

Reporting of Suspected Abuse Policy

1. Purpose

To ensure all staff, volunteers, and affiliates of **Constantiaberg Pre-Primary School** respond appropriately and lawfully to disclosures or suspicions of abuse. This policy protects learners and ensures mandatory reporting obligations are fulfilled without delay.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors who may have contact with learners or become aware of any safeguarding concern on school premises or during school activities.

3. Policy Statement

Constantiaberg Pre-Primary School is a mandated reporting environment. All suspicions, disclosures, or indications of abuse—whether physical, sexual, emotional, or neglect must be acted upon immediately. All cases are to be escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and, if appropriate the DSO will escalate to the Department of Social Development or SAPS. The welfare of the learner is the school's paramount concern.

4. Definitions

- **Abuse:** Any form of physical, emotional, sexual mistreatment or neglect that causes actual or potential harm.
- **Disclosure:** When a learner directly reports abuse or suggests it has occurred.
- **Mandatory Reporter:** Any adult working or volunteering at **Constantiaberg Pre-Primary School** who is legally obligated to report known or suspected abuse.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any conduct of a sexual nature by an adult, adolescent or older child, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given (e.g. exposing yourself, pornography, photographing children in a sexual pose)
- **Sexual Harassment:** Any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. In 3-6 year olds, any behaviour that goes beyond normal, natural curiosity e.g. playing doctor-doctor; looking at bodies; is natural curiosity – not sexual abuse.

5. Responsibilities

- All staff must:
 - Listen non-judgmentally to any disclosure.
 - Reassure the learner without making promises.
 - Record the facts immediately and submit the Suspected Abuse Reporting Form to the DSO within 24 hours.
- The DSO must:
 - Assess and document the concern.
 - Decide whether statutory services must be involved.
 - Maintain a confidential safeguarding register.

6. Procedures

1. The learner makes a disclosure, or a staff member observes signs of abuse.
2. The adult listens, reassures, and does not probe.
3. A factual report is written and submitted via the Suspected Abuse Reporting Form.
4. The DSO determines the level of risk and initiates the appropriate response.
5. Parents/guardians will be informed of safeguarding concerns only when doing so is safe, appropriate, and does not place the learner at further risk
6. External referrals are made in writing, with records securely stored.
7. Follow-up is documented and support offered to the learner.

7. Supportive Strategies

Learners and parents are educated on what abuse is and how to seek help.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

All reports are reviewed monthly by the Safeguarding Committee. Patterns and systemic risks are analysed. Compliance with mandatory reporting laws is tracked and included in safeguarding audits.