



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Current Review Date: November, 2023

Next Review Date: November, 2024

Key Personnel

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection

Mrs. Gloria Okolie

Vice Principal (Academics)

E-mail: gloriaokolie@startriteschools.com.ng

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) for Child Protection

Mrs. Christy Ekanem

Vice Principal (Operations)

E-mail: christyekanem@startriteschools.com.ng

Mr. Femi Akinlade

Principal

E-mail: femiakinlade@startriteschools.com.ng

Governor in Charge of Safeguarding

Mrs. Loretta Akpoke

Member, Advisory Board

E-mail: lorettaakpoke@gmail.com

Mr. Archibong Anderson

The Executive Secretary of the National Council of Child Rights Advocates of Nigeria and a member of the National Child Rights Implementation Committee.

Management of Safeguarding

The safeguarding and welfare of students is of fundamental importance to our School. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children according to the guidance on 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' defines as protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. The school makes a commitment to act in the best interest of the child.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibility is to maintain an overview of safeguarding within the School, to open channels of communication with local statutory agencies, support staff in carrying out safeguarding duties, encourage a culture of listening to students and to monitor the effectiveness of policies and procedures in practice. Details of the School's Designated Safeguarding Leads can be found on the cover page. Particular interest will be paid towards children with special educational needs that may be more vulnerable.

If a member of staff or volunteer suspects or discovers that a student is the victim of abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual or as a result of neglect, she/he must immediately inform the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, except in the case which itself involves a Designated Safeguarding Lead, in which case the matter should be reported directly to the Principal. If the suspicion relates to a member of staff, including a Designated Safeguarding Lead, volunteer, a member of the Advisory Board or the Principal, the matter must be dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out on Page 11.

Archibong Anderson is a renowned Child Protection Expert who was called into the constituency of Children to develop, protect and defend the rights of all children in Nigeria. He is the founder of the Child Rights Brigade International and the Initiator of the Child Protection Officers' Volunteer Scheme first of its kind in the entire Globe.

Mr. Archibong Anderson is the Executive Secretary of the National Council of Child Rights Advocates of Nigeria and a member of the National Child Rights Implementation Committee. As part of his contribution to the development of children he pioneered the establishment of the Nigeria Children's Parliament and has assisted the Federal & State Ministries of Women Affairs to set up and trained the Parliamentarians. His passion for children paid off as he was decorated with an ambassadorial award by Her Excellency Dem Patience Jonathan as African Peace Ambassador. He has written child protection related books and served in many ministerial committees on children matters.

The Board of Management ensure the School complies with its legislative duties, has regard to the DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2022) and that the School's safeguarding arrangements are in line with standard procedures and practice. The Advisory Body has nominated one of its members to manage child protection and safeguarding of children at Start-Rite Schools, Abuja.

Start-Rite Schools Policy: Child Protection

Rationale

Start-Rite Schools Abuja acknowledges the pivotal role of fostering high self-esteem, confidence, supportive peer relationships, and open communication with trusted adults in preventing abuse among our students.

Our school is committed to:

- Cultivating and sustaining a safe and secure environment where students feel encouraged to express themselves and know they will be heard.
- Safeguarding children's health and development.
- Assuring students that there are approachable adults within the school for support during times of worry or difficulty.
- Integrating activities and opportunities into the curriculum that equip students with skills to protect themselves from abuse.
- Educating students on self-protection through the PSHE curriculum.
- Striving to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues.

Aims and Objectives

- Prioritising the safety and well-being of children in all aspects of the school day.
- Maintaining an ethos where staff, students, parents, and the Advisory Board feel confident to voice concerns, assured that effective action will be taken.
- Supporting students who may have experienced abuse by fostering self-esteem through the PSHE programme and utilising online resources.
- Providing children with knowledge about online safety during ICT lessons, as outlined in our online e-safety policy.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, our school ensures that inspections adhere to standards concerning the welfare, health, and safety of children. Any suspicions or complaints of abuse, whether internal or external, are treated seriously. Proper procedures include referral to external agencies such as the Local Agency for Child Protection or the Police authority, with immediate action taken, especially in cases of serious harm.

Purpose of this Policy

This child protection and safeguarding policy aim to establish clear guidelines for staff and others in dealing with child protection issues. Staff responsibilities include awareness, following proper procedures for concerns, accessing additional safeguarding information, understanding key indicators of child abuse, and fully supporting the school's commitment to safeguarding and child protection.

Introduction

Start-Rite Schools Abuja takes its responsibility to protect and safeguard children seriously, focusing on three main elements: prevention through creating a positive school atmosphere, protection through agreed procedures and staff training, and support for students who may have experienced abuse. This policy applies to all school stakeholders, with the school recognising its role as an agent of referral rather than investigation.

Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them. There are however, key people within our school and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those carrying out these responsibilities for the current year are listed on the cover sheet of this document.

It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that all of the child protection procedures are followed within the school, and to make appropriate, timely referrals in accordance with school procedures. If for any reason the DSL is unavailable, the Deputy DSLs or Principal will act in their absence. Additionally, it is the role of the DSL to ensure all staff employed including temporary staff and volunteers within the school are aware of the school's internal procedures, to advise staff and to offer support to those requiring this.

The Advisory Board and School Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that the school follows safer recruitment procedures and make it clear that staff who have lived or worked in the UK will be subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure and a barred list check and similar checks will be made on all other staff with local police or embassies from countries where they lived or worked, including Nigeria. Please also refer to the school's policy on Recruitment, Selection & Disclosure.

The DSL and the Deputy DSL provide an annual report for the Advisory Board detailing any changes to the policy and procedures and training undertaken by all staff and other relevant issues.

Procedures

Start-Rite Schools Abuja will:

- a) Ensure a designated senior staff member with appropriate training (Level 3).
- b) Recognise and support the designated person's role.
- c) Conduct biennial training for all staff and members of the Advisory Board.
- d) Ensure staff awareness of designated people, reporting requirements, and individual responsibilities.
- e) Be vigilant to signs of abuse and educate staff accordingly.
- f) Inform parents of the school's child protection obligations.

- g) Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse, an allegation or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the DSL or in their absence, the Deputy DSLs. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of any member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Guidance

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and the school emphasises that child protection and safeguarding are responsibilities shared by all adults, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

Case Recording – Steps to take Making Referrals of a Child

When a child discloses abuse:

- a) Staff must not promise confidentiality.
- b) Staff should listen attentively without interruption, report to the DSL immediately, and make a timely written record.
- c) Recording processes should involve children and families, practitioners directly involved should complete the record, and records must be accurate, legible, and secure.

What Steps are Taken

Once an allegation is referred to the DSL:

- a) A detailed inquiry follows with the student.
- b) Parents are notified for a meeting with the DSL or DDSL.
- c) Depending on severity, the Principal may become involved or the child is monitored.
- d) In extreme cases, the Local Agency for Child Protection or the Police may be involved.

Training And Support

DSL and Deputy DSLs undergo Level 3 Child Protection and Safeguarding training every two years. All staff receive Child Protection in Education Level 2 training. New staff undergo safeguarding training during induction.

Temporary staff, volunteers, and the security team receive appropriate training, and all staff have access to advice on appropriate behaviour.

Supporting Students at Risk

Start-Rite Schools Abuja recognises the impact of abuse on a child's self-worth and worldview. The school provides support through the curriculum, positive ethos, behaviour management policies, and collaboration with professionals and agencies.

Our school may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children.

We recognise that some children may abuse their peers and any incidents of child-to-child abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures.

Child to child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), online abuse, gender-based abuse, 'sexting' or sexually harmful behaviour. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs. We use lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

In the event of disclosures about student-on-student abuse that all children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, are treated as being 'at risk.' This type of abuse is dealt through our safeguarding policy. Please also see our Behaviour Policy for school procedures and how to child will be supported.

Allegations Against Staff

- Allegations against staff are addressed fairly, protecting the child and supporting the accused staff member. Investigations maintain confidentiality.
- In some circumstances the member of staff will, without prejudice, be asked to take a period of paid leave pending the results of the investigation.
- Start-Rite Schools will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.
- Malicious allegations are investigated by the Principal and if necessary, the Advisory Board.
- Concerns about a colleague should be reported to the DSL/Deputy DSLs, Head Teacher, or the Board of Management.

If There are Concerns About a Colleague

If staff members have concerns about another staff member or volunteer, then this should be referred to the DSL/Deputy DSL or Principal. Where there are concerns about the Principal, this should be referred to the Advisory Board.

Members of staff who, in good faith, draw attention to the attitudes or behaviour of colleagues ('whistleblowing') have a measure of employment protection. Conversely, those who do not report information quickly could put children at risk and bring the School into disrepute, so may face disciplinary action.

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their

colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of a child is paramount. Please also refer to the school's whistleblowing policy.

Policy Review

- The Advisory Board undertakes an annual review of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.
- Ensuring that the list of key contacts on the cover sheet is kept up to date.
- All adults in school will receive a copy of this policy. It will be discussed at least annually at staff meetings.

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Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba *OFR, CON, SAN*
Chairman, Advisory Board



Femi Akinlade
Principal