



THE LIGHT COMES
AS WE WORK TOWARDS IT

THE VICTORIA MEMORIAL SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

THE VICTORIA MEMORIAL SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND (VMSB)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1. The Victoria Memorial School for the Blind (VMSB) is committed to promoting the well-being and safeguarding the rights of all children, especially those with Visual Impairments (VI) and Intellectual Disabilities (ID) as per the PWD Act, 1995.

1.2. This policy outlines the principles, guidelines, and procedures to ensure the protection of children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

2. Purpose

2.1. To establish a framework for protecting children under the care of VMSB.

2.2. To create a safe and supportive environment for children with disabilities.

2.3. To ensure that all staff, volunteers, and associates understand and adhere to the principles of child protection.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, and other representatives of VMSB.

3.2. It covers all activities and programs of the trust, involving children with disabilities.

4. Definitions

4.1. Child: Any person under the age of 18 years.

4.2. Abuse: Any form of physical, emotional, sexual harm, or neglect that impacts a child's health, well-being, and development.

4.3. Neglect: The failure to provide necessary care, assistance, guidance, or supervision to a child.

5. Principles

5.1. Best Interests of the Child: All actions and decisions regarding child protection must prioritize the best interests of the child.

5.2. Non-Discrimination: Every child, regardless of disability, gender, ethnicity, or background, has the right to protection from abuse and exploitation.

5.3. Participation: Children have the right to express their views and have them considered in matters affecting them.

6. Prevention

6.1. Safe Recruitment: Implement rigorous recruitment processes, including background checks, to ensure that staff and volunteers do not pose a risk to children.

6.2. **Training and Awareness:** Provide regular training on child protection to all staff, volunteers, and associates. This includes recognizing signs of abuse and knowing how to respond.

6.3. **Safe Environment:** Ensure that all facilities and activities are safe and accessible for children with disabilities.

7. Reporting and Responding to Abuse

7.1. **Reporting Mechanism:** Encourage children to report any concerns to the Class Teacher, School Principal, Hostel Warden, or the School Administrator immediately.

7.1.1. **Immediate Reporting:** Any staff member, volunteer, or individual associated with the VMSB must report any concerns or suspicions of child abuse immediately to the School Principal or the School Administrator.

7.1.2. **Confidentiality:** Ensure that all reports are handled with strict confidentiality to protect the identities of the children and the reporters.

7.1.3. **Accessible Reporting Channels:** Provide multiple reporting channels, such as a phone line, email, or a physical drop-box.

7.2. **Response Protocol:** Ensuring immediate action against any form of abuse, including immediate safety measures for the child and investigation procedures.

7.2.1. **Assessment of Immediate Danger:** The concerned authority must assess if the child is in immediate danger. If so, take immediate action to ensure the child's safety, which may include contacting parents / local authorities or emergency services.

7.2.2. **Documentation:** Record all details of the report, including the date, time, individuals involved, and a detailed description of the concern or incident.

7.3. **Support for Victims:** Provide appropriate support and counselling services to children who have experienced abuse.

7.3.1. **Counselling and Psychological Support:** Provide immediate counselling and psychological support to the child through trained professionals.

7.3.2. **Medical Assistance:** Ensure the child receives necessary medical attention if there are physical injuries.

7.3.3. **Safe Environment:** Ensure the child is in a safe and supportive environment, free from any contact with the alleged abuser.

7.4. **Investigation Process:** Proper investigation of the matter should be done by the appointed authorities.

7.4.1. **Formation of an Investigation Team:** Form an internal investigation team, ensuring at least one member has expertise in working with children with disabilities if such need arises.

7.4.2. Gathering Information: Conduct interviews with the child (using appropriate communication methods), witnesses, and the accused, if appropriate. Collect any physical evidence and review relevant documents.

7.4.3. Coordination with Authorities: If the incident requires legal intervention, coordinate with local child protection agencies, law enforcement, and other relevant authorities.

7.5. Decision and Action

7.5.1. Evaluation of Findings: The investigation team evaluates the findings and determines the appropriate course of action.

7.5.2. Disciplinary Action: If the allegations are substantiated, take disciplinary action against the perpetrator, which may include suspension, termination, or legal action.

7.5.3. Notification: Inform relevant parties, including the child's guardians and appropriate authorities, about the findings and actions taken.

7.6. Follow-Up

7.6.1. Ongoing Support: Provide ongoing support to the child, including regular counselling sessions and check-ins to ensure their well-being.

7.6.2. Monitoring: Monitor the situation to prevent any further incidents and ensure the effectiveness of the support provided.

7.7. Documentation and Review

7.7.1. Record Keeping: Maintain detailed records of all reports, investigations, and actions taken securely and confidentially.

7.7.2. Policy Review: Regularly review and update the child protection policy based on lessons learned from each incident and evolving best practices.

7.8. Confidentiality

7.8.1. All reports and information related to child protection concerns must be handled with the utmost confidentiality.

7.8.2. Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis and with the appropriate authorities.

7.9. Monitoring and Evaluation

7.9.1. Regularly review and update the child protection policy to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.

7.9.2. Monitor compliance with the policy through regular audits and assessments.

7.10. Roles and Responsibilities

7.10.1. The Management Committee & The Trustees to ensure the implementation and oversight of the child protection policy.

7.10.2. The School Principal, Administrator and Hostel Warden have been given the responsibility of ensuring the implementation and oversight of the child protection policy.

7.10.3. All Staff and Volunteers should adhere to the child protection policy and report any concerns or incidents.

7.11. Partnerships and Collaboration

7.11.1. Engage with the community, and local authorities, wherever necessary, to raise awareness and promote child protection.

8. Review and Amendment

8.1. This policy will be reviewed after three years and amended as necessary to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

Appendices

A. Code of Conduct

- Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Never use physical punishment or abusive language.
- Avoid situations where you are alone with a child.
- Report any concerns or suspicions of abuse immediately.

B. Reporting Form

- Child's Name:
- Date of Birth:
- Description of Concern/Incident:
- Action Taken:

C. Training Schedule

- Training sessions will be organized time and again for those working directly with children.

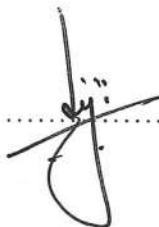
Conclusion:

This policy provides a solid foundation for safeguarding children with disabilities (VI & ID) under the care of The Victoria Memorial School for the Blind Trust. The policy will be valid for three years i.e. from November 2024 to October 2027.

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Signatures



Approved By:


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