

# Child Safeguarding Policy

for  
*Catholic Public and Independent Schools in South Africa*



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Five years have passed since the introduction of the *Child Safeguarding Policy for Catholic Public and Independent Schools in South Africa*, a policy that was made mandatory for all schools in the region. Reflecting on developments in legislation and policy, on the experience of the implementation of the 2012 Policy, and changes in our social and cyber environments, the *Child Safeguarding Policy of 2012* was reviewed. We are grateful to all those who participated in the extensive consultation exercise, and the review process has culminated in the publication of this document. The national Catholic Board of Education is very pleased to introduce *Child Safeguarding Policy of Catholic Public and Independent Schools in South Africa 2018*.

Children are an integral part of the community, and for schools, the reason for their being. Children must be cherished, cared for and safeguarded. We are reminded of this in Matthew 25:40, 'whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

In striving to learn and improve on our practice, abide by this Policy and working to achieve these Standards we each play our part in meeting the challenges set by Pope Francis when he said:

*God has no difficulty in being understood by children and children have no trouble in understanding God. It isn't by chance that in the Gospels, Jesus speaks beautiful and strong words about the 'little ones'. This term indicates all persons who depend on the help of others, particularly children. Children, therefore, are a treasure for humanity and also for the Church because they constantly remind us of the necessary condition for entering into the Kingdom of God: that we must not consider ourselves self-sufficient, but in need of help, of love, and of forgiveness. (General Audience, 18 March 2015)*

And again:

*The Church offers her maternal care to all children and their families, and she brings them the blessing of Jesus. May we always care for our children, not counting the cost, so that they may never believe themselves to be mistakes, but always know their infinite worth. (General Audience, 8 April 2015)*

In terms of the mandate to develop and maintain the Catholic ethos of the school, the Catholic Board of Education requires Governors and School Management to implement this Child Safeguarding Policy in every school. This is a serious challenge and a responsibility that requires effective communication and clear accountability for all in the school environment.

Let us celebrate our ministry with children and ensure, in living out these standards, that children are safeguarded and protected in all our schools.

Bishop Giuseppe Sandri MCCJ  
President: Catholic Board of Education

# Introduction

## Context of the Policy

The Catholic Board of Education (CBE) is committed to making sure that the welfare and rights of children are promoted and protected, and that children are not harmed, exploited or abused. In answering the call to keep children safe, the CBE provides this Child Safeguarding Policy for use in all our schools. The Policy reflects the Gospel values of freedom, justice and respect for all children and young people, as well as the values enshrined in Catholic social teaching. It promotes our underlying belief that

the rights of all children must be promoted and protected,  
all children must be treated equally, with love and respect, and  
the child's dignity as a person must never be diminished.

Children are among the most vulnerable people in any society. They can be easy targets, and can quickly become victimized, and be exploited and abused. Promoting the safety and protection of children as a priority, we align ourselves with international and national policy in this regard. The child's right to dignity of life and bodily integrity shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.

In harmony with the National School Safety Framework, our purpose is to ensure that the same principles, procedures and practices for safeguarding children and for responding to allegations or suspicions of child abuse operate at every level and in every school throughout our network. As the policy leader in the network, we are committed to implementing best practices to ensure that our processes work and are safe, effective, robust and transparent.

The frightening reality of how so many South African children are treated calls us to an absolutely unequivocal, unambiguous stance:

*'If anyone causes one of these little ones who trusts in me to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea'. (Matt 18:6)*

We are ministering in schools against the backdrop of a culture of violence, exploitation of the vulnerable, and growing addiction in the sphere of cyber use. The call of international and national legislation, and of this Policy, to mandatory, obligatory reporting may perhaps demand of us great courage. It is not easy to break through the threatening culture of silence that protects those who abuse, and to become a voice for the voiceless.

## Underlying principles

The Standards are based on the following set of principles:

- All children have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured, cared for and protected
- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation. No matter what cultural differences there are, no matter any other reason, Catholic schools must intervene on behalf of any child whom they think might be being abused

- No practice that is harmful to children may be tolerated or condoned
- Catholic schools must create safe environments for children and young people, and through doing this they can best protect them from any form of harm or abuse
- Every person has a duty of care to support the protection of children
- The professional commitment of all personnel at schools to keeping children safe, and stopping them being abused, is an enormous resource in this mission and it is therefore essential that all school staff are educated about these issues. It is the responsibility of governance and management in each and every school to ensure that all personnel apply the Standards in their own sphere of activity.

## Setting Standards

The revised set of Standards is designed to ensure up-to-date best practice in all aspects of child safeguarding, particularly in the creation and maintenance of safe environments, and in the mandatory nature of reporting.

These Standards represent the expected level of performance that all schools should reach. By dedicating ourselves to learn, to improve on our practice and to meet these Standards, we will remain vigilant in protecting the children of today and tomorrow.

In implementing the Standards properly, as well as children being protected, the School and its staff are protected. The School makes clear its commitment to keeping children safe. Staff will be clear about how they are expected to behave with children and what to do if there are concerns about a child. The Standards will help them to move towards best practice in this area and to deter potential abusers from joining the School.

No Policy, no set of Standards, can offer complete protection for children: but following them minimises the risk to children of abuse and exploitation. A document of this type can never be completely definitive. Like all policies, it expresses the ideal. It is not the solution to the situation, or a panacea. The hard, difficult work has to be done in the implementation, which can only happen in each school. This is in terms of our Gospel calling, a mission that is infinitely worthwhile: the children are our treasure and our responsibility.

The Child Safeguarding Policy and Standards which follow have been prepared for each School's use.

Kathy Gaylor op  
Chairperson: Catholic Board of Education

# Structure and Use of this Child Safeguarding Policy

The Policy is structured under two sections:

## 1. **Statement of the Child Safeguarding Policy**

This Policy outlines the commitment to child safeguarding in all Catholic Schools in South Africa and it applies to all members of the school community.

Each School authority (in the persons of the Chairperson of the School Governing Body/Board of Governors and the Principal) is required to sign, date and adopt this mandatory Policy.

Each School should prominently display the Policy statement and make the Policy available to all those who are required to adhere to it.

All those involved in the School community are required to understand, commit to and sign their agreement to adhere to the Policy throughout their ministry with children.

## 2. **The Seven Safeguarding Standards which are integral to the Policy**

Schools are required to demonstrate that their practice complies with the seven Child Safeguarding Standards.

Each Standard contains:

- The **Statement of the Standard**, and its rationale
- **Indicators** that ensure the Standard is being met
- Ways of providing **evidence** that the Standard is being implemented, in the form of a checklist

The Policy is structured in such a way that it can be adopted by each School, with the insertion of the School's name and details; and the ways of providing evidence at the end of each Standard provide a checklist for identifying how far the School has progressed in this most important obligation.

# The Child Safeguarding Policy

## which includes the Seven Standards

### Foundations

In developing and implementing the Child Safeguarding Policy, the Catholic Board of Education is guided by the following:

#### 1. The Gospel

Children have a key place in the heart of Jesus who said: 'Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it' (Luke 18:17). This places a sacred obligation on all Catholic Schools to ensure that children are welcomed, cherished and protected in a manner consistent with their central place in the life of the community.

#### 2. International and National Law

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) outlines the fundamental rights to be implemented in national law by signatories to the convention. Full realisation of these rights will ensure that children will be 'brought up in a spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity'. (Preamble to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989)

*States, Parties [and other organizations responsible for the care, development and wellbeing of children] shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. (Article 19 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)*

This Convention has world-wide recognition and support, and is the foundation of the rights of all children. We confirm our commitment to upholding these rights for all children.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child further underpins the importance of the safety and security of the child:

*States, Parties to the present Charter shall take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse.*

*Protective measures under this Article shall include effective procedures for the establishment of special monitoring units to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as other forms of*

*prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment, and follow-up of instances of child abuse and neglect. (The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) Article 16)*

### **3 South African Law**

Every child has the right to a name and a nationality from birth; to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment; to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services; to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. (Section 28 of the South African Constitution)

Legal requirements relating to procedures are presented under Standard 3 below. Several of the Provincial Education Departments have policies regarding child abuse.

### **4 Policy Framework for Catholic Schools:**

For Catholic Public Schools on Private Property: the Deed of Agreement, the formal legal contract between the respective Provincial MEC and the Owner of each school, has within its provisions the Schedule describing the Distinctive Religious Character, emphasising in particular the rights of the child to a full, holistic compassionate development. Additionally, the specific obligation to safeguarding children should be enshrined in the Constitution of the School Governing Body.

For Catholic Independent Schools: in line with Signs of God's Presence, it is required that the Constitutions of these schools make specific reference to the obligation of the Board of Governors to safeguard all children and staff on the premises. [cf Appendix 2]

This Policy comes from the guiding principles above, but also from recognising that "in all matters concerning the care, protection and well-being of a child, the standard that the child's best interest is of paramount importance, must be applied". (SA Children's Act 2005, Section 9, Section 110)

## **Purposes of the Child Safeguarding Policy**

- To make sure that all learners are safe
- To make sure that everyone involved in the running of the school – governors, school management, educators, support staff, volunteers and learners – takes every possible measure to safeguard children and prevent abuse (See the Glossary on page 30 for definitions of various forms of abuse)
- To make sure that no person at the school does anything that could allow abuse to occur, or that could be misinterpreted by children, their families or other adults as being or leading to abuse.

## Commitments

Together with the foundations outlined above, this School, as part of the Catholic schools' network, commits to:

### **Caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them**

We will continue to strengthen and review measures to create and maintain environments that are safe for children, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the School for children and the adults who work with them. This will be done through training, support, communications and quality assurance.

### **Responding appropriately to child safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations**

Anyone who brings any suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the School will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child safeguarding procedures and requirements.

We recognise that each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused. Therefore, all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that are required to be reported to the statutory authorities, will be reported via the designated child safeguarding person to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person who is suspected of having abused a child.

### **Caring pastorally for complainants and other affected persons**

Those who have suffered child abuse will receive a compassionate and just response, and will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support in as far as is possible, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

### **Managing the care of respondents and other affected persons**

The School in its response to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child abuse will respect the rights under civil law of an accused. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory inquiry processes. Insofar as it is possible, requisite steps will be taken to restore the good name and reputation of anyone who has been wrongly accused of abusing a child.

## Scope of the Policy

This Policy applies to all Catholic Schools and is addressed to all members of the school community; all members are required to comply with it. Full understanding of and adherence to this Policy should lead to a deepening in the understanding of, and respect for, the rights of children and young people to participate as people of faith.

The care and protection of children involved in school activities are the responsibility of the whole school community, and is a requirement that applies regardless of the nature of the activities in which children are involved. Everyone who participates in the life of the

School has a role to play in creating an environment in which children can develop and be safe. Child safeguarding measures need to be integrated throughout the School's systems, processes, and operations.

### **Putting the Policy into Action**

The Governors, on behalf of the School, commit to the seven safeguarding Standards, which are integral to the Child Safeguarding Policy. The School will implement this Policy, ensuring adherence to the seven Standards. These Standards are recommended by best practice, and they show the expected level of performance that all who govern, work, study or volunteer at the school should reach:

1. Adopting the written Child Safeguarding Policy
2. Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments
3. Responding to suspected or alleged child abuse
4. Access to support and information
5. Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe
6. Communicating the School's Child Safeguarding Policy
7. Monitoring the implementation of the Standards.

## STANDARD ONE:

### ADOPTING THE WRITTEN SAFEGUARDING POLICY

#### What is this Standard?

The School has adopted the written Child Safeguarding Policy approved by the Catholic Board of Education.



The written Policy communicates that the school is committed to keeping children safe and aims to make sure that no member of the school community, personnel or volunteers does anything that could allow abuse to occur, or that could be misinterpreted by children, their families or other adults as being, or leading to abuse.

The Policy helps to create a safe and protective environment for children and shows that the school is taking this duty seriously, making it clear that all children have an equal right to protection.

#### These indicators ensure that Standard One is being met:

- The Policy is adopted and signed by the School Governing Body/Board of Governors
- The Constitution of the School specifies the obligation on the Governors to safeguard all on the premises, especially the children
- The school community recognises that the Child Safeguarding Policy is an essential aspect of the ethos of the Catholic School
- The Policy is publicised, promoted and distributed
- The School Management Team takes responsibility for implementing the Policy
- Workshops address all aspects and contexts of child safeguarding work
- All members of the school community are obliged to comply with the Policy, and staff and volunteers have signed that they know the content and accept the Policy.

#### The following provide evidence that Standard One is being implemented:

<b>A = in place; B = working towards; C = still to begin</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
The written Child Safeguarding Policy has been adopted and signed			
The Constitution of the School makes clear reference to the Governors' obligation to safeguard all on the premises			

continued

Standard One continued

<b>A = in place; B = working towards; C = still to begin</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
A signed copy of the Policy is available at the School			
The Owner and the local office have been provided with a signed copy of the Policy			
The Policy Certificate is publicly displayed in the school			
The Policy has been workshopped in the school and signed registers of attendance are available			
Signed undertaking of knowledge and acceptance of the Policy by any organisation or person working or volunteering or using the premises is kept on file			
The Principal provides at least annually a written report to the Governors on the implementation of the Policy			

## STANDARD TWO:

### CREATING AND MAINTAINING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

#### What is this Standard?

The School is committed to creating and maintaining a safe school environment, promoting a culture of safety, and preventing or reducing the risk of harm to children in order that children are welcomed, nurtured and safe.



The School provides access to good role models whom the children can trust, and who respect, protect and enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

The School will do this through:

- Safe Recruitment
- Codes of Conduct
- Implementing and ensuring Safe Activities
- Maintaining a safe environment in compliance with Health and Safety requirements

**These indicators ensure that Standard Two is being met:**

#### Safe Recruitment

- The School follows good effective recruitment and selection procedures, whether for voluntary or for paid work
- The recruitment policy has been approved and endorsed by the School Management Team/SGB/ Board
- The School assesses the suitability to work with children, of all adults on the premises
- Police clearance (and other legally required clearance in accordance with National Registers) for all employees and volunteers will be sought
- All job applicants will be asked if they have any convictions relating to the abuse of children. Regardless of the response the National Registers will be checked
- South African Council of Educators (SACE) must be contacted to make sure that the person is legally registered as an educator, and that there are no complaints against that person.

#### Codes of Conduct

- The School has responsibility for ensuring that all who work with children agree to follow effective safeguarding practice
- Codes of conduct, including clear procedures, are in place for staff, volunteers, learners and parents (if applicable)

- The School has a clear and concise guide of what is (and is not) acceptable behaviour and practice for adults working with children. This will be signed by all employees and volunteers who work with children
- In order to encourage children’s positive behaviour the School has a clear and concise guide of what is (and is not) acceptable behaviour by and among children.

#### **Safe Activities**

- The School has clear guidelines on how to keep children safe – before, during and after activities
- The School implements effective practice for personnel on assessment of hazards when working with children
- The School implements effective practice for the appropriate use of information technology, including social media use by personnel and by children.

#### **A Safe Environment**

- The School ensures that the physical environment of the property is maintained, secure and used according to purpose
- The physical area for which the School has responsibility is clear and known
- Where applicable, boarding establishments are safe and compliant with all regulations, especially fire regulations
- The School implements effective practice in safe care for all children, including those with specific needs
- There is a designated Child Safeguarding Person who has a clearly defined role and responsibility for safeguarding children
- In the event of an alleged offender not being suspended, the school has arrangements in place
- External groups using the school property comply with effective child safeguarding practice
- Children are adequately supervised at all times including school trips, activities and on playgrounds
- There are guidelines regarding the use of Information Technology: cell phones, email, website, internet.

The following provide evidence that Standard Two is being implemented:

<b>A = in place; B = working towards; C = still to begin</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
The Policy for Safe Recruitment is in place			
The Code of Conduct for staff, indicating appropriate behaviour by adults towards children and young people, is in place			
The Code of Conduct for volunteers, indicating appropriate behaviour by adults towards children and young people, is in place			
The Code of Conduct for children, indicating appropriate behaviour by children and young people with each other and with adults, is in place			
The Code of Conduct for parents is in place			
There are procedures for dealing with breaches of Codes of Conduct			
The school manages children's behaviour in ways which are non-violent and do not degrade or humiliate children			
Staff show awareness of the rights of children and these are seen as a basis for child protection			
Adult one-to-one contact with children and young people is the exception			
There are guidelines on safe care for children, with particular reference to those with specific needs			
There is a checklist to assist with hazard assessment of activities with children			
A designated Child Safeguarding Person with a clearly defined role has been appointed			
There are resources to deal with accidents, e.g. a person trained in first aid; first aid kit			
Awareness of child rights and safety is integrated into the prayer life of the school community			
Adequate and appropriate supervision ratios are maintained for all children's activities			
Measures required for the safety of children on trips away from school are articulated and applied			
The school applies strict safety standards in the use of technology, including the internet, texting, email, photography, CCTV and webcams			
The Maintenance policy and plan of the School is applied, reviewed, and up-to-date			
External groups using school property are required formally to comply with Child Safeguarding Policy and practice			

## STANDARD THREE:

### RESPONDING TO KNOWN, SUSPECTED OR ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE

#### What is this Standard?

The School follows legally compliant, clear procedures and guidance on what to do when knowledge, suspicions, concerns, or allegations arise regarding a child's safety or welfare.



In all actions concerning children ... *the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration.* (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, #3). At no time will children be put at further risk of harm by delay or inaction.

#### Compulsory Reporting

When it is known that a child has been sexually abused, South African law requires the following:

*A person who has knowledge that a sexual offence has been committed against a child must report such knowledge immediately to a police official.* (Criminal Law Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 2007 Section 54 (1) (a))

When there are suspicions, concerns or allegations that a child has been sexually or physically abused, or deliberately neglected, South African law requires the following:

*Any ... teacher ... who on reasonable grounds concludes that a child has been abused in a manner causing physical injury, sexually abused or deliberately neglected, must report that conclusion in the prescribed form to a designated child protection organisation, the Provincial Department of Social Development or a police official.* (Children's Act No 38 of 2005 as amended 2010 Section 110 (1) and (2))

*A person who fails to report child abuse as outlined above is guilty of an offence and may be charged.*

If the alleged offender is a teacher, the South African Council of Educators (SACE) must be informed.

Catholic schools must also report to the Owner.

#### These indicators ensure that Standard Three is being met:

- There are clear legally compliant child safeguarding procedures in the School that provide step by step guidance on what action to take if there is knowledge, or there are allegations or suspicions of abuse of a child
- The child safeguarding procedures are available to everyone (including children, parents, staff and volunteers) and actively promoted. Consideration is to be given to language and different ways of communicating
- Allegations are responded to immediately and effectively according to national and provincial requirements

- All current child safeguarding concerns are reported to the civil authority immediately
- Staff understand the legal obligation to report any case of child abuse
- There are clear ways to raise allegations or suspicions, anonymously if necessary, of unacceptable behaviour towards children
- All members of the school community have access to the telephone number for the *Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit (FCS)*, the *Child Protection Unit* or *Childline* in the area
- Incidents, allegations and referrals are recorded
- There is guidance on confidentiality and appropriate information sharing which makes it clear that the protection of the child is paramount
- All confidential information will be stored securely
- The Code of Conduct for staff deals adequately with complaints about unacceptable or abusive behaviour towards children
- The Code of Conduct for learners deals adequately with complaints about unacceptable or abusive behaviour towards other children, or adults
- The school supports and assists personnel to raise concerns about possible dangerous or unethical conduct by others towards children
- There is clear understanding of what constitutes abuse
- There is a designated person with a clearly defined role and responsibility to handle cases of abuse, whether historical or not
- All staff know who the designated person is
- The school community, particularly the staff, recognises that beyond the essential legal compliance in relation to child safeguarding, a Catholic school has a duty of Pastoral Care.

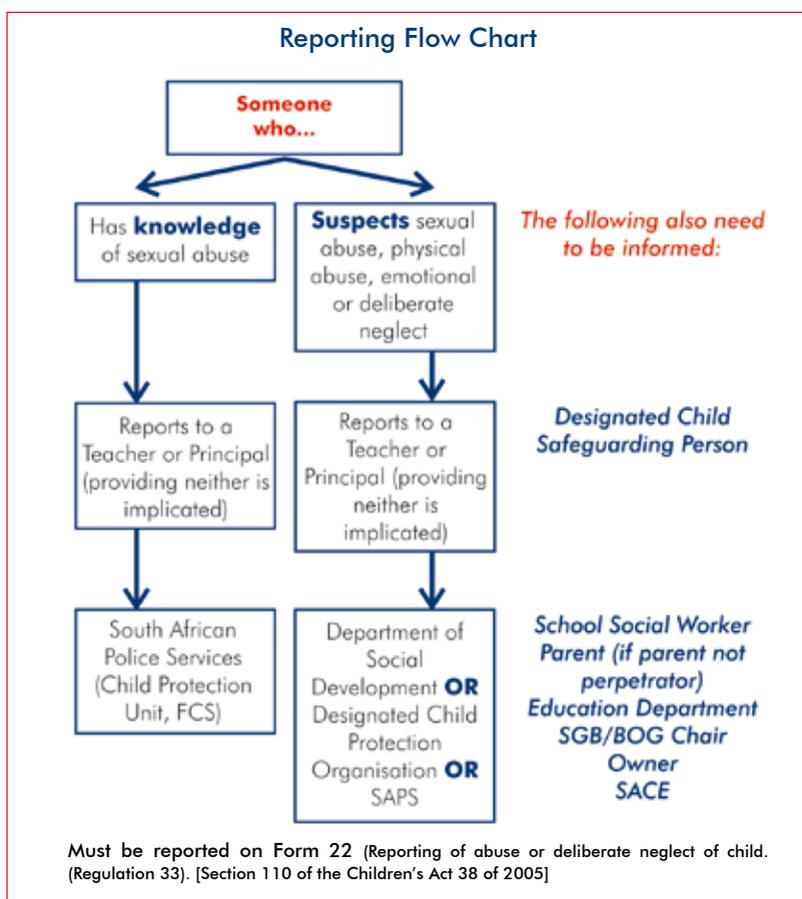
The following provide evidence that Standard Three is being implemented:

<b>A = in place; B = working towards; C = still to begin</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Clear written procedures on action to be taken, are in place			
A copy of written procedures and guidelines is available			
Official forms for recording details of child safeguarding incidents are available (Form 22)			
Contact details about child safeguarding local agencies are displayed			
The Flow Chart must be appropriately displayed, describing steps in the child safeguarding process			
The name, duties and contact details of those people with responsibility for child safeguarding (designated person) are known			

continued

Standard Three *continued*

<b>A = in place; B = working towards; C = still to begin</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
The designated person is well informed about procedures			
Personnel understand the definitions of child abuse			
Registers of workshops attended by personnel are up-to-date			
There is an incident book recording every incident, allegation, referral and report made, including any forms completed and submitted			
Records of incidents, allegations and referrals are kept securely			
Records of reporting are available to appropriate persons			
There are clear guidelines for providing the necessary support and care should a child be vulnerable to abuse			



## STANDARD FOUR:

### ACCESS TO SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

#### What is this Standard?

The School will ensure access to support and essential information to anyone who discloses abuse, who alleges that abuse has taken place, or who is alleged to have perpetrated abuse.



Aware of how distressing child abuse is, and how difficult it is to deal with: the school will make sure that anyone affected by abuse will know where they can go for help and advice if they have a concern.

#### These indicators ensure that Standard Four is being met

- Openly display (in areas where children and staff are) lists of services, authorities and organisations (with contact details) that can help children.
- Support of anyone who discloses abuse, or who alleges that abuse has taken place
  - These lists will be available to all staff and volunteers, so that they know what services are available in order to be able to respond to and support children
  - As there is a particular concern for vulnerable children (such as disabled children and those with communication difficulties, for example deafness), the school will make sure that they are able to report abuse and get information and support if they need it. An appropriate suitable interpreter will be provided where one is needed.
- Support of someone who is alleged to have perpetrated abuse
  - The School will make sure that someone who is alleged to have perpetrated abuse is informed about available support, and will advise them that they have the right to seek legal advice

#### The following provide evidence that Standard Four is being implemented:

<b>A = in place; B = working towards; C = still to begin</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Lists of services, authorities and organisations (with contact details) that can help children are displayed			
Appropriate pastoral care is available			
<b>In terms of anyone who discloses abuse or who alleges that abuse has taken place:</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
– Information about sources of support is available			
– There is a procedure for responding to child safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations and a time-scale for dealing with them			

continued

Standard Four continued

<b>A = in place; B = working towards; C = still to begin</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
– <i>If applicable.</i> As there is a particular concern for vulnerable children (such as disabled children and those with communication difficulties, for example deafness), the school will make sure that they are able to report abuse and get information and support if they need it. A suitable interpreter will be provided where one is needed			
<b>In terms of someone who is alleged to have perpetrated abuse</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
– Information about sources of support is available			

## STANDARD FIVE:

### TRAINING AND SUPPORT

#### What is this Standard?

Those who work with children are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role, in order to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to safeguard and protect children.



Everyone has a role to play in protecting children. In order to carry out this role effectively and confidently, each person needs to be aware of child safeguarding issues, and should have the necessary knowledge and skills.

#### These indicators ensure that Standard Five is being met:

- The School ensures that all are inducted and trained in this Child Safeguarding Policy and the procedures, including requirements in the Codes of Conduct
- All personnel (both paid and voluntary) are provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognise and respond to concerns about child abuse
- The School annually identifies all who require training
- Training on child safeguarding for all new members of staff and volunteers takes place
- The School participates in the training programmes provided by the local Catholic Schools service provider
- The School ensures that those who have specific child safeguarding responsibilities have appropriate, role-specific training
- The School provides the necessary resources both financial and other for those needing training.

#### The following provide evidence that Standard Five is being implemented:

<b>A = in place; B = working towards; C = still to begin</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Staff and other members of the school community have been trained in how children are kept safe			
All members of staff and volunteers have signed a document acknowledging the Child Safeguarding Policy, which includes the Standards			
The school has a clear record of training, giving the topic of the training and when attended, signed by the participant			
The school identifies annually what its training needs are, and ensures regular ongoing training on how to keep children safe			
The school's budget provides for training in child safeguarding			

## STANDARD SIX:

### COMMUNICATING THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

#### What is this Standard?

The School ensures that all people involved in the school, as well as parents, children and external agencies and service providers know that this Child Safeguarding Policy applies.



The school recognises that policies and procedures are only effective if all the people involved, including children, know how to use them.

#### These indicators ensure that Standard Six is being met:

- The Child Safeguarding Policy certificate is displayed in suitable public places throughout the school
- Lists of relevant services, authorities, and organisations with contact details are displayed
- The School communicates the Child Safeguarding Policy to children in a manner that is accessible and appropriate
- Parents, children and other people involved are informed about the School's Child Safeguarding Policy, as well as about procedures for reporting suspected abuse
- The School establishes links with other local organisations that can help children, in order to promote a safe and caring community for children and to share best child safeguarding practice
- The School is very clear about its responsibility to protect children and makes this known to all who come into contact with it.

#### The following provide evidence that Standard Six is being implemented:

<b>A = in place; B = working towards; C = still to begin</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
The Child Safeguarding Policy certificate is displayed in suitable public places throughout the school			
The lists of relevant services, authorities, and organisations with contact details are displayed			
There is evidence in lesson plans and workbooks that child safety concerns are included in the curriculum			
User-friendly, language-accessible, age-appropriate communication of the Child Safeguarding Policy is in use			

<b>A = in place; B = working towards; C = still to begin</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
There is provision for communicating appropriately to those whose home language is not English, as well as to those who have specific needs			
Workshops for the governors, teachers, support staff, volunteers and learners to explain the Child Safeguarding Policy have been arranged			
Links have been developed with other organisations in the locality in order to promote a safe and caring community and to share good practices			

## STANDARD SEVEN:

### MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS

#### What is this Standard?

Standards are made to work, and are regularly checked to see if they are working.



The School has the responsibility to implement, monitor, evaluate and report on its compliance with the Standards. The measures and mechanisms that the School has in place for monitoring and review, ensure accountability in relation to Child Safeguarding.

#### These indicators ensure that Standard Seven is being met:

- The School undertakes an annual review to evaluate its compliance with the Standards
- The School Management Team reports to the Governors as part of its responsibility for the Ethos
- Parents and children are consulted on child safeguarding issues
- The School takes the necessary action to remedy any action or lack thereof
- Child Safeguarding is an integral part of the School Development Plan
- The School undertakes to provide evidence and comply when concerns are identified by legitimately established monitors, for example the local Catholic Schools' service provider.

#### The following provide evidence that Standard Seven is being implemented:

<b>A = in place; B = working towards; C = still to begin</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
The checklist from all seven Standards for monitoring and reporting to the SGB/ Board, indicating the degree of compliance with each Standard, is completed on an annual basis and is recorded in the SGB / Board minutes			
A copy of this checklist, signed by the Principal, is sent to the CSO or CIE Regional Office and the Owner			
The School's incident book is in use, and up to date			
There are records of action taken to remedy identified non-compliance			
There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe			

## COMMITMENT BY ..... SCHOOL

On behalf of the School community, we commit to adopting and implementing this written Child Safeguarding Policy.

This Child Safeguarding Policy was adopted by the School Governing Body /Board of Governors of ..... (Name of School)

on .....(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of SGB/BOG

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## Appendix 1: Guidelines for any person receiving a concern regarding abuse

Anyone who receives a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse should act immediately as follows:

- Listen: be welcoming and supportive.
- Be sensitive: hear the person's story, and then explain the procedures involved in reporting what they have told you to a registered Social Worker/ Department of Social Services or the South African Police Service, as well as the Owner's representative.
- Be mindful: the rights of all involved, both the person making the allegation and the alleged perpetrator, must be respected at all times.
- Put them in contact: the alleged victim must immediately be put into contact with the registered social worker in the area, or connected with the school; or the police as soon as possible.
- Do not guarantee confidentiality: it must be made clear to anyone who wishes to speak about a situation of abuse, that the child be protected and any case of abuse be reported.
- Do not speak to the alleged perpetrator: it is very important that the proper authorities deal with the alleged perpetrator. No attempt to intervene and contact the person directly should be made.

## Appendix 2:

# Child Safeguarding in relation to the School's Distinctive Catholic Character

### Distinctive Religious Character of a Catholic School

The policy document *Signs of God's Presence* describes the distinctive religious character of Catholic schools, noting on page 12 that:

*... the Catholic school aims to promote the holistic growth of all learners, as well as to give witness to social concern and care for others.*

The document further states that

*The Catholic school achieves this through*

- *promoting a Catholic perspective of human life*
- *encouraging a holistic approach to human life*
- *nurturing religious and moral formation*
- *and through the dedication of the principal and staff to practising and promoting moral values and to a high standard of teaching and learning.*

*The Catholic school strives towards excellence in education, with outcomes embracing the total formation of each individual ... and by ... being a model of Christian freedom, justice and love in its administration, teaching and relationships between educators, learners, parents and community.*

In *Catholic Public Schools on Private Property*, the Deed of Agreement supports the right of the Catholic school to maintain its distinctive religious character as described above. This agreement is signed between the Provincial Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education and the Owner of each Catholic School (whether Diocese or Religious Congregation) as provided for in Sections 14 and 57 of the South African Schools Act (DoA, Schedule 3 No 1.2 & 1.3; Free State Schedule 4 No 1.4 & 2.2). In addition, the Religion and Education Policy provides for Catholic schools to maintain their distinctive religious character. One of the Schedules in the Deed of Agreement is that between the Owner and the Governing Body of the School which amongst other aspects requires the SGB to support and develop the Distinctive Religious Character as well as the school's religious and moral policy.

Following this vision, a learner in a Catholic school will be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity. This right will be respected, nurtured and protected by all. Everyone involved in a Catholic School has an obligation to make sure that the basic rights of children are respected. In addition to these obligations and understandings, to which everyone is required to subscribe, the Owner has a right and a responsibility to see that the distinctive religious character of the school is maintained.

*Continued*

The Child Safeguarding Policy, and the fact that the school adheres to this Policy, forms an important part of the moral and religious ethos of the school.

In making sure that the Child Safeguarding Policy of the school works – and works well – the Governors in both Catholic Independent Schools and Public Schools on Private Property are required to comply with certain aspects, including:

- taking responsibility, working in partnership with the Owner, for the preservation of the school's ethos
- putting the Child Safeguarding Policy in place at the school, and making it work
- making sure that all the legal procedures that need to happen actually happen, and that the School Management Team follows the law of South Africa in this regard.

# Legal Framework

Child Justice Act, 2008 (Act 75 of 2008)  
Children's Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005)  
Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007 (Act 32 of 2007)  
Films and Publications Act No. 65 of 1996  
National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996)  
South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996)  
The Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act 76 of 1998)  
SAPS National Instructions 3 of 2008 (Part 4)  
Inclusive Education White Paper 6, 2001  
Ethical Code for Educators, SACE  
Public Service Code of Conduct

## Abbreviations

CPU	Child Protection Unit
BOG	Board of Governors
DCPO	Designated Child Protection Organisation
DSW	Designated social worker: a social worker in the employment of the Department of Social Development or a registered child protection organization such as Child Welfare.
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DSD	Department of Social Development
FCS	Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit of the South African Police Service
FSW	Forensic social worker
PDE	Provincial Department of Education
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASA	South African Schools Act No 86 of 1996 as amended
SACE	South African Council for Educators, the professional council for educators, that aims to enhance the status of educators and maintain a Code of Ethics for the profession
SACBC	Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team, the senior management team of a school comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal and Heads of Department
SSW	School social worker: a social worker in the employ of a PDE that is registered under Section 17 of the Social Service Professions, 1978 (Act 110 of 1978)

## Glossary

Abuse	Abuse of a child may occur when somebody inflicts harm on the child or fails to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger.
Board of Governors (BOG)	The governance structure of an Independent Catholic School.
CBE	The Catholic Board of Education, the body responsible for Catholic schools in South Africa, an associate body of the SACBC.
Child	Any person below the age of eighteen years.
Children with specific needs	Term used to cover the specific or unique, out-of-the-ordinary concerns created by the child's medical, physical, mental or developmental condition or disability. Additional services are usually needed to help a person in one or more of the following areas (among others): thinking, communication, movement, getting along with others, and taking care of oneself.
Code of Conduct	This refers to the Codes of Conduct for educators, learners and parents.
Complainant	The term used to describe a person who has made an allegation of abuse.
Corporal punishment	'Corporal' or 'physical' punishment is defined as "any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting ("smacking", "slapping", "spanking") children, with the hand or with an implement. (UNICEF: The Committee on the Rights of the Child in the General Comment No. 8). In addition, there are other non-physical forms of punishment that are also cruel and degrading and thus incompatible with the Convention. These include, for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child."
Designated Child Safeguarding Person	The person appointed by the school to liaise with the statutory authorities regarding child safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations.
Emotional Abuse	Attacks on the child's emotional development and self-worth via criticism, belittling and insulting the child, rejection, withdrawal of love, support and guidance.
Governor	Member of either a Board of Governors or a School Governing Body.
Indicator	Indicates the state or measure of a specified goal to be achieved.
Monitoring	A mechanism put in place to systematically oversee and review compliance with a Child Safeguarding management plan.
National Register for Sex Offenders	A register kept of every person convicted of a sex-crime according to section 42 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act No 32 of 2007 no 332.
National Child Protection Register	The record of every case of child abuse. This follows from Section 114 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005.
Neglect Abuse	Neglect occurs when basic needs such as food, warmth, shelter and medical care are not met which results in serious impairment of the development of the child or young person. It may also involve failure to protect the child from harm or danger. It may also include unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical Abuse	Any non-accidental injury either inflicted on the child, or sustained by the child through an adult’s intentional neglect to protect the child from physical harm/injury.
Policy	A policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent, and is implemented as a procedure or protocol. Policies are generally adopted by a governance body within an organization.
Respondent	The term used for the person about whom child safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations have been made.
School Governing Body (SGB)	A statutory body vested with the governance of a public school; this body may perform only such functions and obligations and exercise such rights as prescribed by the South African Schools Act.
Sexual abuse	As defined in the Children’s Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005), in relation to a child, means <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) sexually molesting or assaulting a child or allowing a child to be sexually molested or assaulted;</li> <li>(b) encouraging, inducing or forcing a child to be used for the sexual gratification of another person;</li> <li>(c) using a child in or deliberately exposing a child to sexual activities or pornography; or</li> <li>(d) procuring or allowing a child to be procured for commercial sexual exploitation or in any way participating or assisting in the commercial sexual exploitation of a child.</li> </ul>
Sexual offences	Both general and specific offences against children and mentally disabled persons.
Standard	A standard is used in order to establish the required level of performance.
Statutory Authorities	These include the South African Police Services, the Department of Social Development, the Department of Justice.

## Acknowledgements

*Abuse No More Protocol*, Western Cape Education Department (2014)

*Child Safeguarding Policy for Catholic Independent Schools in South Africa* (January 2012)

*Child Safeguarding Policy for Catholic Public Schools in South Africa* (January 2012)

*miscan cara Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy* (2015)

*Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (2016)

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Published 2018

CBE

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Design & production: CJ Graphics

Printing: Law Print