



Woodland Star School: Child Safeguarding Policy **(Revised April 2018)**

Introduction

Everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play in keeping children safe. In order for Woodland Star School (WSS) to effectively fulfil its safeguarding responsibility, the safety and best interest of every child at WSS will be at the center of its decisions and actions.

This Safeguarding Policy is applicable for all staff, including full- and part-time, volunteers and interns, parents and caregivers, students, and the wider school community.

WSS defines safeguarding as:

- Protecting children from violence, abuse, and neglect
- Ensuring that children grow up with the provision of safe, nurturing and quality care
- Taking action to enable all children to develop in a holistic manner to ensure their overall wellbeing¹

WSS will not tolerate any discrimination or acts of violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect against any student at WSS, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, culture, nationality, faith, etc., and including those with special educational needs and disabilities. *Appendices A and B* discuss common safeguarding concerns as well as provide definitions for the school's context.

WSS will strive to keep all students safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a safeguarding team (with a lead) that will oversee school training and implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
- Incorporating safeguarding procedures and practices at all levels of operation.
- Taking all allegations and suspected cases seriously and responding accordingly.
- Recording and storing information securely. All exchanges will be handled professionally and confidentially.
- Instructing children how to stay safe.
- Assuring appropriate filters and monitoring systems for online usage are in place.
- Following procedures for reporting and/or sharing information with appropriate channels.
- Ensuring that we have a safe physical environment for children to play, learn, and interact.
- Maintain an environment where children are confident to approach any member of staff if they have a worry or problem.

¹ NSPCC. "Safeguarding Children: What Organisations Need to Do to Protect Children from Harm." NSPCC, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children., 2018, www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/.

Legal framework

All acts of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect are illegal under Kenyan and international law. The Government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Education, has committed to institutionalizing and mainstreaming school safety across all registered schools in Kenya. The right to access quality education and ensure children are safe and protected in schools are firmly anchored in laws and policies. Specifically, the *Safety Standards Manual for Schools in Kenya* (2008) notes that “safety in schools is critical to facilitating and fostering quality teaching and learning.”²

Roles and responsibility of staff

All staff, including support staff, have a responsibility to keep children safe and have a role in reporting concerns of potential and actual abuse.

The WSS Board

- The Board ensures that the policies, procedures and training in our school are effective and comply with the Kenyan law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place and that the safeguarding policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed bi-annually.
- The Board ensures there is a named designated safeguarding lead and safeguarding team in place.
- The Board ensures that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction and that it is then regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.
- The Board ensures that children are taught how to keep themselves safe through instruction and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum., including online safety.
- The Board and school leadership team are responsible for ensuring the school follows recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. It adheres to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and has recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the school’s Human Resource policy for further information). All potential employees and interns are required to submit a police clearance as part of their application process.
- The Board will ensure that all pictures and information shared for promotional purposes will only be used with parental consent, protecting the dignity of the child at all times.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Team)

- The designated safeguarding team in school takes lead responsibility for managing child protection referrals, safeguarding training, and raising awareness of all child protection policies and procedures.
- They ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers, and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times.
- They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that timely referrals to the local authority and service and care providers, as required.
- If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, the deputy designated safeguarding lead will act in their absence.
- They are accountable to the school leadership and board. Any concerns in relation to carrying out duties, policy and procedures will be communicated to the school leadership and board; any changes must be approved at the board level.

The Principal and School Leadership Team

The Principal and the leadership team work in accordance with the requirements upon all school staff. In addition, they ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the board are followed by all staff and volunteers through ongoing professional development and volunteer training.

All School Staff

Everyone at WSS school has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. All staff members are aware of and are held accountable to follow school processes (as set out in this policy). All staff members are prepared to identify risk factors and signs related to potential abuse, are able to provide appropriate support and will liaise with the designated safeguarding lead to report any concerns.

Allegations of members of the WSS workforce

The school will take all allegations and disclosures of child abuse seriously. It will be reported and investigated appropriately and confidentially, with the safety of the child being of the utmost consideration. All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct as well as the duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of staff in line with the same. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in employment contracts.

The school has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff will be referred to the Principal (or a school director in their absence). This role is distinct from the designated safeguarding lead as the named person should have sufficient status and authority in the school to manage employment procedures. Accusations of misconduct of staff will be handled on a case-by-case basis. This may result in immediate dismissal or suspension of duties until a thorough investigation takes place.

Child safety and risk assessment

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

In the case of a potential criminal offense, the Safeguarding Team will gather information and record information respectfully and confidentially. An initial risk assessment will be made to determine the current safety of the child and the team will respond accordingly. (This is not a formal investigative assessment which requires a trained social worker or police officer. In line with the *Child Safety and Protection Network*, it is best practice to have two people in the room when assessing safety. If a concern is verified, the Gender Officer (GO)/ Designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) at the respective police station (i.e. Tigoni Police Station) is notified and a report of abuse and/or neglect is made. This person refers the case to the Children's Officer (CO) for a comprehensive formal investigation if warranted.

The safeguarding team's risk assessment will document the following:

- A record of the pupils' details (i.e. name, date of birth, address and family details)
- Date and time of the event / concern
- The nature of the concern raised
- The action taken and by whom
- Name and position of the person making the record

In the case of disclosure, the record should also include:

- As full an account as possible of what the child said
- An account of the questions put to the child

- Time and place of disclosure
- Who was present at the time of disclosure
- The demeanor of the child, where the child was taken, and where returned to at the end of the disclosure³

Records and information sharing

Well-kept records are essential to good safeguarding practice. WSS is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be shared with other agencies. Any records related to child protection are kept in a child protection file (which is separate to the pupil and staff member file). All safeguarding records are stored securely and confidentially.

Designated safeguarding team contact details

Name:	Phone:	Email:
Mr. Timo Lehmann	0792 452 227	timol@woodlandstarkenya.com
Mrs. Jennifer Correll	0797 738 975	jenniferc@woodlandstarkenya.com
Mr. Moses Ndung'u Gichuki	0737 595 181	mosesg@woodlandstarkenya.com
Mrs. Esther Wanjiru	0718 143 647	estherw@woodlandstarkenya.com

³ "Guidance: Record Keeping & Management of Child Protection Information - Including Guidance on Consent." *www.icmec.org*, July 2011, pp. 4., doi:<https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/UK-Record-Keeping-Guidance-for-Child-Protection-2011.pdf>.

Appendix A

Common Safeguarding Concerns

Common threats to children's protection and safety in schools usually fall into the following categories:

Violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect

Being exposed to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect can impact on children's ability to thrive and remain in school, as well as on children's physical and mental health. Often, acts of violence are not isolated, and, if not responded to immediately, can escalate to result in more hurtful and harmful forms. Sustained exposure to violence has long-term negative impacts on a child's physical and mental health.

WSS is aware of the signs of abuse so that we are able to identify children who may be in need of support or care. Any harmful behaviour in school will not be tolerated. Swift intervention will take place when this occurs. The school will use classroom lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what violence is and encourage them to tell a member of the safeguarding team if someone, be it a teacher or peer, is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Violence can take on the following forms:

- *Teacher-on-learner*. This can take the form of:
 - Grooming (refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of establishing an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual exploitation or abuse. Children can be groomed face-to-face or on-line).
 - physical violence (such as hitting, slapping, pinching, twisting/pulling of ears, caning),
 - sexual abuse (such as inappropriate touching, using sexually inappropriate language, rape),
 - verbal abuse (such as bullying or use of inappropriate or obscene language),
 - psychological and emotional abuse (such as soliciting inappropriate favors in exchange for something, intimidation, humiliation),
 - exploitation (such as engaging children in activities that physically, mentally, and emotionally excessive),
 - and neglect (such as not meeting learner's physical, mental and emotional needs).
- *Peer-on-peer*. WSS recognizes that stable, secure and safe environments, including both at home and at school, are crucial for reducing children's risk to harm. WSS recognizes that some children may have challenging or defiant behaviour, be withdrawn, or may display abusive behaviour towards other children at school. Peer-on-peer abuse will be managed the same way as other child protection concerns and will follow the same procedures. Children showing signs of defiant, withdrawn or aggressive behaviour will be discussed with parents/caregivers to agree upon how the home and school setting can best support the child. Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), online abuse, gender-based abuse, 'sexting' or sexually harmful behaviour. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Our school understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs;
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

Appendix B

Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

1. NEGLECT: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result maternal substance abuse.

2. PHYSICAL ABUSE: Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

3. SEXUAL ABUSE: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit act of sexual abuse, as can other children.

4. SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: Child sexual exploitation occurs when a child or young person, or another person, receives "something" (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of the child/young person performing sexual activities, or another person performing sexual activities on the child/young person. The presence of any significant indicator for sexual exploitation should trigger a referral to children's social care.

5. EMOTIONAL ABUSE: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment