



**ABC Kidz**  
**Educare**  
“We nurture happiness”

# Anti-Child Abuse / Child Protection Policy

25 Ameshoff Street  
Libridge Building  
Braamfontein

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*Person responsible: Esme Olyn*

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## Policy statement

In our aim to give children the very best start in life, ABC Kidz Educare ensures the rights and safety of our children on our premises and, wherever possible, off-site as well.

The curriculum that ABC Kidz Educare uses covers many of the dangers and the children are taught, in a non-frightening way, about 'stranger danger' and how people may not touch their private parts. Most importantly we give the children tools that can help them alert the people around them and, possibly, get away.

ABC Kidz Educare actively promotes a Culture of Safety. We are very aware of child abuse and are committed to preventing incidents of any form of abuse in our school. In the unlikely event that an incident takes place at school, we will respond promptly and appropriately, and cooperate with the Police, Department of Social Development and Social Welfare.

We are very aware of child abuse and watch our children very carefully. However, we try to remain balanced and do not look for signs where there are none.

## Method

This policy will be implemented and updated by Esme Olyn Principal.

## Culture of Safety

ABC Kidz Educare is committed to building a culture of safety in which children are protected from abuse and harm.

1. The Safety Coordinator for child protection issues, is: Wilna Terblanche.
2. The designated management, who oversees the Safety Coordinator, is: Esme Olyn.
3. All staff are trained to understand our safety policies and procedures and parents are made aware of them too.

## Staff

1. As per the Department of Social Development's recommendations, ABC Kidz Educare adheres to the following ratio:
  - a. Birth to 18 months: 1:6
  - b. 19 months to 36 months: 1:15
  - c. 37 months 72 months: 1:25
2. The adequate numbers of staff, each with the appropriate qualifications, help us to ensure that:
  - a. Children are never left alone, even for one moment.
  - b. A staff member is available to attend all extra-mural lessons.
  - c. Children are not left alone in the toilets.
  - d. Students doing their practicals and/or volunteers are never left alone with the children.
  - e. Children are never left when maintenance is being carried out at school.
3. Comprehensive personal records for every staff member are kept by management. The records include all contact details and their ID number.
4. Before employment commences at ABC Kidz Educare all potential staff members are checked against the South African Crimes Database and Sexual Offenders Database. They are rechecked every 12 months.

## Arrivals and Departures

1. Arrivals and departures are detailed in the Arrivals and Departures Policy.
2. We have procedures in place that ensure that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

## Facebook and other social media

1. Parents sign a release form before we post their child's picture on Facebook.

2. ABC Kidz Educare does not post images of social media in which any child's face is identifiable.

## Incidents and Concerns

ABC Kidz Educare is committed to responding promptly to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may be/are brought to our attention.

1. We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
2. When children are suffering from abuse, this may be demonstrated through:
  - a. Significant changes in their behaviour.
  - b. Deterioration in their general well-being.
  - c. Their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure).
  - d. Changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
  - e. Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.
3. Any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the school premises.
  - a. We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, for example domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent's learning disability.
  - b. ABC Kidz Educare places great store in the South African Children's Act and National ECD Policy.
4. If the child was abused in any way at home, the parents are encouraged to tell the ECD centre management about it so that we can provide the support that the child needs in these trying times.

## What we do if we suspect, or know, that a child is being abused

ABC Kidz Educare is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur. We are also committed to working with the relevant agency when the abuse is investigated.

### Responding to suspicions of abuse

1. We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability such as, abuse of disabled children, fabricated or induced illness, sexual exploitation and internet abuse, amongst others.
2. We are also aware that some children are affected by gang activity or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect the children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children/young people who we may come into contact with.
3. When we believe that a child in our care is being abused in any form, we follow the procedures below:
  - a. **Where the evidence is clear:**
    - i. The child's Class Practitioner at school writes a dated record of the details of the concern and discussed what to do about it with the Safety Coordinator and senior management.
    - ii. The records and details of the discussion is stored in the child's personal file.
    - iii. ABC Kidz Educare will refer the matter to the South African Police, Department of Social Development, Department of Health and Social Welfare.
    - iv. Care is taken not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to the child or by asking questions of the children.
    - v. If the parents are suspected, care must be taken not to alert them (lest they start hiding the abuse), before referring the matter to the Departments as have been listed in this Policy.
  - b. **Where the evidence is unclear:**
    - i. The matter will be discussed at school between the child's teacher, the Safety Coordinator and senior management.
    - ii. If the above group of people cannot reach consensus, they will make a decision to talk to the parents and/or Social Welfare and/or Social Development and/or Health.

### Recording and handling of disclosures

When a child makes comments to a staff member that gives cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff notices another member of staff being abusive to a child, or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give

cause for concern, such as significant changes in behavior, deterioration in general well-being, unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, that member of staff:

1. Listens to the child, offers comfort and gives assurance that she or he will take action.
2. Does not question the child.
3. Writes a report that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure. The report must include:
  - a. The date and time of the observation or the disclosure.
  - b. The exact words spoken by the child as far as possible.
  - c. The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time.
  - d. The names of any other person present at the time.
4. These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
5. The Safety Coordinator is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity.

### **Informing parents**

1. Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events, unless we feel that the parent is the perpetrator of the abuse and that informing them may put the child in greater danger.
2. We make a note of any discussion we have with the parents regarding a concern and the notes are stored in the child's personal file.
3. If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to the SAPS, DSD or Welfare, parents are informed that the abuse has been reported.
4. If the parent is the possible abuser, management takes advice from DSD, Welfare or the school's attorney regarding when to inform the parents.

### **Information from parents**

1. **Accident/Incident Register:**
  - a. All parents have been informed that they must always be sure to fill in the Accident/Incident Register when they drop their child off with new cuts or bruises.
  - b. The Incident/Accident Register is kept in the sick room / the office.
  - c. When a child gets a new cut or bruise the teacher fills in the Incident/Accident Register. Please refer to the Medical Policy for more detail on how we handle injuries.
2. If a parent ever feels that ABC Kidz Educare is not operating in a safe manner, or that their child is unsafe at school, they are encouraged bring the matter to management's attention immediately.

### **Reporting the abuse to the Departments**

1. ABC Kidz Educare works with all the child protection agencies in our local Municipality as well as nationwide.
2. We have procedures for contacting local authorities regarding child abuse issues, including an easy-access list of names and telephone numbers of the relevant people who will help the child.

### **Allegations against staff**

1. All the parents at ABC Kidz Educare are aware of the complaints procedure about the behaviour or actions of staff, which may include an allegation of abuse.
2. We respond firmly and decisively to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with the children, which includes:
  - a. Inappropriate sexual comments
  - b. Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities
  - c. Inappropriate sharing of images
  - d. Excessive shouting in class or on the playground
  - e. Excessive anger/irritation by any member of staff
  - f. Apparent neglect (i.e. children being left unattended)
  - g. Allowing a child to leave the school premises with an unauthorised person
  - h. Hitting or smacking a child or any other form of hurting or humiliating a child

- i. Excessive punishment
3. When a complaint of any abuse is received about a member of staff we respond by first recording the details of the alleged incident.
4. Senior management and the 'Safety Coordinator will hold a meeting with the member of staff and his/her version is recoded and filed.
5. We refer the complaint to the local authorities (as listed previously in this document).
6. Management may suspend the member of staff (on full pay) until the investigation is complete. This is not an admission of guilt or that the alleged incident did take place, but is to protect the staff, as well as children and families throughout the investigation.
7. ABC Kidz Educare cooperates to it's fullest extent with the authorities investigating the event.
8. **Disciplinary action:**
  - a. After the investigation, if the member of staff is found to be guilty:
  - b. ABC Kidz Educare will see to it that the member of staff is charged by the police in accordance with South African law.
  - c. An emergency Disciplinary Hearing will take place and the employee will be summarily dismissed.
  - d. If the employee was taken into custody before the Disciplinary Hearing could be conducted, the Hearing is held 'in absential and the employee's Dismissal Letter will be forwarded to the employee's Attorney.
9. ABC Kidz Educare will take legal advice from our Labour Consultant on this dismissal.

## Awareness of child abuse issues

ABC Kidz Educare is committed to promoting the awareness of child abuse issues through:

1. Training for parents, staff and the community in general.
2. Our curriculum covers child abuse issues and, in a non-threatening or frightening mannger, gives the children an awareness of their own personal safety.
3. In addition, we are committed to empowering young children through our to be strong, resilient and listened to.

## Training

1. We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the school thus ensuring that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the reporting procedure.
2. The Safety Coordinator receives training in recognising all forms of child abuse and how to handle it professionally.
3. After the training, the Safety Coordinator shares her knowledge with the rest of the staff.
4. ABC Kidz Educare ensures that all staff and parents know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about child abuse.

## Supervision

1. The classrooms and play area at ABC Kidz Educare are laid out in a way that allows for constant supervision.
2. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers.
3. The children use established toileting routines.
4. When a child needs the toilet outside of the routine times, a trusted adult accompanies the child to the toilet.

## Curriculum

1. ABC Kidz Educare introduces the elements of keeping children safe into our programme in an effort to promote personal, social and emotional development in children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to. They also develop an undersanding of how to keep safe.
2. We have created a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
3. We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

**Confidentiality**

1. All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know.

**Support to families**

1. ABC Kidz Educare has built trusting and supportive relationships with our families, staff and the community in general.
2. Through all our Policy document we have made it clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such a reporting of concerns, information sharing and monitoring the child. In addition, we will liaise at all times the the agencies involved in the case.
3. ABC Kidz Educare will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst the investigations are being made in regard to any alleged abuse.
4. Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child’s parents or with the chld’s legal guardian.

This policy was adopted on 31 December 2019. At Braamfontein and is in full force and effect at ABC Kidz Educare. Where necessary all the parents have been informed of this policy. All our employees have a good understanding of the contents of this policy and if at any time any of the clauses in this policy are contravened, normal disciplinary sanctions, as per the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, will be taken.

Name and Signature 1: .....

Name and Signature 2: .....

Name and Signature 3: .....