



**ARSHA VIDYA MANDIR**

Where tireless striving  
stretches its arms  
towards perfection

## **CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

1. Introduction:
2. Background and Overview
3. What is the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy?
4. Objectives of the Policy
5. Scope and Applicability
6. The Law
7. Definitions
8. Code of Conduct
9. Preventive measures to be taken by the school
10. Child Protection officer:
11. Role and Responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer (CPO)
12. Child Protection Committee
13. Reporting and Resolution Process
14. Anonymity and Confidentiality
15. Record Keeping
16. Flowchart of Sexual Abuse Complaint Procedure followed by the School
17. List 1 - Types of complaints that can be reported
18. General Guidelines for School Teachers and Staff

-----

## CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### 1. Introduction:

As an organisation, Arsha Vidya Mandir (AVM) is committed to safeguarding all its students from all forms of abuse, exploitation, neglect, and any other harmful behaviour. AVM has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse. This policy is in accordance with the rules given in the POCSO Act, 2012.

### 2. Background and Overview:

At Arsha Vidya Mandir, the critical importance of child protection is recognised and the school is committed to creating a safe and secure environment for all the students. It is believed that every child deserves to be protected from harm, abuse, and neglect, and the school is dedicated to taking all necessary steps to ensure that the above-mentioned are followed. The policies and procedures are designed to prevent any form of abuse, harm, or mistreatment; to detect and report any instances of the same that may occur; and to provide support and care for any child who may be affected. Responsibility for child protection is taken very seriously, and the safety and well-being of the students are prioritised above all else.

### 3. What is the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy?

Child Protection: Protecting children from harmful behaviour and abuse.

Safeguarding: Taking care of the well-being of children in someone's or an organisation's care.

A child protection and safeguarding policy gives institutions and their staff guidelines to create safe and caring environments for children. It helps protect both children and staff by clearly defining the actions needed to keep children safe and ensuring that all staff follow the same process.

### 4. Objectives of the Policy

The aim is to establish the seriousness with which Arsha Vidya Mandir takes the responsibility of safeguarding its students, so as to ensure their safety and wellbeing inside and outside the school premises.

In other words,

- to ensure maximum safety of children on the school premises as well as outside, including field trips or any other school programs.
- to help children understand their rights and responsibilities.

- to safeguard children against every kind of abuse, such as physical, emotional, sexual, or mental.
- to effectively address online abuse.
- to give immediate healthcare and support in times of emergency stemming from any abuse.
- to educate and create awareness about this policy.

## **5. Scope and Applicability**

This policy applies to all known incidents involving adults (parents, teachers, school staff, etc.) and minors who come into contact with the students, whether within or outside of school premises. All adults who have interactions with students shall follow the Code of Conduct to safeguard every student from abuse.

Arsha Vidya Mandir seeks to ensure that anyone working with the students is equipped with sufficient knowledge to identify any abuse and the confidence to report any concerns that they might have for a child or about the behaviour of an adult or young person towards any child through an understanding of this policy and related training.

Via this policy, Arsha Vidya Mandir formulates the existing safeguarding culture and working environment where the potential to perpetrate abuse is minimised and prevented.

The school management has the discretion to alter the policy as it deems fit. The school management intends to conduct an annual review of how the policy is being implemented.

## **6. The Law**

This policy is guided by the existing legal frameworks for child protection in India and the ratified international conventions, namely:

- Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012
- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015
- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009
- The Information Technology Act, 2000
- The Indian Penal Code, 1860

## 7. Definitions

**7.1 Child:** The term “**Child**” is defined under Section 2(d) of the POCSO Act 2012 as any person below the age of eighteen years.

**7.2 Sexual Harassment:** The term “**Sexual harassment**” is defined under Section 11 of the POCSO Act as- A person is said to commit sexual harassment upon a child when such person with sexual intent,

- (i) utters any word or makes any sound, or makes any gesture or exhibits any object or, part of body with the intention that such word or sound shall be heard, or such gesture or object, or part of body shall be seen by the child; or
- (ii) makes a child exhibit his body or any part of his body so as it is seen by such person or any other person; or
- (iii) shows any object to a child in any form or medium for pornographic purposes; or
- (iv) repeatedly or constantly follows, watches or contacts a child either directly or through electronic, digital, or any other means; or
- (v) threatens to use, in any form of media, a real or fabricated depiction through electronic, film or digital, or any other mode of any part of the body of the child or the involvement of the child in a sexual act; or
- (vi) entices a child for pornographic purposes or gives gratification, therefore.

Explanation: Any question that involves “sexual intent” shall be a question of fact.

**7.3 Safeguarding:** Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment.
- preventing harm to children’s health or development.
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

**7.4 Child Protection:** Child protection is part of the safeguarding process and focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

**7.5 Child Abuse:** Child Abuse is any action by an adult or child that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual, or emotional, but it can also be about a lack of love, care, and attention.

An abused child can experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. It can often happen over a period of time, rather than being a one-off event, and increasingly, it can happen online.

## **7.6 Types of Child Abuse:**

**7.6.1 Physical Abuse:** Deliberate hurting of a child, causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns, or cuts.

**7.6.2 Emotional Abuse:** Emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child, sometimes called psychological abuse, causing serious harm. It includes making a child feel worthless, unloved, or inadequate; expecting more than their developmental stage allows; being overprotective; exposing them to domestic abuse; and subjecting them to bullying (including cyberbullying).

**7.6.3 Neglect:** Ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs, such as adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, access to medical care, and protection from danger. It also includes a lack of responsiveness to a child's emotional needs.

**7.6.4 Sexual Abuse:** Forcing or persuading a child to take part in sexual activities. This can involve physical contact or non-contact activities, such as making a child look at sexual images, encouraging inappropriate behaviour, or grooming them for future abuse.

**7.6.5 Grooming:** Grooming is defined as developing the trust of an individual or his or her family for the purposes of physical abuse, physical exploitation, emotional abuse, mental manipulation, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Grooming can happen both online and in person.

**7.6.6 Online Abuse** Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks or playing games online. Sexual abuse can happen online, too.

**7.6.7 Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is bullying with the use of digital technologies. It is a form of harassment or bullying inflicted through the use of electronic or communication devices such as computers,

mobile phones, laptops, etc. It involves repeated behaviour aimed at scaring, angering, or shaming the victim. Examples include spreading lies, posting embarrassing photos, sending hurtful messages, or impersonating someone online.

**7.6.1 Cyber Grooming:** Cyber grooming involves someone (often an adult) befriending a child online to build an emotional connection with future intentions of sexual abuse, exploitation, or trafficking. The goals include gaining the child's trust and obtaining intimate or personal data to blackmail or further exploit the child.

**7.7 School Staff:** For the purposes of this policy, "school staff" includes all school teachers, administrative staff, support staff, and any external personnel such as mentors, facilitators, contractors, and other representatives who enter the school campus with permission to interact with students.

## **8 Code of Conduct**

Arsha Vidya Mandir is dedicated to maintaining a safe and respectful environment for the children it serves. All school staff are strictly prohibited from engaging in any activity that could lead to child abuse. Arsha Vidya Mandir aims to prevent any actions or omissions that could place children at risk. All school staff are expected to uphold this commitment.

Violations of the Code of Conduct will result in serious disciplinary actions, up to and including termination and legal remedies. The following guidelines must be followed by all adult and student representatives:

**8.1 Physical Abuse:** No AVM school staff member shall physically abuse a student, including actions like hitting, pinching, pushing, shaking, biting, burning, or any other form of physical harm.

**8.2 Sexual Abuse:** No AVM school staff members shall sexually harass, abuse, or exploit a student. This includes non-consensual touching, grooming, inappropriate relationships, sexually suggestive behaviour, and displaying inappropriate content.

**8.3 Emotional Abuse:** No AVM school staff members shall emotionally abuse or manipulate a student, including using offensive language, actions intended to embarrass or degrade, and creating an environment of fear.

- 8.4 Negligence:** No AVM school staff members shall neglect a student's basic needs or ignore allegations raised by a student.
- 8.5 Discrimination:** No AVM school staff members shall discriminate against a student based on gender, religion, disability, economic status, political views, or any other protected characteristic.
- 8.6 Quid Pro Quo (a favour for a favour):** No AVM school staff members shall put students in situations involving implicit or explicit quid pro quo.
- 8.7 Consent:** No AVM school staff members shall take photographs or video record students without consent or reveal student information without permission on any forms of media (print media, electronic/broadcasting media, outdoor and transit media, and digital media/new media/internet).
- 8.8 Legal Compliance:** All AVM school staff members must adhere to child welfare protection laws such as the Juvenile Justice Act and the POCSO Act.

## **9. Preventive measures to be taken by the school**

To ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct, Arsha Vidya Mandir shall implement the following preventative measures:

### **9.1 Safe Recruitment:**

- 9.1.1** To conduct background and reference checks.
- 9.1.2** To require self-disclosure of criminal and non-criminal records.
- 9.1.3** To conduct interviews focusing on attitudes toward child safety.
- 9.1.4** To require new employees to acknowledge the Child Protection Policy.

### **9.2 Risk Mitigation Strategies:**

- 9.2.1** To collect important information about students' health.
- 9.2.2** To display sensitivity in all interactions and avoid inappropriate physical contact.
- 9.2.3** To design an appropriate agreement with students on discipline in the learning environment and refrain from corporal punishment.
- 9.2.4** To prohibit intimate or sexual relationships with students and the sharing of mature content.

- 9.2.5 To exercise responsibility and prohibit any substance abuse on the school premises.
- 9.2.6 To respect student privacy and maintain confidentiality.
- 9.2.7 To seek consent for the use of photographs and videos.
- 9.2.8 Educate students about appropriate behaviour and safety guidelines.

### **9.3 Safety guidelines while taking students outside the school for exposure/ field trips:**

- 9.3.1 To obtain consent or indemnity for field trips, outstation trips, and overnight trips from parents.
- 9.3.2 To ensure that the ratio of the teachers accompanying the students on the overnight or outstation exposure trips is 1:12.
- 9.3.3 To immediately address and separate victims from perpetrators in cases of reported or observed bullying and/or physical dominance on the bus.
- 9.3.4 To obtain consent, indemnity or written permission from parents/guardians before taking the child out of the school for activities and outings.
- 9.3.5 To communicate the exact route, destination, and timings well in advance to parents or guardians.
- 9.3.6 To inform participants of the trip or excursion about safety precautions and necessary phone numbers at least three days prior to the program.

### **9.4 Institutional Framework and Policies:**

- 9.4.1 To develop and enforce a standard and uniform Child Protection Policy applicable to all persons employed by the institution.
- 9.4.2 To require all personnel, outside instructors, mentors, and anyone in positions of responsibility and authority over children to sign the Child Protection Policy document.
- 9.4.3 To establish effective and impartial complaint mechanisms for children, making them known to children and their parents or guardians, and allowing children to notify parents of complaints or concerns regarding their treatment or conditions.



**9.4.4** To summarise the Child Protection Policy and display a one-pager at the reception or main lobby area of the institution along with the 1098 CHILDLINE Helpline number.

**9.4.5** To review the implementation and impact of the guidelines annually based on surveys and other monitoring mechanisms.

**9.4.6** By adhering to these measures, Arsha Vidya Mandir aims to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all its students.

## **10. Child Protection officer:**

The designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) for Arsha Vidya Mandir School is Ms. Githa Mohana (email ID: schoolcounselor@arshavidyamandir.in)

## **11. Role and Responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer (CPO):**

### **11.1 Ensuring Adherence to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy:**

**11.1.1** The CPO is responsible for ensuring that all representatives are aware of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This includes organising training sessions and briefings for the representatives.

**11.1.2** The CPO must also ensure that all representatives sign a declaration agreeing to comply with this policy.

### **11.2 Receiving Complaints Relating to Child Protection:**

The CPO will be available to receive and respond to complaints related to breaches of the child safety Code of Conduct and guidelines.

### **11.3 Maintaining Records of Child Protection-Related Incidents:**

**11.3.1** The CPO must maintain a written record of all child protection-related incidents, regardless of the size, scale, or nature of the complaint.

**11.3.1** These records will be used for organisational reviews and to identify any patterns or trends.

### **11.4 Resolving Child Protection Complaints:**

**11.4.1** When there is an alleged violation of the Code of Conduct or guidelines, the CPO is responsible for investigating and resolving the complaint.

**11.4.2** The CPO must communicate the outcome of the investigation to all parties involved.

## **12. Child Protection Committee:**

The Child Protection Committee of Arsha Vidya Mandir will comprise eight (8) members

- Two teaching staff
- Two parent representatives
- One non-teaching staff
- School Counsellor
- School Principal
- School Correspondent (Management)

The details of the members of the Child Protection Committee are presented in Annexure 1.

## **13. Reporting and Resolution Process**

### **13.1 Initial Response:**

13.1.1 Upon receiving a report of an incident violating the Code of Conduct, the Child Protection Officer (CPO) will provide an initial response to ensure the safety and well-being of all parties involved. This may include separating individuals if necessary, providing support to the reporting party, and taking immediate action/s to address any imminent risks or threats.

13.1.2 Steps to be followed when the child is in immediate danger or report sexual assault or grievous hurt requiring medical attention:

- Calling the appropriate emergency service.
- After ensuring the child's safety, informing the Child Welfare/Protection team.
- Contacting the police
- Not delaying taking the necessary action(s) to safeguard the child.

13.1.3 If the child is in the care of a chaperone, the school shall consider the child's right to confidentiality, unless it is the chaperone that has approached the school.

## 13.2 What Can Be Reported?

- 13.2.1 Any violation of the Code of Conduct and guidelines.
- 13.2.2 Suspicious behaviour.
- 13.2.3 Any child protection concern for a student studying at AVM, regardless of the source. This includes signs of physical abuse at home or medical emergencies.

Note: Follow the rule "When in doubt, report it" to prevent escalation and address concerns early. Also note *List 1: Types of complaints that can be reported*.

## 13.3 Who Can Complain or Report?

Anyone can report violations, suspicious behaviour, or other wellbeing concerns, including:

- the student experiencing the issue
- other students who witness or suspect such behaviour
- parents of the concerned or other students
- school teachers or staff members

## 13.4 To Whom Should Complaints/Reports Be Made?

- 13.4.1 Complaints/reports should be made to the Child Protection Officer (CPO), responsible for overseeing child protection and safeguarding students at Arsha Vidya Mandir. Reports can be made directly to the CPO.
- 13.4.2 Current CPO: Ms. Githa Mohana S, email ID: schoolcounselor@arshavidyamandir.in
- 13.4.3 The written complaint can also be placed in the 'Complaint Boxes' that will be available on the school campus in specified locations, as mandated by law.
- 13.4.4 If the Child Protection Officer is involved in the incident or if the reporting party feels uncomfortable reporting to them, they should report to the school Principal.

### **13.5 How to Complain?**

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing, with the option to remain anonymous if desired. If reporting in writing, the reporting party should provide as much detail as possible about the incident, including the nature of the behaviour, names of individuals involved (if known), and any supporting evidence.

### **13.6 Initial Assessment:**

Upon receiving the report, the designated authority, including the CPO, will conduct an initial assessment to determine the severity and urgency of the situation. This may involve gathering additional information from the reporting party and any other relevant sources.

### **13.7 Investigation:**

If the initial assessment indicates that further action is necessary, a formal investigation will be initiated by the appropriate authorities, including the CPO and the Child Protection Committee. The investigation will be conducted impartially and in accordance with established protocols for confidentiality and fairness.

### **13.8 Resolution Process:**

**13.8.1 Gathering Evidence:** During the investigation, evidence related to the reported incident will be collected, which may include interviews with witnesses, review of relevant documentation, and any other relevant information.

**13.8.2 Assessment of Findings:** Once the investigation is complete, the findings will be assessed by the committee, which includes the CPO, to determine whether a violation of the Code of Conduct has occurred and, if so, the severity of the violation.

**13.8.3 Determination:** Based on the findings of the investigation, the incident will be categorised as either substantiated (evidence supports the occurrence of the reported behaviour) or unsubstantiated (insufficient evidence to support the reported behaviour).

13.8.4 **Decision Making:** Depending on the determination, appropriate actions will be taken to address the situation. This may include disciplinary measures, counselling, training, warning, suspension, termination, or other interventions, depending on the circumstances.

### **13.9 External Consultation:**

In cases where additional expertise or consultation is required, external resources such as legal counsel, child protection agencies, or law enforcement authorities may be contacted to provide guidance and support throughout the resolution process.

### **13.10 Reporting to Authorities:**

If the reported incident involves allegations of sexual abuse or other criminal behaviour, it will be reported to the appropriate authorities in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. The reporting process will be conducted in a manner that prioritises the safety and well-being of all parties involved.

### **13.11 Communication and Follow-Up:**

Both the reporting party and the individual(s) involved in the incident will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and any actions taken as a result. Follow-up measures will be implemented to ensure that the situation has been effectively addressed and to provide support to those involved.

## **14. Anonymity and Confidentiality**

**14.1 Anonymity:** Reporting parties have the option to remain anonymous during the reporting process, and every effort will be made to protect their identity throughout the investigation.

**14.2 Confidentiality:** All information related to the report, including the identity of the reporting party and any witnesses, will be kept confidential to the extent possible, in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.

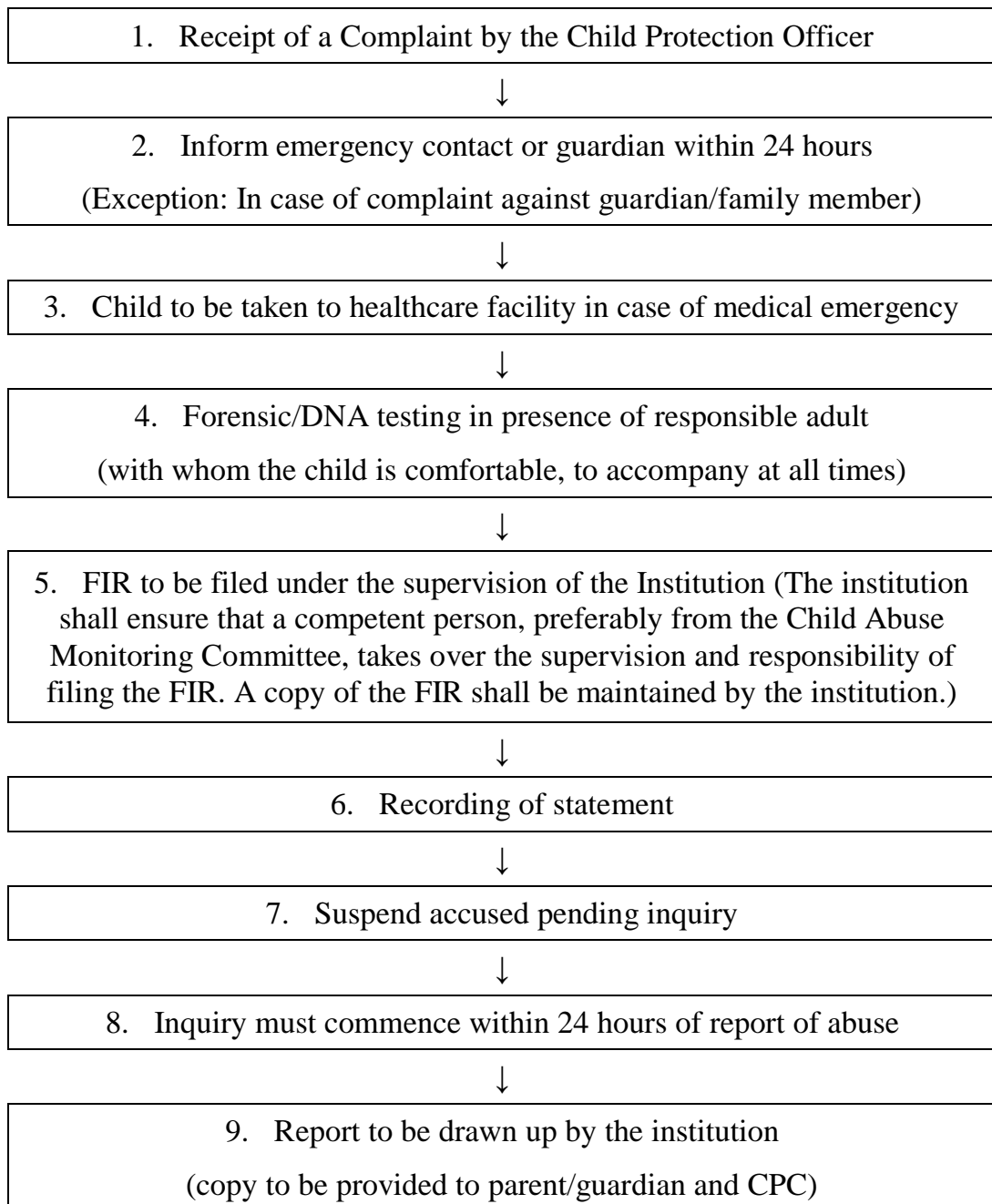
## **15. Record Keeping**

**15.1 Details:** Records of all reported incidents, investigations, and resolutions will be maintained in a secure and confidential manner.

**15.2 Access:** Access to these records will be restricted to authorized personnel directly involved in the resolution process, including, the CPO, the Child Protection Committee, and school management.

**15.3 Retention:** Records will be retained for a specified period until the child remains in school and as required by applicable laws and regulations, after which they will be securely disposed of in accordance with data protection guidelines.

**16. Flowchart of Sexual Abuse Complaint Procedure followed by the school:**



Time limit for proceedings within the institution: **15 days**

## 17. List 1 - Types of complaints that can be reported:

1. **Sexual Abuse:** Awareness of it, violation, coercion, showing sexually suggestive content, sexually suggestive remarks (in person or online).
2. **Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse or instances involving parent/s, teacher/s and student/s within or outside the school premises.
3. **Verbal and Emotional Abuse:** Threats from parents, teachers or any adult known to the student, insults, and manipulation that affect a child's mental health.
4. **Bullying:** Bullying by any student/s within or outside the school premises, including cyberbullying.
5. **Neglect and Discrimination:** Neglect by parent/s or guardian/s at home or school staff. Discrimination done by the staff in the school on the basis of gender, religion, physical characteristics, disability or community.
6. **Observation of an injury:** Any observation made by any staff or student can be reported to the CPO or any other school authority.
7. **Witnessing or hearing concerning interactions with any individuals:** Any conversations in person or text messages on social media platforms between a staff member of the school and a child that are deemed inappropriate or concerning.
8. **Inappropriate use of mobile phones:** Use of mobile phones to send or obtain inappropriate messages or pictures; recording any of the students without consent; posting pictures of the students on social media platforms without prior consent; calling the student for any non-academic purpose.
9. **Any signs of distress or danger:** Visible signs of disturbed behaviour, withdrawal, acting out, frequent crying, emotional outbursts, fatigue, and deviating from the student's normal behaviour.

## 18. General Guidelines for School Teachers and Staff

### 18.1 What to do if concerned about a child:

**18.2 Documenting concerns:** Maintain a record of any unexplained injuries or any concerning behaviour over time, as patterns may emerge, warranting further investigation.

### 18.3 How to respond to a disclosure:

If a child discloses information or expresses a desire to share a 'secret,' it's imperative to respond appropriately. Further respond by -

- remaining calm and avoid showing shock or disbelief.
- listening carefully / making brief notes as you listen
- avoiding to ask detailed, probing, or leading questions.
- assuring the child that the disclosure is taken seriously.
- explaining that, depending on the information, others might be involved to ensure student safety.
- not promising to keep secrets and emphasising the importance of the child's safety.
- keeping in mind that at all times, the child is paramount.

#### **18.4 Handling parental involvement:**

If the parent is unaware of the disclosure or is the alleged abuser, the school may seek guidance from the police on sharing information. When informing parents, the school shall also consider their emotional well-being and choose an appropriate person for the task.

#### **18.5 Guiding Principles for the Staff:**

##### **18.5.1 Dos**

- All staff members must provide an enabling environment for children's personal, physical, social, emotional, moral, and intellectual development.
- They must encourage and respect other employees' and children's voices and views.
- Be inclusive and involve all children without selection or exclusion on the basis of gender, disability, community, religion, or any other status.
- Be aware of the potential for peer abuse (e.g., children bullying, discriminating against, victimising or abusing children).
- Develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and more vulnerable children from peer and/or adult abuse.
- Be aware of high-risk situations for possible bullying (e.g., unsupervised mixing of older and younger children and the possibility of discrimination against minors).
- Avoid placing oneself in a compromising or vulnerable situation when meeting with children.



- Meet with a child in a public, central location whenever possible. Avoid one on one interactions with students, always interact in the presence of other students or adults.
- Immediately report the circumstances of any situation that occurs that may be subject to misinterpretation.
- Make oneself aware and educated on the laws, rules, and guidelines related to child protection as amended from time to time.
- Ensure children leave school only with their parents or authorised personnel.
- According to Sections 19(I) and 21 of the POCSO Act, 2012, teachers, management, and all employees of institutions should be aware of the provisions of the Act, some of which place a duty on them to report instances of child abuse.
- Be responsive in case any special need for the child arises such as health issues or emotional support.
- Immediately report any suspicious behaviour/suspected occurrence of abuse. It is a criminal offence to conceal or abet incidents of child abuse, and it is mandatory to report such offences.

### **18.5.2 Don'ts**

- Don't physically assault or physically abuse the child in the name of corporal punishment.
- Don't use language that is discriminatory, abusive or hurtful to the child while admonishing them.
- Don't develop relationships with the child that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Don't act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse, discriminate against, show differential treatment towards, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Don't ignore any blatant abuse occurring to any student, with your knowledge.

- Don't engage in any sort of physical contact with a child that may make the child or an observer feel uncomfortable, or that may be seen by an observer as violating boundaries.
- It is important to note that whether or not a particular behaviour or action constitutes inappropriate behaviour will be a matter determined by the organisation having regard to all of the circumstances, including past behaviour, and allegations or suspicions related to such behaviour.

### **18.6 Online Safety**

If there are any online safeguarding concerns, whether related to online grooming or child abuse images, these must be referred to the Child Protection Officer or the Child Protection Committee at school immediately. Cybercrime agencies can be approached to enable the removal of child abuse images from the internet. Adults at school are strongly discouraged from following students on social media.

Children should not accept friend requests from unknown people on social media platforms.

### **18.7 Confidentiality**

The school and the authorities shall ensure that the minor's name is not revealed. Failure to adhere to this requirement would lead to legal consequences as specified in the POCSO Act.

The POCSO Act's Section 23(2) forbids the disclosure of any information that could reveal the identity of a minor victim of sexual offenses, including that student's name, residence, portrait, family information, school, neighbourhood, or other facts.

This restriction's violation is a crime that carries a six-month to one-year prison sentence as well as a fine.

Any and all data collected by the school in lieu of record-keeping can be made compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The best way to ensure GDPR compliance is to ensure that all parties involved understand that the data is completely confidential. Any personal data used must be promptly communicated to the concerned person.

-----

Arsha Vidya Mandir wishes to ensure for its students a happy, safe and memorable childhood free from all forms of harm. We are committed to safeguarding our children and draw on the support of all associated with us to make this a reality.

**Acknowledgements:**

- CBSE Guidelines related to the safety of children in school (<https://www.cbse.gov.in/cbsenew/safety.html>)
- Government of India Ministry of Women and Child Development National Child Protection Policy Guidelines
- Handbook on Implementation of POCSO Act, 2012 for School Management and Staff by National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development
- GDPR compliance checklist - GDPR.eu
- A Handbook for Adolescents/ Students on Cyber Safety ([https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/CyberSafety\\_English\\_Web\\_031\\_22018.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/CyberSafety_English_Web_031_22018.pdf))
- ISDS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

### **Annexure 1:**

At Arsha Vidya Mandir School, the Child Protection Committee plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and well-being of students by overseeing and enforcing the school's child protection policies. This committee is responsible for conducting thorough and impartial investigations into any child protection concerns, adhering strictly to established protocols to guarantee fairness and accuracy. Its primary function is to be accessible to discuss any child protection issues raised, providing a supportive and responsive environment for addressing concerns. The committee ensures that all necessary actions are taken to uphold the highest standards of child safety and protection.

The members are:

1. Two teaching staff- Mr. Amar & Ms. Sarika Caroline
2. Two parent representatives- Mr. Rajasekar Ganesan & Dr. Govardhini
3. One non-teaching staff- Ms. Krithika N Venkat
4. School Counsellor- Ms. Githa Mohana S
5. School Principal- Dr. Aruna A
6. School Correspondent (Management)- Ms. Arpitha Reddy

### **Child Protection Committee: Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **1. Initiation of Investigation:**

- The Child Protection Committee (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") shall initiate an investigation upon receiving a formal complaint or report. The Committee will conduct an initial assessment to determine the severity and urgency of the situation before proceeding with the investigation.

#### **2. Oversight of Investigation:**

- The Committee will oversee the investigation process, ensuring that evidence is gathered in a systematic and lawful manner. This includes interviewing witnesses, collecting physical or digital evidence, and ensuring the matter is resolved with due diligence.

#### **3. Confidentiality of Records:**

- All records pertaining to child protection incidents shall be maintained with strict confidentiality. These records will be accessible only to members of the Committee and will not be shared with unauthorized individuals, in accordance with relevant data protection laws.

**4. Committee Meetings:**

- The Committee shall convene as necessary, based on the gravity of the issue, to discuss the investigation. It shall also report any serious concerns to external authorities, such as law enforcement or child protection agencies, if mandated by law.

**5. Quorum for Meetings:**

- For any meeting of the Committee to be considered valid, a quorum must consist of the following six members:
  - Correspondent,
  - Principal,
  - Headmistress,
  - Child Protection Officer (CPO),
  - One teaching staff member, and
  - One parent representative.

**6. Quorum for Investigations and Policy Changes:**

- For the investigation of a complaint, the quorum shall include the following individuals:
  - Correspondent,
  - Principal,
  - Headmistress,
  - CPO,
  - One teaching staff member, and
  - One parent representative.
- For decisions regarding policy changes, all eight Committee members must be present.

**7. Assistance in Final Resolution:**

- A designated parent representative and teaching staff member shall assist the Committee during the final resolution process, providing input from their respective perspectives to ensure a fair outcome.

**8. Finality of Decisions:**

- The decisions rendered by the Committee, after a thorough investigation and review of the facts, shall be deemed final and binding, subject to any applicable rights of appeal or further action as provided by law.