

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

THE DIVINE WORD

EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY &

SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE WORD

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The child is the centre of our education apostolate. To protect the child is our prime responsibility. This Child Protection Policy is meant to ensure that children attending our schools are protected from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and inappropriate behaviour while in the care of the school within or outside its premises by the management, staff [whether full-time or part-time, whether paid a salary or fee or honorarium or providing free services, whether permanent, temporary or on contract], volunteers, visitors or others. The Child Protection Policy aims to lay down the responsibilities of those who work with our schools in respect of protection of children.

2. Recognizing that abuse of children takes place in different settings, including schools, it is necessary for schools to create an environment where the child is safe and protected against abuse, exploitation and inappropriate behaviour. Hence it is necessary that a strict code of conduct and stringent measures of discipline be implemented within our own schools. This is the reason why this Child Protection Policy has been created.

3. This Child Protection Policy will help to eliminate vigilantly and diligently all risks of child abuse and child exploitation in our schools. This Child Protection Policy contains guidelines for the Schools, Staff and Associates and also deals with the procedures and guidelines for dealing with child abuse cases in the schools managed by the Divine Word Educational Society and Society of the Divine Word. The contents of this Child Protection Policy and its Principles, Procedures and Guidelines are in accordance with the Constitution of India, the laws enacted by the Government of India and the standards laid down by international instruments, more particularly, the United Nations, and in harmony with the Guidelines of the Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church and the substantive norms promulgated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in 2001 and 2010.

4. It is the right of the children and the duty of the schools to provide adequate care and protection to those they are serving. This Child Protection Policy acknowledges our commitment towards creating a safe environment for children and for safeguarding their best interests in all possible situations.

II. OBJECTIVE OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

5. We have committed ourselves to caring for the needs of the young and helping them to reach their potential so that they may enjoy “life in its fullness”.

6. The protection of children who are under our care is not only our duty and responsibility but also our first priority. We defend them from all possible physical, sexual, emotional and moral dangers.

7. We, as educators have the responsibility to take care of the rights of children in our charge. We promote and defend the rights of children; especially their rights to health, education, development, participation and protection. We are also aware that it is our duty to Study, interpret and implement in our activities and schools the laws enacted in the country and the human rights standards laid down by the international community for the protection and promotion of the rights of the children.

8. This Child Protection Policy is a concrete expression of our wholehearted commitment to the welfare, protection and empowerment of children in our charge. We believe it is also a valuable contribution to the many steps the Government and concerned citizens are taking towards the care and protection of children in our country.

9. We endeavour to be the voice of every child under our care by promoting awareness, education, recognition, prevention and intervention regarding child abuse.

III. CHILD ABUSE IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

10. **Child Abuse** is a Violation of Human Rights. While certain types of child abuse [such as physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse] and neglect issues [such as abandonment and problems of street children] are found in almost all countries, there are many issues which are prevalent only in certain regions of the world. For instance, in Asia where population density is high, incidence of child labour and child sexual exploitation are very high. The World Health Organization (WHO) in 2002 estimated that globally 150 million girls and 73 million boys under 18 years of age experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact. The ‘Study on Child Abuse in India 2007’, conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, acknowledged that the scale of child abuse taking place in schools is alarmingly high. According to this study, two out of every three children have been physically abused; 65% of school-going children reported facing corporal punishment; 53.22 % children reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse. Every second child reported facing emotional abuse.

11. **Steps taken by the Government of India:** Various laws have been enacted by the Government of India to promote and protect the rights of children. Amongst such laws are the Child Labour [Prohibition and Regulation] Act 1986, the Juvenile Justice [Care and Protection of Children] Act 2000 [hereinafter referred to as the ‘JJ Act 2000’], the Right of Children to free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 [hereinafter referred to as ‘the POCSO Act’]. The JJ Act 2000 punishes the person who having the charge or control of child, assaults, abandons, abuses, exposes or wilfully neglects the child or causes the child to be placed in such situation. At this stage it is important to note that when a child is in school or on a school excursion, the child is under the charge and control of the school management and staff, and the school is responsible for the child’s care.

12. **The POCSO Act** is a special law that has been enacted to comprehensively deal with the issue of sexual offences against children. It describes different types of sexual offences

against children, such as penetrative sexual assault, sexual assault and sexual harassment, and provides punishment for the same. Sexual offences committed by management / staff of an educational institution are treated more severely and the punishment is enhanced. It also stipulates a child-friendly procedure to be adopted by the police and Special Court during investigation and trial, respectively. The POCSO Act has introduced the concept of Mandatory Reporting, namely, punishing a person who fails to report to the police the occurrence of an offence under the POCSO Act despite having knowledge of its commission. Failure of such reporting by a person in-charge of an institution in respect of a subordinate under his control is treated more severely.

IV. DEFINITION AND CONTEXT OF TERMS USED IN CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

13. **Best interest of the child** aims at guaranteeing full and effective enjoyment of all rights by the child, including those related to the child's protection and means that in all actions, processes and decisions taken regarding a child, the best interest of that child shall be of paramount consideration. Any decision regarding a child, whether in the private or public sphere, should be taken after assessing the best interests of such child to ensure his or her holistic development. The Committee on the Rights of the Child in its General Comment No.14[2013], Right of the Child to have his or her Best Interests taken as a Primary Consideration, states, 'The full application of the concept of the child's best interests requires the development of a rights based approach, engaging all actors, to secure the holistic physical, psychological, moral and spiritual integrity of the child and promote his or her human dignity.' The Juvenile Justice [Care and Protection of Children] Rules 2007 [hereinafter referred to as 'the Model Rules'] define "best interest of the child" as a decision taken to ensure the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and moral development of juvenile or child. The Model Rules also include the Principle of Best Interest as a fundamental principle of juvenile justice and protection of children.

14. **Child** means a person who has not completed 18 years of age and is enrolled in a school that comes either under the management of the Divine Word Educational Society or Society of the Divine Word. **Child Abuser** means any person above the age of 18 years who is in a position of responsibility, authority and trust over the child, and who is alleged to or found to have committed child abuse.

16. **Child Abuse Monitoring Committee** is a Committee constituted in every school to take measures for the promotion of child protection and for the prevention of child abuse, and to inquire into instances of child abuse in that school.

17. **Child Protection** is defined as the responsibilities, measures and activities that are undertaken to safeguard children from both intentional and unintentional harm. UNICEF uses the term 'child protection' to refer to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children - including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage.

18. **Child Abuse** according to the World Health Organization is as follows, "Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a

child and any action resulting in actual or potential harm to child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.”

Child abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harm a child or damage their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.

Child abuse also refers to any act, deed or word which debases, degrades or demeans the intrinsic worth and dignity of a child as a human being.

Child abuse can be categorized into four different types, namely, Neglect, Emotional abuse, Physical abuse and Sexual abuse.

(i) **Child Neglect** is an act of omission or commission leading to the denial of a child's basic needs. Neglect in a school setting includes failure to provide appropriate schooling or special educational needs to a child as per the laws in force, failure to take adequate measures to protect the child while under the school's charge which causes harm to the child.

(ii) **Emotional abuse** of child is the persistent emotional maltreatment that would adversely affect 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. This may be expressed verbally or non-verbally or via electronic or written communication or any other form. Emotional abuse includes verbal abuse, mental abuse, and psychological maltreatment. This can include using extreme and/or bizarre forms of punishments, such as confinement in a closet or darkroom or being tied to a chair for long periods of time or threatening or terrorizing a child. Less severe acts, but no less damaging, are belittling or rejecting treatment, using derogatory terms to describe the child, habitual tendency to blame the child or make him/her a scapegoat.

(iii) **Physical Abuse** has been defined by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in its afore mentioned study on Child Abuse as inflicting of physical injury upon a child. This may include burning, hitting, slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, beating or otherwise harming a child even when the caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child. It may, even be the result of over disciplining or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age.

(iv) **Sexual Abuse** of child shall mean and include the sexual offences contained under the POCSO Act, and any act of sexual nature contained under any law for the time being in force in India and / or in the State.

19. **Child Exploitation** is using a child unfairly for personal advantage or gain, whether monetary or otherwise. This involves befriending or grooming the child through gifts, online chat rooms, social networking websites, email, mobile, telephone messaging, gaining the child's trust, and stalking their online activities. The Constitution directs the taking of measures to ensure that “childhood and youth are protected against exploitation”.

20. **Child-friendly** shall have the same meaning as contained under the Model Rules. The Model Rules defines ‘child-friendly’ as any process and interpretation, attitude, environment and treatment, that is humane, considerate and in the best interest of the child.

21. **Coordinator** is the person in charge of pre-primary section.

22. **Corporal Punishment** is the subjecting of a child by any person to physical punishment that involves the deliberate infliction of pain, however light, as punishment, or for the purpose of disciplining or reforming the child. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, constituted under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in its General Comment No.8 [2006], the Right of the Child to Protection from Corporal Punishment and other Cruel or Degrading forms of Punishment, states that it includes punishment which “belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child. It takes place in different settings such as family [biological, adoptive, guardian], alternative-care [residential institutions, foster care], educational institutions [schools, colleges, coaching classes]. Discipline and Corporal Punishment are not one and the same –discipline is physical action or intervention to protect the child or others whereas corporal punishment is the deliberate and punitive use of force to cause some degree of pain.”

23. **Head Master / Head Mistress** are the person in-charge of the secondary section of the school.

24. **Head Teacher** is the person in-charge of the primary section of the school.

25. **Manager** is a Trustee of a school and the person in-charge of all the sections of a school, and has supervisory powers over the Principal, Head Master / Head Mistress, Head Teacher and Coordinator of that school.

26. **Principal** is the person in-charge of the Junior College attached to a school.

27. **School** means an educational institution that comes either under the Divine Word Educational Society or Society of the Divine Word and provides education to children at pre-primary, primary, secondary and Junior College levels.

28. **Staff** includes any person employed by the school as a teacher or on the administrative side whether full-time or part-time, whether paid a salary, fee or honorarium or providing free service, whether permanent, temporary or on contract basis, or a volunteer.

V. GUIDELINES FOR CHILD PROTECTION IN SCHOOLS

a. General Principles for Schools and Management / Staff:

29. The management and staff of all schools shall adhere to the Child Protection Policy at all times without exception.

30. The Child Protection Policy should be displayed at prominent places on the school premises.

31. No child shall be discriminated against on the basis of age, behaviour, class, caste, cultural practice, disability, ethnicity, parentage, place of birth, race, religion and sex, and shall have a right to protection from abuse, exploitation, harm and ill-treatment.

32. All actions, measures and decisions taken in relation to a child shall be in the child's best interest to ensure his or her safety and well-being, and physical, emotional, intellectual, social and moral development so that such child is able to achieve optimum potential.

33. All schools undertake to protect the children from all forms of child abuse and child exploitation. The school shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate child abuse and child exploitation and to prevent any inducement to coerce a child into any abusive and exploitative situations.

34. No corporal punishment shall be used on any child. Physical action as a form of discipline shall not be deployed. Physical intervention may be warranted in certain instances for protection of that child or others from danger. In such instances, the minimum necessary restraint or force should be utilized for the shortest necessary period of time. Schools shall conduct training programmes for their staff to minimize the necessity to use restraint or force and to ensure that such methods used are safe and proportionate to the situation and do not involve the deliberate infliction of pain as a form of control and / or punishment.

35. Management and staff of the school shall not exercise inappropriate behaviour towards children. Inappropriate behaviour may relate to speech, comments, gestures, jokes, pictures, books, films, photographing of the child, etc.

36. The Manager, Principal, Head Master / Head Mistress, Head Teacher and Coordinator of the school shall create an atmosphere where human dignity and physical integrity of every child is respected. The Manager, Principal, Head Master / Head Mistress, Head Teacher and Coordinator shall strive to ensure that no child is abused and/or exploited and/or placed at the risk of harm when under the school's charge and control.

37. All schools shall maintain an environment where the management, staff, children and parents or guardians feel comfortable to express concerns about child protection and other issues regarding children.

38. The management and staff shall consider supporting the child and/or family in instances where the abuse and/or exploitation and/or harm has occurred at the hands of a person in no manner connected with the school and when such child is not under the school's control and charge.

39. Every child shall have a right to express his or her views freely and without fear and shall be given an opportunity to be heard in all matters concerning such child.

40. All records and particulars about children and their families along with information regarding their status will be maintained in strict confidentiality by all schools, and the management and staff shall not disclose the same to the press and/or any other person or persons.

41. To protect children from sexual offenders it is imperative to ensure that photographs of children and/or their particulars are not published in the electronic or print media by the management or staff nor posted on web-sites of the school. In special circumstances, group photographs of children with written consent of their parents or guardians for a particular purpose and instance may be so published or posted.

42. The school through its management or staff shall establish support systems with professionals, agencies and official authorities within their locality. Contact and relationship will be built and maintained with police stations, hospitals, doctors, mental health professionals, lawyers, social workers, government and non-government social services, etc., so as to be able to seek their assistance when found necessary in the interest of the child.

43. A juvenile in conflict with law under the JJ Act 2000, shall not be expelled or suspended and shall be permitted to complete his schooling. The management and staff shall not disclose such child's identity to the media, other children and their parents or guardians.

44. In case the conduct of a child is harmful to other children, the school shall bring the same to the notice of the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall recommend remedial measures to alter the behaviour of such child in consultation with such child and his / her parents or guardians. If such child continues with his behaviour which is harmful to other children, such child may be expelled or suspended by recording reasons in writing after having given such child and his / her parents or guardian an opportunity to be heard.

45. Children who are victims of child abuse or inappropriate behaviour or suffer injury due to dereliction of the provisions of this Child Protection Policy shall be cared for and provided support by professionals and responsible personnel who have suitable skills to provide such support.

b. General Principles for the Staff in Schools:

46. If management or staff member learns about any child abuse or child exploitation in the school, he/she shall report the same to the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee. This is a mandatory requirement for the management or staff. Failure to so report shall result in disciplinary, criminal or other action against the staff. Failure to report a sexual offence committed against a child is an offence under the POCSO Act, and may result in registration of First Information Report against such member of management or staff.

47. Severe action, including registering of First Information Report, severance of employment, disciplinary action, removal, etc., shall be taken against member of management or staff accused of child abuse, inappropriate behaviour or dereliction of the provisions of this Child Protection Policy.

48. Management and staff of the school shall maintain a standard of decorum in their dress, demeanour, interaction and association with children so that children perceive them as role models. For example, they shall not in the presence of children use foul language, consume tobacco or liquor.

49. All members of the management and staff should ensure that no child is alone with a member of the management and staff in a closed room.

50. All members of the management and staff should cooperate fully in any investigation or inquiry regarding concerns and allegations of child abuse.

c. Staff Recruitment Policy:

51. Two references, including a character certificate, should be provided by the person seeking employment.

52. No staff, including volunteers, shall be recruited or engaged having a criminal record of physical or sexual assault or of any such related crime. All staff, including volunteers, on selection and prior to appointment shall submit an Affidavit stating that they have not been accused, charged or punished for offences related to physical or sexual assault under any law, whether within India or outside.

53. A thorough investigation shall be conducted by the school management into the prior employment and engagement of the person sought to be appointed, including police verification and scrutiny of the references provided.

54. All members of the staff, including volunteers, on recruitment or engagement should be furnished with a copy of the Child Protection Policy and must sign a statement stating that they are aware of the contents of the Child Protection Policy and shall respect and abide by it and they understand that disciplinary or penal actions would be taken in cases where their behaviour is not in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.

d. Complaint Mechanism for Children:

55. Complaint Mechanism for Children should be established which is impartial and effective whereby children can notify complaints or concerns regarding their treatment. Suggestion / Complaint Box should be placed in a prominent place in the school premises.

56. The Suggestion / Complaint Box should be opened and the suggestions / complaints should be dealt with by the Manager. Children and their parents or guardians should be informed about the outcome of their complaint, and the decisions taken should be given in writing to the parent or guardian. If any complaint relates to child abuse or child exploitation, the same should be brought to the notice of the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee by the Manager.

e. Counselling Centre:

57. Therapeutic intervention in the form of counselling services should be made available to every child enrolled in a school through full-time or part-time counsellors.

58. Schools should designate a room as a Counselling Centre with adequate provisions to protect the privacy of a child who comes to share his or her grievances.

59. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times during counselling services. The school shall be liable for any breach of confidentiality regarding the identity of the child or details of the issues brought to the counsellor.

60. A child who is a victim of child abuse or child exploitation should forthwith be offered counselling facilities.

f. Training of staff:

61. Capacity building of staff, including volunteers, or any other person interacting with children, to enable them to deal with a child against whom any physical or sexual assault or any such related crime has been committed, and to recognize behaviour which is suspicious, erratic or unusual so as to be able to maintain a safe environment for children.
62. Training should also include knowledge of legislations, policies and protocols related to children.
63. Such training should be periodically imparted, at least once a year.

g. School Bus:

64. Guidelines on school transport issued by the Directorate of Education and other school boards, and/or the Government of India and /or the Government of the State should be adhered to.
65. At least one female attendant should be present on the bus until the last child is dropped home, whether the child is male or female.
66. Phone numbers of the parent or guardian as well as the emergency contact person should be with the bus operator and bus driver to enable immediate contact.
67. The bus driver and the female attendant should be provided with a mobile phone when on duty so as to be able to take prompt action in an emergency.

h. Picnics, camps and other out-of-school activities:

68. No picnic, camps or other out-of-school activities should be made compulsory for children
69. To enable children to participate in any picnics, camps and other out-of-school activities, the parents or guardians must give their prior permission in writing.
70. The children should be accompanied by at least one teacher at picnics, camps and other out-of-school activities.
71. Children should be divided into batches. Each batch should contain 30 children or less and each such batch should be accompanied by at least one teacher.

i. Acts amounting to child abuse at the hands of other children:

72. Child sexual abuse at the hands of other children may be classified into the following:
 - i. **Normal sexual exploration:** This could consist of innocent play between two children that involves the exploration of their sexuality. Such behaviour should not be coercive or dominating. The only child protection intervention necessary, if at all, is counselling.

ii. **Abuse reactive behaviour:** A child who has been previously abused by an adult or child acts out the same behaviour on another child. This situation requires intervention, the behaviour and needs of the abused child, as also the child perpetrator, requires to be addressed. Intervention is also required to be taken against the adult offender.

iii. **Sexually obsessive behaviour:** A child may engage in sexually compulsive behaviour which may be meeting some other emotional need. Such children require specific intervention in addressing their behaviour, including counselling.

iv. **Abusive behaviour by children:** Behaviour that is abusive will have elements of domination, coercion, bribery and secrecy, and requires intensive intervention. Sexual experimentation, generally, takes place between children of the same age, same status or same intellect – in other situations, it is necessary to ensure suitable intervention.

73. Cases falling under item (IV) of clause 72 should be brought before the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee for appropriate action for the care and protection of both the abused child and the abuser child. It is imperative to acknowledge that the abuser child also requires care and protection, and not punishment. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall consider reporting such case to the police or the Juvenile Justice Board constituted under the JJ Act 2000.

VI. PROCEDURES IN DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE

a. Constituting of a Child Abuse Monitoring Committee:

74. Each school either under the Divine Word Educational Society or Society of the Divine Word shall establish a Child Abuse Monitoring Committee for the promotion of child protection and for the prevention of child abuse, and to inquire into cases of child abuse and child exploitation in that school.

75. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall consist of five members : (i) nominee of the Management; (ii) representative of staff; (iii) representative of the Parents Teachers Association;(iv) a mental health professional, and (v) a Non-Governmental Organisation or a person (in no way associated with the school)working in the field of child rights. At least one member on the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall be a woman. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall select one of its members as the Chairperson, who shall be responsible for convening the meetings of the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee. The names and contact details of the members of the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee should be displayed at a prominent place in the school premises.

76. The members of Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall be appointed by the Manager in consultation with the Principal, Headmaster / Head Mistress, Head Teacher and Coordinator for a term of three years.

77. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee in the course of its duties may seek the assistance of other professionals and experts on a case to case basis.

78. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee, to enable their functioning, should during the inquiry be provided with clerical staff, such as stenographer or computer operator, and appropriate infrastructure.

b. Functions of the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee:

79. The primary function of the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee is to take measures for protection of children and prevention of child abuse, and towards this end to ensure that the Child Protection Policy is being complied with.

80. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall inquire into cases of child abuse or child exploitation suo-moto or when brought to their notice by a child, parent or guardian, Manager, Principal, HeadMaster / Head Mistress, Head Teacher, Coordinator, member of Management, staff or any other person.

81. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall:

- Inquire into alleged cases of child abuse on the part of management or staff, including volunteer, or visitor to that school.
- Examine the child and other child witnesses, if any, in a child friendly manner, as also the parents or guardian of the child, staff or other persons concerned with the child abuse.
- An opportunity to be heard shall also be given to the abuser.
- Recommend action against the abuser in conformity with the prevailing laws, and for rehabilitation of the abused child. Their recommendation of the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall be submitted to the Manager for taking such action against the abuser and for complying with any other directions. In the event of the Manager being involved in the child abuse or child exploitation, the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall submit its decision to the Principal, Head Master / Head Mistress, Head Teacher or Coordinator, as the case may be, for taking the recommended action.

82. The Manager shall forward the recommendation of the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee and the action taken against the child abuser to the INE Provincial Office.

c. Procedure before the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee:

83. The making of any complaint to the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee about any child abuse or child exploitation is a right of the child or of any other person concerned with the welfare of the child, and a duty of the adult who has knowledge about such an incident.

84. Under no circumstances shall there be any attempt by the management or staff or the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee to intimidate a complainant or to dissuade a complainant from filing or proceeding with a complaint.

85. When any instance of child abuse comes to the notice of the management, Manager, Principal, Head Master / Head Mistress, Head Teacher, Coordinator, teacher or staff or volunteer, such person should forthwith furnish the relevant information regarding the same to the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee.

86. When a complaint of child abuse or child exploitation is so received by the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee, the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall ensure that the counsellor or any adult person [teacher, staff or volunteer] in whom the child reposes confidence, forthwith counsels the child so as to put the child at ease.

87. In case of a medical or health related emergency occurring due to the offence, the Principal, Head Master / Head Mistress, Head Teacher or Coordinator, or person in-charge of the school, in the absence of the Principal, Head Master / Head Mistress, Head Teacher or Coordinator, shall be responsible for ensuring the child is taken to the nearest hospital or dispensary, depending upon the nature of the injury.

88. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall at the earliest, not later than 24 hours of receiving information about child abuse, intimate the same to the parent or guardian and the Manager.

89. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee may make recommendations pending the inquiry regarding any immediate action that needs to be taken in relation to the alleged abuser and for the protection of children. In case of any staff, including volunteer, or visitor being accused of any offence of physical or sexual assault or of any such related crime, such person shall be removed from active duty and / or prevented from entering upon the school premises with immediate effect pending inquiry.

90. When a child has to be examined, whether the victim or any other child, the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall seek the services of the counsellor or any other adult with whom the child is comfortable so as to enable the child to speak without fear.

91. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall also examine the complainant, especially to ascertain the manner in which the child abuse came to light, and the parent or guardian of such child, and any other persons, including staff, visitor. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall examine any person they find necessary to ensure justice to the child.

92. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee may seek the complaint in writing or may themselves render such complaint in writing. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall compile the statements of all persons examined, including the child and other children, into writing.

93. Once a complaint of child abuse is brought to the notice of the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee they shall proceed with the inquiry, irrespective of whether the complainant wishes to withdraw the same or the alleged abuser fails to cooperate, and shall arrive at a finding.

94. The child and the parent or guardian should be permitted to seek the assistance of an independent person [who could be a lawyer] for representing the child and parent or guardian during the inquiry before the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee.

95. The Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall inform the abuser about the complaint against him or her, and shall furnish the alleged abuser with material documents to enable him to put forth his or her response to the same. The alleged abuser shall be informed about the procedure of the inquiry, and shall be permitted to be represented by a person of his choice [who could be a lawyer] before the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee. The alleged abuser shall be given an opportunity to be heard prior to any decision being taken against him, and the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee should set a specific time limit within which the alleged abuser should submit his or her response.

96. The inquiry before the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall be expeditiously completed, preferably within one month, and not later than three months, of having received information regarding the same.

97. The decision of the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall be reasoned and shall be recorded in writing, and a copy thereof should be forwarded to the Manager, the child [through parents or guardians] and the alleged abuser.

98. The records of the inquiry shall be treated as confidential, and the members of the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee and others engaged with the inquiry shall be liable for breach of confidentiality.

99. The records of the inquiry shall be preserved by the Management of the school.

100. In case of dismissal of a complaint on completion of inquiry, no coercive steps should be taken against the child who has so complained.

VII. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN WHEN AN ALLEGED ABUSER IS FOUND GUILTY

101. If an alleged abuser admits guilt, does not contest guilt, or there is a finding of guilt on completion of inquiry by the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee, with regard to an act or omission of child abuse or child exploitation, such abuser shall be dealt with commensurate to the act or omission, such as warning, transfer, demotion, suspension, termination of services, without prejudice to existing State/ Labour Laws, and / or penal action. In grave offences, adequate safeguards should be taken to ensure that no school or other educational institution either under the Divine Word Educational Society or Society of the Divine Word employs or engages the individual in any capacity.

102. In case of the child abuse being a sexual offence under the POCSO Act or any other form of child abuse, such as a crime relating to physical violence under the Indian Penal Code or any other law for the time being in force, having been committed by a member of the management, Manager, Principal, Head Master / HeadMistress, Head Teacher, Coordinator, or staff of that school, the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall facilitate the registration of the First Information Report. In any other case of child abuse or child exploitation, the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee shall recommend suitable action depending on the facts of that case, such as disciplinary actions.

DECLARATION FORM FOR ALL STAFF MEMBERS

Name of the Institution: _____

Name: _____ Surname: _____

Male: Female: [Tick one]

Date of Birth: _____

Home

Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____

Details of previous work experience:

Details of qualifications:

Character references:

Please give the names and addresses of two persons who can provide information on your suitability to work with children:

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

2. Name: _____

Address: _____

Personal statement by staff:

I have no history of abuse of children and no case of child abuse or violent crime is pending against me and I have no record of convictions relating to offences against children or for violent crimes, and I consider myself suitable to work in this institution. I have read the

Child Protection Policy of the Divine Word Educational Society and Society of the Divine Word and promise to abide by it.

Signature of the staff member: _____

Signature of the Principal: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

N.B. In case a history/incidence of past sexual abuse or violent crime, or pendency of such case or conviction comes to be discovered, the candidate alone will be held responsible and his/ her services will be terminated, entertaining no claims whatsoever towards any benefits or compensation.

CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT

I,....., acknowledge that I have read and understand the Child Protection Policy of the Divine Word Educational Society and agree that in the course of my association with the school I must:

- Treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts.
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in proximity of children.
- Not invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- Not use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children or access child exploitation material through any medium.
- Not use physical punishment on children.
- Not hire children for domestic or other labour as per the laws in force.
- Comply with all relevant Indian and State legislation, including all child related laws.
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures.
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during my association with the school that relate to child exploitation and abuse.

Sign:_____

Date:_____

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones.
For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face
of my Father in heaven.”
Matthew 18:10