aware of the Hub's safeguarding children procedures and to follow them;

- to know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary;
- to keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event;
- to report any matters of concern to the Designated Person;
- to undertake appropriate training including refresher training at three-yearly intervals.

5 Procedures

5.1 *Initial complaint:* A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- must listen carefully to the child and/or parent and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place;
- must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer;
- must reassure the child and/or parent but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the Designated Person who will ensure that the correct action is taken;
- must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. 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 Designated Person.

5.2 *Preserving evidence:* All evidence, (for example, scribbled notes, cell phones containing text messages, clothing, computers), must be safeguarded and preserved.

5.3 Reporting: All suspicion or complaints of abuse must be reported to the Designated Person, or if the complaint involves the Designated Person, to the Manager or other Deputy.

5.4 Action by the Designated Person: The action to be taken will take into account:

- the guidelines set out by Section 15 of the Child Care Amendment Act;
- the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to the Department of Social Development or the police without further investigation within the Hub;
- the wishes of the child's parents, provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the child's best interests and that they are properly informed. It may be necessary, after all appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the Designated Person is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child at risk, he or she will take further advice from the relevant professionals before making a decision to disclose;
- duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable;
- if there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the Designated Person may consult with other appropriate professionals on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a child may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made without delay. If the initial referral is made by telephone, the Designated Person will confirm the referral in writing to the Department of Social Development within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgment is received within three working days, the Designated Person will contact Child Line, Western Cape.

5.5 External agencies: Whether or not the Hub decides to refer a particular complaint to the Department of Social Development or the police, the parents will be informed in writing of their right to make their own complaint or referral to the Child Protection Unit of the police and will be provided with contact names, addresses and telephone numbers, as appropriate.

5.6 Allegations against staff: Clever Kids Learning Hub has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (and volunteers who work with children) that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse

and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations.

These procedures are as follows:

- All allegations or suspicions against staff will be taken seriously and considered as requiring a child protection response/enquiry
- Any allegation or suspicion of child abuse made against any staff member will be reported and referred to children's social care and the police.
- Once the referral is made to children's social care, the allegation will be investigated by the Department of Social Development who will consider the available information, decide whether an investigation is indicated and work out the details, who will be involved and arrangements for interviewing:
 - The child
 - Parent/ guardian
 - Person to whom the allegation was made
 - Any witnesses

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Person will report to and consult with the Director who will follow the procedures outlined above.

Detailed guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place children or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a child. This guidance is contained in the Staff Handbook.

5.7 Allegations against children: If a child is accused or suspected of causing harm to another child or children, the matter should be investigated thoroughly and carefully. It may be necessary to ask the parent to keep this child away from the Hub during the investigation. Staff will work together with parents to seek a positive outcome following the investigation.

5.8 Suspected harm from outside the Hub: A member of staff who suspects that a pupil is suffering harm from outside the kindergarten should seek information from the child with tact and sympathy using "open" and not

leading questions. A sufficient record should be made of the conversation and if the member of staff continues to be concerned he or she should refer the matter to the Designated Officer.

5.9 Confidentiality: All information about safeguarding and welfare issues will be shared only on a "need to know" basis. However, where the safety and welfare of a child is in question, all staff must ensure that all relevant information is provided to the Designated Person without delay. The Designated Person will then decide, taking advice if necessary, whether such information needs to be disclosed to any other person.

6 Monitoring

6.1 **The Designated Person** will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures and make an annual report to the Principal.

6.2 **The Principal** will ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to safeguarding children arrangements are remedied without delay;

7 Contact numbers

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