



# Child Protection Policy

2022

<b>Board signed off: Minuted Board Meeting</b>
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<b>Date: 31 May 2022</b>
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**El Shaddai Christian School  
Child Protection Policy**

**Biblical Rationale for Child Protection Policy**

In the Bible, God reveals His heart for children. This is the foundation for our Christian approach to keeping children safe and child protection. Our attitude toward children should reflect God's own attitude and our actions should reflect his character.

The Bible shows that children are precious to God. Psalm 139:13-14 reminds us how God creates each child uniquely and Matthew 18:5 shows Jesus welcoming children. As a school we aim to reflect this value for each individual child.

In the Bible, God acts on behalf of the vulnerable. Psalm 10 reminds us that God is the protector of the weak: 'The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless' (v. 14). Because of His care for vulnerable children, God calls his people to protect and defend them (Isaiah 1:17, Psalm 82:3-4).

As Christians working with children we have a responsibility to make sure that children thrive and are safe from harm. We acknowledge we must be accountable for our actions with children because 'nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account' (Hebrews 4:13).

## El Shaddai Christian School Mission and Vision Statements

### Mission Statement

We strive to disciple young people to follow Jesus, whilst providing a quality education.

### Vision Statement

As a ministry of the El Shaddai Christian Church, the school seeks to operate under the lordship of Jesus Christ, through the empowering of the Holy Spirit, according to the mandate of Scripture and through prayer.

The school believes that God's call is to prepare pupils for their Kingdom role in society by:

1. encouraging young people to walk in a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ;
2. implanting a Biblical worldview for all aspects of life;
3. developing Godly character;
4. providing a Biblically-integrated, quality education that enables pupils to fulfil their God-given purpose;
5. evangelising and reaching out to the wider community;
6. assisting those who wish to become involved or further their involvement in Christian education.

**The goal of the child protection policy:** to set guidelines to ensure that El Shaddai Christian School provides an emotionally and physically safe and healthy environment in which children can learn about God and His world. The policy also seeks to inform and equip staff, parents, volunteers, board members, service providers and affiliates of El Shaddai Christian School of the following:

- definitions of abuse
- possible signs of abuse
- safeguards for children and staff\*
- reporting procedures.

### Aims:

1. The policy aims to ensure safeguards for children and staff\* are in place
2. The policy aims to be clear and transparent with easy to follow steps for both learners and staff\*
3. As El Shaddai Christian School we aim to model Christ-likeness in all our behaviour. We aim to demonstrate Christ's love and forgiveness and testify of the Holy Spirit's work within us by ensuring we are a school where all children are protected irrespective of race, gender, and or culture and where abuse of any form is not acceptable.

### Principles for the protection of children:

- We believe that child protection is both an individual and a corporate responsibility.
- We believe that everyone must take precautions and responsibility to help create a safe place for children and their protection. This begins with everyone being well informed and aware of child protection issues. Procedures for responding appropriately if abuse of a child is alleged, disclosed, discovered or suspected.

- We encourage openness about concerns relating to child protection matters because child abuse thrives on secrecy. The guidelines in this policy explain what should be done about those concerns.

## 1. Definitions

**It is important to clarify terms of reference that are applicable to the policy:**

<b>Child</b>	A child is defined as anyone under 18 years of age.
<b>Child Abuse (legal definitions)</b>	Child abuse can take many forms and can include, but is not limited to physical, verbal/emotional, neglect and sexual abuse.
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	Directly injuring or excessively punishing a child or placing a child in a situation in which they are likely to be injured
<b>Verbal/Emotional Abuse</b>	Repeatedly rejecting, humiliating or denying the work or rights of a child as a human being (both physically and verbally).
<b>Neglect</b>	Neglect is when a child is abandoned, or is denied food, clothing, shelter, appropriate care, supervision, education, stimulation or medical attention
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	Which includes direct or indirect sexual corruption or exploitation of a child by involving them (or threatening to involve them) in sexual activities. Types of Sexual Abuse (that do not involve touch): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual remarks or comments</li> <li>• Pornography (watching or participating in)</li> <li>• Obscene phone calls (being involved in making or receiving calls)</li> <li>• Exhibitionism</li> <li>• Allowing children to witness sexual activity</li> </ul> <p>The Sexual Offences Act, section 15(1) and 16(1)(sections of the act which refer to children over 12 years and under 16 years old) states that a person who commits sexual penetration/violation with a child, is guilty of offence even if the child has consented.</p>
<b>Child Protection</b>	In the context of this policy Child Protection is used to describe the values, policies and procedures in place that protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm.
<b>Volunteers</b>	This refers to volunteers who offer services to the school without cost.
<b>Extra-curricular coaches</b>	This refers to all private contracted affiliates who work directly with children within the agreed-on parameters of their extracurricular activity or sport.
<b>Direct contact with children</b>	Direct contact is defined as being in the physical presence of a child or children within the context of work at El Shaddai Christian School, this direct contact includes but is not limited to contact with individuals, groups or classes, occasional or regular.

### 2. Roles within child protection at El Shaddai Christian School

#### **School Management Team**

The Headmaster, deputy principals, discipleship pillar heads and HOD's as part of the school management team play a key role in ensuring the use of procedures and reporting processes within the school.

#### **Child Protection Coordinator**

The child protection coordinator coordinates and oversees child protection procedures within El Shaddai Christian School. This is a supportive and oversight role to assist the school management team in managing child protection procedures.

### 3. Legislation guiding the child protection policy

Below is a summary of legislation guiding this policy and a summary of the relevant sections informing the policy:

#### **The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa**

Section 28 of the Bill of Human Rights states that every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation.

#### **The Children's Act 38 of 2005**

Section 110 of the Children's Act mandates that abuse, neglect or maltreatment must be reported to a child protection agency. Teachers are specifically named as professionals mandated to report. Good faith principle applies: if you report without malicious intent you are protected against prosecution even if the claims are found to be invalid.

Section 110, Regulation 33 stipulates the use of Form 22 The Reporting of Abuse or Deliberate Neglect of Child. This form must be completed for allegations of abuse or deliberate neglect of a child. A separate form must be completed for each child. This form acts as the reporting mechanism to the Designated Child Protection Agency.

Section 126(3) all staff's names shall be checked against Part B of the Child Protection Register (people unsuitable to work with children). No one may be employed (as having direct contact with children) if their name appears on Section B of the Register.

**Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007** (Act No. 32 of 2007; also referred to as the **Sexual Offences Act**). Section 15 and 16 aim to protect children who are older than 12 years but younger than 16 years from sexual exploitation by adults.

### 4. Safeguards

For the purposes of this policy, it is important to clarify the difference between discipline and abuse.

Children need discipline and boundaries set in a secure and loving environment. This is essential for their development into a person that feels secure and loved, is self confident, self-disciplined and able to deal with the stresses of life. The goal of discipline is to help the child learn right from wrong, respect the rights of others and to know what is acceptable and

unacceptable behaviour. Thus discipline should involve not only the correction of wrong or negative behaviour and actions but also the rewarding and praising of acceptable or positive behaviour and actions.

It is important that all staff, volunteers and affiliates manage the children's behaviour in ways that are non-violent and ensure that children are never degraded or humiliated.

Any form of abuse of any kind, as defined above, will NOT be tolerated (see definitions of abuse).

Positive examples of appropriate discipline include:

- Use age appropriate classroom management strategies that allow for smart choices
- issuing a warning
- time-out – separation from the group or activity

Appropriate discipline also includes making sure the child is aware of why they are being disciplined. It is important for them to realise that the behaviour they were engaging in was wrong and inappropriate and they should be offered ways to correct their behaviour.

### Ways to Avoid Problem Behaviours

- Come prepared
- Keep things moving
- Be sensitive to the moods of the children in the group
- Provide enough elbow room
- Set clear expectations with the children

### When Learners Require Discipline or Guidance

- Use a firm but gentle voice to address the behaviour
- Remove the child from the activity
- Focus your remarks on the behaviour you want to see
  - Don't use words or a tone of voice that shames or frightens a child
  - Don't use sarcasm or scream at a child
  - Never make remarks that put down the individual as a person or make negative references about appearance, race, or gender
  - Never use corporal punishment or spanking of any kind
  - Use touch in affirming ways:
    - Appropriate examples: high fives, pat on the back or shoulders, etc.
    - Inappropriate examples: demanding/expecting hugs, slapping on the butt, kissing, etc.

## 5. Bullying

Although bullying by definition does not fall within child protection, it is essential to understand bullying and the policy and procedures when bullying occurs.

## 6. Possible Signs of Child Abuse

Possible Signs of Child Abuse		
Physical Signs	Verbal Signs	Behavioural and Emotional Signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacerations</li> <li>• Bruises, marks</li> <li>• Difficulty with toilet routine</li> <li>• Discomfort when sitting or performing certain tasks</li> <li>• Keeping body covered ie. in hot weather always stays in jacket</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I don’t like to be alone with ...”</li> <li>• “Someone is doing things to me when I’m alone”</li> <li>• Evasive or not wanting to answer questions about home etc.</li> <li>• Telling friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden behaviour changes</li> <li>• Nervous or hostile behaviour towards adults</li> <li>• Self-consciousness</li> <li>• Acting out behaviour/role play (e.g. in play or activities)</li> <li>• Withdrawal from activities and friends</li> <li>• Nightmares</li> <li>• Drawing out abusive situations</li> </ul>

This policy recognises that a child may experience more than one type of abuse at a time, if you observe any form of abuse please follow the recording and reporting steps outlined in section 8 below.

## 7. Differences between suspicion and disclosure of abuse

Suspicion - A suspicion refers to observed behaviour without a verbal disclosure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour: Such as nervousness around adults, sudden behaviour changes or withdrawal from usual activities</li> <li>• Drawings: the child may draw explicit /violence images.</li> <li>• Indirect statements: The child may say things such as “I don’t like being alone with...” or you may observe concerning play when with peers.</li> <li>• Physical signs: The child may have bruises or marks on their body.</li> <li>• However, none of these signs by themselves are enough to evidence or confirm abuse they are concerning and should be noted (see section on reporting suspicion).</li> </ul>
Disclosure - Disclosure is being told directly by the child (or witnessing yourself)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disclosure: A child tells you (discloses) abuse of any form to you. It may start with a drawing/play, but then they tell you the details.</li> <li>• Witness: You directly witness an event</li> <li>• Please see the section on reporting disclosure of abuse for the steps to follow.</li> </ul>

### 8. Reporting Procedures: Suspicion

Process to follow when you have a suspicion		
1	<b>Record/Note</b>	Make detailed (dated) notes, these 'small' suspicions can add up over time
2	<b>Notes and Internal Reporting</b>	These notes need to be kept with the child's intervention notes and when pattern is observed this needs to be reported to the Disciple Pillar Head.
3	<b>Escalating</b>	Concerns raised in staff meetings and other staff have similar concerns and/or repetitive nature, escalate to Headmaster and Child Protection Coordinator (Google form to be completed).
4	<b>Follow Up</b>	Headmaster and/or Child Protection Coordinator will give written feedback after consultation on the process forward.
5	<b>Parent Meeting/ External Referral</b>	Based on specific cases: Parent meeting, referral to professional support such as counsellors, covering church will be contacted. Referral to the child protection agency will be done if there is a confirmation of abuse.

### 9. Reporting Procedures: Disclosure

Process to follow when you have a disclosure of abuse		
1	<b>Listen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen and ask open-ended questions.</li> <li>• No value judgements.</li> <li>• Keep calm and get information.</li> </ul>
2	<b>Believe the Child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the process to the child, that you must report the matter.</li> <li>• You are the first to report.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Report Immediately</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately report the matter to the Disciple Head, Headmaster and Child Protection Coordinator: a Form 22 will be completed.</li> </ul>
4	<b>Follow Up/Referrals/Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familial sexual abuse the child cannot leave with the parents.</li> <li>• Case specific referral will be made,</li> <li>• If alleged abuse occurred in school - internal HR processes to be followed</li> </ul>
5	<b>Follow up and Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up on case</li> <li>• Support given to child, staff and family.</li> </ul>