

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY
SHALOM ACADEMY and STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE (IROVO)

SHALOM ACADEMY and STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE (IROVO) have a zero-tolerance policy against all forms of abuse against children and learners. As such, the school is guided by the *Best Interest Principle* of the child in all matters concerning our pupils.

Definitions

Safeguarding ensures that the school's employees and official visitors to the school do no harm to children in their care whether by acts of commission or omission. Further, it ensures that safeguards are in place to protect children from the risk of harm, neglect and abuse.

Child Protection ensures measures are put in place to protect individual children who have been identified as either suffering or at risk of suffering harm, neglect or abuse.

Abuse refers to any violation of a child's rights. This can take the form of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse, and neglect or negligent treatment or other exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a child.

The Legal Framework

Article 53 of the Constitution of Kenya details the rights of a child which include the right to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment, and hazardous or exploitative behaviour. The provision further embodies the Best Interest Principle as a matter of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child.

The Children's Act of 2001 is the guiding statute with regards to children's matters. *Section 36 of the Basic Education Act, 2013*, prohibits torture, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment against the child, be it physical or psychological.

Guidelines on Handling Children

I. Members of staff and visitors from supporting organisations should consider at all times the implications of their interaction with learners, in order to avoid being accused of misconduct.

Physical contact between members of staff and learners must always be of a non-sexual and non-violent nature.

II. Conversations between a staff member and pupil shall be within the school premises whenever possible.

III. Members of staff shall not contact or converse privately with learners on social media sites without their parent's or guardian's knowledge and consent.

IV. Members of staff shall avoid making remarks about a learner's body which may be misconstrued to be sexual abuse or any derogatory remarks directed at a learner.

Procedure for Dealing with Child Abuse

Identification

Once a member of staff suspects an incidence of child abuse or neglect, or they have reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer abuse, they must report to the school director.

Reporting

Reporting shall be in writing and a permanent record kept. If the child is reporting in person, the school director will make a detailed written record.

Follow up

Once the report of suspected abuse has been made, the school director will follow up with a thorough investigation.

Sanction

Any breach of this child protection and safeguarding policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter. This may result in immediate termination of employment and/or reporting to the police, and relevant regulatory authority or other body.

Responsibility

Shalom Academy recognises that it is the individual and collective responsibility of every member of staff to safeguard and promote the well being and safety of all pupils.

Background Checks

So far as it is possible, Shalom Academy will carry out background checks on all potential employees.

Designated Safeguarding Officers

The school director will act as the lead safeguarding officer and shall appoint other officers from time to time for the purpose of handling investigations and responses to safeguarding concerns. The officers will handle such reports and concerns appropriately and in accordance with this policy.

Review

This policy will be subject to review every year, or earlier if the need arises.