



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Statement of Commitment:

SGHS is committed to the prevention of abuse. We will ensure the well-being and safety of all children, staff and families connected to our school. This policy provides guidelines to staff, by which to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect and to understand their own role in keeping children safe.

2. Scope:

This policy covers all staff of SGHS who have direct or indirect contact with children. This includes those staff, paid or voluntary, employed directly by SGHS, as well as those professionals contracted or invited to provide services to children in the care of SGHS. This includes teaching and non-teaching staff and their responsibilities in the safety and well-being of children. This policy applies to all children who attend SGHS and to those with whom staff come into contact in the course of their work (i.e. siblings). All staff have a responsibility to discuss any child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect, with the Head or the Director.

3. Principles:

This Child Protection Policy confirms the commitment of SGHS to the protection of children and proceeds to:

1. Outline the standards and principles by which all staff will abide
2. Outline the action to be taken by staff where any form of abuse or ill-treatment is known or suspected

3. Establish what action is required when allegations are made against staff
4. Explore the implications for staff training

SGHS will ensure that:

1. Staff are carefully selected with the principles of this policy in mind
2. Staff are appropriately trained in issues of child protection
3. Staff are aware of the Child Protection Policy and accompanying procedures and/or guidelines
4. SGHS recognizes that the family's primary role in caring and protecting the child should be valued and maintained. However, the child's safety and well-being will have priority.

4. Responsibilities:

Any member of staff, paid or voluntary, may directly witness child abuse or have allegations made by a child or an adult, relayed to them. There may also be disclosures of abuse that have occurred prior to attending SGHS. As sustained abuse and neglect of children can have major long term effects on all aspects of their health, development and well-being, it is the intention of SGHS to ensure that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety of children at all times. This is achieved through consistent and agreed protocols regarding child protection, as well as the regular undertaking of awareness-raising training.

Each staff member must:

1. Be aware of, and alert to, potential indicators of abuse or neglect.
2. Record (usually in writing) a factual account of any concerns they have, or that are brought to their attention.
3. Work in co-operation with the parents and caregivers, unless this compromises the safety of the child.
4. It is the primary responsibility of staff to be vigilant, have knowledge and awareness of the indicators of neglect, potential or actual abuse and to report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of suspected abuse immediately and ensure that the concern is taken seriously and reported.
5. The statutory responsibility to investigate allegations of child abuse rests with Child, Youth and Family and the Police.

5. Role of the Principal:

The role of the Principal is to:

1. Ensure the safety and wellbeing of each child is paramount.
2. Ensure that the Child Protection Policy is effectively implemented throughout SGHS.
3. Ensure that all staff are aware of and have access to full copies of the procedures for reporting child abuse.
4. Ensure that all staff are employed, in accordance with approved guidelines to identify those people safe to work with children.
5. Ensure all staff are supported appropriately, when dealing with child protection concerns.

6. Safe recruitment of staff:

All appointments (permanent, fixed term, casual or volunteer) to positions that have direct and /or frequent contact with children or young people, will be conditional on safety checks, including a Police check.

7. Training of staff

1. All staff will receive child protection training at the level appropriate to their role. The Designated Person for Child Protection (usually the Principal) will undertake more intensive training. This person will be accessible to staff to provide advice and support.
2. All staff will be given appropriate training covering basic awareness of child protection. This will include an overview of signs and indicators of abuse, and also the procedure for responding to actual or suspected abuse.

Training will include:

- Roles and responsibilities of staff regarding child protection.
- Recognizing and responding to the signs and indicators of actual or suspected abuse.
- Ensuring staff understand and can follow the Child Protection Policy and the procedures for reporting a concern.

8. Induction of new staff:

All new staff will receive child protection training as part of their induction and will receive a copy of this policy as part of the induction process.

9. Safe Working Practices:

1. A relationship between an adult and a child or young person cannot be a relationship between equals. There is a potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.
2. Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others. Adults who work with children must therefore act in a way that is considered safe practice.
3. Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, must take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobilephone, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, webcams, websites, social networking and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a child or young person. They must not request or respond to, any personal information from the child or young person, other than that which is appropriate as part of their professional role.
4. Adults must ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
5. 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, gender, ethnicity and background. Adults should use their professional judgement at all times, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and use a level of contact and /or form of communication which is acceptable to the child for the minimum amount of time necessary.

10. Child Protection Procedures:

All staff will respond to concerns of child abuse by following the identified procedures:

1. The identification of abuse
2. Handling disclosures whether verbal or behavioral, from a child
3. Reporting procedures
4. Identification of abuse
5. Child abuse is – “the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.
6. Guidelines for responding when a child tells of his/her abuse
7. It is important that you as the adult remain calm and confident when a child tells you what has been happening to him or her. Every child is different in how, when and where they will tell an adult about abusive experiences, so it will most likely happen when you are least expecting it.
8. Your facial expressions and your tone of voice are as important as what you actually say to the child.
9. Stay calm, listen and reassure the child and at times you may need to clarify what the child has said so that you can take the appropriate action. If a child sees that you are upset or not able to cope with what he or she is telling you, they may not continue to tell you what has been happening or take back (i.e. retract) the original statements they have made.

**Sincerely,
Management**