



Child Protection Policy

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Start-Rite Schools Policy: Child Protection

Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to a child's education as well as to their physical, social, and emotional development. Start-Rite Schools, Abuja is committed to providing a safe environment for its students and will ensure the safety and well-being of every child. Start-Rite endorses the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, to which our country, Nigeria, is a signatory. These two key articles are important and we wish to draw your attention to them:

1. Article 19 - Protection from abuse and neglect

The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

2. Article 34 - Sexual exploitation

The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

Definition of Child Abuse:

Child abuse is the physical, sexual, and/or emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child.

Child Abuse Prevention:

Start-Rite seeks to be a safe haven for students. In order to achieve this, Start-Rite follows safe hiring practices that include background checks for all employees, independent contractors, and other adults at the discretion of the school. In addition, Start-Rite trains all staff and personnel who directly or indirectly interact with students on the safety and well-being of children.

Response to suspected abuse:

Educators have the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time and are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection. Trained educators can pick up clues of possible abuse or neglect by observing children's behaviour at school,

observing physical signs, or during routine interviews with parents. Educators and the Counselling Team have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection. It is important to note that the recognition of child abuse may be based on a cluster of indicators that form a picture of abuse rather than on the detection of one or two clues.

At Start-Rite, community members including, but not limited to, employees, substitutes, independent contractors, volunteers, student teachers, and coaches are required to report suspected incidences of child abuse whenever one has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering abuse. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations under this policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the parents, the appropriate child protection agency, and/or local authorities.

In cases of suspected child abuse by an employee or Start-Rite Schools or another adult on campus, the school will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process. In cases of suspected child abuse outside of the school, the school will take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse.

Communications:

Start-Rite publishes, communicates, and provides training for this policy annually. The policy will be published in staff handbooks, communicated annually to staff, students and families, and training for all staff, parents and students will be provided. Signing off on the policy will be part of the admissions process for new families.

As part of our overall educational programs and specific to our shared responsibility to educate children, to protect them, and to learn and grow in a safe environment, Start-Rite follows the following protocols:

- Provide age appropriate lessons for all grade levels to help students understand personal safety, needs, and rights.
- Provide parent, materials and information sessions to help you better understand our programs and policy.
- Provide annual training to school employees and contracted staff to recognise and report issues of abuse and neglect.

We look forward to working with you towards ensuring that our children are safe and are knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities to themselves and to each other. While we thank you for your support of our efforts, we invite you to contact ____ regarding any specific questions you may have.

By signing this document, you have read, understood, and will adhere to it.

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____