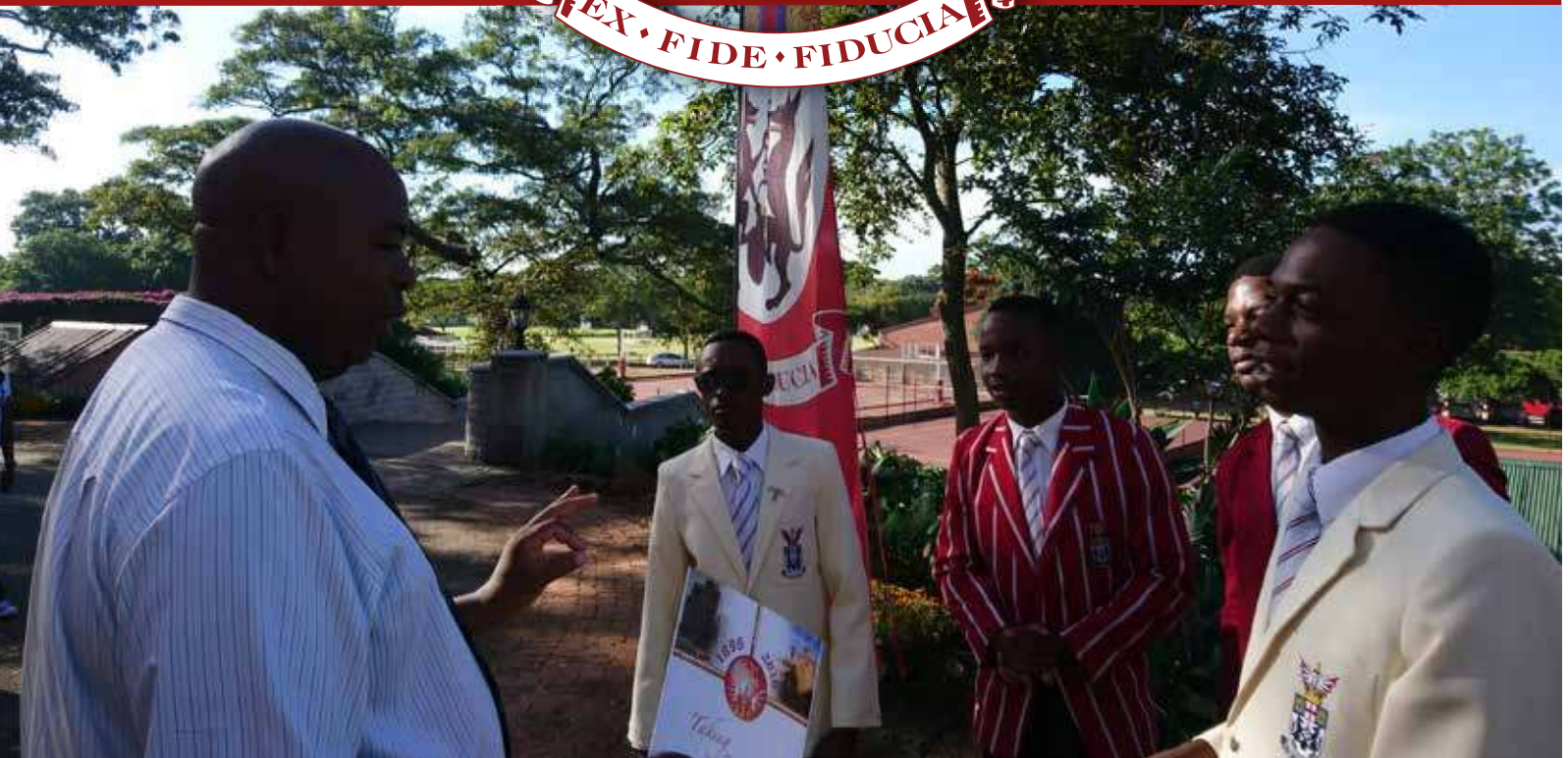


# ST GEORGE'S COLLEGE



*Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*

# **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

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"...In the course of their formation, (learners) must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering and engage it constructively. They should learn to perceive, think, judge, choose and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed." -

Fr. Peter – Hans Kolvenbach, October 2000.





## **1. Introduction**

St. George's College and Hartmann House (SGC/HH) are committed to the total protection of Children, Minors and Vulnerable persons from all forms of harm, abuse and violation. We are passionate about creating and maintaining safe environments for all who live, learn, and work in our school. Our desire for environments safe from abuse extends to the protection of our staff, colleagues, friends, partners, communities and all children, minors and vulnerable persons that visit or do business with our schools. We present this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as a practical tool and mechanism for the full implementation of Child Protection and Safeguarding Practice at SGC/HH.

Our rationale for Child Protection and Safeguarding Practice is drawn from Gospel Values and the teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ on Children, the Vulnerable and Marginalised. In addition to the guidelines from the United Nations (UN) and the Constitution of Zimbabwe we have the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church which further emphasise for us the sacredness of life and the full dignity of the human being. Various Church documents (encyclicals) remind us of our roles in helping children and all vulnerable people to receive the proclamation of faith as well as our commitment towards a faith that serves justice. Our schools and Educational institutions, just like families, are therefore called to be communities of Grace, Prayer, Human Virtue and Christian Charity. Our Ignatian values are a good guide towards the measure of the quality of our practices as educators.

I therefore encourage all members of the College Community as part of the worldwide Ignatian Family, to prioritise faith and justice in their work and take the provisions of this policy seriously to make our schools safe spaces for formation, learning and working.

***Fr. Joe Arimoso SJ***

Rector, SGC/HH

Education Delegate, Jesuit Province of Zimbabwe – Mozambique

Education Secretary for Africa





## **2. Underlying Principles**

There are **five** Underlying Principles that guide this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. These principles follow the Gospel Values, the teachings of the Catholic Church, Ignatian Spirituality, best practices in Child Protection from the UN and the Law of the state of Zimbabwe and Safeguarding and the professional commitment of all working in and with Jesuit Schools and Educational Institutions of which SGC/HH are a part.

### **2.1. In the best interest of Children, Minors and Vulnerable people**

All activities, decisions and actions towards the provision of Child Protection and Safeguarding are made in the best interest of Children, Minors and Vulnerable people.

### **2.2. The equal protection of all Children, Minors and Vulnerable people**

All Children, Minors and Vulnerable people have the right to equal protection from all forms of abuse regardless of their race, gender, cultural background, social class, religion or denomination.

### **2.3. A Written Policy for SGC/HH**

A written policy is in place at SGC/HH. The policy gives clear guidelines and directions on the implementation of best Child Protection and Safeguarding practices in the school according to the context.

### **2.4. The professional duty to care for Children, Minors and Vulnerable People**

All adults working at SGC/HH acknowledge that it is part of their professional duty and an inclusion in the minimal standards for their professional practice to care for and protect Children, Minors and Vulnerable people from all forms of abuse.

### **2.5. Fully Implementing the Standards for Child Protection and Safeguarding**

SGC/HH recognise and fully adopt the minimum standards for universal Child Protection and Safeguarding practice and commit to fully implement these standards always.

## **3. Minimum Standards for Child Protection and Safeguarding Practice for SGC/HH**

This set of Child Protection and Safeguarding Standards define what needs to be in place in SGC/HH to keep children, minors and vulnerable people safe. Standards also list criteria for measurement and evaluation of effective Child Protection and Safeguarding Practice. SGC/HH commits to the standards for Child Protection and Safeguarding outlined below. These standards are recommended by best practice, and show the expected level of performance that all who govern, lead, provide services, work, study or volunteer at SGC/HH.

### **Standards**

#### **3.1. Written Safeguarding Policy is in force at SGC/HH**



- 3.2. There is a written commitment to put the policy into practice and this commitment is on display at the College.
- 3.3. There are clear procedures showing how to report and respond to any suspected or alleged violation or abuse that may happen at SGC/HH.
- 3.4. There are written guidelines on safe and protective behaviours towards children, minors and vulnerable people.
- 3.5. There are arrangements in place for the recruitment, induction, ongoing training and education of all staff, adults and children on Child Protection and the safeguarding of minors and vulnerable people.
- 3.6. A variety of methods to communicate this Child Safeguarding Policy are in place.
- 3.7. Advice and support on Child Protection and Safeguarding is available to all those who need it.
- 3.8. Standards are made to work, and are regularly checked to see if they are working.
- 3.9. Safeguarding Standards are met in different locations within and outside the school.
- 3.10. Equal rights to protection are accorded to all irrevocably.
- 3.11. The school works with various partners to meet these Safeguarding Standards.

#### **4. Provisions of The SGC/HH Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is guided by various documents including the United Nations publications on Child Safeguarding, the Constitution of the State of Zimbabwe, and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) Child Protection Policy Document (2015). It therefore seeks to localise the provisions of these Child Protection Policy documents to SGC/HH.

##### **4.1. A Written Policy**

All Jesuit Schools and Educational Institutions shall have a written Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

- 4.1.1. All staff, employees, volunteers, parents, partners, service providers and relevant stakeholders in contact with the institution shall be given a hard



copy of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for their use and reference during their tenure at the school.

4.1.2. The written policy shall be used as a reference and a guide for the effective implementation of Child Protection and Safeguarding Practices at the school.

4.1.3. SGC/HH shall lodge a copy of the Policy with the Jesuit Education Office who will in turn assist with strategies for the relevance and applicability of the Policy in line with ZCBC Child Protection Policies and various local regional and international Legal frameworks.

4.1.4. The written Policy shall be reviewed by the school or institution every three years.

#### 4.2. Recruitment and Selection

To minimise the risk of recruiting unsuitable people who may make the Jesuit School or Education Institution unsafe for Children, Minors and Vulnerable people, the school or Education institution shall in addition to the already existing recruitment procedures include:

4.2.1. Police criminal offences Clearance of any Child Protection violation and abuse of Minors and Vulnerable people for the incumbent.

4.2.2. Clearance from other legal and recognised Child Protection and related Registers locally and elsewhere.

4.2.3. Interviews in person for the incumbent which include a direct question if they have any convictions relating to the abuse of Children, Minors or Vulnerable persons. (Regardless of the response, Registers and references to be checked).

4.2.4. Reference checks to be made with a specific question if there were convictions, accusations, suspicions, or doubts relating to the incumbent's abuse of Children, Minors and Vulnerable people and to receive responses in writing.

4.2.5. With regard to Teachers, Lecturers, Tutors or Educators, the Parent Education Ministries (MoPSE and MHTE)<sup>1</sup> to be contacted to make sure there are no previous or current complaints against the incumbent.

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<sup>1</sup> MoPSE – Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education  
MHTE – Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education





4.2.6. For Catholic Religious personnel, the Superior of the Congregation or Bishop of the Diocese to be contacted through the Local Responsible Authority and related protocol.

4.2.7. All employees, staff, volunteers, partners, associates, service providers, parents shall sign the Child Protection and Safeguarding Self - Declaration Form as their commitment towards upholding and meeting all the provisions of the Jesuit Schools and Educational Institutions Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

#### 4.3. Induction, Training and Ongoing Education

SGC/HH shall have clear and standing arrangements for the induction, training and on-going education of all personnel, partners and learners in Child Protection and Safeguarding. The induction, training and ongoing education programme will have provisions for

4.3.1. A budget line in the school budgets for the Induction, Training and On Going Education programme at the school.

4.3.2. An induction, Training and On Going Education plan for parents, governors, staff, volunteers and learners.

4.3.3. Suitable people to train in Child Protection and Safeguarding.

4.3.4. Follow the Jesuit Schools Child Protection and Safeguarding Training Curriculums recommended by the Jesuit Province Education Office.

4.3.5. Working with other experienced partners in Child Protection and Safeguarding Training and Education.

4.3.6. Records, registers and reports of all training and all who attend the training.

#### 4.4. **Communicating the Keeping Children Safe and Safeguarding Message to all**

SGC/HH will ensure that all people (including the minors themselves) stakeholders and agencies involved in the school know about the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the school or institution's commitment to the safety of Children, Minors and Vulnerable People.

4.4.1. A statement of commitment towards the protection of Children, Minors and Vulnerable people will be displayed in suitable public places throughout the school.



- 4.4.2. To ensure that people know about this policy, both formal and informal and informal communication methods will be used to include Briefings and Meetings, Newsletters, Posters, Memos, Discussions, Campaigns, workshops, training, Sharing of documents and information, open displays, with provisions for those with and/or special needs.

#### **4.5. Advice and Support for those who need it**

- 4.5.1. The school or institution will ensure that children, minors and vulnerable people seeking or in need of help, support and /or advice on matters of protection and safeguarding will know where they can go.
- 4.5.2. Specialist advice on Child Protection and Safeguarding Issues, from appropriate providers, will be made available to anyone who needs it.
- 4.5.3. The school or institution will openly display in public and accessible places, lists of services, authorities and organisations with (contact details) that can help those who need help.
- 4.5.4. These lists will be available to all staff and volunteers so that they know what services are available in order to respond to, help and offer support those who need help.
- 4.5.5. The School or Institution will ensure that alleged perpetrator(s) of any abuse are able to receive suitable support to include the clear communication to them that they too have a right to seek legal support and advice.

#### **4.6. Code of Conduct and Behaviour Protocols**

In the spirit of encouraging a culture of safety for Children, Minors and Vulnerable people, SGC/HH will advance clear and concise guidelines of what is and is not acceptable behaviour and practices when working with Children, Minors and Vulnerable people. Such protocols will be adopted in addition to any existing Codes of Conduct in operation at the school to include:

- 4.6.1. Total respect of Children, Minors and Vulnerable people's privacy and boundaries; including total refrain from sleep in the same room or bed as Children, Minors or Vulnerable people they are working with.



- 4.6.2. Visibility to others - Adults and Children alike - when working with Children, Minors and Vulnerable people.
- 4.6.3. Total prohibition of the use of Corporal Punishment to any Child, Minor or Vulnerable person.
- 4.6.4. Non-discriminatory behaviours and practices to all children, Minors and Vulnerable persons, whatever the circumstance.
- 4.6.5. Abstaining from taking part in behaviour which is illegal, unsafe or abusive with Children, Minors and Vulnerable people; or, allowing them to take part in such behaviours or practices.
- 4.6.6. Never act or behave in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, minors and vulnerable people.
- 4.6.7. At no time compromising the safety, care and wellbeing of children, minors and vulnerable people at any time, at the school or elsewhere.

#### **4.7. Regular Risk Elimination and Appropriateness**

SGC/HH shall have clear guidelines on what to do to keep Children, Minors and Vulnerable people safe – before, during and after every activity. A risk assessment will be carried out on a termly basis and strategies will be worked out to deal with any identified risks. Standard Risk elimination for all schools and institutions will include the acknowledgement and general understanding of inappropriateness that:

- 4.7.1. It is inappropriate to act in ways that may be abusive or may place children, minors and vulnerable people at risk of abuse.
- 4.7.2. It is inappropriate to expose Children, Minors and Vulnerable people to personal privacy as well as private boundaries and spaces such as homes, personal, living and domestic spaces.
- 4.7.3. It is inappropriate to interact with Children, Minors and Vulnerable people outside of the school or institution's ordinary context and, without the written consent of the parents, guardians and that of vulnerable people.
- 4.7.4. It is inappropriate to develop relationships with Children, Minors and Vulnerable people, which could be considered to be exploitative or abusive.





4.7.5. It is inappropriate to do things (of a personal nature) for children, minors and vulnerable people that they can do for themselves.

4.7.6. It is inappropriate to expose children, minors and vulnerable people to what could be considered unsafe, unsuitable and/or abusive.

#### **4.8. Reporting Procedures**

SGC/HH Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy acknowledges existing Reporting Procedures and Protocols as guided by the ZCBC Child Protection Policy (2012), the ZCBC & CMRS<sup>2</sup> Procedural Protocol for dealing with allegations of Misconduct (2012), The Public Service Commission Procedures for Allegations of Misconduct as guided by parent Ministries of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) and Higher and Tertiary Education (MHTE).

In addition to the existing Reporting Procedures and Protocols in the schools and institutions, SGC/HH will develop:

##### **4.8.1. Clear and safe reporting structures for Children and minors**

Children and Minors should know who to report to should they have any concerns of Child Protection and Safeguarding violations.

##### **4.8.2. Clear and safe reporting structures for all personnel under authority**

Lay personnel under authority should know who to talk to should they have a concern about violations of Child Protection and Safeguarding at the school or institution.

##### **4.8.3. Clear and Safe procedures for those in authority**

Jesuit School Authorities, such as Heads and Local Responsible Authorities are guided accordingly by the existing reporting protocols from the Public Service Commission (through parent Ministries) and the Conference of Major Religious Superiors (CMRS) Procedures of 2012 for heads and Religious people respectively.

#### **4.9. Structures for effective Child Protection and Safeguarding Practices**

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<sup>2</sup> CMRS – Conference of Major Religious Superiors



Every Jesuit School and Educational institution will establish the following structures for the effective implementation of Child Protection and Safeguarding Practices:

**4.9.1. A Child Protection and Safeguarding Committee:**

This committee will advance Child Protection and Safeguarding practice through:

- 4.9.1.1. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of Child Protection and Safeguarding activities at the school or institution.
- 4.9.1.2. Facilitating training and education in Child Protection and Safeguarding for everyone involved with the school or institution.
- 4.9.1.3. Assists the Child Protection and Safeguarding Coordinator with the management of the internal reporting process and referral procedures.
- 4.9.1.4. Facilitating Child Protection and Safeguarding Self Assessments, Evaluations and Reflections for the school or institution.
- 4.9.1.5. Supporting the work and function of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Coordinator.
- 4.9.1.6. Championing the effective implementation of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy at the school.

**4.9.2. The Child Protection and Safeguarding Coordinator.**

SGC/HH should have a named designated person as the Child Protection and Safeguarding Coordinator who is responsible for making sure that the child protection and safeguarding policy is implemented and followed. This role should reflect the nature and structure of the organisation and the person should be senior enough, and have enough support, to carry out the role. The Child Protection and Safeguarding Coordinator's roles and responsibilities will, in addition to those reasonably assigned by the Responsible Authority and Head include:

- 4.9.2.1. Acting as a focal point to receive information about Child Protection and safeguarding issues in and around the school or institution.



- 4.9.2.2. Chairing of the Child Protection and Safe Guarding Committee.
- 4.9.2.3. Coordinating activities of The Child Protection and Safeguarding Committee.
- 4.9.2.4. Receiving and managing all reports on Child Protection and Safeguarding matters at the school or institution.
- 4.9.2.5. In consultation with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Committee manages the internal reporting protocol and referral procedures, and offers advice to the Head and Responsible Authority for purposes of external reporting and referral procedures.
- 4.9.2.6. Participating in various management functions of the school or institution to serve the interests of Child Protection and Safeguarding.
- 4.9.2.7. Regularly updating and informing the Responsible Authority and Head on all matters concerning Child Protection and Safeguarding at the school or institution.
- 4.9.2.8. Working and liaising with Heads of other departments and various organs of the school or institution to streamline Child Protection and Safeguarding practices.
- 4.9.2.9. Developing networks and partnerships and successfully managing these for the efficiency of Child Protection and Safeguarding practices at the school or institution.
- 4.9.2.10. In consultation with the Responsible Authority and Head, arranges for expert and /or professional help when needed at the school to support Child Protection and Safeguarding Practice.
- 4.9.3. Board of Governors
  - On the Board of Governors, a Board Seat shall be reserved for a Governor whose interests include the school governance's matters of Child Protection and Safeguarding.
- 4.9.4. School Development Committee
  - A seat to be reserved for a committee member who has an interest in the school in matters of Child Protection and Safeguarding.
- 4.9.5. Works Council/Workers Committee





A seat to be reserved for a committee member who has an interest in the school in matters of Child Protection and Safeguarding.

#### 4.9.6. Teachers and Volunteers Council

Where such a structure exists, a seat to be reserved for a committee member with an interest in the school in matters of Child Protection and Safeguarding.

#### 4.9.7. Child Participation and Inclusive Practices

SGC/HH will ensure that Children, Minors and Vulnerable people are included and participate in decisions and activities that pertain to their protection and safeguarding.

### **4.10. Ramifications of Misconduct**

4.10.1. Where an allegation of Child Protection and Safeguarding violation is made, the accused person(s) will be immediately removed from all school or institutional activities and programs pending the outcome of all investigations. Similarly, where it is deemed expedient, the child or victim may also be removed temporarily to allow for a fair process.

4.10.2. Any disclosures by a child, minor or vulnerable person and, any reports of suspected abuse or violation and, all details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly.

4.10.3. All documentation of reports, of abuse, suspected abuse, investigations and outcomes of investigations will be held in a secure location at the school or institution where a breach of privacy cannot occur.

4.10.4. Where there is a disclosure or report of an allegation of Child Protection and/or Safeguarding violation, SGC/HH reserves the right to carry out disciplinary procedures and actions in accordance with the Laws and Constitution of Zimbabwe.



## 5. Appendices

### 5.1. Statement of Commitment displayed in strategic places around the school and on the school websites.

#### **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT**

This Child Protection Policy (CPP) applies to ALL staff, priests, brothers, the board of governors, volunteers, specialist coaches, students or anyone working on behalf of St. George's College and Hartmann House.

**The purpose of this policy is:**

- To protect ALL children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive our services or are associated with us. This includes the children of adults who use our services and those who work on our behalf, or with us or for us.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

As schools we believe that a child or young person and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable people and to keep them safe. We are committed to principles and practices that protect them.

**We recognise that:**

- All human life is sacred and any abuse comes into direct conflict with this principle.
- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- We are committed to working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, caregivers and other agencies to promote young people's welfare.

**We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- Raising awareness of their rights, valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training, and capacity building for all working with children.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Reporting all abuse to relevant authorities within 24 hours.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.



## **5.2. The School's Distinctive Catholic Character**

Being a Roman Catholic school our approach to Child Protection will be guided first and foremost by our fidelity to the Gospel of Christ. The other principles that also feed our concern in Child Protection are secondary to our following Christ's Law of love. This love begins with the love that God our father has bestowed upon us. Thus ultimately, we stand guided by our individual and collective consciences as we will ultimately be answerable to the father of life, the Lord God himself.

To guide our exercise of our conscience thus, there is a periodic review of where we have been and where we are going in the area of child safeguarding. In all this we seek to do everything to the greater glory of God (AMDG) and in the service of humanity.

### **A note on Appendices**

There are several appendices available elsewhere on request or produced as necessary in the continuing work of child protection. These appendices are periodically revised as new insights and experiences come forth.





### **5.3. Definitions of various forms of abuse**

Abuse in general refers to a situation where there has been a violation on the rights of one by another.

#### **5.3.1. Verbal abuse**

Violating a child using words e.g., calling them names or scolding them, especially in public.

#### **5.3.2. Physical abuse**

The use of physical violence that includes actual beating as well as pushing, shoving or exposure to physical danger.

#### **5.3.3. Emotional abuse**

Abuse involving deliberately hurting the feelings of another, often associated with other forms of abuse e.g., verbal, physical etc.

#### **5.3.4. Sexual abuse**

Inappropriate conduct towards a minor which is of a sexual nature. Can include physical contact and verbal exchange as well as the showing of inappropriate sexual media.

#### **5.3.5. Spiritual/Religious abuse**

Making a child uncomfortable through mocking or ridiculing their faith or religious practices.

#### **5.3.6. Negligence**

Providing inadequate care towards children. This includes exposing children to dangerous situations without the relevant precautions as well as denying them what they would ordinarily require to survive or to be safe.

