

Guru Tegh Bahadur 3rd Centenary Public School
C - Block, Mansarover Garden, New Delhi-15

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Child Protection Policy applies to everyone associated with Guru Tegh Bahadur 3rd Centenary Public School.

It encompasses the whole school

1. Staff members.
2. Support staff and any other person

OBJECTIVE OF THE POLICY

The main objectives of the School Child Protection Policy are:

- TO ENSURE AND FOSTER A SECURE, INCLUSIVE AND NURTURING SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT WHERE EVERY STUDENT FEELS SAFE, RESPECTED AND IS ABLE TO LEARN AND GROW TO HIS/HER FULL POTENTIAL.
- TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE CARE AND SUPPORT TO STUDENTS AFFECTED BY ABUSE, FOLLOWING THE SCHOOL'S CHILD PROTECTION POLICY.
- TO PROMOTE AWARENESS OF CHILD SAFETY & PROTECTION AND ABOUT SCHOOL SAFETY MEASURES.
- TO ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE PROCEDURES FOR TIMELY IDENTIFICATION, REPORTING AND MANAGEMENT OF SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

POLICY STATEMENT

Guru Tegh Bahadur 3rd Centenary Public School ensures the safety, security, dignity and well-being of every child within school premises.

The school strives towards a conducive and child sensitive learning environment where every child has the right to be protected from harm and is provided a safe environment.

The Child Protection Policy focuses on the development of children and provides us guidelines to protect our school students from physical violence, mental harassment and abuse.

The Child Protection Policy applies to all school staff, teachers, visitors, parents and any other who directly interacts with students of the School.

OUR SCHOOL STRIVES TOWARDS ZERO TOLERANCE TO CHILD ABUSE AND SAFETY VIOLATION IN ANY FORM

CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

1. HEAD OF THE SCHOOL
2. OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT
3. SCHOOL COUNSELLOR
4. NGO MEMBER
5. PARENT REPRESENTATIVE
6. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE
7. PGT AND TGT TEACHING STAFF MEMBER

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

The school maintains a zero-tolerance approach towards all forms of child abuse, neglect, bullying, harassment, violence & discrimination.

Every concern is addressed promptly, fairly and confidentially.

2. STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

All staff members shall maintain professional boundaries with students, treat every child with dignity and respect. No staff shall engage in corporal punishment, harassment, discrimination or humiliation.

3. SAFE RECRUITMENT

All teaching, non-teaching staff and support staff undergoes appropriate background verification before appointment.

Every member acknowledges and adheres to the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct.

4. REPORTING AND RESPONSE

Every suspected or disclosed case of child abuse is reported immediately through prescribed reporting mechanism.

All complaints are handled promptly, sensitively, confidentially and in accordance with the POCSO Act, 2012.

5. COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT

Students affected by abuse or safeguarding concerns receive timely counselling, emotional support and appropriate services.

6. PREVENTION OF BULLYING

The school strictly prohibits physical, verbal, emotional, social and sexual bullying as well as cyberbullying.

Appropriate preventive and corrective measures are taken to address incidents of bullying.

7. AWARENESS & EDUCATION

Regular awareness programmes are conducted for students on personal safety, cyber security and child rights.

Staff as well as parents receive periodic training on child safety and protection.

8. COMPLIANCE AND REVIEW

The school comply with the POCSO Act, 2012, CBSE guidelines and other applicable child protection laws.

The policy is reviewed periodically to ensure it's effectiveness.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE OF SCHOOL

1. Ensure that the Child Protection Policy is communicated and accessible to all parents.
2. Follow safe recruitment practices by appointing qualified, competent, and child-friendly staff.
3. Provide regular training to all staff on the POCSO Act, child safeguarding, and reporting procedures.
4. Foster a safe, inclusive, and child-friendly environment that promotes the dignity, well-being, and protection of every student.
5. Raise awareness among students, parents, teaching, non-teaching, and support staff about child protection, personal safety, cyber safety, and available support services, including Child Helpline 1098.
6. Ensure that all concerns or disclosures of abuse are reported promptly to the Child Protection Committee (CPC) or Child Protection Officer (CPO), documented confidentially, and handled in accordance with the POCSO Act.
7. All suspected cases are referred to the appropriate authorities as required by law.
8. Maintain confidentiality throughout the reporting and response process to safeguard the child's privacy and well-being.
9. Encourage appropriate professional boundaries between staff and students at all times.
10. Review and update the Child Protection Policy yearly to ensure compliance with requirements and best practices.

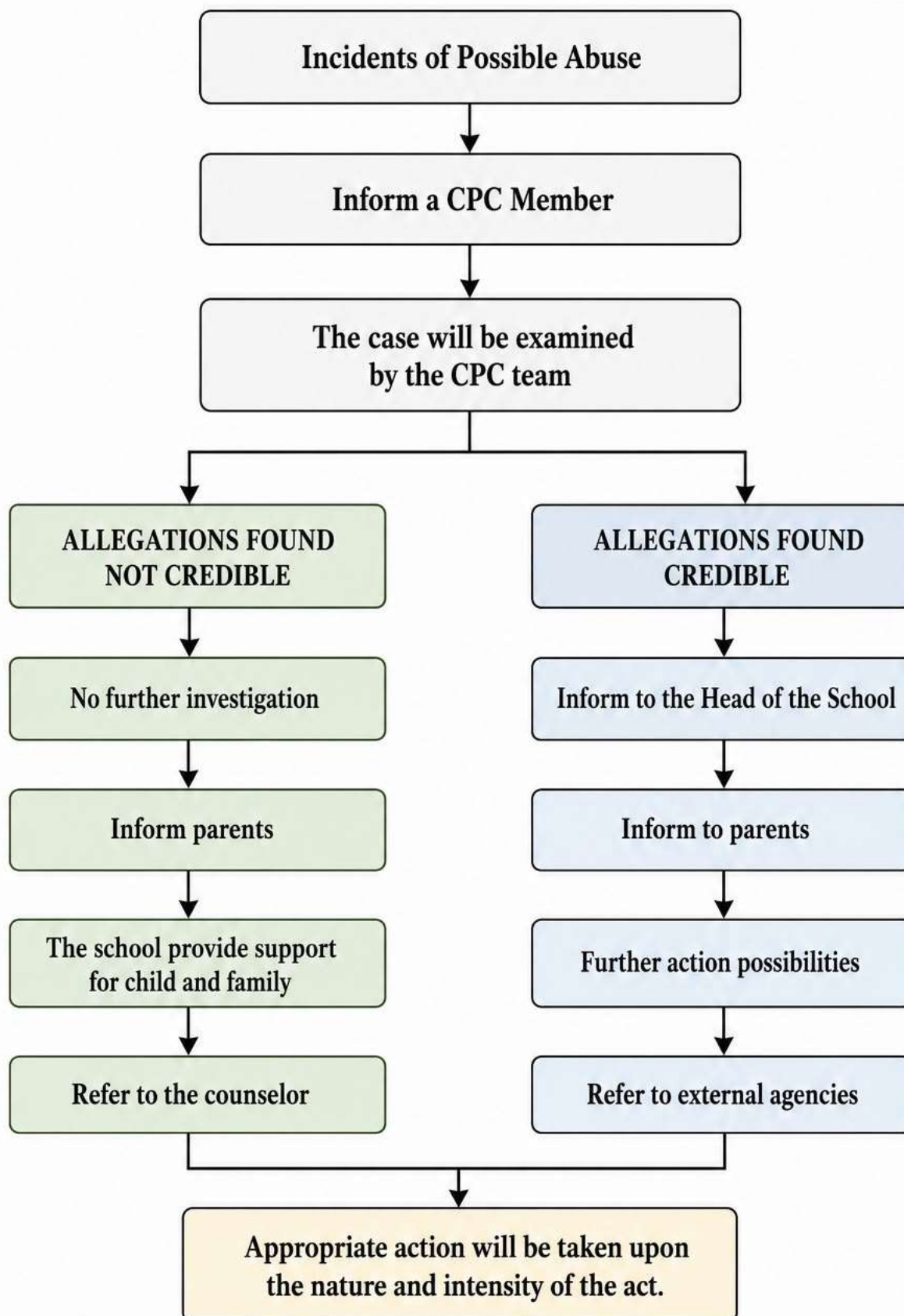
ROLE OF PARENTS

1. Provide updated details of authorized persons permitted to collect their child and inform the school of any changes.
2. Inform the school about family circumstances or significant life events that may affect the child's well-being.
3. Report any suspected or confirmed child abuse to the School Child Protection Committee (CPC)/Child Protection Officer (CPO) without delay.
4. Educate your ward about personal safety and the Child Helpline 1098.
5. Cooperate with the school during child protection matters while maintaining confidentiality.
6. Understand that failure to report child abuse or making false complaints may have legal consequences.
7. Monitor their child's online activities to protect them from cyberbullying, grooming, and other forms of online abuse.

ROLE OF SUPPORT STAFF

1. Maintain professional boundaries and interact with students in accordance with the POCSO Act and the school's Child Protection Policy.
2. Immediately report any suspected or witnessed incident of child abuse to the Child Protection Officer (CPO) or Child Protection Committee (CPC).
3. Cooperate fully with the school during any child protection inquiry while maintaining confidentiality.
4. Understand that failure to report suspected child abuse may attract legal consequences under applicable laws.
5. Be aware that making false or malicious complaints is a punishable offence under the law.

PROCEDURE TO REPORT AN ABUSE



TYPES OF ABUSE EVERY CHILD MUST BE PROTECTED FROM:

1. Physical Abuse

According to WHO, physical abuse of a child is defined as the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in – or has a high likelihood of resulting in – harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity. Physical abuse may involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child. (These symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as, cutting and suicide ideation).

2. Emotional/psychological Abuse

According to WHO, emotional and psychological abuse involves both isolated incidents as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or caregiver to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with his or her personal potential and in the context of the society in which the child dwells. Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; that they are inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person, age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children causing children frequently to feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children are few of the types of emotional abuse.

3. Neglect and Negligent Treatment

According to WHO, neglect includes both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or other family member to provide for the development and well-being of the child – where the parent is in a position to do so – in one or more of the following areas- health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions. Negligence might take place irrelevant of the financial condition of the parents. Neglect is the failure on the part of the parents, guardian, teacher or any other responsible people to recognize or provide for the child's basic needs, such as food, shelter, medical care, educational opportunities, or protection and supervision.

4. Exploitation

Exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and child prostitution. These activities are detrimental to the child's physical or mental health, education, spiritual, moral or social emotional development.

5. Sexual abuse

According to WHO, "Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared or that violates the laws or social taboos of society".

5.1. Sexual abuse is an act or behaviour which constitutes a sexual offence under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, as amended from time to time. Such sexual offences include penetrative sexual assault (including rape), non-penetrative sexual assault (including touching the private parts of a child), sexual harassment (including stalking a child, showing a child pornography and making a child exhibit his/her body) and using a child for pornographic purposes (including storing of pornographic material involving a child for commercial purposes).

5.2. An abetment of and an attempt to commit a sexual offence under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 are also considered to be offences. Certain offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 are considered to be aggravated offences and are subject to stringent punishments. For instance, sexual assault committed by persons in a position of trust or authority in relation to the child (including relatives of the child, persons managing or working in an educational institution, police officers or public servants) are considered to be aggravated offences.

6. Abuse in Virtual Space

Virtual worlds have become a regular destination for children. Easy access and affordable fees enable children of all walks of life to participate in virtual worlds. Games specifically, appear to be a great attraction for young children in their use of the internet. While virtual worlds provide entertainment to many children, it also offers opportunities for sexual child offenders to access contact with vulnerable children. Aggressors can exploit all the possible communication channels of virtual worlds (chat, messengers, video and audio) to perpetrate virtual sexual abuse (sexual age play, virtual rape and pornography) via avatars, and traditional forms of online sexual abuse (exposure to sexually explicit/harmful

content, the creation, storage and distribution of real child pornography, and online solicitation which can lead to three devastating contact crimes: rape, sex tourism and child trafficking). Devoid of geographical borders and lacking in a universally agreed upon and accepted definition of both online child sexual abuse and virtual sexual abuse, law enforcement can do little should an abuse become known. It becomes imperative for parents and caregivers to engage with their children in discussions of safety and for the collaboration of parents, schools, virtual world operators and law enforcement to join in efforts to prevent such abuse, especially in the case of child-headed homes where there is no primary parental supervision. (Reddy and Minnaar, 2019)

EXISTING CONSTITUTION & LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Constitution of India guarantees several rights to children and enables the State to make provisions to ensure that the tender age of children is not abused.

A summary of the United Nations on The Rights of the Child

ARTICLE 1 (definition of a child)

The rights set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) apply to everyone under the age of 18.

ARTICLE 2 (non – discrimination)

The rights set out in the UNCRC apply to every child whatever their race, colour, gender, language, religion, ethnicity, disability or any other status.

ARTICLE 3 (the best interests of the child)

All decisions and actions that concern children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

ARTICLE 5 (parental guidance)

The state must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child in exercising his or her rights and in a way that is consistent with a child's developing capacities.

ARTICLE 12 (respect for children's views)

Every child has the right to express their views on matters that affect them and for these views to be taken into consideration.

ARTICLE 13 (freedom of expression)

Every child has the right to find out and distribute information and to express their ideas – through talking, writing, art or any other form of expression.

ARTICLE 14 (freedom on thought, conscience and religion)

Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose, and to practice their religion, provided this does not prevent others from enjoying their rights. The state should respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to provide direction to their child that is appropriate to his or her development.

ARTICLE 15 (freedom of association)

Every child has the right to meet other people and to join groups and organizations, as long as this does not prevent others from enjoying their rights.

ARTICLE 16 (privacy)

Every child has the right to privacy, including their family and home life, and they should be protected from unlawful attacks on reputation.

ARTICLE 17 (mass media)

Every child has the right to find out information and material from a variety of media sources. The state should encourage mass media information that supports children's well-being and development. The mass media should be encouraged to consider the linguistic needs of children from minority groups. The production and dissemination of children's books should be encouraged. Children should be protected from information that may be damaging.

ARTICLE (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)

The state must do all it can to protect children from violence, abuse, neglect, bad treatment or exploitation by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

ARTICLE 23 (disabled children)

Disabled children have the right to enjoy a full life, with dignity and to participate as far as possible in their community. The government should support disabled children and their families.

ARTICLE 24 (health and healthcare)

Every child has the right to the best possible health and to healthcare. The state should ensure children have healthcare services, nutritious food, clean water, a clean environment and healthcare information. Richer countries should support poorer countries in this.

ARTICLE 31 (play and cultural and artistic activities)

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in cultural and artistic activities

ARTICLE 33 (drug abuse)

Children should be protected from using, producing or distributing illegal drugs.

ARTICLE 34 (sexual exploitation and abuse)

All children must be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, including unlawful sexual activity, prostitution and in pornographic materials.

ARTICLE 37 (cruel treatment and detention)

No child should be tortured or treated in a cruel or inhuman way. Prison should be a last resort. Children who are detained should not be imprisoned with adults and they should have the opportunity to remain in contact with their family. No child should be given the death penalty or a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of release.

POCSO ACT, 2012

To deal with child sexual abuse cases, the Government of India has brought in a special law, namely, The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

The Act has come into effect from 14th November, 2012 along with the Rules framed there under. The POCSO Act, 2012 is a comprehensive law to provide for the protection of children from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography, while safeguarding the interests of the child at every stage of the judicial process by incorporating child friendly mechanisms for reporting, recording of evidence, investigation and speedy trial of offences through designated Special Courts.

In keeping with the best international child protection standards, the said Act also provides for mandatory reporting of sexual offenses. This casts a legal duty upon a person who has knowledge that a child has been sexually abused to report the offense; if he fails to do so, he may be punished with six months' imprisonment and / or a fine.

The said Act also casts the police in the role of child protectors during the investigative process. Thus, the police personnel receiving a report of sexual abuse of a child are given the responsibility of making urgent arrangements for the care and protection of the child, such as obtaining emergency medical treatment for the child and placing the child in a shelter home, should the need arise.

The police are also required to bring the matter to the attention of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) within 24 hours of receiving the report, so the CWC may then proceed where required to make further arrangements for the safety and security of the child.

The said Act makes provisions for the medical examination of the child in a manner designed to cause as little distress as possible. The examination is to be carried out in the presence of the parent or other person whom the child trusts, and in the case of a female child, by a female doctor. The prevention of child sexual abuse, protection of victims, justice delivery, and rehabilitation of victims are not isolated issues. The achievement of these objectives requires a coordinated response of all the key players, which include the police, prosecution, Courts, medical institutions, psychologists and counsellors, as well as institutions that provide social services to the children.

The protection of children from violence and abuse thus requires an integrated approach. Needless to say, the identification and understanding of the roles of each of these professionals is crucial to avoid duplication and promote effective convergence. The responsibility of supporting children who have been sexually abused should be embraced by the whole community, but it is the professionals that work in this field who play an important role in enabling the healing process.