

## SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

### Table of Contents

1) INTRODUCTION .....	3
1.1 Statement of Intent .....	3
1.2 Terminology and Definitions .....	4
2) ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES .....	4
2.1 Roles & Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead .....	4
2.2 Roles & Responsibilities of the Principal .....	5
2.3 Roles & Responsibilities of all Staff .....	5
2.4 Roles & Responsibilities of the Trustees .....	6
3) INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION.....	7
3.1 Managing Disclosure .....	8
3.2 Confidentiality .....	8
3.3 Reporting to external authorities .....	8
3.4 Immediate medical attention .....	8
3.5 Referral to Police .....	8
3.6 Referral to Police and the Child Protective Service .....	9
3.7 Referral to the Child Protective Service .....	9
3.8 Consultation with the Child Protective Service .....	10
4) CHILD PROTECTION (CP) & MONITORING PROCEDURE.....	10
4.1 SMMIS CP Admissions Register .....	10
4.2 Record Keeping.....	10
4.3 Allegations Involving School Staff / Volunteers.....	11
4.4 Communication with Parents .....	12
4.5 Support .....	12
5) SAFER RECRUITMENT .....	12
5.1 Enhanced Criminal Checks.....	13
5.2 Pre-employment Checks.....	13
5.3 References.....	14
5.4 Volunteers .....	14
5.5 Records and Staff Suitability.....	14
5.6 Training.....	15
5.7 Visitors to SMMIS .....	15
5.8 External providers, including CCA providers .....	15
5.9 Safeguarding Training and Support .....	16

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

6)	REPORTING.....	16
6.1	SMMIS Procedures & Staff Responsibility .....	16
6.2	Reporting A Concern at SMMIS.....	17
6.2.1	Disclosures .....	17
6.2.2	Staff Interaction with Children and Young People .....	18
6.3	Defining Misconduct.....	19
6.3.1	Defining misconduct .....	19
6.3.2	Other Misconduct that relates to interaction with children and young people .....	20
6.3.3	Reporting concerns (Reporting Teacher’s Misconduct) .....	21
6.3.4	Investigation and assessment process.....	21
6.3.5	Referral to external authorities .....	21
6.3.6	Risk assessment and management during an investigation.....	22
6.3.7	SMMIS internal investigation process .....	23
6.3.8	Making a finding .....	24
6.3.9	Decision making.....	24
6.3.10	Appeals .....	25
6.3.11	Matters involving Other Misconduct.....	25
6.3.12	Risk management following an investigation.....	25
6.4	Confidentiality .....	25
6.5	Record Keeping.....	26
6.5.1	What records are created.....	26
6.5.2	How records are stored .....	26
6.5.3	Records regarding investigations of staff interaction with children or young people.....	27
6.5.4	How long records are retained .....	27
6.5.5	Access to records .....	27
6.5.6	Sharing of records.....	28
6.6	Associated School Policies and Guidance.....	28
	APPENDIX - CATEGORIES OF ABUSE .....	29
	APPENDIX - ASSESSING THE RISK.....	44
	APPENDIX – EXPECTATIONS OF SMMIS PE & SWIM COACHES .....	52

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **1) INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Statement of Intent**

The Sir Manasseh Meyer International School (**SMMIS**) is committed to child protection, safeguarding and promoting the welfare and interests, both physical and emotional, of every student, both inside and outside of the school premises. SMMIS recognises that effective child protection practice requires sound procedures and good inter-agency cooperation.

This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy provides the basis for good practice within SMMIS for child protection work, and sets out a clear and consistent framework to ensure that the professional responsibilities of all staff are clear, in order that all statutory and other duties are fully met. This policy is based on current legislation, being the Children and Young Persons [Act](#) (Cap. 38), and SMMIS and its staff members have a professional responsibility to comply with this policy. The procedures outlined in this policy are also in line with the Manual on Management of Child Abuse in Singapore (2008 Rev. Ed.), produced by the Singapore Inter-Ministry Working Group comprising the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports of Singapore. Through this policy, SMMIS and its staff members commit to:

- (a) Creating a culture of safe recruitment by adopting procedures that help deter, reject or identify individuals who might pose a risk to children.
- (b) Educating its students on how to keep safe and to recognise unacceptable behaviour.
- (c) Ensuring that members of the School Management, the Principal and staff understand their responsibilities, and are alert to the signs of child abuse, and know to refer concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- (d) Ensuring that the Principal and any new staff members and volunteers are only appointed when all the appropriate checks have been satisfactorily completed.

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is implemented purely as a matter of 'best practice' only, and not because SMMIS has any specific concerns for the immediate safety of our students. As a world-class organisation with a strong moral compass, SMMIS wishes to make certain that every step is taken to ensure the safety and well-being of every student, which remains paramount. This policy should be read together with the Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy and the Outrage of Modesty Policy.

This Policy will be reviewed annually, on the basis of self-evaluation.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **1.2 Terminology and Definitions**

Child abuse occurs across all communities regardless of the gender, wealth, religion or ethnicity of the child or the perpetrator. Schools, as institutions working with young children, become attractive to those who wish to exploit children. All members of SMMIS thus have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

For the purposes of this policy, the phrase 'safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children' shall be interpreted to mean:

- (a) Protecting students from maltreatment;
- (b) Preventing the impairment of students' health or development;
- (c) Ensuring that students grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- (d) Taking all action to enable all students to have the best outcomes.

### **2) ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

At SMMIS, the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** shall be primarily responsible for the school's approach to policy, practice, procedures and professional development in relation to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead shall in the first instance be **ELAINE ROBINSON** (Principal), or in her absence: **SIMCHA ABERGEL** (VP: Head of Jewish Ethos); **ALEXANDRA CIPRIANO** (VP: Head of Secondary School); **JANINE LEWINTON** (SEND/CO) or **JONATHAN WOODS** (ESAL Teacher).

#### **2.1 Roles & Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- (a) Liaise directly with parents in regard to all allegations of child abuse, (except in the case of sexual abuse or when a family member may be involved).
- (b) Refer all cases of suspected abuse to community agencies for child protection concerns, and to the police in cases where a crime has been / is suspected to have been committed.
- (c) Liaise with the Principal to inform him/her of safeguarding issues, especially ongoing enquiries and police investigations.
- (d) Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff members on matters of safeguarding by liaising with relevant agencies.
- (e) Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention.
- (f) Support staff members in liaising with other agencies and setting up inter-agency assessment where early help is deemed appropriate.
- (g) Keep cases of early help under constant review and refer them to the Child Protection Specialist Centres if the situation does not appear to be improving in accordance with the Sector Specific Screening Guide (Education) (SSSG).

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

- (h) Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures, which will be discussed during the staff induction process.
- (i) Be alert to the specific requirements of children in need, including those with special educational needs and disabilities and young carers.
- (j) Keep detailed, accurate and secure records of concerns and referrals.
- (k) Obtain access to resources and attend all relevant training courses.
- (l) Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings.
- (m) Work with the Trustees to ensure the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually and procedures are updated regularly.
- (n) Ensure the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is available publicly, and parents/carers are aware that the school may make referrals for suspected cases of abuse or neglect, as well as the role the school plays in these referrals.
- (o) Make sure that staff members are aware of the training opportunities available and made aware of the latest local policies on safeguarding.
- (p) Ensure that a student's child protection file is copied when transferring to a new school.
- (q) Be available at all times during school hours to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The school will determine what 'available' means, e.g. it may be appropriate to be accessible by other means such as phone or TEAMS / Zoom etc.

#### **2.2 Roles & Responsibilities of the Principal**

The Principal of SMMIS will:-

- (a) Safeguard students' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession.
- (b) Ensure that the policies and procedures determined and implemented by the Trustees, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and / or neglect, are followed by staff members.
- (c) Provide staff with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Behaviour Policy, information regarding the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Children and Young Persons Act.

#### **2.3 Roles & Responsibilities of all Staff**

All staff of SMMIS have a shared responsibility to:

- (a) Safeguard students' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- (b) Provide a safe environment in which students can learn.
- (c) Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned and always act in the child's best interests.
- (d) Be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect.
- (e) Act as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment, where necessary.

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

- (f) Be aware of, and understand, the process for making referrals to social workers, as well as for making statutory assessments and their role in these assessments.
- (g) Support social workers to take decisions about individual children, in collaboration with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- (h) If at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, make a referral to Community agencies and/or the police immediately.
- (i) Be aware of and understand the procedure to follow in the event that a child confides that they are being abused and / or neglected.
- (j) Support social workers in making decisions about individual children, in collaboration with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- (k) Maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality when dealing with individual cases, and always act in the best interest of the child.
- (l) Follow the school's procedure for, and approach to, preventing radicalisation.

#### **2.4 Roles & Responsibilities of the Trustees**

The Trustees of SMMIS will exercise supervisory jurisdiction over all staff of SMMIS, in order to:

- (a) Ensure that the school complies with its duties under the above child protection and safeguarding legislation.
- (b) Ensure that the policies, procedures and training opportunities in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.
- (c) Confirm that the school's safeguarding arrangements take into account the requirements under Singapore law.
- (d) Ensure that a Trustee is nominated to liaise with partner agencies on issues of child protection, in the event of allegations of abuse made against the Principal or other Trustee. (SMMIS Nominated Trustee is Mr Sam Sassoon).
- (e) Ensure that there are effective child protection policies and procedures in place together with a staff code of conduct.
- (f) Ensure that there is a senior board level (Trustee) lead responsible for safeguarding arrangements.
- (g) Appoint a member of staff from the senior leadership team to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead as an explicit part of the role-holder's job description – there should always be cover for the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- (h) Ensure that students are taught about safeguarding, including protection against dangers online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- (i) Adhere to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required.
- (j) Ensure that volunteers are appropriately supervised.
- (k) Ensure that at least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training.

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

- (l) Ensure that all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection training updates, such as e-bulletins, emails and staff meetings, as required, but at least annually.
- (m) Ensure that there are procedures in place to handle allegations against members of staff or volunteers.
- (n) Ensure that there are procedures in place to make a referral to the police and other relevant bodies if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned.
- (o) Ensure that there are procedures in place to handle allegations against other students.
- (p) Ensure that students' wishes or feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take, and what services to provide to protect individual students.
- (q) Ensure that there are systems in place for students to express their views and give feedback.
- (r) Introduce mechanisms to assist staff in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities.
- (s) Ensure that staff members have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep looked-after children safe, particularly with regard to the student's legal status, contact details and care arrangements.
- (t) Put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for students who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and prevent the risks of their disappearance in future.
- (u) Ensure that all members of the Trustees have been subject to the Singapore equivalent of an enhanced UK Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

### **3) INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION**

SMMIS contributes to inter-agency working as part of its professional responsibilities. The school will work with the Child Protection Specialist Centres, Government agencies, the police, health services and other services to protect the welfare of its students, through the early help process and by contributing to interagency plans to provide additional support.

The school recognises the importance of information sharing between professionals and local agencies in order to effectively meet students' needs. In light of the above, staff members are aware that whilst the Personal Data Protection Act places a duty on schools to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where failure to do so would result in the student being placed at risk of harm.

Staff members will ensure that fear of sharing information does not stand in the way of their responsibility to promote the welfare and safety of students. The school also recognises the particular importance of inter-agency working in identifying and preventing child sexual exploitation.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **3.1 Managing Disclosure**

The disclosure of child abuse by a child to an adult is likely to be one of the hardest conversations that all parties at SMMIS will face. It is essential that staff members show empathy and professionalism in the approach to managing such conversations, mindful that what is said and recorded could influence criminal proceedings at a later date.

### **3.2 Confidentiality**

Safeguarding children raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers in the school:

- (a) All staff in schools, both teaching and non-teaching staff, have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the local investigative agencies (Child Protection Specialist Centres and the police).
- (b) If a child confides in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff/volunteer tell the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age/stage of development that they cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe.
- (c) Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts as explained in the Staff Code of Conduct.

### **3.3 Reporting to external authorities**

Action taken by the School in response to safeguarding and child protection concerns will be in accordance with Singaporean legislation and the Child Abuse Reporting Guide, where required.

### **3.4 Immediate medical attention**

The child or young person will be taken to the Nurse if attention to an injury or suspected injury is required.

Emergency services will be contacted as required. If the Nurse is not in operation or accessible at the time care is needed, the School will make appropriate arrangements with emergency services and/or the child or young person's parents as required and appropriate.

### **3.5 Referral to Police**

In accordance with Singaporean law, the School is required to report to the Singapore Police the commission, or intention to commit, certain offences, including some matters relating to hurt and assault.



## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

Where the School has received information that a child or young person has been harmed by a person other than a household member, the School will usually contact the child or young person's parents and assess any obligation to report to the Singapore Police as appropriate. There may be exceptional circumstances where it is not appropriate for the School to contact parents.

### **3.6 Referral to Police and the Child Protective Service**

The School is required to report sexual abuse matters to the police and the Child Protective Service in accordance with the Child Abuse Reporting Guide (CARG) criteria.

Specifically:

- The child or young person is under the age of 18 years, and
- The person who is suspected and/or reported to be the perpetrator of the sexual abuse is the child or young person's parent or carer or
- The person who is suspected and/or reported to be the perpetrator of the sexual abuse is another household member and the parent/carers is not protecting the child or young person  
\* and/or
- The person who is suspected and/or reported to be the perpetrator of the sexual abuse resides with other children or young people.

In these circumstances, the School will not contact the child or young person's parents and will seek guidance from the Police and/or the Child Protective Service regarding appropriate management of the matter.

### **3.7 Referral to the Child Protective Service**

We assess all statutory child protection concerns in accordance with the Child Abuse Reporting Guide (CARG) that applies only to children under the age of 18 years who have been allegedly harmed or are at risk of harm by a parent/caregiver or other household member.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

Following our referral, the Child Protective Service may:

- advise the School whether it will accept the referral.
- ask the School for further information.
- ask the School to support the family with particular actions.

### **3.8 Consultation with the Child Protective Service**

Sometimes it is unclear whether a concern meets the Child Protection Service thresholds for referral or we may have concerns that we would like to discuss with the Child Protective Service. Such consultations are usually managed without providing identifying family details. In some situations, the Child Protective Service may request a referral and identifying details.

## **4) CHILD PROTECTION (CP) & MONITORING PROCEDURE**

### **4.1 SMMIS CP Admissions Register**

Students are placed on the CP Admissions Register at the beginning of the first day that is agreed by the school, or when the school has been notified that the student will first be attending. The school will ensure that the admissions register is kept up-to-date and accurate at all times, and will inform parents when any changes occur. Staff will monitor students who do not attend the school on the agreed date.

If a parent/carer notifies the school that their child will live at a different address, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:-

- (a) The full name of the parent/carer with whom the student will live
- (b) The new address
- (c) The date from when the student will live at this address. If a parent/carer notifies the school that their child will be attending a different school, or is already registered at a different school, the following information will be recorded on the admissions register:-
  - (i) The name of the new school
  - (ii) The date on which the student first attended, or is due to attend, that school

Where a student moves to a new school, the school will securely transfer the students' data. The school will also highlight any other necessary, contextual information, including safeguarding concerns.

### **4.2 Record Keeping**

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff / volunteer should:

- (a) Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- (b) Accept what is being said
- (c) Allow the child to talk freely
- (d) Reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

- (e) Not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer the information on
- (f) Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault
- (g) Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- (h) Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify
- (i) Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- (j) Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told
- (k) Make a written record
- (l) Pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay who will administer the SSSG to decide if further reporting is necessary.

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- (a) Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation. Use the school Record of Concern Sheet wherever possible. Record of Concern Forms can be found on the system in the forms folder and hard copies are kept in the staffroom.
- (b) Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court.
- (c) Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child.
- (d) Draw a diagram to indicate the position and size of any injuries.
- (e) Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions.

All records need to be given to the Designated Safeguarding Lead promptly. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer.

#### **4.3 Allegations Involving School Staff / Volunteers**

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff/volunteer may have:

- (a) Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- (b) Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child
- (c) Behaved toward a child in a way which indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

This applies to any child the member of staff/volunteer has contact with in their personal, professional or community life.

The person to whom an allegation is first reported should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. S/he should not investigate or ask leading questions and if seeking clarification, it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only. Actions to be taken include making a written record of the allegation using the informant's words - including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, what was said and anyone else present. This record should be signed and dated and immediately passed on to the Principal.

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

If the concerns are about the Principal, then the Chair of Trustees should be contacted.

The Chair of Trustees in this school is:

NAME: **Mr Sam Sassoon**

CONTACT NUMBER: 65 9735 2768

In the absence of the Chair of Trustees, the Vice Chair of Trustees in charge of the School should be contacted.

The Second Trustee is:

NAME: **Mr Victor Sassoon**

CONTACT NUMBER: 6271 9508

The Principal will not investigate any allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether it is necessary to refer the concern. If it is decided that the allegation meets the threshold for further action through the Child Protection System in Singapore, the Principal must immediately make a referral to the police. If it is decided that the allegation meets the threshold for further action through the SSSG, the Principal must immediately follow the recommended course of action. The Principal should, as soon as possible, following briefing from the police or child protection officer, inform the subject of the allegation.

#### **4.4 Communication with Parents**

SMMIS will undertake appropriate discussion with parents prior to involvement of another agency unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm. SMMIS will also ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibilities placed on the school and staff for safeguarding children.

#### **4.5 Support**

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and safeguarding issues can be stressful. The member of staff/volunteer should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **5) SAFER RECRUITMENT**

The safe recruitment of staff at SMMIS is essential to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the students in the school's care. SMMIS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its students and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment. It is recognised that this can only be achieved through sound procedures, good inter-agency cooperation and the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees. The purpose of this section is to set out the minimum requirements of a recruitment process that aims to attract the best possible applicants to vacancies; to deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with our students, and to identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with our students.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

SMMIS seeks to achieve a diverse international workforce which includes people from all backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. SMMIS is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the school is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. Recruitment must observe the Singapore Fair Consideration Framework 2014 and comply with the [Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices](#).

### **5.1 Enhanced Criminal Checks**

An enhanced criminal check will be undertaken for all staff members engaged in regulated activity. A person will be considered to be in 'regulated activity' if, as a result of their work, they:

- (a) are responsible on a daily basis for the care or supervision of children.
- (b) regularly work in the school at times when children are on the premises.
- (c) regularly come into contact with children under 18 years of age.

### **5.2 Pre-employment Checks**

SMMIS will take implement the following procedures as part of its pre-employment checks against potential candidates for vacancies:

- (a) The Principal will assess the suitability of prospective employee's identity, preferably from current photographic ID and proof of address except where, for exceptional reasons, none is available.
- (b) Obtain a certificate for an enhanced criminal check, or country equivalent check, with barred list information where the person will be engaged in regulated activity.
- (c) Obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the criminal check, or country equivalent, certificate is available.
- (d) Check that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Singapore Government.
- (e) Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to undertake their working responsibilities, including asking relevant questions about disability and health to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role.
- (f) Check the person's right to work in Singapore, e.g. if there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in Singapore.
- (g) If the person has lived or worked outside Singapore, making any further checks that the school considers appropriate; this includes checking for any teacher sanctions or restrictions that a professional regulating authority has imposed.
- (h) Check professional experience and qualifications as appropriate.

In addition to the above, SMMIS will ensure that:

- (a) A criminal check, or country equivalent, certificate will be obtained from candidates before or as soon as is practicable after appointment. An online update check may be undertaken.

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

- (b) An enhanced criminal check or country equivalent certificate and barred list check will be obtained for all trainee teachers. An enhanced criminal records check will be carried out on each member of the Trustees.
- (c) The school will refer to the Child Protection Service anyone who has harmed a child, poses a risk of harm to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed an offence and has been removed from working in regulated activity.
- (d) A supervised volunteer who regularly teaches or looks after children is not in regulated activity.
- (e) For those who have lived or worked outside of Singapore, additional checks regarding teacher sanctions or restrictions will be conducted; this includes checking for any teacher sanctions or restrictions that an EEA professional regulating authority has imposed.

#### **5.3 References**

References will be obtained directly from referees and scrutinised, with all concerns satisfactorily resolved prior to confirmation of employment. References will be sought on all short-listed candidates, including internal ones, before interview, and checked on receipt to ensure that all specific questions were answered satisfactorily. Information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered carefully when assessing an applicant's suitability for a post. Checks will be conducted to ensure that the candidates presenting themselves for work are the same persons on whom the checks have been made.

#### **5.4 Volunteers**

No volunteer will be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity until the necessary checks have been obtained. An enhanced background check will be obtained for all new volunteers in regulated activity that will regularly teach or look after children on an unsupervised basis, or provide personal care on a one-off basis.

#### **5.5 Records and Staff Suitability**

SMMIS keeps a record of all staff, including supply staff who work at the school. SMMIS ensures that staff and volunteers working in our setting are not disqualified from doing so under the relevant Legislation currently in force.

A person may be disqualified if they:

- (a) Have certain orders or other restrictions placed upon them
- (b) Have committed certain offences
- (c) All staff members are required to sign the declaration form provided in the appendices of this policy confirming that they are not disqualified from working in a schooling environment.
- (d) A disqualified person will not be permitted to continue working at the school, unless they apply for and are granted a waiver. The school will provide support with this process.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **5.6 Training**

Staff members will undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction, which will be updated on an annual basis. All staff members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as necessary and at least annually.

Staff will receive opportunities to contribute towards and inform the safeguarding arrangements in the school. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will undergo updated child protection training every two years, as well as additional training to refresh their skills and knowledge at regular intervals (at least annually) to allow them to keep up with any developments relevant to their role. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also undergo regular extremism awareness training which will enable them to understand and support the school with regards to extremism, and equip them with the knowledge needed to advise staff.

If the school appoints deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, they will also undergo the same training as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, therefore, will be trained to the same standard, though ultimately, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will lead safeguarding practices at the school.

Online training will also be conducted for all staff members as part of the overall safeguarding approach.

### **5.7 Visitors to SMMIS**

All visitors to SMMIS are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the School's Visitors' Code of Conduct and are encouraged to report any concerns about a student or young person to one of the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead staff. All visitors to SMMIS must sign in at the Frontdesk and wear a visible SMMIS Guest lanyard and be accompanied by a member of SMMIS staff at all times, unless previously screened by SMMIS.

### **5.8 External providers, including CCA providers**

CCA programme providers are asked to sign a declaration form indicating a basic awareness of safeguarding, and to agree to some safeguards, before students can undertake activities on their placement. All external providers, including CCA providers not employed directly by the school are required to:

- take part in safeguarding induction training and/or annual safeguarding training as specified by the School.
- Provide confirmation they have read and understood the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Signed the Self Declaration Form.
- Adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct and the SMMIS Code of Conduct for External Vendors and all the procedures as outlined within.



## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

All external providers, including CCA providers not employed directly by the school, are instructed to only communicate with students through Teams, and school-monitored accounts are set up for those who need to message students.

Safeguarding updates are sent to external providers, coaches, and CCA providers regularly through briefings or emails, as ongoing reminders throughout the school year.

External providers, including CCA providers are given a Safeguarding Card on what to do if a child discloses.

Bus Staff are provided with safeguarding training tailored to buses. This is delivered in English and Mandarin, and bus staff are given a Safeguarding Card on what to do if a child discloses an important matter to them.

### **5.9 Safeguarding Training and Support**

#### *Whole staff training requirements*

All SMMIS staff (faculty and non-faculty) are required to:

- adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct.
- complete the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Induction Training.
- complete the School's annual updates, including confirming that they have read, understood and commit to adhere to, the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and the School's Behaviour policy and Antibullying policy.
- attend annual briefings and best practice training updates as directed by the School.

Staff are given regular safeguarding reminders through briefings or written weekly updates.

## **6) REPORTING**

### **6.1 SMMIS Procedures & Staff Responsibility**

If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform the Designated Safeguarding Team. The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns on the same day on CPOMS. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations. The Designated Safeguarding Team will use the [Sector Specific Screening Guide](#) (Education) and [Child Abuse Reporting Guide](#) as provided by the Social Service Institute of Singapore to decide whether the concerns should be referred to Child Protection Specialist Centre. If it is decided to make a referral this will be done with prior discussion with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

If there are obvious signs of harm, the student will be taken to the school nurse immediately. If the student is in need of urgent medical attention, s/he should be taken to either the KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) or the National University Hospital (NUH). If it is not possible or advisable to obtain parental consent, the Child Protection Services should be contacted for consultation. Where SMMIS suspects that abuse has occurred or is about to



## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

occur and the child is unsafe and in imminent risk of further harm, SMMIS will commit to reporting the matter to Child Protection Services Helpline at 1800 777 0000 (during usual business hours) or the police.

Where SMMIS suspects that the abuse has been perpetrated by someone close to the family or within the family network, the Designated Safeguarding Team or a designated member of staff will contact the family and discuss ways the student could be kept safe. Full consideration as to whether the contact with the immediate family would increase the risk of harm should be given.

Students with special education needs and / or disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. All staff need to be vigilant to identify students who need more support to be kept safe and to keep themselves safe, should they have any concerns they must speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child about whom the school has concerns. If a student who is or has been the subject of a child protection plan changes school, the Designated Safeguarding Team will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the Designated Safeguarding Team at the receiving school, in a secure manner, and separate from the child's academic file.

## **6.2 Reporting A Concern at SMMIS**

### **6.2.1 Disclosures**

If a child or young person makes a disclosure about themselves or another child or young person to you, try to:

- remain calm.
- listen carefully, paying particular attention to the child or young person's exact words.
- observe carefully, paying particular attention to the child or young person's emotional state.
- avoid panicking and avoid expressing shock.
- avoid making assumptions about the child, their family or the content of the disclosure.
- confirm your understanding of the disclosure with the child or young person in their words if possible, and ask any clarifying questions if appropriate, and if your relationship with the child or young person allows. If you are not familiar with conducting this kind of inquiry with children and young people, it is fine to pass the information directly to designated safeguarding lead staff who will conduct the follow up.
- reassure the child or young person that part of your job is to help and protect them.
- tell the child or young person what will happen next: reassure the child or young person that the school has specific people to help and that you will need to pass information on so that they get the help they need.

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

- reassure the child or young person that you will only pass information on to the person/people who need to know.
- consider asking the child or young person if they want to come with you when you pass the information on to the designated safeguarding lead. This may be appropriate with a young person who is particularly fearful about what is going happen next.
- be mindful of the child or young person's emotional state as your conversation is ending. If you are concerned for their safety, do not leave them alone. Consider whether asking the child or young person to accompany you to the designated safeguarding lead or a school nurse, for example, is appropriate.
- promptly report to a designated safeguarding lead who will ask you to record what the child or young person said and what you observed. It is important to record as much detail as possible. If you can remember the exact words the child or young person used, record them verbatim. If you cannot remember the actual words used, summarise your understanding of the disclosure. Make a note in your written record regarding whether the information is verbatim or your summary.
- avoid asking to see any alleged injury and do not take photographs of any injury. If you see an injury or you suspect a current injury, take the child/young person to a School Nurse.
- maintain confidentiality. Only discuss the matter in the context of a professional forum with the objective of managing care and protection of the child or young person, as directed by a Designated Safeguarding Lead. Do not discuss the matter outside the professional setting.

**Cause for Concern Form:** [Safeguarding Concern Referral Form.docx/](#) CPOMS

#### **6.2.2 Staff Interaction with Children and Young People**

Our response to concerns about staff interaction with children and young people is guided by our *Staff Code of Conduct* and our *Managing Safeguarding Allegations Against Staff*.

Most adults who work with children and young people act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment that nurtures the wellbeing of all children and young people in their care. However, tensions and misunderstandings can occur, concerns and allegations can be made maliciously, and there are people who seek out, create, or exploit opportunities to harm children and young people.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

All staff are expected to:

- Always act in the child/young person's best interests
- Understand the responsibilities that are part of their role
- Be responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably
- Understand that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the recipient, an observer or any person to whom the action is described
- Always be prepared to explain actions
- Always encourage children/young people to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Ensure any physical comfort provided to a child/young person is age appropriate
- Treat children/young people with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body
- Be aware of gender, cultural and religious issues that may need to be considered prior to initiating physical contact
- Ensure visibility by other staff when working in one-to-one situations with a child/young person and always report any situation where a child/young person becomes distressed or angry to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Only take, store and/or distribute appropriate photographs of children/young people with their permission, and on School-issued devices for School agreed purposes
- Take care not to overstep personal and professional boundaries, or impose personal values, attitudes or beliefs on children/young people

### **6.3 Defining Misconduct**

Our response to concerns about staff interaction with children and young people is guided by our *Staff Code of Conduct* and our *Managing Safeguarding Allegations Against Staff*.

#### **6.3.1 Defining misconduct**

The School's *Staff Code of Conduct* defines misconduct as "Serious Misconduct" or "Other Misconduct." All misconduct is subject to assessment, investigation and possible disciplinary action.

#### **Serious Misconduct that relates to interaction with children and young people**

Serious Misconduct is defined as:

- Harming a child or young person (including physical, sexual and emotional abuse), negligence resulting in harm, or behaving in a way that may have harmed a child.
- Behaving in a way toward a child or young person that may constitute an offence under Singapore or international law.
- Behaving in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or young people, or which indicates unsuitability to work with children or young people, including patterns of grooming behaviour, inappropriate touch, and physical

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

punishment or reprimand. Behaviour that takes place outside of their role in school is included.

- Extremely intoxicated, violent, or unruly behaviour within the school or in any public place.
- Behaviour of a type which could render the member of staff liable to prosecution for any criminal offence, whether in Singapore or any other place (excluding minor motoring or other similar offences).
- Sexual harassment within the school.
- The expression of racist, sexist, or intolerant political or religious views (and/or behaviour of a racist, sexist or politically or religiously intolerant nature).
- Inappropriate conduct (including sexual conduct) which could disturb or cause disruption or embarrassment to other members of staff or students.
- Gross negligence or wilful acts leading to the injury of other people.
- Use of technology, programmes or communication channels to harm or threaten others, or to the detriment of the School or work performance.
- Theft of SMMIS property or any property within the School.
- Verbally or physically intimidating or threatening any person in the school community on the school grounds.
- Conduct of a nature liable to lower the reputation of the School, including financial embarrassment.
- Repeated infractions of the items listed under Other Misconduct below.
- Please refer [here](#) for more information.

#### **6.3.2 Other Misconduct that relates to interaction with children and young people**

Other Misconduct is defined as:

- Behaviour involving interaction with children or young people that is inappropriate but on its own does not meet the threshold for Serious Misconduct.
- For examples of specific behaviour that constitutes Other Misconduct involving children or young people, please see below:
  - Rudeness or lack of courtesy to parents or other members of staff within the school.
  - Failure to carry out responsibilities of the role in a constructive and collaborative manner.
  - Failure to satisfactorily meet performance targets or implement action plans resulting from questionable quality practice and/or classroom management identified by a senior member of staff/line managers.
  - Revealing confidential/privileged information concerning the school, its students, or any member of staff at the school.
  - Persistently arriving late for work/in class after the member of staff has been informed of his or her required starting time.
  - Inappropriate dress which could cause embarrassment to other members of staff or students or the School.

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

- Deliberately instigating or inciting others to unruly behaviour.
- Removal/disposal of equipment from the School without proper authorisation.

#### **6.3.3 Reporting concerns ([Reporting Teacher's Misconduct](#))**

All concerns about staff member's interaction with children or young people must be reported as follows:

- Faculty staff are required to report to any Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Business support staff are required to report to HR or a Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- All other members of the School community are encouraged to report any concern to a Principal or one of the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead staff.
- Matters arising during non-term time should be reported to the School Management Team staff member with designated investigation responsibility at that time.
- Anyone wishing to report a serious concern who is not comfortable with the above reporting arrangements, or anyone who has a complaint about the School's management of a matter, may report to the Trustees in accordance with our *Whistleblowing Policy*.
- A concern involving the Principal's interaction with children or young people should be referred to the Chair of Trustees and the Trustee for Safeguarding.

#### **6.3.4 Investigation and assessment process**

##### **Guiding principles**

- When a concern is raised about staff interaction with a child or young person, our first priority will be to secure the immediate safety of any children and young people involved and to attend to any emergency actions required.
- All staff are required to adhere to strict principles of confidentiality in managing any concern about staff interaction with children and young people.
- The level of the School's investigation about a concern will be commensurate with the seriousness of the concern. The extent of information gathering will be limited to what is appropriate and necessary to ensure reasonable and fair decision making and risk management.
- Support is given to the child and to the person who is the subject of the allegation.

#### **6.3.5 Referral to external authorities**

Referral to Singapore Police and/or the Child Protective Service will be in accordance with section: *Reporting to External Authorities* of this policy.

##### **Initial response**

- For matters involving Serious Misconduct, the Principal should be informed and the following initial response actions should be completed within two hours of the concern being reported. Any delays should be documented.
- For matters involving Other Misconduct, the Principal should be informed and the following initial response actions should be completed within one working day of a concern being reported. Any delays should be documented.

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

Upon receiving a concern about staff interaction with children or young people, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Attend to any immediate safety concerns
- Clarify the allegation/concern
- Clarify the identities of the children or young people involved
- Clarify the identity of the staff member who is subject of the concern
- Clarify when and where the alleged incidents occurred
- Consult with the Principal as necessary to decide whether the matter constitutes Serious or Other Misconduct as defined in the *Staff Code of Conduct*
- Consider whether the concern may constitute serious misconduct or a criminal offence and liaise accordingly with the School's Legal advisor, HR, Chair of Trustees and Designated Safeguarding Lead regarding reporting to the Singapore Police and Child Protective Services.
- Inform the HR that a concern has been reported.

Upon receiving a concern about staff interaction with children or young people, the Principal will:

- Appoint an Investigation Team (consisting of Principal /Management Team staff member, Designated Safeguarding Lead/s,)
- An initial Investigation Team meeting will be used to assess initial risk, formulate an initial risk management plan and agree investigation responsibilities and next steps.

#### **6.3.6 Risk assessment and management during an investigation**

The focus of risk management during an investigation is to respect and to protect the rights of children and young people and the staff member. Risk management strategies will be commensurate with the seriousness of the concern raised but are not a predictive indicator of the outcome of any investigation.

The Investigation Team will consider:

- Risk to children and young people
- Risk to the staff member
- Risk to an appropriate investigation of the matter

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

Risk management action that may be considered:

- Suspension with pay. Suspension with pay will be considered in relation to any concern that involves Serious Misconduct
- Redeployment within the School to minimise direct contact with the child or young person involved in the concern
- Redeployment within the School to minimise contact with all children or young people.
- Increased supervision in existing position
- Actions to minimise the possibility of the staff member being alone with any child or young person
- Actions to increase visibility of the staff member and transparency in their behaviour when with children and young people

#### **6.3.7 SMMIS internal investigation process**

If a matter has been referred to and accepted by an external authority (Police and/or the Child Protective Service), the School's management of the matter will be limited to internal risk assessment and management and any other actions as directed by the external authority.

The focus of any investigative action by the School is to gather information efficiently and create accurate records that facilitate appropriate decision making.

The Principal/Management Team staff member keeps HR informed about the investigation steps and, where appropriate, any interim findings, to enable liaison with the Board of Trustees as required.

The following is a summary of the School's investigation process:

- Principal or delegate as chosen by the Principal or SLT member in consultation with HR or DSLs as appropriate, arranges to inform the staff member that a concern about misconduct has been raised.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead arranges to interview the child/ren or young person/people who are the subjects of the concern and any witnesses.
- Principal or SLT staff member or delegate interviews the staff member.
- Principal or SLT staff member or delegate collects any further information.
- Principal or SLT staff member prepares an investigation report which is shared as necessary with the HR Board of Trustees and Legal team.
- Principal/SLT member, in consultation with the Board of Trustees/Legal team as appropriate, makes a finding and recommendations.
- Investigation reports and findings are stored by HR



## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **6.3.8 Making a finding**

The investigation finding is an internal School assessment about whether, on the balance of probabilities, the reported behaviour occurred.

The School's finding is separate from any external agency's decision about a matter but may be informed by the external agency's investigation. For example, if a matter is referred to the police and police conclude that there is insufficient evidence to pursue a matter, the School will proceed with its own investigation and assessment of the matter in order to determine an appropriate course of action.

### **6.3.9 Decision making**

#### **Possible criminal matters and matters involving Serious Misconduct**

All matters involving possible criminality or Serious Misconduct will be referred to the Principal and HR for decision making by the Principal as soon as the investigation is completed.

The Principal will:

- Review the investigation report and recommendations
- Make a decision
- Communicate the decision to the Chair of Board of Trustees
- Communicate the decision to the staff member in person (where possible) and in writing in the presence of HR
- Advise the staff member, in writing, about the School's appeal process

Any application by a staff member to resign following a concern being reported and prior to, or during the course of an investigation, will not be accepted by the School.

The School will proceed to complete the investigation and make a finding on the matter. If the investigation (including any appeal process) concludes that the staff member's behaviour warrants dismissal, the School's records will reflect termination.

In some circumstances, the school may submit a report or referral to the teaching board relevant in the staff member's home country.



## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **6.3.10 Appeals**

- The staff member who is the subject of the concern may appeal the School's decision on a matter
- The staff member who is the subject of the concern may appeal the School's decision on a matter
- The staff member may submit an appeal in writing to the SMMIS Board of Trustees request a Formal and Independent Review.
- A Review Meeting should be held, to which the staff member will be invited, within 10 days of an appeal application being received.

### **6.3.11 Matters involving Other Misconduct**

Decisions about Other Misconduct will be managed by the Principal/SLT member or delegate with investigation lead responsibility in consultation with HR.

Decisions should be communicated to the staff member in person and in writing.

### **6.3.12 Risk management following an investigation**

The Principal and HR are responsible for formulating and ensuring implementation of any risk management plan following an investigation. They may seek recommendations from those involved in the investigation or from DSLs.

The plan may include:

- Details of any restrictions to the staff member's duties
- A plan to monitor the staff member's progress
- Details of any other staff involved in monitoring the staff member
- A time frame for review and closure of the matter

## **6.4 Confidentiality**

- a. We respect families' privacy and are committed to managing all matters involving concerns about harm and risk of harm in a sensitive, child-focused manner that is supportive and protects confidentiality as far as possible.
- b. *Confidentiality* is an understanding that any information shared with someone in trust can only be passed on to a third party with the agreement of the person disclosing it.
- c. There are some limits to confidentiality in relation to ensuring the wellbeing and protection of children and young people. We may share information internally or externally, in the best interests of a child or young person, and in accordance with Singapore law if required, in circumstances where a child or young person:
  - has been harmed or is at risk of harm to themselves
  - has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by someone else

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

We are committed to managing safeguarding and child protection concerns according to the following confidentiality principles:

- Only requesting information from, and providing information to, School staff who are familiar with, and/or can assist and support the child or young person
- Providing referrals to, and liaising with, external professionals with the permission of a child or young person's parent, and in consultation with the child or young person where appropriate and possible. There may be exceptional circumstances where the School may provide referral information or other information to a student who is over the age of 18 years, without seeking parental consent, if the School assesses that this is in the student's best interests.
- Maintaining confidential, securely stored records at CPOMS.

### **6.5 Record Keeping**

#### **6.5.1 What records are created**

The School creates digital records to be held in CPOMS for all reported concerns about harm or risk of harm to a child or young person. Examples of records that may be created and stored on CPOMS are:

- Records of Concern
- Photos or scans of paper documents e.g. letters, notes, artwork
- Risk of Harm Assessments
- Reports to the Child Protective Service
- Investigation reports
- Records of interviews and conversations
- Records of correspondence with parents, staff, or external agencies
- Records of actions taken
- Care Plans
- Scanned documentation from paper safeguarding and child protection files that pre-dated 2017

#### **6.5.2 How records are stored**

Hard copy records are stored in locked cabinets in lockable offices (the HR's office) in accordance with the School's *Confidentiality Policy*.

Hard copy records that have been scanned and saved onto CPOMS are securely destroyed, unless they are deemed by DSLs to be relevant to current cases.

Electronic records are stored securely in CPOMS with restricted access through two-factor authentication and differentiated levels of access according to role and training.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **6.5.3 Records regarding investigations of staff interaction with children or young people**

During the course of an investigation, the Principal/Management Team staff member with investigation lead responsibility should ensure confidential investigation file management and secure, restricted access and storage.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the file is transferred to the HR and stored securely, confidentially and with restricted access, separate from the staff member's general human resources personnel file.

Documentation for matters where the finding is "not substantiated" or "substantiated" is placed on the staff member's general personnel file advising that a separate confidential file exists that may be accessed only by designated senior staff in the School for specific purposes.

### **6.5.4 How long records are retained**

Records are retained in accordance with Singapore law and the School's *Confidentiality Policy* and *Data Protection Policy*.

When a child or young person leaves the school, records are archived on CPOMS.

Records for students who have not been the subject of safeguarding concerns are retained until the subject of the record is 25 years old.

Records for students who were the subject of safeguarding concerns relating to sexual, physical or emotional abuse or neglect, or where there was consultation with statutory agencies, are retained until the subject of the record is 50 years old. This timeframe allows for any students or families that are the subjects of the records to request to access them.

Records are automatically deleted from CPOMS when the retention period has expired.

### **6.5.5 Access to records**

Safeguarding and child protection records are considered to be particularly sensitive. Access is strictly filtered and limited to Designated Safeguarding Lead staff, so that only staff who require access for specific purposes that are directly related to the care and protection of a child or young person are permitted to view records.

The School will consider any request by a family to access records involving their children.

Requests should be made to one of the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead staff. Requests will be dealt with in accordance with Singapore's PDPA laws.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **6.5.6 Sharing of records**

Records may only be shared in accordance with Singapore law, including the *Personal Data Protection Act (2012)*. Records may be shared with:

- Singapore courts of law
- Courts of law in other jurisdictions
- The Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development Child Protective Service, and the National Anti-Violence & Sexual Harassment Helpline (NAVH), in accordance with Singapore Government guidance on reporting and consulting regarding child protection concerns

### **6.6 Associated School Policies and Guidance**

The following School policies and guidance are associated with this policy:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Guidelines for Remote Learning
- Complaints Procedure
- Formal and Independent Review/Appeal Request guidance
- Student Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Policy for Visits and Trips
- Parents' Code of Conduct
- Personal Data Protection Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- ICT Technology and E-Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Other supporting [information](#)

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **APPENDIX - CATEGORIES OF ABUSE**

All members of staff will be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be given a specific label and, as such, multiple issues often overlap one another.

All members of staff will also be aware of peer-on-peer abuse, which likely includes actions such as bullying, gender-based violence, sexual assaults and sexting. All staff will be aware of the actions involving peer-on-peer abuse, and the necessary procedures to follow to prevent such abuse, as outlined in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy (see annexure).

All staff will be aware of the behaviours linked to drug taking, alcohol abuse, truancy and sexting, and will understand that these put students in danger.

**Abuse:** A form of maltreatment of a child which involves inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting by those known to them, or, more rarely, by others, e.g. via the internet. Please note some physical disciplining of children is used in Singapore. Parents are likely to be charged with child abuse if the child is significantly injured as a result of excessive force. At SMMIS the physical disciplining of students is never acceptable.

**Physical abuse:** A form of abuse which may involve actions such as hitting, throwing, burning, drowning or poisoning, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse can also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. SMMIS notes that some physical disciplining of children is used in Singapore.

**Emotional abuse:** A form of abuse which involves the emotional maltreatment of a child such as might cause severe / adverse effects on the child's emotional development. This may involve telling a child they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, not giving them the opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or often making them feel as though they are in danger.

**Sexual abuse:** A form of abuse which involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, and whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve penetrative assault, such as touching, or non-penetrative actions, such as looking at sexual images, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways. SMMIS notes that in Singapore, sexual intercourse with a girl below the age of 14 years constitutes a criminal offence of rape, even if the girl gives her consent. When the girl is already 14 years old but not yet 16, the said activity constitutes the offence of "carnal connection", provided the girl consents.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

**Neglect:** A form of abuse which involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's health or development. This may involve providing inadequate food, clothing or shelter, or the inability to protect a child from physical or emotional harm, or to ensure access to appropriate medical treatment.

**Child Sexual Exploitation:** For the purposes of this policy, "child sexual exploitation" (CSE) is defined as a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. CSE can take many forms but the perpetrator will always hold some kind of power over the victim. It is important to note that some young people who are being sexually abused do not exhibit any external signs of abuse. Where CSE, or the risk of it, is suspected, staff will discuss the case with the dedicated member of staff for child protection. If after discussion a concern still remains, a referral will be triggered.

**Child Radicalisation:** Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the school's wider safeguarding duties. SMMIS will actively assess the risk of students being drawn into terrorism. Staff will be alert to changes in students' behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff will use their professional judgement to identify students who may be at risk of radicalisation and act appropriately, which may include making a referral to the police. The school will ensure that they engage with parents/carers and families as they are in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation. In doing so, the school will assist and advise family members who raise concerns, and provide information for support mechanisms. Any concerns over radicalisation will be discussed with a child's parents/carers, unless the school has reason to believe that the child would be placed at risk as a result. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake awareness training to be able to provide advice and support to other staff on how to protect children against the risk of radicalisation. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will hold formal annual training sessions with all members of staff to ensure they are aware of the risk indicators and their duties regarding preventing radicalisation.

### **Child on Child Abuse**

SMMIS acknowledges the importance of recognising problematic peer dynamics and the value of prompt responses to concerns. The student Behaviour for Learning Policy guides the School's response to concerns about student behaviour. The School acknowledges that concerning or problematic behaviour occurs along a spectrum and that different levels of behaviour require different management strategies. All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. The Anti-Bullying Policy provides detailed information about levels and types of bullying behaviour and the School's management of these concerns. "Peer abuse" and "child on child abuse" are terms that are used to describe behaviour that is more serious and requires a higher level of intervention. The School provides students with methods to report concerns including the semi-anonymous QR code. All children and young people involved in child on child/peer abuse dynamics are considered to be at risk of harm. We acknowledge the

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

Contextual Safeguarding approach that recognises that children and young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts, including neighbourhoods, schools and online environments. We also recognise that peer behaviour outside school is likely to impact peer behaviour inside school and, more importantly, influence what behaviour is perceived to be acceptable across social contexts. We will consider intervening in any child on child/peer abuse matter that is impacting, or has the potential to impact, the School community, recognising that the peer relationship most often exists as a direct result of the school context.

Concerns involving child on child/peer abuse will be managed by the School's Designated Safeguarding Team.

### **Definition**

Child on child/peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and / or financial abuse, and / or coercive control exercised between children and young people within their relationships, including intimate and non-intimate contexts.

This includes:

- Serious bullying (including bullying occurring on social media and gaming platforms and by other electronic means)
- Abuse in personal relationships between children
- Sexual harassment, sexual violence or sexual exploitation
- Physical abuse / Violence
- Harmful sexual behaviour including sexting and youth-produced sexual imagery
- Initiation / hazing violence and rituals

### **Assessing child on child/ peer abuse concerns**

Child on child/ peer abuse often indicates wider safeguarding concerns for a child or young person that may be linked to other things happening in their lives and in the spaces where they spend their time.

An assessment of these concerns should consider whether the behaviour:

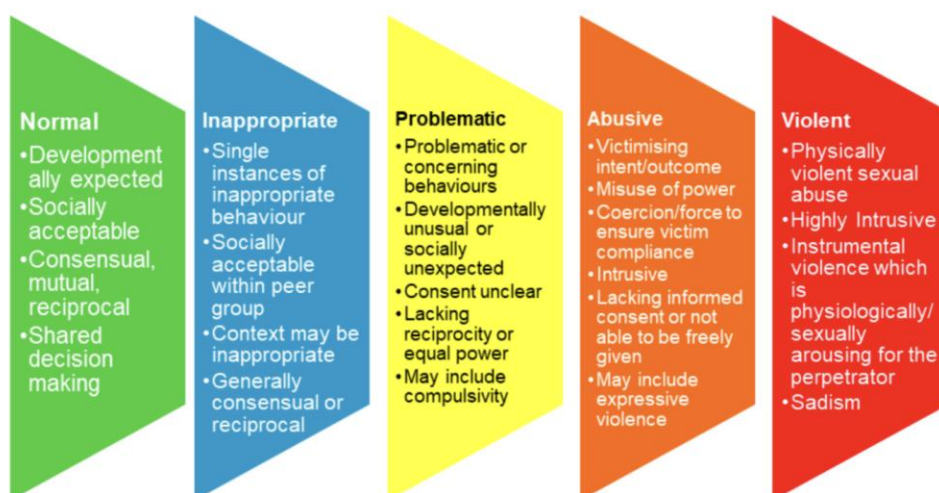
- is socially acceptable/ should be socially acceptable within the peer group.
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time.
- involves elements of victimisation or discrimination (for example, in relation to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability).
- involves elements of coercion and planning.
- involves a power imbalance.



## SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The School recognises that the same behaviour exhibited by different children may be understood at different points on a spectrum, depending on the context. For example, an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery may be inappropriate in one situation and yet abusive in another, if produced as a result of coercion, or if used to manipulate the young person.

A guide to understanding a range of sexual behaviours that is also useful in the assessment of some other peer non-sexual behaviours is provided by Hackett 2014:



(Hackett, 2014)

### Possible indicators

Some factors can increase a child or young person's vulnerability to child on child / peer abuse.

For example, a young person could become more vulnerable to abuse following the sharing of an inappropriate image, based on how peers perceived that young person following the incident. Similarly, a young person who is questioning or exploring their sexuality may be a higher risk of child on child/peer abuse. Peer group factors and dynamics also influence levels of vulnerability. For example, children who are more likely to follow others or who are socially isolated may be more vulnerable to child on child /peer abuse.



## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

Signs or symptoms that may indicate child on child/ peer abuse:

- Poor school attendance or decline in attendance
- Physical injuries
- Emotional and mental health issues
- Alcohol or substance use
- Behaviour that is not age appropriate
- Abusive behaviour towards others

### **Online Abuse**

The School acknowledges the significance and utility of digital technology in the lives of children and young people. Phones, computers and other devices are important tools for learning, communication and recreation. We also recognise the potential for harm associated with digital technology and the ability for harm to be perpetrated across locations and jurisdictions. The source of such harm may be other children or young people or adults. Online platforms provide significant opportunities for predatory behaviour by people seeking to “groom” children and young people for the purposes of sexual and / or other exploitation. Concerns involving online behaviour will be managed by the School in accordance with the Information & Communication Technology (ICT), and E-Safety Policy, the Behaviour for Learning Policy and the Anti-bullying Policy.

SMMIS recognises the four Cs of online risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising, and / or adults posing as children or young adults with the intention of grooming or exploiting them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **Conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and/or receiving explicit images (e.g. the consensual and or nonconsensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography; sharing other explicit images, and online bullying, and
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and / or financial scams.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Particular forums for risk include:**

- Online gaming platforms
- Social media platforms
- Online chat rooms

Any web-based activity that permits direct communication between/among participants

### **Definition of Online abuse includes:**

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
- Creating and/or sharing embarrassing images and / or video recordings
- “Trolling” – sending menacing or upsetting messages on platforms such as social media networks, chat rooms or online gaming platforms
- Targeting a child or young person for exclusion from an online peer activity or friendship group.
- Shaming a child or young person online
- Setting up hate sites about a particular child or young person or group of children or young people
- Encouraging children or young people to self-harm
- Creating, hijacking or stealing online identities and/or manipulating content to embarrass a child or young person, or to cause them trouble using their identity
- “Sexting” – sending explicit messages
- Pressuring a child or young person to send sexual images or to engage in sexual conversations.

### **Child sexual abuse online**

Online sexual abuse involves children and young people being persuaded or coerced to:

- send or post sexually explicit images of themselves.
- participate in sexual activities using a webcam or smartphone.
- have sexual conversations by text or online. Perpetrators may be adults or other children or young people, and may threaten to send images, video or copies of any conversations to the child or young person's friends and family unless they take part in further sexual activity.

Children and young people involved in this dynamic can feel trapped by the fear of not complying with the perpetrator’s demands, and, in this way, the abuse continues and often escalates.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Vulnerability factors**

#### **Characteristics of children and young people that may increase risk of online abuse include:**

- Social isolation or marginalisation
- Susceptibility to being manipulated
- Feeling unsupported at home
- Previous experience of victimisation or abuse
- Naivety about the capabilities for manipulation inherent in online environments

#### **Other factors that may increase vulnerability to online abuse include:**

- Inadequate supervision of children's and young peoples' interaction with digital platforms
- Anonymity, and a predator's ability to manipulate online identities for the purposes of deceiving a child or young person and luring them into an abusive interaction
- Any community or peer culture that encourages the disintegration of personal boundaries and encourages risk taking behaviours
- The lowered inhibitions associated with online recreational activity which increase the risk of disclosing personal information
- Perceived safety from physical harm

### **Possible indicators**

We encourage parents to be watchful for changes in their child's behaviour that may indicate online abuse.

#### **Signs that a child or young person may be exposed to online abuse include:**

- Feeling nervous or frightened about going to school or having contact with a peer group
- Anxiety when using devices or using social media
- Distress following online activities
- Unwillingness to discuss or share information about their online activity
- Unexplained physical ailments such as headaches, stomach complaints or other anxiety related symptoms
- Withdrawal from peers and/or family
- Difficulty sleeping
- Expression of suicidal ideation
- Self-harming

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Self-harm Definition**

**Self-harm is harm that a child or young person inflicts on themselves and may include:**

- Cutting
- Burning
- Bruising
- Scratching
- Hair pulling
- Overdosing

### **Reasons that children and young people may self-harm**

The reasons that a child or young person may hurt themselves are not always easy to work out. Some children and young people will be able to articulate the reasons they self-harm and others may have very limited insight into the reasons for their actions.

### **Self-harm can represent:**

- a coping mechanism to manage emotional pain, anxiety or distress. For some children and young people, the physical pain of self-harm can seem easier for them to deal with than confronting the emotional pain that is behind it.
- a way for a child or young person to punish themselves for something.
- a way for a child or young person to feel in control of some part of their life.

When a child or young person self-harms, they may experience relief from the emotions that underlie the self-harming action. This relief is usually short lived and feelings of pressure and guilt later arise. In this way, the cycle of self-harm is perpetuated. While self-harm is not often directly linked to suicidal ideation, prolonged self-harming behaviour has the potential to lead to depressive states that, in the absence of intervention, may escalate. Recognising and promptly intervening at the first signs of self-harm to assist the child or young person to develop insight into their behaviour and implement healthy, alternative coping strategies is therefore a priority.

### **Possible indicators**

A range of emotional states can be associated with self-harm, including:

- Low self-confidence
- Loneliness
- Sadness
- Anger
- Feeling a lack of control over one's life/specific areas of life

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

Physical, emotional and behavioural indicators that may be present:

- Cuts, most commonly, serial cuts on arms, wrists, thighs
- Bald patches from pulling out hair or skin scratched raw /scabbed over repeatedly
- Burns
- Bruises
- Depression
- Tearfulness
- Sudden weight loss or gain
- Becoming withdrawn or isolated; spending increased time alone
- Wearing clothing that uncharacteristically covers parts of the child or young person's body that they would not normally cover, for example long sleeves or long pants, in attempts to hide self-harm marks.

### **Risk taking behaviours**

SMMIS acknowledges that as children and young people develop their understanding of the world and their place in it, they will often experiment with limits and boundaries that reflect a desire for independence and/or acceptance in a peer group. Some of these behaviours will entail risk, are often indicative of poor decision making and weak impulse control, and reflect the predictable challenges of growing up in an ever-changing world. We also acknowledge that risk taking behaviour may be an indication of underlying emotional or other difficulties that a child or young person may be experiencing.

### **Examples of risk-taking behaviours**

- Drug use
- Alcohol use
- Promiscuity
- Sexting
- Dangerous social situations, for example, keeping company (including online) with adults or other young people involved in a risk taking social culture
- Engaging in criminal behaviours, for example vandalism, stealing, breaking into private property, damaging property
- Engaging in other physically dangerous behaviour, for example, playing games with traffic • Self-harm

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Addressing risk taking behaviours**

We recognise the importance of identifying risk taking behaviours and working with parents to address them. Effective, early intervention and a consistent approach between the School and parents is essential to minimise risk of an isolated behaviour escalating into a problematic pattern of behaviour that represents higher risk to the child or young person. Instances involving collective peer risk taking behaviours (for example, drinking alcohol or using drugs or other substances at parties) can be challenging to manage, particularly as they often occur outside of school.

The Singapore jurisdiction views some risk-taking behaviours in particular seriously, and SMMIS is required to report certain matters to Singapore authorities. We are committed to a child-centred approach and will work with families, providing internal support and external referrals as appropriate.

To effectively address and manage risk taking behaviours and protect all children and young people involved with the School, we expect parents to:

- co-operate with the School in ensuring the protection and wellbeing of their children in accordance with the School's values, including not providing or allowing children and/or young people in their care to consume alcohol or use drugs.
- adhere to the Parents' Code of Conduct.
- understand that risk taking behaviours that may occur outside of school almost always have an impact at school and/or within the school community.

### **Mental Health and Emotional Issues**

The School acknowledges that children and young people experience the world in their own unique way and each cope with adversity, stress and the challenges of growing up differently. We are committed to our role in building community awareness of mental and emotional health issues affecting children and young people, with a view to early identification and intervention to effect best possible outcomes.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Definition**

Mental and emotional health challenges in children and young people may be triggered by situational stress or may be indicative of a broader, underlying issue. There are many types of mental and emotional difficulties. Some of the more common issues that may arise for children and young people are:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Disordered eating/Eating disorders
- Self-harm
- Suicidal ideation
- Suicide behaviours
- Post traumatic stress responses

### **Vulnerability factors**

While each child or young person's experience of, and response to, situations is different, some children and young people are at increased risk of experiencing mental or emotional difficulties. Factors that may increase vulnerability include:

- Familial history of mental health issues
- Drug or alcohol use
- Social isolation and/or exposure to child on child / peer abuse
- Exposure to abuse, violence or trauma and ACE's (Acute Childhood Experiences)
- Unstable or unsupportive family environment
- Low sense of self-worth
- Feeling pressure in relation to academic achievement
- Bereavement

### **Possible indicators**

All children and young people are different and it can be difficult to identify emotional pain as they often keep things to themselves. Some common signs that a child or young person may be experiencing mental or emotional health challenges are:

- Becoming withdrawn from family and friends
- Persistent low mood and unhappiness
- Tearfulness and irritability
- Worries or behaviours that obstruct day-to-day functioning
- Loss of interest in activities they usually enjoy
- Difficulties with eating or sleeping
- Self-harm

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Addressing mental health and emotional challenges**

We recognise the importance of early identification and effective intervention, where children or young people are experiencing mental health or emotional challenges. Communication and cooperation between school, parents and external professionals is key in supporting students with these issues. We are committed to a child-centred approach and will work with families, providing internal support and external referrals as appropriate.

Our staff closely monitors students with Mental Health or emotional concerns, and support is provided in school through the pastoral structures as well as the School Counsellor, and The Other Clinic.

### **Suicide Prevention Training**

The Principal and one of the Designated Safeguarding Team have taken part in LIVINGWORKS Safetalk suicide prevention training. This provides training on how to reach out to someone thinking about suicide and help them keep safe by promptly connecting them to further support. This follows a model of identifying signs that might signal that someone is thinking about suicide, and then always directly asking them, following this structure: 'Sometimes when people are feeling this way, they think about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?' If the answer is yes, the DSL will ask if the child has thought about how they might do suicide. If the child has had suicide ideation, they will then be referred directly to The Other Clinic for a therapist to carry out a risk assessment, and provide a recommendation for appropriate onward referral. Until the Other Clinic is available to carry out a risk assessment, the parents of the child will be contacted and asked to pick the child up from school, to take the child home and to keep them safe until the risk assessment has been carried out, and recommendations have been made and put in place. In this instance, if the suicide risk is judged as moderate to high, we will require evidence of measures having been put in place to keep the child safe, such as a letter from a psychotherapist, before allowing the child to return to school. If suicide ideation has not occurred, the DSL will notify parents and refer the child for counselling with the school counsellor.



### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

All staff at SMMIS are trained to report to the Safeguarding Team if any children are showing signs that they might be thinking about suicide. These can be referred to as invitations (for us to reach out to them) The invitations might be seen, heard or sensed, and could include, but are not limited to:

- Statements of hopelessness about their life or the future.
- Feelings of depression.
- Statements such as 'I want to die' or 'my life is over', even if they may seem flippant.
- Withdrawal from community.
- Appearing tired or dishevelled.
- Changes in body weight.
- Self-harm.
- Change in behaviour.
- Giving away personal possessions.

#### **Other general risk factors:**

Factors that may increase a child or young person's vulnerability to harm or risk of harm include:

- Previous exposure to physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse in the home
- Mental illness in the home
- Parental separation/divorce
- Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND)
- Previous exposure to trauma
- Gender identity factors
- Social isolation or problematic peer relationships
- Other situational stress
- Cultural patterns, for example the use of physical discipline, or young people consuming alcohol or engaging in risk taking behaviours

### **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

We recognise that children and young people who are experiencing, or have previously experienced any of these factors, and in particular, children who have Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND) may also:

- experience difficulty in discerning whether what they experiencing is abusive or “normal”
- experience difficulty in communicating that they have been hurt, or their fear of being hurt.
- exhibit challenging behaviours that may inhibit communication and/or influence others’ perceptions about any disclosure of harm and subsequent decisions about protective action.

Additionally, abuse dynamics usually involve some attempt by the perpetrator to prevent the child or young person from telling anyone about the abuse or seeking help including:

- Instilling fear in the child or young person that the abuse will get worse if they tell anyone
- Instilling fear in the child or young person that they will not be believed, that the abuse is their fault and/or that the child or young person “deserved it”
- Instilling shame
- Instilling a belief that no one can help
- Instilling a belief in the child or young person that the abuse they are experiencing is “normal” and/or that their parents know about it and condone it.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE**

#### **When to be concerned**

A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and, as such, these children are increasingly at risk of being victims of abuse, neglect, harm, exploitation or radicalisation. It is extremely important that any unauthorised absence from education is responded immediately. Any member of staff can make a referral to the Child Protection Specialists Centres team a child protection incident in the case of an emergency if they are unable to reach the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff need to be aware that private fostering arrangements, if in place with a family, must be notified to the local authorities. Please speak to your Designated Safeguarding Lead for guidance.

Staff will monitor students who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions, and report them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead following normal safeguarding procedures. SMMIS will inform the police of any student who fails to attend school for long periods of time, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period with no contact from the parents.

#### **Symptoms of Abuse**

All staff and volunteers should be concerned about a child if he/she presents with indicators of possible significant harm. Generally, in an abusive relationship the child may:

- (a) Appear frightened of the parent/s or other household members e.g. siblings or others outside of the home.
- (b) Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups).
- (c) Display insufficient sense of 'boundaries', lack stranger awareness.
- (d) Appear wary of adults and display 'frozen watchfulness'.

**Updated February 2025**

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **APPENDIX - ASSESSING THE RISK**

#### **Assessing Concerns: Initial assessment of a concern**

To assess a concern Designated Safeguarding staff may request information from, and discuss the matter with:

- The person who raised the concern
- The child or young person directly, or arrange for another member of staff (such as a School Counsellor) with whom the child/young person has an established relationship, to speak with the child/young person
- The child/young person's parents
- School staff who have relevant knowledge of the child/young person
- Other relevant designated pastoral care, learning support, safeguarding and child protection staff

#### **Assessing Harm and Risk of Harm**

To assess harm and risk of harm, the School considers the following factors:

##### **Severity of harm**

Assess whether the alleged harm is significant, or is likely to become significant if repeated over a prolonged period.

Assess whether the impact of the harm on the child or young person's development and well being is, or will be, significantly detrimental.

##### **Frequency of harm and duration**

Establish the number of incidents that have occurred and the period of time over which the incidents have occurred.

##### **Source of Harm**

Assess the significance of the relationship between the child or young person and the person who is/allegedly is the source of the harm.

The number of people responsible for, and/or complicit with, the harm.

Assess whether the harm/alleged harm makes the child or young person more vulnerable to abuse by other perpetrators.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Protective Factors**

Assess whether there is a protective parent/other adult available and willing to protect the child or young person. Assess the level of contact that person has with the child or young person. Assess the person's understanding of the harm/risk of harm and their capacity to protect the child or young person. Assess what actions have been taken by the person to protect the child or young person and whether these can be verified.

### **Strengths and Resources**

Assess the perpetrator/alleged perpetrator's/child or young person's comprehension of the harm/risk of harm and their willingness to develop their insight. Assess ability and willingness to engage with support, including at School.

### **Probability of Harm Continuing**

Assess the level of access that the perpetrator/alleged perpetrator has to the child or young person. Assess the level of acknowledgement of harm and insight into the impact of the harm the perpetrator/alleged perpetrator possesses. Assess what protective factors may mitigate risk and how significant these are.

### **Vulnerability of Future Harm**

Consider characteristics of the child or young person including age, any disability, medical conditions or social isolation that may increase vulnerability. Consider family characteristics including cultural values and attitudes, social isolation, situational stresses.

### **Risk to Others**

Consider if there any other children who are, or likely to be, at risk of harm due to the concern – for example, risk to siblings, peers, others.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Staff Misconduct:**

#### **Serious Misconduct (staff)**

Specific behaviour that constitutes Serious Misconduct involving children or young people includes and is not limited to:

- Commission of a sexual act with a child or young person
- Touching a child or young person in a sexual manner
- Sexual exhibitionism
- Personal correspondence (including email, social media and phone messages) with a child or young person with regard to the staff member's own sexual feelings for any child or young person
- Exposing a child or young person to material of a sexual nature (not including school curriculum based material that is provided within a school educational context), including printed or digital material such as pornography
- Possession or creation or distribution of child pornography
- Exposing a child or young person to the sexual behaviour of others
- Encouraging a child or young person to behave in a sexual manner
- Watching a child or young person undress, for example in changing rooms or toilets when supervision is neither required nor justified
- Exhibiting a pattern of behaviour that is consistent with grooming a child or young person for sexual exploitation
- Hitting, smacking, pushing or throwing objects at a child or young person (that is not related to sports or other situations where physical contact is accidental, required or foreseeable)
- Any other type of physical discipline or reprimand
- Verbally or physically threatening behaviour that causes a child or young person to fear that an assault may occur
- Humiliating or belittling a child or young person
- More than one incident of "lower level" behaviours that, on their own, may constitute Other Misconduct but collectively may represent a concerning pattern of behaviour

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Other Misconduct (staff)**

Specific behaviour that constitutes Other Misconduct involving children or young people includes and is not limited to:

- Conversations or comments of a sexual nature in the presence of children or young people
- Physical restraint that is excessive in the circumstances
- Verbally or physically reprimanding in a way that is disproportionate to a child or young person's behaviour or inappropriate given the child or young person's stage of development that does not result in physical harm
- Singling a child or young person out for "special" attention that is outside the boundaries of encouraging and supporting a child or young person
- Persuading a child or young person that a special relationship exists with them
- Isolating a child or young person for the purposes of favouritism
- Allowing a child or young person to overstep rules that is outside of making reasonable concessions where particular issues exist for the child or young person
- Touching a child or young person in an inappropriate, unnecessary or unwelcome manner
- Inappropriate personal comments such as complimentary or derogatory comments about a child or young person's appearance
- Using social media, gaming or other digital platforms to form a relationship with a child or young person
- Providing physical comfort to a child or young person that is not in accordance with the School's Personal and Intimate Care Guidance
- A repeated pattern involving one of the above behaviours, or a pattern involving more than one of the above behaviours may be considered to constitute Serious Misconduct that would then be investigated accordingly.



## SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

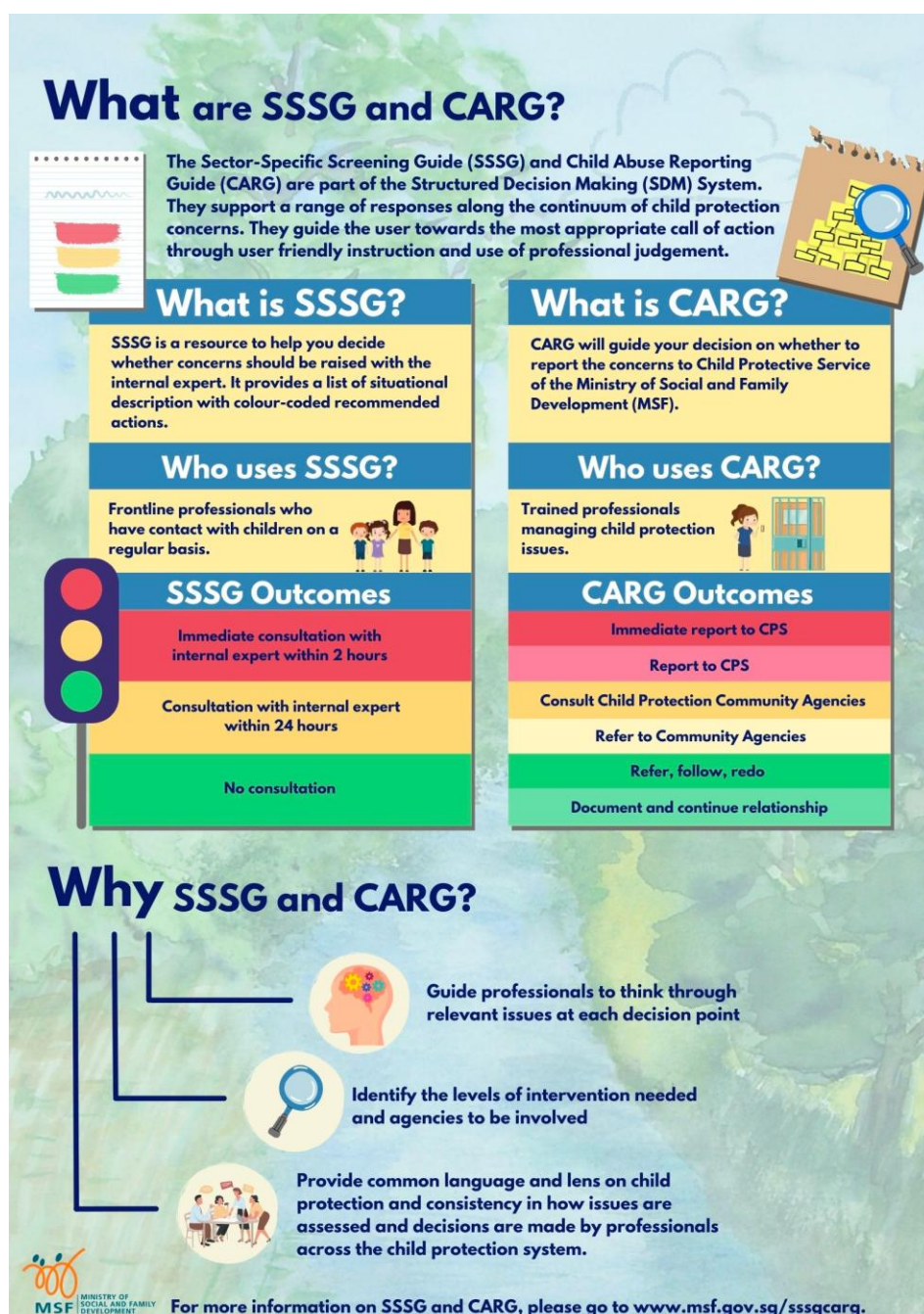
### 1. RESOURCES / FURTHER INFORMATION

Sector Specific Screening Guide (SSSG Education)

Child Abuse Reporting Guide (CARG)

For more information watch this short [video](#)

[https://www.msf.gov.sg/what-we-do/help-those-in-need/article/resources/sector-specific-screening-guide-\(sssg\)-and-child-abuse-reporting-guide-\(carg\)](https://www.msf.gov.sg/what-we-do/help-those-in-need/article/resources/sector-specific-screening-guide-(sssg)-and-child-abuse-reporting-guide-(carg))



## What are SSSG and CARG?

The Sector-Specific Screening Guide (SSSG) and Child Abuse Reporting Guide (CARG) are part of the Structured Decision Making (SDM) System. They support a range of responses along the continuum of child protection concerns. They guide the user towards the most appropriate call of action through user friendly instruction and use of professional judgement.

### What is SSSG?

SSSG is a resource to help you decide whether concerns should be raised with the internal expert. It provides a list of situational description with colour-coded recommended actions.

### Who uses SSSG?

Frontline professionals who have contact with children on a regular basis.

### SSSG Outcomes

- Immediate consultation with internal expert within 2 hours
- Consultation with internal expert within 24 hours
- No consultation

### What is CARG?

CARG will guide your decision on whether to report the concerns to Child Protective Service of the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF).

### Who uses CARG?

Trained professionals managing child protection issues.

### CARG Outcomes

- Immediate report to CPS
- Report to CPS
- Consult Child Protection Community Agencies
- Refer to Community Agencies
- Refer, follow, redo
- Document and continue relationship

## Why SSSG and CARG?

- Guide professionals to think through relevant issues at each decision point
- Identify the levels of intervention needed and agencies to be involved
- Provide common language and lens on child protection and consistency in how issues are assessed and decisions are made by professionals across the child protection system.

**MSF** MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

For more information on SSSG and CARG, please go to [www.msf.gov.sg/sssgcarg](http://www.msf.gov.sg/sssgcarg).



## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Child Protection and Welfare Service**

SLF Podium #01-01 to #01-01 512A  
Thomson Road Singapore 298137

**Child Protection and Welfare Helpline:** 1800-777-0000 (Mondays to Fridays, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm and Saturdays, 8:30 am – 1:00 pm)

### **Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)**

If you are feeling distressed, or know someone who is feeling suicidal, get help immediately. Talk to somebody.

Website: <https://sos.org.sg/>  
Tel: 1800-221 4444 (24hrs)

### **Tinkle Friend**

Primary school children who need a listening ear, this helpline provides support, advice and information to lonely and distressed children especially in situations when their parents or main caregivers are unavailable.

Website: <https://www.childrensociety.org.sg>  
Tel: 1800-274 4788

Operating Hours (Mon - Fri):  
0930hrs to 1130hrs  
1430hrs to 1700hrs

Secondary schools in Singapore use the following, they are all MOE registered schools.

#### **HELPLINES:**

**Samaritans of Singapore:** 1800-221-4444

**Singapore Association for Mental Health:** 1800-283-7019

**Institute of Mental Health's Mobile Crisis Service:** 6389-2222

**Care Corner Counselling Centre (Mandarin):** 1800-353-5800

Or report to the Police Divisional HQ or the nearest Neighbourhood Police Post

### **Important Legal Information in Singapore**

**7) Legal Drinking Age and Drinking-Related Laws in Singapore**

**Legal Age of Consent in Singapore**

**Singapore Drug Laws**

**Vaping in Singapore**

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Other Resources**

#### **The Singapore Government**

The Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development is responsible for statutory child protection. The Protecting Children in Singapore (2016) publication may be found here:

<https://www.msf.gov.sg/publications/Pages/Protecting-Children-in-Singapore.aspx>

Other publications about child abuse and protection may be found here:

<https://www.msf.gov.sg/publications/pages/default.aspx?topicID=1>

Singapore legislation, including the Children and Young Persons Act (2001) may be accessed here: <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/>

The Singapore Big Love Child Protection Specialist Centre provides help for families with child protection concerns. More information may be accessed here:

<https://www.biglove.org.sg/>

<https://www.giveavoice.sg/>

#### **United Kingdom Resources**

There are numerous organisations that provide useful information for organisations, parents, children and young people about harm and risk of harm.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (United Kingdom) provides a range of safeguarding and child protection resources for parents, including information about:

- Recognising forms of abuse and neglect
- Understanding risk factors for harm and risk of harm
- Protective behaviours
- How parents can talk to their children about risk Further information may be found here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

#### **International resources**

The International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) provides extensive resource material based on global best practice. Further information may be found here:

<https://www.icmec.org/>

## SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

### Child Protection System in Singapore

#### A : THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Child protection concerns operate on a continuum, with corresponding responses from either the community, more specialised partners or the State. Generally, a more serious concern will necessitate higher levels and more intrusive interventions, with the State stepping in when warranted.

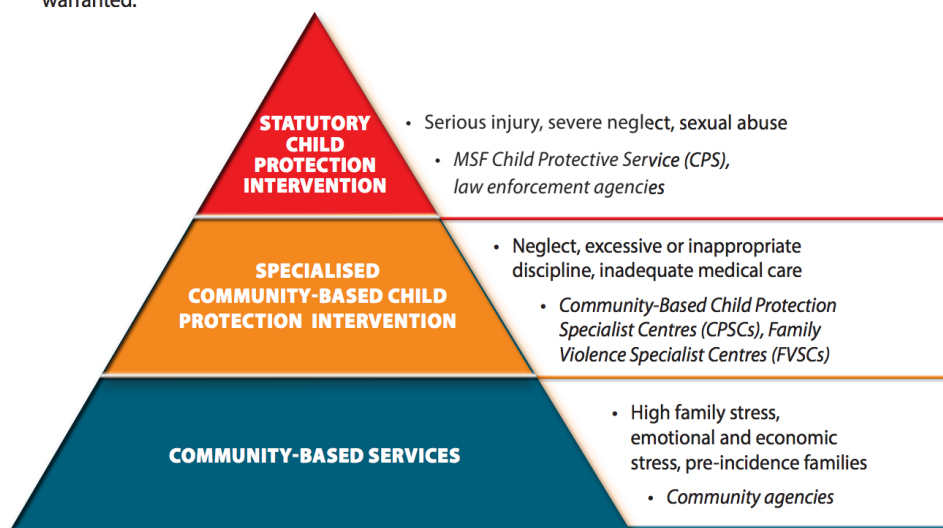


Diagram 1: Continuum of Child Protection Intervention and Community-Based Services

#### B : MANAGEMENT OF CHILD ABUSE CASES BY MSF

Diagram 2 gives a broad overview on CPS's intervention.

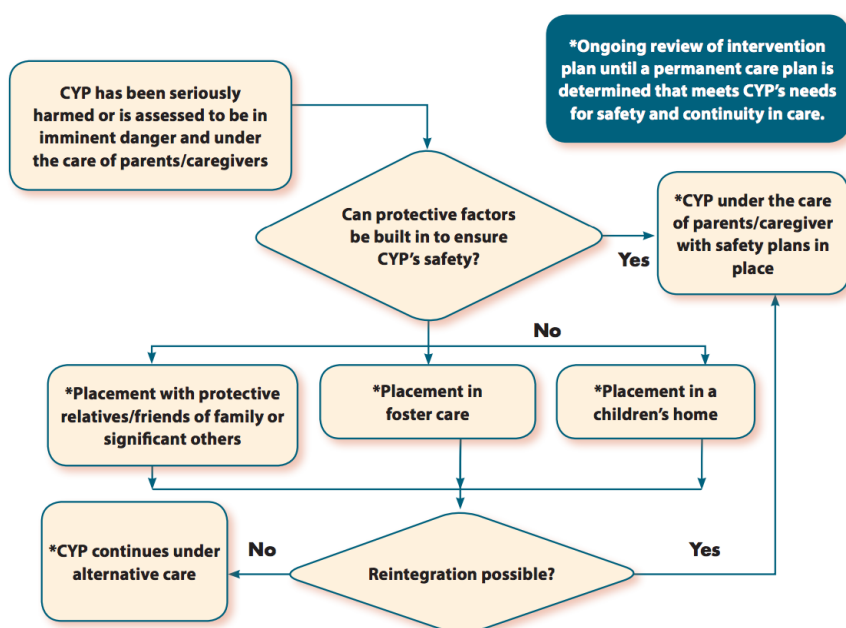


Diagram 2: Overview of Management of Cases Referred to CPS

## SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

### APPENDIX – EXPECTATIONS OF SMMIS PE & SWIM COACHES

#### 1) Commitment to Student Safety and Well-being

- a. **Prioritise Safety:** Always place the safety and well-being of students at the forefront of all activities. Create a secure and nurturing environment that fosters growth while minimising risks. (See SMMIS Risk Assessment)
- b. **Monitor Risk Factors:** Continuously assess potential risks within the training environment, including the physical condition of the facilities and equipment.

#### 2) Understand and follow Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

- a. **Adhere to Legal and Institutional Guidelines:** Familiarise yourself with, and follow, all relevant SMMIS Safeguarding and Child Protection policies, including local, national and institutional guidelines.
- b. **Know Reporting Protocols:** Be knowledgeable about the reporting procedures for any incidents of abuse or misconduct. Report any concerns to the appropriate authorities promptly and responsibly.
- c. **Maintain Clear Boundaries:** Ensure that all interactions with students, both physical and verbal, are appropriate and professional. Never engage in any form of inappropriate or harmful contact with students.

#### 3) Create a Safe Training Environment

- a. **Minimise Hazards:** Regularly inspect the swimming environment to ensure it is safe, clean, and free from potential hazards.
- b. **Supervise Adequately:** Ensure that students are properly supervised at all times during training sessions, both in and out of the water.
- c. **Appropriate Use of Technology:** Use technology responsibly, ensuring any communication with students (such as social media or digital platforms) adheres to ethical boundaries and privacy standards.

#### 4) Build Trusting Relationships

- a. **Positive Role Model:** Be a positive role model by demonstration appropriate behaviour, respect, and professionalism at all times.
- b. **Establish Open Communication:** Encourage open communication, where students feel safe to express concerns or report issues without fear of retaliation.
- c. **Respect Student Autonomy:** Allow students to maintain control over their own training and competition decisions, ensuring they feel empowered and respected.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **5) Understanding Child Protection Laws and Regulations**

- a. **Compliance with Local and National Laws:** Stay up-to-date with child protection legislation and make sure you comply with legal requirements for working with minors in a sporting context.
- b. **Mandatory Training:** Complete any required safeguarding and child protection training regularly to stay informed about best practices and the latest developments. SMMIS requires that all staff complete CP training at least once per year.

### **6) Maintain Confidentiality**

- a. **Respect Privacy:** Maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information related to students. Do not share personal or private details without the student's consent or the consent of their guardian, except when required by law or safeguarding policies.
- b. **Secure Records:** Store student data, such as medical information or personal history, in a secure and confidential manner to ensure privacy is respected.. SMMIS uses CPOMS for secure documentation.

### **7) Prevent Bullying and Harassment**

- a. **Respect Privacy:** Maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information related to students. Do not share personal or private details without the student's consent or the consent of their guardian, except when required by law or safeguarding policies.
- b. **Secure Records:** Store student data, such as medical information or personal history, in a secure and confidential manner to ensure privacy is respected.. SMMIS uses CPOMS for secure documentation.

### **8) Responding to Disclosures or Concerns**

- a. **Listen and Act Appropriately:** If a student discloses an issue or expresses concerns about their safety, listen attentively and respond appropriately. Remain calm and supportive, ensuring the student feels heard and understood.
- b. **Report Concerns Promptly:** If you suspect any form of abuse, neglect, or harm, or if a student confides in you, report it promptly to the designated safeguarding officer or appropriate authorities.

### **9) Involve Parents/Guardians**

- a. **Keep Parents Informed:** Maintain open lines of communication with parents or guardians regarding their child's training progress, well-being, and any concerns that arise. Involve them in any decisions that affect their child's safety or welfare.
- b. **Seek Parental Consent:** Obtain consent from parents or guardians before taking any photographs, videos, or engaging in online communication with students.

## **SMMIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **10 ) Commit to Continuous Professional Development**

- a. **Ongoing Education:** Engage in regular training to stay updated on safeguarding practices, child protection laws, and the latest research in sport and child welfare.
- b. **Self-Reflection:** Regularly assess your own practices and behaviour to ensure you are consistently meeting safeguarding standards and maintaining a safe environment for students.

### **Coaches Protection**

Coached must prioritise their own protection by avoiding any physical contact with students unless absolutely necessary for safety or instructional purposes. Any physical interaction should be minimal, appropriate, and respectful, such guiding a swimmer's arm in technique or ensuring safety during training. Coaches should always seek to communicate effectively through verbal instructions and demonstrations, maintaining of professional boundaries to prevent misunderstandings and ensure a safe environment for both themselves and the students. Coaches should not entre the student changing rooms unless called for an emergency.

### **Red Dot Penguins**

All RDP and external coaches are required to complete SMMIS standard safeguarding training and adhere to SMMIS safeguarding expectations and External Vendor Code of Conduct. Whenever possible, SMMIS will provide internal staff to accompany lessons to ensure a safe environment for students. Coaches should avoid situations where they are alone with a student, we understand that this might occur at times. They should not enter the changing rooms (unless called to an urgent matter) maintaining clear boundaries to protect both the students and staff. If called to an urgent matter the coach must attend to the child at risk, and ask one of the SMMIS students to call for an additional member of SMMIS staff to come to the pool side immediately.

These guidelines are essential to uphold the safety and well-being of all students within the swimming programme.

### **Conclusion**

PE and Swim coaches must be vigilant and proactive in safeguarding the well-being of their students, ensuring a healthy, supportive, and safe environment. By adhering to safeguarding principles, coaches play an essential role in preventing harm and promoting the positive development of young students. Coaches should always be aware of their responsibilities, continually educate themselves, and maintain high standards of professional and ethical conduct in all aspects of their role.

**Updated August 2025**