

# **PETINAR KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL - CHILD PROTECTION POLICY VISION 2022.**



## **TEACHERS, CAREGIVERS, SUPPORT STAFF AND PARTNERS S' HANDBOOK**

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## **Acknowledgment**

The management of Petinar Kindergarten school would like to thank Petinar Kindergarten School staff, Namugonde – Kakindu parents, Mary Reparatrix Catholic Church Namugonde sub-Parish, St Stephen Bwerenga Church of Uganda, Katabi town council Uganda police child protection unit and Wakiso District Local Government Child Protection Department for your hard work and dedication in development of Petinar Kindergarten School Child Protection Policy. Your skills and professionalism in everyday work, and this achievement in particular, are much appreciated by the management. We are very proud of your relationship with Petinar Kindergarten School. Thank You.

## **Why Child Protection Policy Handbook:**

To ensure the safety, well-being, and protection of all students from harm, abuse, and exploitation, both on and off school premises.

## **Whose Child Protection Policy Handbook:**

**The Child protect policy Handbook** is for all Petinar Kindergarten School teachers, caregivers, support staff, volunteers, contractors, and visitors who come in contact with Children.

## **Key Values**

1. All Petinar Kindergarten School Teachers, Caregivers, Support Staff and Stakeholders' members have a responsibility to protect children and report any concerns.
2. At Petinar Kindergarten School, we believe that all children have the right to be safe at all times. We will proactively work to provide safe activities and environment for children. We will do this by assessing and managing child protection risk and impact, through careful identification, reduction, and mitigation of risks to the children.
3. Petinar Kindergarten School will strive to create a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where children feel valued and respected
4. Petinar Kindergarten School does not tolerate the abuse of children. Child abuse /exploitation will be followed up with disciplinary action and depending on the nature of the allegation criminal proceedings shall be made.
5. The best interest of the child will be supreme in all decisions and actions concerning the wellbeing of children attending Petinar Kindergarten school and participating in Petinar Kindergarten school supported programs.

Petinar Kindergarten school will always apply fair processes when managing complaints, concerns and allegations of child abuse or exploitation

## Scope of the Policy

The Petinar Kindergarten School Child Protection Policy applies to all staff (including part-time and volunteers) and personnel, partners and other participants engaged in projects / programs being run by the school.

## Accessibility and awareness raising on the Child Protection Policy

- The Child Protection Policy is available as hardcopy on admission at the school, in the Teacher and caregivers 's record files, and on Petinar Kindergarten school website.
- The policy forms part of the orientation process for new staff to Petinar Kindergarten school. All staff members are given access to a copy of the policy.
- Every new employee, and project personnel as well as existing staff will undergo training in child protection using this policy handbook at least once every 12 months, and whenever revisions have been made to this policy. The training shall focus on how to conduct risk assessments, the teacher's code of conduct, responsibilities of the staff and personnel, how to reporting procedures, course of action and the overall guiding principles of this policy.

## How we assess and manage risks of children protection.

Petinar Kindergarten School will proactively assess and manage child protection and safety risks by conducting a child protection risk assessment on all programs and activities involving or impacting children. Identified risks and mitigation measures will be monitored and new or emerging risks identified and addressed.

Petinar Kindergarten School staff and partners are responsible for being continuously alert to and actively minimizing opportunities and situations where children can be harmed.

These risks and decision-making processes will be documented and assessed as part of the activity planning and risk management processes.

## Partnerships

Petinar Kindergarten School requires its partners (organizations that are implementing projects with or on Petinar Kindergarten School's behalf) to apply the minimum child protection standards in this policy as appropriate to their engagement with Petinar Kindergarten School, the activities they are implementing and their level of contact with children. As a minimum, Petinar Kindergarten School would expect that partners:

Have or develop their own child protection guidelines or sign onto and adhere by the Petinar Kindergarten School Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct. Implement agreed child protection measures as outlined in MOU's with Petinar Kindergarten School. These measures will be informed by a child protection capacity and risk assessment.

## Petinar Kindergarten School Child Protection team

Child Protection Team shall be revised or selected at the beginning of every school year. Its members are a senior teacher, a Caregiver, community paraeducator, secretary, Principle, and a parent. The team meets two times a year to review policies and practices concerning child protection and possible critical situations. The team will also be in contact with the school's external referrals. The current Contacts of the referrals will be maintained by the school principal.

The Board or school Principal will seek assistance from a qualified counselor / child protection expert where necessary while dealing with emerging reports.

## Safe Employees Recruitment

1. Petinar Kindergarten School is fully committed to using child safe recruitment, selection and screening practices. These practices aim to recruit the safest and most suitable people to work in Petinar Kindergarten School.
2. Petinar Kindergarten School child safety practices include.
3. Assessing all positions for the level for risk in relation to contact with children.
4. Conducting at least two referee checks that involve discussing child protection with referees.
5. Undertaking criminal history checks.
6. Requiring statutory declarations where criminal history checks are not available
7. Requiring applicants to disclose whether they have been charged with child abuse/exploitation offences
8. Requiring applicants to read and sign onto the Petinar Kindergarten School Child Protection Code of Conduct
9. Including questions on child protection during interviews
10. Including child protection performance appraisal

Petinar Kindergarten school shall not recruit any person to work or be in contact with children if they have any criminal records or pose unacceptable risks to children's safety or wellbeing.

Petinar Kindergarten school employment contracts include a provision for suspension or transfer to other duties of any employee who is under investigation and provisions to dismiss an employee after an investigation.

## Key Responsibilities:

| Teachers, Caregivers and support staff   | Parents/ /suppliers / Contractors  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Actively supervise learners and generally take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of learners under their supervision.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents/ visitors /suppliers / Contractors on compound are expected to interact with Petinar Kindergarten School Learners in an appropriate way in line with the Child Protection Policy</li></ul> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow the school's child protection policies and safety procedures.</li> <li>Abide by the Child Protection Code of Conduct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect the rights of children, families, and colleagues to confidentiality and therefore, only discuss Children' or colleagues' performance with people who need to be involved professionally.</li> <li>Report any concerns with regard to child abuse or neglect using the reporting procedures</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p>of the school. Inappropriate interaction between a parent and another parent's child on the school compound and facilities will lead to the administration being informed and a possible compound ban for the offending parent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All visitors to the compound must report to the administration office upon arrival.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

## Child protection code of conduct.

Petinar Kindergarten School has developed a Child Protection Code of Conduct to provide clear guidance to personnel and partners on ways to minimize risks to children and make clear the standards of behavior and practice expected while engaging with children at Petinar Kindergarten School. All Petinar Kindergarten School staff and partners are required to read and sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct as per **appendix 1**.

## Reporting a Concern.

### Who should report?

All Petinar Kindergarten School staff and associates including people in the community and partner organizations.

## What should be reported?

- Any disclosure, concern or allegation from a child, community member, staff or associate regarding the safety, abuse or exploitation of a child (this includes actual, suspected, or risk of abuse or harm to a child)
- Any observation or concerning behavior exhibited by Petinar Kindergarten School staff,
- volunteer or other associate that breaches the Petinar Kindergarten School Child Protection Code of Conduct.

**When to report?** Child abuse concerns should be raised immediately.

**Who to report to?** Child abuse reports should be made to Headteacher or Board of Governors.

**How should it be reported?** Verbally and by completing the Petinar Kindergarten school child abuse incident reporting sheet (see appendix 2).

## **Next Action**

Petinar Kindergartenschool Principal and/or Board of Governors in consultation with an external child protection advisor will discuss the allegations and then decide upon the next step.

### **This will involve one or more of the following:**

1. Interviewing the person/persons who made the allegations and/or other witnesses to gather more information with which to make a decision about the allegation;
2. Reporting to local police and or child protection authority when it is suspected or becomes clear a crime has been committed;
3. Referring the child to local support services if necessary
4. Handling the concern internally if it is not a criminal matter
5. Action or no further action taken
6. Providing support to all stakeholders (including reporter) as necessary.
  1. Petinar Kindergarten School will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties will be treated fairly and the principles of natural justice will be a prime consideration. All reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and expediently.
  2. All reports made in shall be assessed in accordance to the best interest of the child regardless of the outcomes of any investigation. Petinar Kindergarten School will ensure that the interests of anyone reporting child abuse in good faith are protected.
  3. The rights and welfare of the child is of prime importance. Every effort will be made to protect the rights and safety of the child throughout the investigation.
  4. Children and community members with whom Petinar Kindergarten School works with. shall be provided with information on how to report any child protection concerns about Petinar Kindergarten School staff members and associates.
  5. In all steps, follow up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually, and that strict confidentiality maintained.

## **O. Confidentiality.**

Confidentiality is a key principle of reporting and managing child protection concerns. All information regarding a child protection concern must only be shared with the designated Principal and/or member of Board of Governors. The names of people involved and the details of the report will remain confidential. Information will only be released on a “need to know” basis or when required by law or when a report to police or child.

## **P. Responding to disclosure by a child.**

When a child/young person tells you that he or she has been abused, they may be feeling scared, guilty, ashamed, angry and powerless. You, in turn, may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger and sometimes disbelief.

If a child discloses abuse, what the outcome, the child must be taken seriously

It is important for you to remain calm and in control and to reassure the child/young person that something will be done to keep him or her safe.

When a child or young people discloses that they are being abused or harmed you can show your care and concern for the child/young person by:

- Listening carefully
- Telling the child, you believe him or her
- Telling the child, it is not their fault and he/she is not responsible for the abuse
- Telling the child, you are pleased she/he has told you

**Q. You will not be helping the child if you:**

1. Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone
2. Push the child into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to
3. What the child wants to tell you and not to conduct an investigation (Beware of asking any leading questions as this may prejudice any subsequent investigation)
4. Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child with others not directly involved.

**R. Disciplinary Action**

If any member of staff employed by Petinar Kindergarten School is accused of child abuse then that member of staff must be suspended from duties, on full pay, whilst the investigation takes place. This is not an admission of guilt, but simply allows the incident to be investigated in a way that protects both the child and the staff member should the allegations turn out to be unfounded. A breach of or failure to comply with the Code of Conduct will result in the implementation of disciplinary procedures which may result in disciplinary actions up to:

- In the case of a staff member – suspension or dismissal
- In the case of a consultant or intern – suspension or termination of their services; In the case of a partner – up to and including suspension or termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements with Petinar Kindergarten School.
- In the case of a parent or visitor – a warning or direction to leave the school
- In addition, depending on the nature of the allegation, cases may result in legal action; and/or criminal investigation and prosecution.
- Disciplinary action will be taken against any Petinar Kindergarten School found to:
- Have failed to report a child protection concern
- Have intentionally made false allegation



## **Appendix (1) Definition**

### **Child or Children**

In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ‘child’ means every human being under the age of 18 unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. For the purposes of this policy, Petinar Kindergarten School considers a child to be a person under the age of 18 years.

### **Child protection**

An action designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly that arising from child exploitation and abuse.

### **Child abuse**

Child abuse is any act that causes physical or emotional harm to a child, that is carried out by someone who is in a position of responsibility, trust or power. This might be an adult or an older child. Child abuse is against the law in Uganda. It is never appropriate. An act may be considered child abuse, even if it was not done intentionally. It’s not known how many children suffer from child abuse, because many children don’t tell anyone about it.

### **Bullying and Peer-to-Peer Conflict**

Bullying can be defined as ‘unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.’

### **Child exploitation**

One or more of the following:

- committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a child
- possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material
- Committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of grooming or online grooming
- Using a minor for profit, labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage.

### **Partners/stakeholders**

Partners /stakeholders are organizations that Petinar Kindergarten school engages to participate in, or execute project and program activities. Partners/Stakeholders must understand and should act on their obligations to manage risks to children.

### **Personnel/Staff:**

Personnel/staff are either employed by Petinar Kindergarten school, or, engaged by an organization on a subcontract basis, or engaged by an organization on a voluntary or unpaid basis on a project of Petinar Kindergarten school. Personnel/staff can include paid staff, volunteers, interns, trustees, board members

### **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 caregiver fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is when someone repeatedly tries to make another person doubt themselves, feel bad or inadequate. People who abuse emotionally aim to exercise power or control over another person. It is also known as psychological abuse. Emotional abuse is the most common type of child abuse in slums of Uganda, although it can occur at any age.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. It may involve physical contact, penetrative or non-penetrative acts and also includes children in the production of or watching sexual online images, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **Neglect**

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which is likely to result in serious impairment to their health and development. It may involve a parent or caregiver failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing; failing to protect from physical and emotional harm or danger; or failing to allow access to medical care or treatment. It may also include the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Child Protection Code of Conduct**

Petinar Kindergarten School staff and partners are responsible for maintaining a professional and caring role when working with or interacting with children associated with Petinar Kindergarten School. This Petinar Kindergarten school Child Protection Code of Conduct aims to keep children safe and serves to protect everyone from misunderstandings by providing clear behavioral guidelines and expectations for interacting with children.

### **I agree that while working or interacting with children associated with Petinar Kindergarten school I will at all times:**

Treat all children with respect

Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive,

sexually provocative, demeaning, humiliating or culturally inappropriate

Not to engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for and exchanging gifts or grades for sexual services

Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working near children

Not invite unaccompanied children into private residences, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children or family)

Not seek to or make contact with any student, outside school/program times. This includes direct contact or any contact via social media platforms.

Not to sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case the supervisor's permission must be obtained, and ensuring that another adult is present if possible (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children)

Never use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material through any medium

- Instantly report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy noncompliance in accordance with appropriate procedures
- Instantly disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or occurs during association with Petinar Kindergarten School not use physical punishment on children or youths
- Not hire/recruit children or youths for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or development stage; which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities; or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- Comply with all child protection legislation of Uganda, including Uganda's labour laws in relation to child labour: be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviors that could be perceived by others as child or youth exploitation and abuse
- Take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child
- Obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing, filming or documenting personal details of a child. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner. Children and youths should be adequately clothed and not posing in a way that could be seen as sexually suggestive
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts
- Ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child or youth when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.

- Note: These behaviours are not intended to interfere with normal family interactions.

### Appendix 3 Petinar Kindergarten School Child Protection Reporting Form

Please complete this form to document and report any child protection concerns, a breach or potential breach of the Child Protection Code of Conduct. All child protection concerns should be reported immediately. This report must be made in strict confidence.

**IMPORTANT!** It is your responsibility to report any allegations – NOT to investigate. You do not have to have proof of your concern or answers to all of the questions in order to complete this form

What is your name? .....

What is your Telephone Contract? .....

And Email? .....

What is the name of the Child / victim? .....

What is the name of suspected offender? .....

How do you know the child / victim? .....

Describe in detail the nature of your concern?

Nature of concern .....

Time ..... Date .....

Witnesses (if any) .....

Location of incident .....

Behaviour .....

Signed observed .....

Any other details that outline your concern .....

Provide details of any conversation with the child. Please describe exactly what the child said with his/her own words

.....

Are there any immediate safety or medical concerns for the child? If so, what are they

.....

Have you contacted anyone else about this concern? If so, who have you contacted?

.....

**Petinar Kindergarten School. Located at Ndegeya Road - Kakindu, Kisubi -parish. Katabi Town Council- Wakiso District. P.O. Box. 131193 Kampala (GPO). Tel +256754590448/+256414598874.**

Email:[edithnamuddu@yahoo.com](mailto:edithnamuddu@yahoo.com)/ [info@petinarkindergartenschool.org](mailto:info@petinarkindergartenschool.org).

Website:<https://petinarkindergartenschool.org>

What other steps have you taken (if any)?

.....

Please sign and date this report

Signed .....

Date: .....

#### **OFFICE USE ONLY**

Name of person who received incident report .....

Date received .....

#### **Appendix 4: Recipient Declaration Form.**

I acknowledge the receipt of Child Protection Policy 2022.

I have read the policy, I understand it and I accept the contents therein as part of my conditions of employment with Petinar Kindergarten school. I am fully aware that should I fail to comply with the policy, I will be liable to dismissal and/or legal remedies commensurate to the offence.

I testify that I have not been involved in any form of child abuse before.

I promise to respect, honor and protect children at all times during my work through my conduct, the language that I use and by immediately reporting child protection violations of which I am aware.

To show my consent and commitment to comply with the policy, I hereby sign this declaration.”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_