



MICHAELHOUSE

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Preamble

Michaelhouse is committed to keeping boys safe. To do this, certain standards of best practice must be formally established and adhered to. But we recognise that no policy or standards can offer complete protection to boys, and this is why we pledge ourselves to revise our procedures regularly. Attention is drawn to the link with the Staff Code of Conduct which refers to certain areas of unprofessional conduct and to the SACE Code.

Purposes of a Safeguarding Policy

- To make sure that all boys are safe.
- To foster an understanding and appreciation of what constitutes abuse and inappropriate behaviour towards children.
- To make sure that everyone involved in the organisation of Michaelhouse – Board, school management, teachers, support staff and boys – take every possible measure to ensure that boys are safeguarded, and that abuse is prevented.
- To make sure that nobody at Michaelhouse does anything which could allow abuse to occur.
- To ensure that suspicions in the area of safeguarding, concerns or allegations are dealt with sensitively, actively, respectfully and in a timely manner in the knowledge that we have a duty to notify the statutory authorities of concerns or allegations, where such duty arises.
- To set out the process for an investigation where there are allegations and/or concerns regarding such behavior.
- To set out the guidelines for the reporting requirements to the Child Protection Unit and other law enforcement agencies and professional bodies.
- To follow up with those who may have suffered abuse in a compassionate and appropriate manner, providing appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support.
- To ensure that Michaelhouse complies with its legal and ethical obligations in dealing with incidents which may undermine the safeguarding of boys in the care of Michaelhouse.

SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

Creating and maintaining a safe environment

The school is committed to maintaining a safe school environment by promoting a culture of safety and preventing or reducing the risk of harm to boys. The school provides access to good role models whom the boys can trust and who respect, protect and enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.



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The school will do this through:

- Further roll out and implementation of the Guardian App.
- Diligent and comprehensive recruitment processes.
- Careful observation and implementation of the Staff Disciplinary Code and Procedures and the way in which this relates to the Safeguarding Policy.
- Maintaining a safe environment and creating a safe space for boys to raise concerns and fears.
- Implementing a framework that manages these incidents and works to resolve them.

1. Diligent and comprehensive recruitment processes:

- The school follows effective recruitment and selection procedures including procuring two good written references, one from the most recent employer/institution (except in exceptional circumstances, where these are not available).
- The school makes a note of its own assessment of the suitability of employees to work with boys and of all adults on the premises.
- Police clearance (and other legally required clearance in accordance with National Registers) for all employees and volunteers will be sought and regularly updated.
- All job applicants will be asked if they have allegations or convictions relating to the abuse of children. Regardless of the response, the National Registers will be checked.
- Membership of the South African Council of Educators or exclusion form that body may be relevant.

2. Careful observation and implementation of the Staff Disciplinary Code and Procedures:

- The school has a responsibility for ensuring that all who work with boys agree to follow effective safeguarding practices and, annually, electronically agree to the Staff Disciplinary Code and Procedures and the Safeguarding Policy.
- Clear procedures are in place for all in the school community.
- The school has a clear and concise guide of what is (and is not) acceptable behaviour and practice for adults working with young people.
- In order to encourage positive behaviour amongst boys, the school has a clear and concise guide of acceptable behaviour.



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3. Maintaining a safe environment and creating a safe space for boys to raise concerns and fears.
 - The school explains and implements effective practice for the appropriate use of information technology, including social media use by staff and boys.
 - Putting in place ground rules for adult one-to-one contact with boys, to ensure that it takes place in certain defined circumstances and for a specific and legitimate purpose.
 - This may include the improved use of CCTV footage and other technological advances in and around the school environment.
 - The school applies strict safety standards in the use of technology, including the internet, texting, email, Teams, WhatsApp, photography, CCTV and webcams.
 - There is a Designated Safeguarding Lead (a respected teacher) who has a clearly defined role and responsibility for safeguarding boys. This is currently Mr Sibs Ncamani, Deputy Rector: Pastoral.
 - External groups using the Michaelhouse property comply with effective safeguarding practice.
4. Implementing a framework that manages these incidents and works to resolve them.
 - Regular training of employees.
 - Understanding the legal principles related to the reporting of incidents and the impact of the Child Protection Act and the Sexual Offences Amendment Act.

Responding to known, suspected or alleged abuse of boys

The school follows legally compliant, clear procedures and guidelines on what to do when knowledge, suspicions, concerns or allegations arise regarding a boy's safety or welfare.

The School implements the following:

- Clear legally compliant safeguarding procedures at Michaelhouse which provide step by step guidance on what action to take if there is knowledge of or if there are allegations or suspicions of the abuse of a boy
- Mechanisms for the reporting of suspected incidents and raising concerns by boys, teachers, parents and other members of the School community



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- a. Allegations are responded to immediately and effectively in compliance with the requirements of the school.
 - b. Official forms for recording details of safeguarding incidents are available
 - c. The Code of Conduct for boys explains to boys how to lodge complaints about unacceptable or unethical conduct by others towards them.
 - d. The implementation of the Guardian App.
 - e. Michaelhouse supports and assists personnel to raise concerns about possible dangerous or unethical conduct by others towards boys.
 - f. Staff understand the obligations to report any suspected case of abuse to the School Management and to raise their concerns utilizing appropriate channels
 - g. There is clear understanding of what constitutes abuse
 - h. There is a designated person with a clearly defined role and responsibility to handle cases of abuse, whether historical or otherwise.
 - i. The name, duties and contact details of those people with responsibility for safeguarding (designated person) are known. This is **Mr Sibs Ncamani, Deputy Rector: Pastoral. Mobile No:079 992 8514**
 - j. All staff know who the designated person is.
- Safeguarding procedures are available to the school community, including boys, parents, staff and volunteers and actively promoted:
 - a. Registers of workshops attended by personnel are up-to-date.
 - b. All personnel provided with electronic copies of the policies and a register is retained.
 - Mechanisms for investigating and addressing the suspected incidents and concerns raised in a sensitive and confidential manner, respecting and balancing the rights of the boys and persons involved. This includes:
 - a. The Rector will appoint a person to investigate the allegations. The designated person is well informed about procedures.
 - b. Depending on the nature of the allegations and the circumstances surrounding the incident, the Rector will inform the parents and/or legal guardian of the boy concerned and discuss the proposed course of action.
 - c. Interviews may take place with the affected persons and any witnesses or persons involved in the incident.
 - d. The investigator will prepare a report documenting their findings and set out recommendations on any further action necessary.
 - e. This report will be submitted to the Rector, who will then determine any further reporting compliance and disciplinary action, and ensure that same is then complied with.
 - f. The Rector will ensure that any assistance required is provided to the complainant and that School works together with the affected parties to ensure the wellbeing of the affected parties.
 - g. Incidents, allegations and referrals are recorded and documented.



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- Mechanisms for reporting the suspected incidents and concerns in accordance with the School's legal and ethical obligations. This includes:
 - a. Compliance with the legislative requirements on reporting safeguarding concerns to external authorities in appropriate measure and at the appropriate time, appreciating the sensitive nature and impact of such allegations.
 - b. Reporting any safeguarding concerns to the appropriate professional bodies where appropriate.
- Record keeping:
 - a. Ensuring that an accurate record of the investigation and outcome is retained and securely stored, and documenting the process followed by the School in dealing with the incident, including any decision not to report the incident.
 - b. There is an incident file recording every incident, allegation, referral and report.

Access to Support and Information

Michaelhouse will ensure access to support and information to anyone who discloses abuse, who alleges that abuse has taken place or who is alleged to have perpetrated abuse. The school is aware of how distressing abuse is and the difficulties associated therewith: the school will make sure that anyone affected by abuse will know where they can go to receive help and advice.

Such support mechanisms include:

- Appropriate pastoral care is available
- Information about sources of support is available
- There is a procedure for responding to safeguarding suspicion, concerns, knowledge of allegations and a timeframe for dealing with them
- Support of anyone who discloses abuse or who alleges that abuse has taken place. This will be offered by the school management as appropriate.
- Support of someone who is alleged to have perpetrated abuse involves informing the potential abuser that they have a right to seek legal advice.



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Training and Support

Those who work with boys in the sphere of safeguarding are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role, in order to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to safeguard boys.

These measures include:

- Michaelhouse ensures that all staff are inducted and trained in the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and how this ties in with the Code of Conduct.
 - a. All members of staff have electronically agreed to have “read and understood” and, thus, acknowledged the Safeguarding Policy
 - b. Appropriate training to ensure an understanding of the legal obligations and legislation addressing child protection issues and sexual offences, particularly involving minors.
 - c. All staff are given the opportunity to learn about how to recognise and respond to concerns about abuse
 - d. Michaelhouse annually identifies those who need training.
 - e. Michaelhouse keeps a clear record of training, outlining the topic of the training and when it was attended and by whom
 - f. Michaelhouse identifies annually what its training needs are and ensures regular ongoing training
 - g. The school’s budget allows for training to take place

- Education initiatives aimed at educating the boys on:
 - a. Child protection issues and safeguarding measures available within the school.
 - b. Support structures and avenues for boys to raise their concerns and ventilate any safeguarding concerns and issues.
 - c. This will also be age specific and sensitive to the different relationships and social dynamics.

Communicating the Safeguarding Policy

This ensures that all people involved in the school are aware of the Safeguarding Policy.

The following measures will be put in place:

- This Safeguarding Policy is displayed in suitable places in the school



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- Appropriate contact details for the following are displayed:
 - a. The Guardian App
 - b. The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr Sibs Ncamani (Tel: 065 635 8188)
 - c. Support channels, including the School counsellor, Mr Tim Jarvis (Tel: 082 884 2548)
- The school communicates the Safeguarding Policy to boys annually in a manner that is accessible and appropriate.
- Parents, boys and others are informed about the safeguarding as well as about procedures for reporting suspected abuse. The school is clear about its responsibility to protect boys and makes this known to all who come into contact with Michaelhouse.

Monitoring the implementation of the Standards

Michaelhouse has a responsibility to monitor and evaluate its own compliance with the Standards set.

Such measures include:

- Michaelhouse undertakes an annual review of its compliance with the Standards.
- The Rector reports to the Board as part of the ongoing joint responsibility for safeguarding.
- The school takes necessary action to remedy any deficiencies.

ANTONY CLARK
RECTOR

January 2022