



Secretariat for
Catholic Education

Safeguarding Children in our Schools

Guidelines & Procedures



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Terminology

Abusive Behaviour	Refers to patterns of various behaviours which may be aggressive, coercive or controlling, destructive, harassing, intimidating, isolating, or threatening, that an abuser may use to control a domestic partner, a college, a child or other victim.
Designated Safeguarding Officer	Ideally a member of SLT appointed by the Head of School to be a point of reference for any member of the Interdisciplinary Team and staff members at school and visiting professionals. The school may appoint more than one DSO in charge of different year groups.
Head of School	Refers to the school legal representative – Rector, Director and/or Head of School
Interdisciplinary Team	Refers to Counsellors, Social Workers, Psychologists, Psychotherapists, Play Therapists, Youth Workers, Inclusion Coordinators, Occupational Therapists, Autism Spectrum Support Team, Career Advisors and other psychosocial professional employed by SfCE or by individual schools.
Learners	Refers to children who are attending Church Kindergarten, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and 6th forms up to 18 years old.
Parents	Refers to the biological or legal guardians of the learners
School	Refers to Church Kindergarten, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, 6th Forms and College
School Social Worker	SfCE social worker or social worker employed by the school
Trusted member of Staff	The school /SfCE employee receiving disclosure from learner / parent

List of Acronyms

CIHT	Crisis Intervention and Home Treatment Team
CPS	Child Protection Services
CSA	Church Schools Association
CSS	Child Safety Services
CYPS	Children and Young People Services
DSO	Designated Safeguarding Officer
DV Unit	Domestic Violence Unit
MEDE	Ministry for Education and Employment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSSS	National School Support Services
SfCE	Secretariat for Catholic Education
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
YPU	Young People's Unit

Preface

SFCE takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. We are subject to the Child Safety Services (CSS) procedures within the MEDE, the Minors Protection Act, 2019 and to the Church's Safeguarding Policies and Guidelines published by the Safeguarding Commission.

The Head of School has the responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of every student in school without judgement and discrimination based on circumstances, family history, religion and culture social status of both victim and perpetrator.

The final version of this document is the result of consultations with the Heads of School, Church School Association (CSA), Child Safety Services, Child Protection Services, Safeguarding Commission and SfCE Interdisciplinary Team.

Following a Memorandum of Understanding between Child Safety Services (CSS) provided by the National School Support Services (NSSS) within MEDE and Child Protection Services (CPS) within Appogg, SLT and Interdisciplinary Teams in schools must adhere to the following protocol.

Some schools have their own school-based Interdisciplinary Team. In good practice these professionals work collaboratively with SfCE Interdisciplinary Team and abide by the guidelines stated in this document.

The SfCE is committed to offer continuous professional development to the Interdisciplinary Teams supporting the school and other key persons mentioned in this document.

1. Structures for the Implementation of this policy

The schools must appoint a Designated Safeguarding Officer, ideally a member of the Senior Leadership Team who should have the necessary understanding and expertise to assume this role. The DSO is the first point of reference for any member of the Interdisciplinary Team, staff members at school and visiting professionals.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer gives updates and consults with Head of School on regular basis. In case that the Designated Safeguarding Officer is away from school, the point of reference is the Head of School. The Head of School may choose to appoint more than one Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer calls regular meetings with the Interdisciplinary Team to discuss students presenting pressing issues and concerns.

Any member of the Interdisciplinary Team and /or the School Safeguarding Officer give regular updates to the professionals involved in supporting the student. This includes members of staff from the NSSS, Appoġġ and other entities or NGOs.

The Interdisciplinary Team, Discipline Team, Well-Being Team, Pastoral Care Team and other similar school based structures should have clear and distinctive roles. Since all teams have in common the holistic well-being of the children, they should all communicate with the Designated Safeguarding Officer

2. Dealing with Concerns and Allegations of Abuse

2.1 Consent

The School distributes to all parents/guardians a Consent and Information Form covering all SfCE services at entry point to kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and sixth form. Consent needs to be signed by all parents/guardians of the student. Refer to the standard Consent and Information Form.

When a new student joins the School at an entry point, the SLT must ensure that the consent form is also given to parents/guardians. The signed form should be returned to the SLT within one working week.

Interdisciplinary Team will still be involved with or without the parents'/guardians' consent in the situations stated below:

- When there are patterns of absenteeism
- When the student's safety and well-being is at risk
- When the student's behaviour is a serious threat to others' safety and well being

In case of alleged abuse by one of the parents, the Interdisciplinary Team will still intervene in any way deemed necessary in the professional judgment of the Interdisciplinary Team member/s involved even though only one parent has given consent. Support may include but not be limited to monitoring, discussing and giving feedback to CSS or CPS. In some cases, it may involve sessions with counsellors/social workers/psychotherapist/psychologist etc. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis according to the professional judgment of the Interdisciplinary Team member/s.

2.2 Disclosures and Reporting Procedures

The students may disclose information which can cause harm to oneself and/or to others with any member of the Interdisciplinary Team mentioned above, as well as any other member of staff at school or visiting professionals.

All members of staff and SfCE service providers have the duty of mandatory reporting to the designated safeguarding officer any disclosures and /or observation of students' behaviour which is:

- Harm to self (self-harm, suicidal ideation, use of illegal substances or other),
- Harm by others (any kind of abuse: physical, neglect, sexual, violence, sharing or trafficking of illegal substances, bullying, cyber bullying or other),
- Harm to others (any kind of abuse: sexual, physical, violence, sharing or trafficking of illegal substances, bullying, cyberbullying or other).

The members of staff who become the repository of sensitive information, are obliged and ethically bound not to disclose this information to third parties other than the Designated Safeguarding Officer and in her/his absence the Head of School.

Upon disclosure, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will inform the Head of School and any members of the Interdisciplinary Team following or in any way involved with the student. In the case of students not already being followed by the Interdisciplinary Team members, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will liaise with the social worker and guidance teacher or counsellor. More specific details regarding procedures to be undertaken in different scenarios are indicated in sections 2.2.1 - 2.2.4. No intervention should be taken up by any person prior to consultation with the school social worker, who in turn may consult with CSS.

The social worker and /or counsellor may liaise with other services within SfCE and/or NSSS.

When the Head of School does not take action, the Designated Safeguarding Officer has the duty to report to SfCE Director. Where applicable, Designated Safeguarding Officer will be offered support by the Interdisciplinary Team to fill in the referral form.

Mandatory Reporting is a legal obligation. There are severe consequences which may include imprisonment for any person who delay and /or decide not to refer any type of abuse to CSS and CPS.



Figure 1: Reporting Alleged Abuse occurred away from School

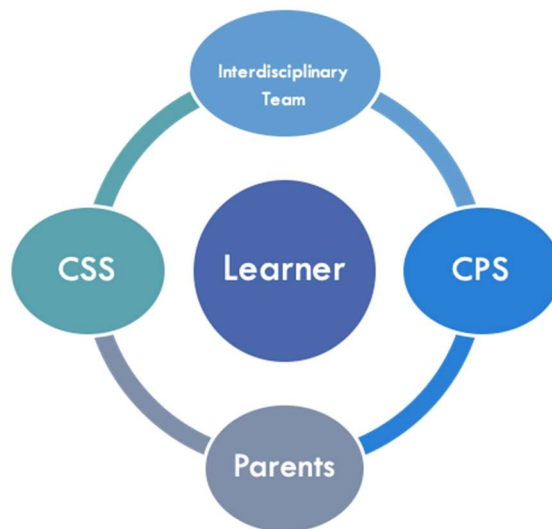


Figure 2: Follow up Reporting to CPS

2.2.1 Disclosure of explicit sexual abuse away from school premises and/or school activities

1. The trusted member of staff (the person who receives disclosure from learner) refers the case to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
2. The Designated Safeguarding Officer informs the Head of School and refers to school social worker.
3. School social worker informs CSS professional and together with the Designated Safeguarding Officer and /or other Interdisciplinary Team members involved fill in the CPS referral form on same day of disclosure.
4. In some cases, the Head of School, CSS Professional and/or school social worker may consult with the Service Manager for Student Services and decide to file a report to the Police. Referral to CPS is still to be handed in.
5. The Designated Safeguarding Officer informs any other Interdisciplinary Team members following the student.
6. The school social worker needs to be involved in every referral. However, in the event that the social worker is not available, the referral still needs to be filled in by the Designated Safeguarding Officer and other members of the interdisciplinary team, following consultations with school social worker and CSS.
7. The referral form signed by the Head of School is to be taken to Appoġġ by hand on the same day as the disclosure and the filling-in of the referral form.
8. On the same day, a copy of CPS referral form is taken by hand to CSS by the same person.
9. The CSS and /or CPS guide the Interdisciplinary Team to continue supporting the student without investigation. Support may include but is not limited to monitoring, discussing and giving feedback to professionals involved. In some cases, it may involve sessions with counsellors/social workers/psychotherapist/psychologist etc. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis according to the professional judgment of the Interdisciplinary Team member/s.
10. The leader following the case at CPS or Vice Squad may refer the learner to Appoġġ Services, school-based or private counselling/ psychotherapy/play therapy sessions etc. depending on the nature of the case.

11. In case of any further voluntary disclosures (harm to self or/and others), CSS and CPS are to be updated.
12. It is important to note that the Interdisciplinary Team, CSS and CPS update each other regularly on new developments following referral.
13. In eventual further voluntary disclosures, CSS and/or CPS are to be updated. In cases of disclosures about harm to self and/or suicide ideation, refer to section 5 of this document: Dealing with Medical and Mental Health Emergencies.

2.2.2 Disclosure /evident signs of violence, neglect, emotional abuse

1. The trusted member of staff (i.e. the person who receives disclosure from the learner) refers the case to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
2. The Designated Safeguarding Officer informs the Head of School, school Social Worker and any other Interdisciplinary Team members following the student.
3. The Designated Safeguarding Officer, the school Social Worker and the Interdisciplinary Team member involved (if any) consult with CSS.
4. The Interdisciplinary Team and/or CSS may further assess the situation.
5. The CSS professional may meet the parents in the presence of the SLT/guidance teacher/ Interdisciplinary Team member.
6. When applicable, CSS and the school Social Worker and other Interdisciplinary Team members involved fill in referral for CPS.
7. The school social worker needs to be involved in every referral. However, in the event that the social worker is not available, the referral still needs to be filled in by the Designated Safeguarding Officer and other members of the interdisciplinary team, following consultations with school social worker and CSS.
8. The referral form signed by the Head of School is to be taken to Appoġġ by hand on the same day as the disclosure and the filling-in of the referral form.
9. On the same day, a copy of CPS referral form is taken by hand to CSS by the same person.

10. In cases of a referral to CPS, the Interdisciplinary Team will continue to support the student. Support may include but is not limited to monitoring, discussing and giving feedback to professionals involved. In some cases, it may involve sessions with counsellors/social workers/psychotherapist/psychologist etc. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis according to the professional judgment of the Interdisciplinary Team member/s.
11. If there is no referral to CPS, the student is to be referred to school based or private counselling/ psychotherapy/play therapy or other professionals, as necessary.
12. In case of any further voluntary disclosures, CSS or/and CPS are to be updated. In cases of disclosures about harm to self and/or suicide ideation, refer to chapter 4 of this document: Dealing with Medical and Mental Health Emergencies.

3. Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools

3.1 School Policy

- The School must have an Anti-Bullying Policy which reflects the core values of the National Policy: Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools; Respect for All Framework 2014.
- The Behaviour Policy including challenging and/or inappropriate behaviour should be distinctively separate from the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy, must include clear guidelines for students, parents, teaching staff, SLT and helping professionals supporting the school on procedures to follow in different scenarios.
- The policy must include the following:
 - o Reporting system of bullying behaviour by different stakeholders: learners, parents, teaching staff, SLT and helping professionals supporting the school.
 - o Designated Safeguarding Officer to receive reports and take action without prejudice.
 - o Parents' Involvement of both parties throughout the cycle; from reporting stage to actions taken ensuring a safe environment, provision of support and restorative justice.
 - o SLT's initiatives to ensure safe environment for all learners; upgrading of measures taken following specific reports.

- Support system for both alleged victim and perpetrator.
- Clear indication of restorative justice for perpetrator.
- The role of helping professionals allocated to the school including members of the Anti-Bullying Team from the NSSS.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy, as with all other school policies must be accessible to all stakeholders; parents, learners and members of staff.

3.2 Prevention

3.2.1 Code of Conduct for Learners

- All learners and parents must sign the Code of Conduct document at least at point of entry in Primary School, Secondary School and 6th Form.
- It is recommended as good practice to include parents' declaration that both parents and learners have read the Learners Code of Conduct (accessible on school website /portal) with the administrative paper work in the beginning of the scholastic year.
- For more effective results, the Code of Conduct must be written in simple and clear language.
- The Code of Conduct must promote a positive approach encouraging positive behaviour, clear procedures and consequences for infringement of this code as well as restorative justice.
- It is recommended that the Code of Conduct includes the name of the Designated Safeguarding Officer for both reporting and referral for support.

3.2.2 Creating a safe and positive environment

- Foster a culture of Restorative Justice Practices.
- Encourage an environment of open communication and good relationships amongst adults and students.
- Provide opportunities for both adults and students to be ambassadors of peace.

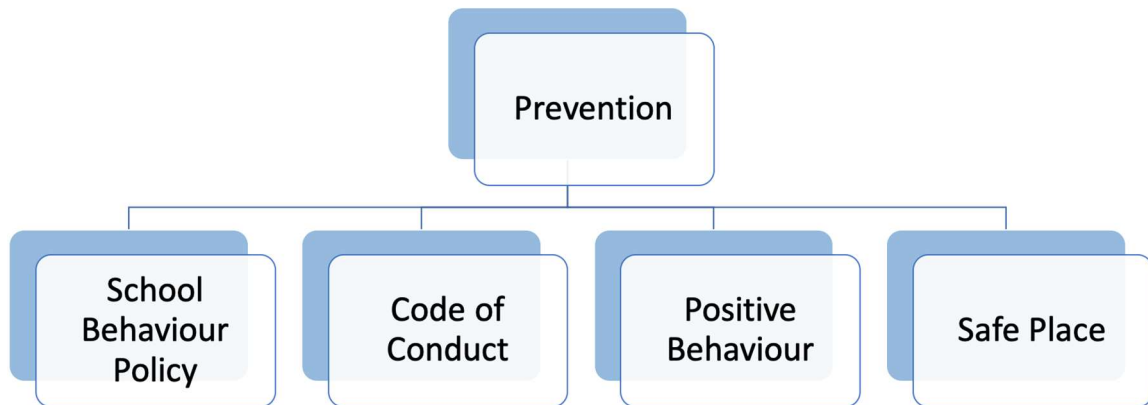


Figure 3: Prevention at School

3.3 Intervention

3.3.1 Student to Student

1. The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) listens to reporting learner /member of staff/ parent carefully.
2. The DSO speaks to the reporting learner and/or alleged victim.
3. DSO speaks to the perpetrator (separately from reporting student and/or alleged victim).
4. DSO speaks to witnesses for further clarification.
5. In cases where DSO feels that specialised intervention is required, case is referred to guidance teacher (social worker or counsellor in the Primary School).
6. Guidance teacher considers all information and clarifies whether it is a matter of conflict or bullying, and proceed accordingly.
7. If the case is still unresolved, guidance teacher/counsellor /social worker is expected to report back to DSO, and refer case to the Anti-Bullying Service.

3.3.2 Incident Reported by Parents

- If the parents are making the referral about the bullying incident, it must be immediately reported to the Head of School or Designated Safeguarding Officer, and then follow guidelines mentioned in 3.3.1.

3.3.3 Notes on Reporting

- School Staff, all other professionals and all members of staff working within educational establishments, are to verbally intervene immediately to stop bullying behaviour.
- When a bullying incident is reported, member of staff needs to listen in a non-judgemental manner.
- All bullying behaviour is to be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, and noted in the Incident Report Book.
- Designated Safeguarding Officer is immediately to inform Head of School.
- Once Head of School is informed, the designated member of staff is to inform parents of both parties by means of a letter and /or email

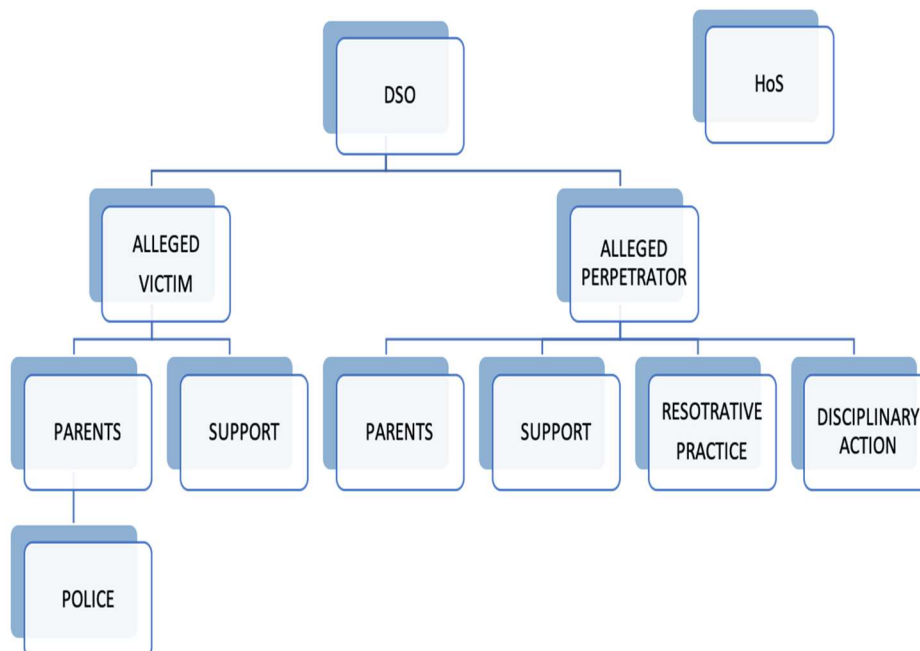


Figure 4: Reporting

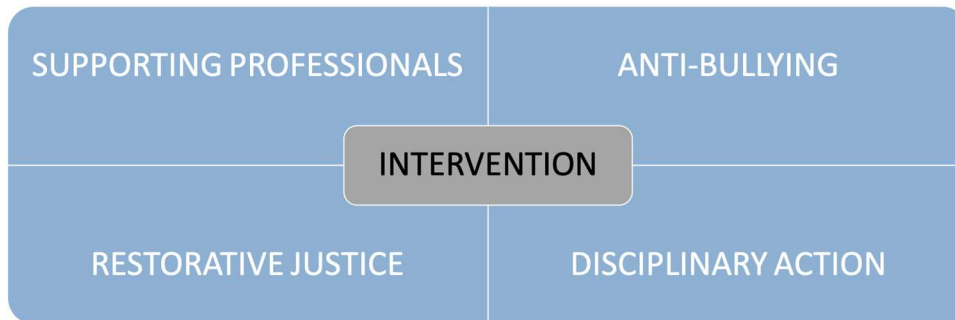






Figure 5: Intervention

3.4 Cyber Bullying

Procedures are adapted from the National Guidelines on how to deal with cyberbullying (MEDE 2019)

Teachers reporting Cyberbullying	Parents report Cyberbullying to school	Students report Cyberbullying themselves	Outside agencies report Cyberbullying
			
Teachers are obliged to report immediately to DSO.	Reporting parents are to be directed to the DSO. Parents can report directly to the Anti-bullying National Service.	DSO collates these reports to inform parents of students concerned.	DSO should involve the guidance teachers and psychosocial interdisciplinary and/or the Anti-Bullying Service.
DSO and /or HoS informs the parents of the student concerned; and asks student to get the necessary evidence.	The DSO should record the incident in the school report book using the incident report template, Appendix 4. Printed screenshots should be attached to the report.	DSO asks student to get a print out of the screenshots as evidence.	DSO informs the parents of the student concerned; and asks student to get the necessary evidence – printed screenshots.

DSO should also involve guidance teachers or psychosocial interdisciplinary team in the initial stages.	SLT is to consider what disciplinary action to take if cyberbullying is proven and perpetrator is a school student	DSO should also involve guidance teachers or psychosocial interdisciplinary team in the initial stages.	The DSO is to keep a record of the meetings with the parents and any decisions taken.
The DSO is to keep a record of the meetings with the parents and any decisions taken	If cyberbullying is between an adult and a child then the police should be involved.	The DSO should record the incident in the school report book using the incident report template, Appendix 4 Printed screenshots should be attached to the report.	SLT is to consider what disciplinary action to take if cyber bullying is proven and perpetrator is a school student
SLT is to consider what disciplinary action to take if cyberbullying is proven and perpetrator is a school student	If cyberbullying is between a teacher and a student the Head should liaise with the SfCE Director and decide a course of action.	SLT is to consider what disciplinary action to take if cyberbullying is proven and perpetrator is a school student	The DSO and /or HoS is to advise the parents to file a report with the police.
The SLT is to advise the parents to file a report with the police.	When DSO and psychosocial interdisciplinary team are further concerned about the safety of the student/s, they are to inform APPOGĠ about this incident.	The DSO is to keep a record of the meetings with the parents and any decisions taken. The DSO and /or HoS is to advise the parents to file a report with the police.	The DSO should record the incident in the school report book using the incident report template, Appendix 4. Printed screenshots should be attached to the report.
The DSO should record the incident in the school report book using the incident report template, Appendix 4		DSO must ensure that the guidance teacher or psychosocial interdisciplinary team provides the support for the students involved and to parents where necessary.	DSO must ensure that the guidance teacher or psychosocial interdisciplinary team provides the support for the students involved and to parents where necessary.

<p>DSO must ensure that the guidance teachers or psychosocial interdisciplinary team provides the support for the students involved and to parents where necessary.</p>		<p>When DSO & psychosocial interdisciplinary team are further concerned about the safety of the student/s, they are to inform APPOGĠ about this incident.</p>	<p>When DSO & psychosocial interdisciplinary team are further concerned about the safety of the student/s, they are to inform APPOGĠ about this incident.</p>
<p>When DSO & psychosocial interdisciplinary team are further concerned about the safety of the student/s, they are to inform APPOGĠ about this incident.</p>			

4. Safeguarding Learners and Vulnerable Adults in Schools

4.1 Prevention

4.1.1 Recruitment, Initial Training and Continuous Professional Development of Personnel and Protection of Minors in Compulsory Education

- When recruiting new personnel, SfCE and schools should be in adherence with principles and practices of Education Act (CAP 327), Legal Notice 206 of 2016 - **Recruitment, Initial Training and Continuous Professional Development of Personnel and Protection of Minors in Compulsory Education Regulations, 2016** (refer to Appendix 3).
- SfCE and church schools are committed to comply with the Safeguarding Policy (2014). Adherence with the Safeguarding Policy should be included in employment contracts of all newly recruited employees.

4.1.2 Continuous Professional Development for all employees

- Schools should provide information sessions on child protection issues to any person working directly with minors within the school premises, whether such person is an employee of the school or not.
- All schools' employees and SfCE supporting staff should be aware who is the Designated Safeguarding Officer as first port of call in cases where children's well-being is concerned.

4.2 Reporting System

4.2.1 Reporting System Procedure for Inappropriate Behaviour from Adult to Learner

1. Victim and/or witnesses file a report in writing to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
2. DSO reports to Head of School and College Rector /Director (where applicable).
3. DSO and HoS listen to the alleged perpetrator's version and record testimony in writing.

4. DSO and HoS listen to the alleged victim in the parents' presence and record testimony in writing.
5. In not later than one working day, the Head of School submits referral to the Head of Malta Diocese Safeguarding Commission, copying in the Archbishop's Delegate and Director of Secretariat for Catholic Education.
6. The Safeguarding Commission will carry out the initial assessment and proceed either with preliminary investigation or recommendations to the Ordinary / Bishop for action congruent with the aim of safeguarding children and adults at risk.
7. The Safeguarding Commission communicates the outcome of the investigation to the Rector /Provincial and Head of School. The Safeguarding Commission may also inform the Archbishop's Delegate for Catholic Education and SfCE Director.
8. If allegations result to be unfounded, all collected data will be destroyed.
9. If allegations are sustained, respective Head of School is to proceed according to the Safeguarding Commission's short term and long term recommendations including established regulations and legislations.

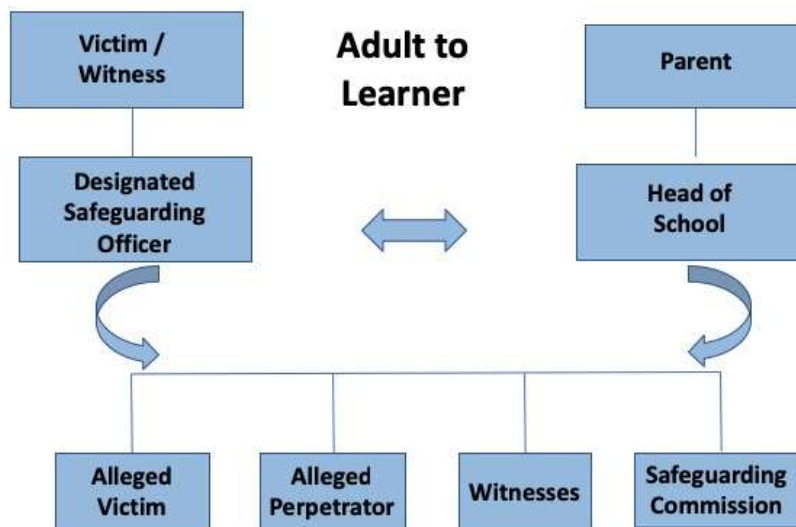


Figure 6: Reporting System Adult to Learner

4.2.2 Reporting System Procedure for Inappropriate behaviour from Learner to Adult

1. Victim and/or witnesses file a report in writing to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
2. DSO reports to Head of School and College Director /Rector (where applicable).
3. DSO and HoS listen to the alleged victim and any witnesses, recording testimony in writing.
4. DSO and HoS listen to the alleged perpetrator's version in the parents' presence and record testimony in writing.
5. In instances of violent aggression, further advice is to be sought from the SfCE Director, who may guide the school in steps to be taken and what assistance can be provided where necessary. The educator will be kept informed by the Head of School of the steps taken and the assistance offered.
6. Following the investigation, the Head of School may take disciplinary actions against the perpetrator.

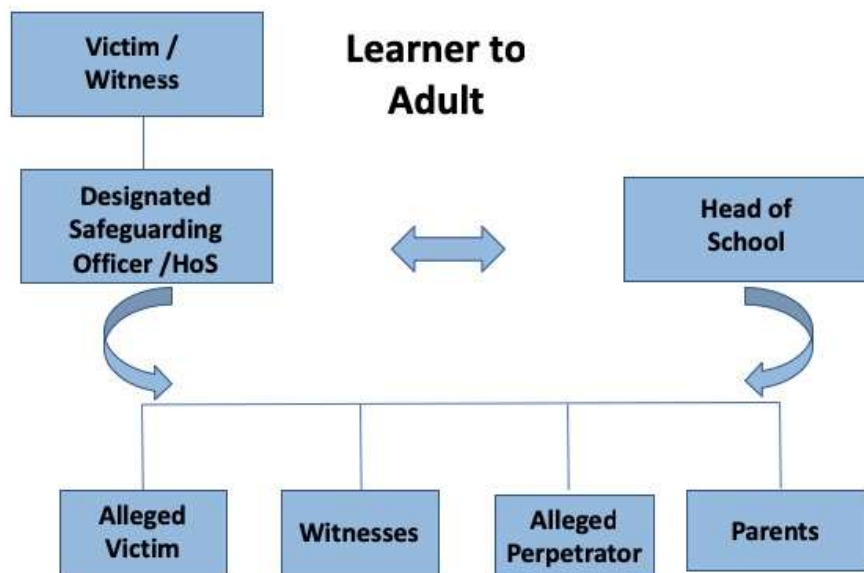


Figure 7: Reporting System, Learner to Adult.

4.2.3 Reporting System Procedure for Inappropriate behaviour from Adult to Adult

1. Victim and/or witnesses file a report in writing to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
2. DSO reports to Head of School and College Rector /Director (where applicable).
3. DSO and HoS listen to the alleged perpetrator's version and record testimony in writing.
4. DSO and HoS listen to the alleged victim and record testimony in writing.
5. The HoS and DSO assess the situation identifying whether it is a conflict between two adults or harassment /abuse from one adult to a vulnerable adult. Further advice may be sought from the SfCE Director.
6. Following investigation, the Head of School works with the two parties to resolve conflict and improve the relationship. Disciplinary actions may be taken against one or both parties.
7. In case of alleged harassment /abuse of a vulnerable adult, the HoS and DSO refer the case to the Safeguarding Commission. Following an independent initial assessment, the Safeguarding Commission proceeds either with preliminary investigation or recommendations to the Ordinary / Bishop for action congruent with the aim of safeguarding children and adults at risk.
8. The Safeguarding Commission communicates outcome and recommendations to the Rector/Provincial and Head of School. The Safeguarding Commission may also inform the Archbishop's Delegate for Catholic Education and SfCE Director.

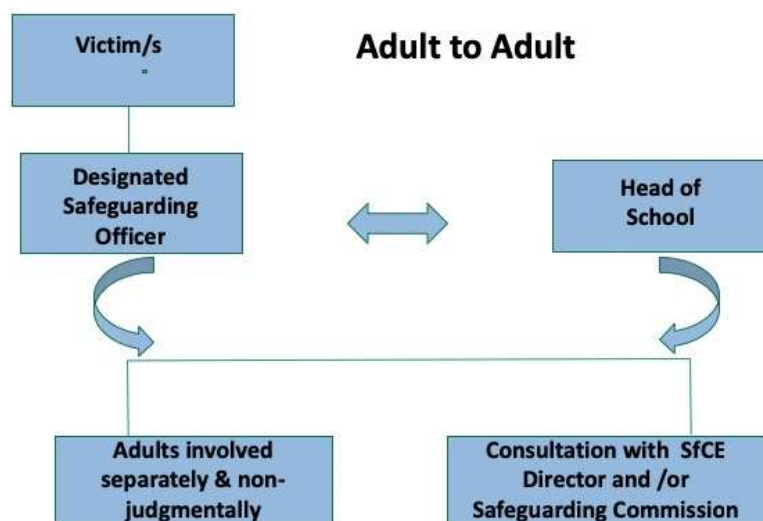


Figure 8: Reporting System, Adult to Adult.

Disclaimer

The following clauses apply in all circumstances mentioned in 4.2

- Failure to forward any violence / harassment /sexual abuse report or complaint as provided herein will result in disciplinary action against the Designated Safeguarding Officer. If the complaint involves the DSO, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the Rector /Head of School by the reporting party or the complainant.
- If the complaint involves the Rector / Head of School, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the Safeguarding Commission by the reporting party or the complainant.
- Notwithstanding all members of staff are encouraged to report through official procedures, alleged victims or witnesses reserve the right to report directly to the Safeguarding Commission.

5. Handling Medical and Mental Health Emergencies

5.1 Definition of Different Scenarios

Self-Harm:	Refers to intentional, direct injuring of body tissue done without suicide intentions. It's usually a way of coping with, or expressing overwhelming emotional distress. Repetitive self-harm may be a symptom of psychiatric illness.
Passive Suicide Ideation:	Learner discloses that s/he wishes to die
Active Suicide Ideation:	Learner discloses suicidal intentions
Suicide Attempt:	Learners tries to commit suicide but s/he survives
Suicide:	Refers to the act of intentionally causing one's own death

5.2 Disclosure of Self Harm or Passive Suicide Ideation

1. When disclosure is received by a member of staff, s/he must report to DSO immediately.
2. DSO is to inform the Guidance Teacher and /or Counsellor and any Interdisciplinary Team member/s already following the student.
3. The counsellor / guidance teacher carries out an assessment session and plans intervention accordingly.

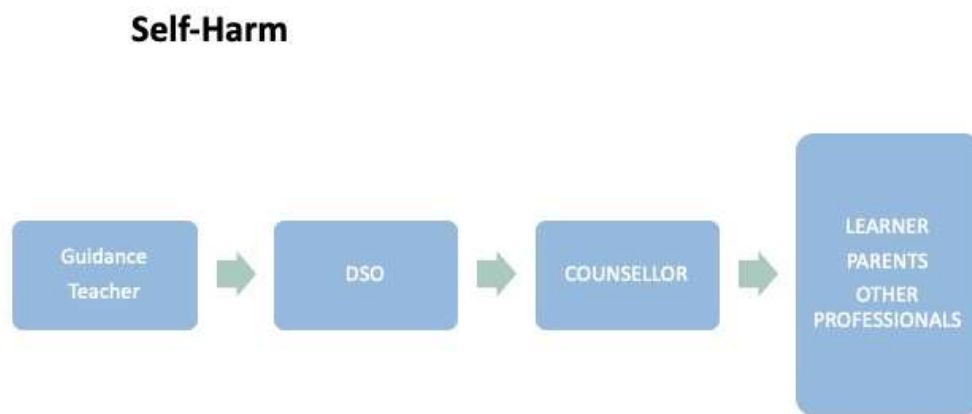


Figure 9: Reporting System, Self-Harm

5.3 Disclosure of Suicidal Ideation

1. Member of staff or supporting professional receiving the disclosure must inform the DSO immediately.
2. The Designated Safeguarding Officer is to inform the Head of School and any Interdisciplinary Team member/s following the student.
3. In the case of a learner who is not yet followed by any supporting professionals, the counsellor / guidance teacher /psychologist (if happens to be on school premises) carries out an assessment session and calls CIHT for consultation.

4. In cases when assessment by CIHT is not recommended:
 - DSO is to inform the parents verbally & in writing by sending an incident report via child mail or email.
 - DSO gives them an appointment with the counsellor.
 - Learner can continue to attend school whilst being followed by the counsellor and/or clinical psychologist.
5. In cases when the assessment by CIHT is recommended:
 - The HoS / DSO is to inform the parents and ask them to come to school immediately.
 - The counsellor / guidance teacher explains the situation to the parents and instructs them to refer to Critical Intervention Home Therapy Team (CIHT) within the Emergency Department or a private clinical psychologist /psychiatrist, particularly if learner is already being followed.
 - The Counsellor /Guidance teacher or any Interdisciplinary Team member following the student prior and / or after the incident is to keep contact with CIHT / clinical psychologist / psychiatrist.
 - The decision of when the student is to attend school subsequent to the incident is to be taken on a case-by-case basis according to the professional advice received in writing from the mental health professionals involved.
 - The learner continues to be supported /monitored by the guidance teacher /counsellor in liaison with the clinical psychologist /psychiatrist following the learner at CYPS or privately.
6. In cases when the learner is admitted at the Young Persons Unit (YPU):
 - The counsellor /social worker keeps contact with the Nursing Officer of the YPU during the student's stay and gives updates to the school and Service Manager for Student Services.
 - On his/her return to school, the learner needs to present a written certificate from the psychiatrist saying learner has been discharged /on leave.
 - The Interdisciplinary Team member following the student is to follow up the case with parents/guardians and, if already involved, the CSS/CPS accordingly.

- The Interdisciplinary Team member following the student is to follow up the process with the family.
- The family is strongly encouraged to avail itself from the school Social Worker Services
- The School Social Worker offers to accompany parents and learner/s to the psychiatrist, CIHT or Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) according to the need.

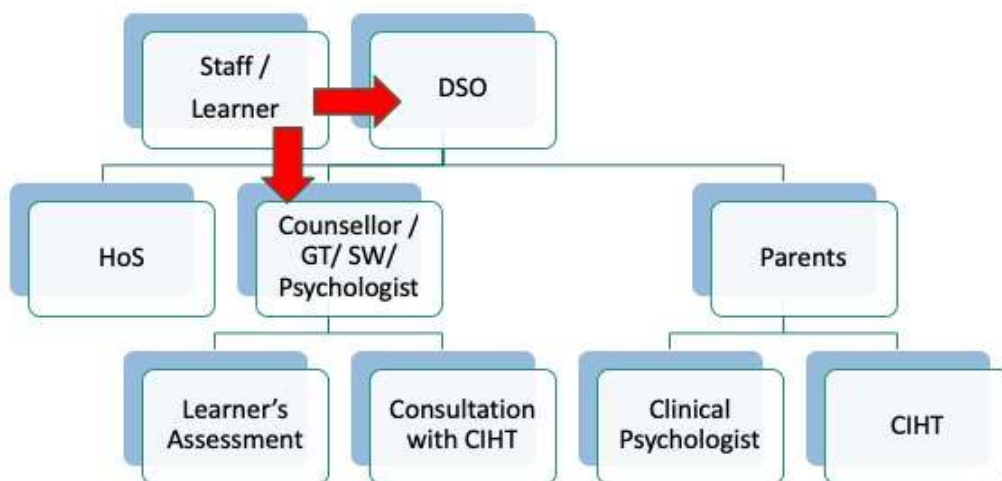


Figure 10: Procedure for Suicide Ideation

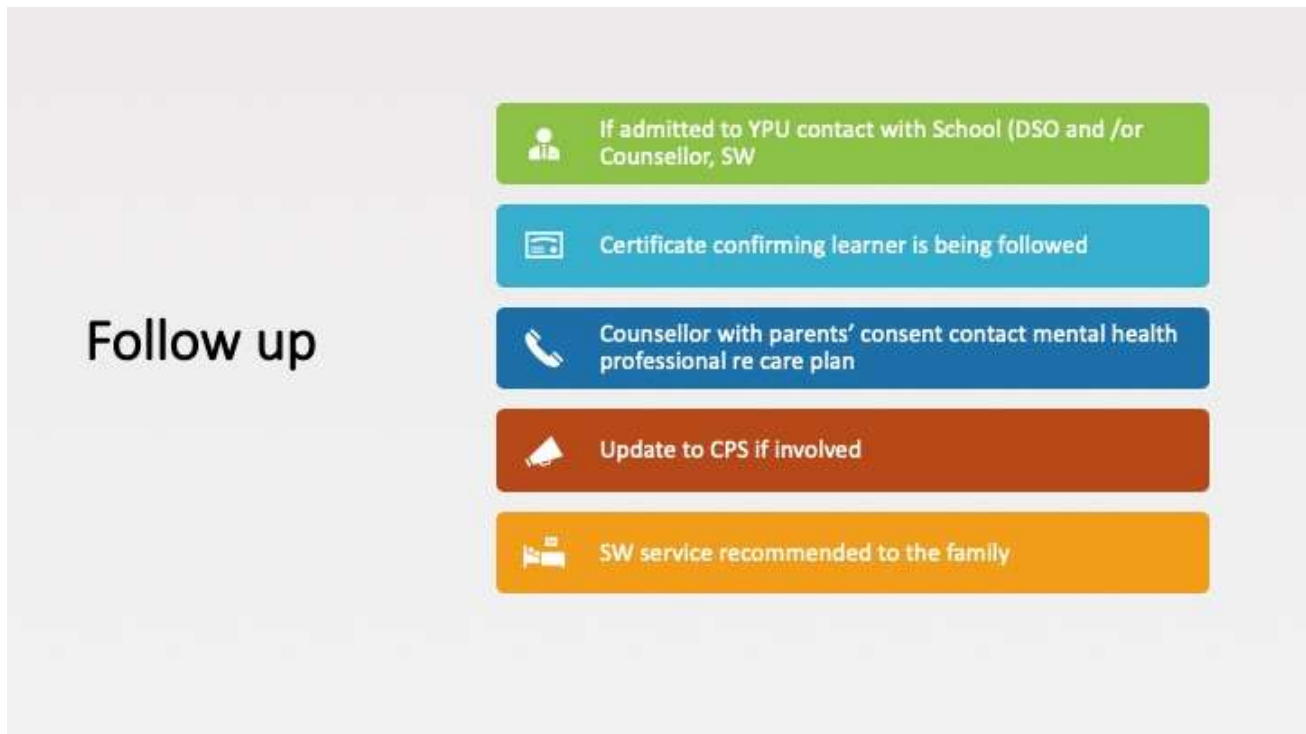


Figure 11: Follow up for Suicide Ideation

5.4 Additional notes

- In case the school is aware of a previous referral to CPS, reporting a separate incident of abuse by one of the parents, just the consent of the other parent is enough. The previous incident of abuse should not be mentioned with the parents at any point. Updates of the student's current situation are then to be given to CSS or social worker following the case at CPS.
- In case of a medical emergency, the student is to be accompanied to hospital if necessary by two members of staff; one in ambulance and one by private car. Parents are to be immediately informed to proceed to the Emergency Department at Mater Dei.
- In a situation when from CIHT it was recommended to send the student for assessment but the parents /guardians do not cooperate, the student needs to be supervised at all times by any member of the Interdisciplinary Team / SLT member until the school closes. If by the time school closes nobody has as yet called for the

student, the SLT is to call the police. A school staff member and a member of the Interdisciplinary Team are to accompany the student to the nearest police station until the parents/guardians are located or CPS is called.

- In case of self-harm/suicide attempt performed at school, the First Aider may intervene if necessary. The Service Manager for Student Services may be contacted immediately for a Critical Incident Intervention in view of intervening with other students and school staff members witnessing the incident.
- In case the SLT and/or Interdisciplinary Team notices medical neglect i.e. that the student is not being taken for psychiatric evaluation, a consultation by telephone to CSS needs to be done immediately.

5.5 Suicide attempt performed at school

1. The HoS or DSO is to call 112 immediately and /or SfCE Service Manager Student Services, to give guidance on whom to contact depending on type of suicide attempt.
2. The HoS informs the parents and instruct them to come to school or to the hospital /depending on the situation.
3. The DSO or a supporting professional must accompany and support the learner until she is assisted by medical professionals and parents.
4. The SfCE Service Manager for Student Services informs the SfCE Director and allocates the Critical Incidence Intervention Team to support the school community.

Suicide Attempt on School Premises

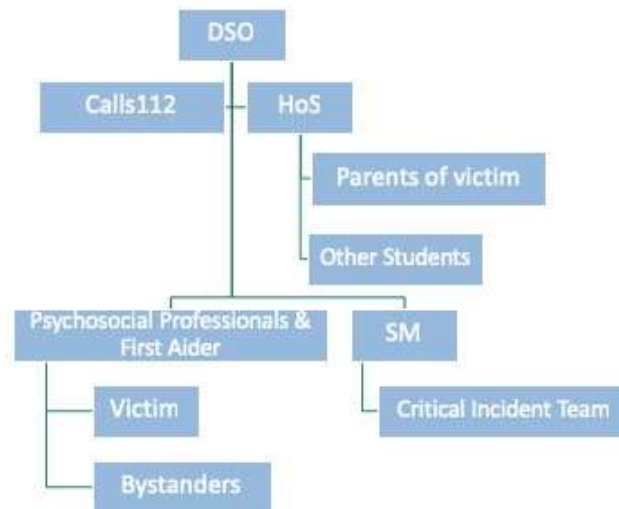


Figure 12: Procedure for suicide attempt on school premises

5.6 Suicide performed at school

1. The HoS or DSO is to call 112 immediately, giving all the details and notify SfCE Director for support and guidance.
2. The HoS /DSO notifies the parents.
3. The HoS / delegate notifies School's lawyer.
4. Access to the scene is denied to other students and members of staff.
5. The Service Manager for Student Services allocates the Critical Incident Intervention Team to support the school community in dealing with such a traumatic loss.

6. Managing Critical Incident Intervention

- SFCE provides Critical Incident Intervention to the school community when faced with a tragedy and /or emotional distress effecting students, staff members and parents. Such incidents may include the death of a student/staff member, a sudden death of a parent exposed on media (suicide/ overdose/ accident), diagnosis of a terminal illness of a student/member of staff and students witnessing aggressive behaviour at school. Other situations may be considered.
- The Critical Incident team is made up of Interdisciplinary Team professionals, led by a psychologist specialised in Critical Incident Intervention. The team works with the SLT, members of staff, parents, groups of students and individual follow-ups according to need.
- In such incidents the SLT is encouraged to make the request directly to the SfCE Service Manager Student Services. Intervention will take place immediately.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

Who should be the Designated Safeguarding Officer?

- Depending on the school population, the Head of School appoints one or two persons of trust to coordinate and /or be the point of reference for learners, educators, interdisciplinary professionals and parents.
- It is recommended that the Designated Safeguarding Officer has a background of Guidance /counselling or a natural aptitude to deal with these issues on daily basis.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer should not be the Head of School.
- Ideally the Designated Safeguarding Officer is a different person from the Assistant Head for Inclusion and Prefect of Discipline.

What is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer?

- The Designated Safeguarding Officer maybe asked by the Head of School to assist in vetting new members of staff for clearance to work with children during enrolment period.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer is responsible to receive Safeguarding training from the Safeguarding Commission at least every two years.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer is responsible to ensure all members of staff receive Safeguarding Training from Safeguarding Commission and are aware of and have access to the SfCE Safeguarding Guidelines and Procedures, and other related policies.
- Head of School, educators and parents refer students for services through the designated member of staff. Students still have a right for a self-referral to Guidance Teachers, Counsellors, Youth Worker, Psychologist and Social Worker.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer appraises the referrals, consults with one or more psychosocial professionals and determines who is the professional best suited to address the needs of each particular student. In some cases, more than one professional may be involved.

- The Designated Safeguarding Officer does not interfere in the approach to be taken by the professionals being involved.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer has access to consent forms and students' data.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer keeps track of all correspondence, keeping in the loop all the persons involved with that particular student.
- When specific situations indicate an escalation in complexity and students are at risk, the Designated Safeguarding Officer updates the Head of School.
- In the case of a critical situation such as indications /disclosure of abuse or mental health issues, the Designated Safeguarding Officer follows the Safeguarding Procedures and consults with the appropriate Interdisciplinary Team professionals who in turn liaise with NSSS Teams or CIHT according to the situation.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer coordinates the Interdisciplinary team meetings which are held periodically.

Interdisciplinary Team Meetings

- This team may have a different name in each school but it serves a common purpose.
- The team coordinated by the Designated Safeguarding Officer is made up of the Rector and/or the Head of School, some/all SLT members, Interdisciplinary Team professionals allocated to that school and Guidance teachers (when applicable). Some schools prefer to include the year coordinators.
- Since sensitive and confidential matters are discussed during these meetings, it is not advisable to have the Discipline teachers and PSCD teachers (unless they are Guidance teachers) included in this team.
- The scope of these meetings is mainly to give updates and consult together on the students who have the most pressing issues. Members of the team may present new cases of concern for consultation.
- Way forward discussed in these meetings is included in the minutes.

Appendix 2

How to recognise a Physically Abused student?

“Physical abuse implies physically harmful action directed against a child”
(C.H. Kempe)

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any one of them to a marked degree.

Victims of physical abuse may display:

- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Withdrawal from physical contact – shrinking back if touched
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Fear of going home after school
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Bullying smaller children
- In play demonstrates violence to dolls and animals
- Cruelty to animals
- Destructive behaviour
- Anger control problems
- Chronic running away
- Art work displays violence; adults loom as large threatening figures, while child figures as small and powerless.
- Preoccupation with themes of conflict

- Unexplained injuries or burns especially if they are recurrent
- Improbable excuses to explain injuries
- Bald patches

How to recognise an Emotionally Abused student?

“Emotional abuse includes a child being continually terrorised, berated, or rejected.”
(C.H. Kempe)

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any one of them to a marked degree.

Victims of emotional abuse may display:

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Social isolation poor peer relationship
- Depression, suicidal thoughts or gestures
- Absence of affect and ability to communicate feelings
- Self-mutilation, digging or picking at skin
- Being argumentative
- Telling lies
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Poor self-esteem. Statements about being worthless. (I’m stupid)
- Sudden speech disorders
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain (‘I deserve this’)
- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Substance abuse Drug/solvent
- Compulsive stealing.

- Angry acts (such as fire setting and animal cruelty),
- Chronic running away
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Biting others in preschool children

How to recognise a Neglected student?

“Neglect implies the failure of the parents to act properly in safeguarding the health, safety and well-being of the child. It includes nutritional neglect, failure to provide medical care or to protect a child from physical and social danger.”

(C.H. Kempe)

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any one of them to a marked degree.

Victims of neglect may display:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness. Fatigue
- Poor state of clothing
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Low-self esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- No social relationships and/or have tense relations with their peers,
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive scavenging
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school

- Delayed physical development
- Seeks physical contact with strangers
- Underweight
- An infant or young child does not cry for help or attention; makes no sound or makes a tiny sound like a kitten's meow
- Child inappropriately clad for the weather
- Child smells of urine, excrement, or severe body odour.
- Prone to have stealing habits
- Be taking up responsibilities not appropriate to their age.
- Frequent illness

How to recognise a Sexually Abused student?

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any one of them to a marked degree.

Victims of Sexual Abuse may display:

- Show discomfort walking
- Have urinary infections, chronic itching, bleeding or soreness in the genital or anal areas
- Have soreness or bleeding in the throat
- Have chronic ailments, such as abdominal pain or headaches
- Constipation, faecal retention
- A child withdrawing into a fantasy world
- Say that a friend has a problem
- Ask you if you will keep a secret if they tell you something
- Seem to be keeping secret something which is worrying them
- Hints of secret and secret games

- Exhibit sudden inexplicable changes in behaviour such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Become severely depression
- Suicidal feelings and attempts or excessive risk taking
- Running away
- Self-mutilation
- Eating disorders, sudden loss of appetite (Anorexia) or compulsive eating
- Drug abuse – teenagers may turn to illegal drugs or alcohol to escape
- Becoming insecure or clinging
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Statements that they are no good, dirty or damaged
- Truancy or runaway behaviour – often a last resort to escape sexual abuse
- Begin lying, stealing, blatantly cheating in the hope of being caught
- Delinquent or aggressive behaviour
- Stop enjoying previously liked activities, such as music, sport, art, scouts or guides, going to summer camp, gym club
- Be reluctant to undress for gym
- Take over the parent role at home, seem old beyond their years (if victim of incest)
- Child is afraid to go home or expresses a desire to live in a foster home or institution
- Excessive bathing or poor hygiene
- Sleep disturbances and nightmares symptoms of fear and anxiety
- Start wetting themselves
- Repeat obscene words or phrases which may have been said during abuse
- Talk or write about sexual matters
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviours: clinging, fondling, flirting, rubbing, public masturbation
- Sexual themes in language or play
- Sexual aggression to, smaller children, toys, and pets

- Attempt to sexually abuse another child
- Detailed and overly sophisticated understanding of sexual behaviour
- Act in a sexual way inappropriate to their age
- Draw sexually explicit pictures depicting some act of abuse
- Have unexplained sources of money
- Non-participating in school activities

It is important to note that these lists are possible indicators of abuse. Many of the signs could have other explanations. These lists are useful as a reference. A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse.

(Taken from: Child Safety Services: Reference notes for teachers and professionals.)

Appendix 3

Legal Notice 206 of 2016

L.N. 206 of 2016

EDUCATION ACT (CAP. 327)

Recruitment, Initial Training and Continuous Professional Development of Personnel and Protection of Minors in Compulsory Education Regulations, 2016

IN exercise of the powers conferred by article 135(i), (j) and (s) of the Education Act, the Minister for Education and Employment has made the following regulations:-

1. The title of these regulations is the Recruitment, Initial Training and Continuous Professional Development and Protection of Minors in Compulsory Education Regulations, 2016. Citation.

2. In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires: Interpretation.
 - "Act" means the Education Act; Cap. 327.
 - "Minister" means the Minister responsible for education;
 - "personnel" refers to all staff employed in a school.

3. Personnel in schools shall not be recruited unless such recruitment is done through an open call for applications and such recruitment follows an interview carried out by an interview panel composed of at least one person having such adequate experience in the area of working with minors in the educational area as may be necessary. Recruitment of personnel.

4. Personnel employed in schools are to have a clean police conduct certificate in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Conduct Certificates Ordinance. Clean Police Conduct Certificate.
Cap. 77.

5. Applicants are to fill in a self-declaration form to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders and reprimands together with relevant past or pending investigations that may affect their suitability to work with minors. Self-declaration form.

6. Any call for application for personnel to be employed in schools shall convey the school's zero tolerance approach to child abuse and harm. Zero tolerance approach to child abuse and harm.

7. Should schools accept character references for applicants they are to verify the veracity of the contents of these references. Character references.

Induction
training and
mentoring.

8. Schools are to provide induction training and mentoring for its newly engaged personnel, which training shall include child protection issues.

Information
sessions.

9. Schools shall provide information sessions on child protection issues to any person working directly with minors within the school premises, whether such person is an employee of the school or not.

Children's well-
being.

10. Each school shall designate a person whose role is to put forward issues related to children's well-being and to be the first port of call in cases where children's well-being is concerned.

Child protection
policy.

11. Schools shall have a child protection policy in place which shall include provisions of how the school is to deal with any allegations relating to child abuse, whether such abuse occurs in the school or outside.

Appendix 4

Incident Report Book Template

Name of Student who is targeted:

Class:

Name of Student who is carrying out bullying behaviour:

Class:

Person Reporting:

Date of Incident:

Time of Incident:

Place where behaviour took place:

Description of bullying behaviour:

Initial Plan of Action to address bullying behaviour:

Date when letter is sent
to Parent of perpetrator:

Date when family of victim was informed
and how message was conveyed:

Action Taken:

Was issue resolved:

Appendix 5

Letter to Parents informing them of first incident of Bullying

[Insert College letterhead]

Date:

Dear Parent,

Please be informed that of class was involved in a bullying incident at school today. Below is a brief summary of the incident.

Time:

Location:

Observed Bullying Behaviour:

At our school we aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for everyone within the school and therefore take bullying very seriously. Please be informed that, from now on, we will be monitoring your child's behaviour very closely.

Please contact us, so that together we can discuss positive and constructive strategies to help prevent your child from being involved in similar incidents in the future. We look forward to working with you to help resolve this situation.

Sincerely,
Head of School

Appendix 6

Letter to Parents informing them of a subsequent bullying behaviour

[Insert College letterhead]

Date:

Dear Parent,

We need to bring to your attention that [redacted] of class [redacted] was again involved in another bullying incident at school today. Below is a brief summary of the incident.

Time:

[redacted]

Location:

[redacted]

Observed Bullying Behaviour:

[redacted]

As mentioned in our previous communication, at our school we aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for everyone and therefore take any form of bullying very seriously. We request that you contact our school immediately to discuss your child's actions as it is imperative that you cooperate with the school in your child's interest.

Sincerely,
Head of School

List of References

1. Maltese Ecclesiastical Province. 2014. On Cases of Sexual Abuse in Pastoral Activity: Statement of Policy and Procedures in Cases of Sexual Abuse. Retrieved; March 13, 2019, from: <http://ms.maltadiocese.org/WEBSITE/2014/Safeguarding%20Policy%202014.pdf>
2. Ministry for Education and Employment. 2015. Addressing Behaviour Policy in Schools. Retrieved; March 13, 2019, from: <https://education.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Policy%20Documents/Managing%20Behaviour%20in%20Schools%20Policy.pdf>
3. Child Safety Services. Reference notes for teachers and professionals. Retrieved; March 11, 2019, from: <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/safe/css>
4. Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools Policy, April 2014. Retrieved March 13, 2019, from: <https://education.gov.mt/en/Documents/Addressing%20Bullying%20Behaviour%20in%20Schools.pdf>