

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy for Employees of Sikh Academy

In Compliance with FISA BC and the BC Independent Schools Act

Address: Sikh Academy

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Surrey, BC

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1. Preamble

Ensuring that Sikh Academy has policies and procedures to respond promptly and effectively to incidents of child abuse and neglect is a responsible approach to protecting students and the interests of the school authority.

This policy underscores the importance of a collaborative approach between school authorities, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and the police to ensure children are protected. Sikh Academy is committed to preventing child abuse and enhancing the safety and well-being of the students entrusted to its care.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide specific guidance to the employees of Sikh Academy in fulfilling their commitment to prevent child abuse and neglect and to provide clear reporting protocols if abuse is suspected or known to have occurred.

Sikh Academy may modify or remove portions of this policy as circumstances warrant, and any changes will be communicated to staff. The most recent version of this policy is available in the **Staff Manual Policies and Procedures Manual** or upon request from the administration.

3. Guiding Principles

- The safety and well-being of children are paramount considerations.
- Children are entitled to be protected from abuse, neglect, harm, or the threat of harm.
- A family is the preferred environment for the care and upbringing of children, and the responsibility for the protection of children rests primarily with the parents.

4. Protocol on Reporting Child Abuse and/or Neglect Involving Parents

Designated Roles

- **The Appointed School Official (ASO):**
Principal: Amrik Singh Phull (778-898-5052).
- **Alternate Appointed School Official (AASO):**
Rupinderjit Kaur: (604-512-3242).

Reporting Steps

- a) Any school personnel suspecting or learning of child abuse must contact the **MCFD** or the **Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agency** and inform the ASO.
- b) If the ASO is the alleged abuser, report directly to the MCFD and notify the Board of Directors.
- c) If a child is in immediate danger, contact the police (**911**) and the MCFD.
- d) School personnel must not contact parents/guardians alleged to be involved; this is the responsibility of the child welfare worker.
- e) The ASO will ensure the school environment is safe during investigations.
- f) School personnel will support affected students and cooperate fully with investigations.

5. Procedures for Allegations Against School Employees or Volunteers

General Responsibilities

- a) Allegations of child abuse involving school employees, volunteers, or others must be reported to the ASO or AASO, who will investigate and, if appropriate, notify the MCFD or police.
- b) The Principal has authority under the Independent School Act (ISA) to suspend an employee if their presence threatens student safety.

Reporting Professional Misconduct

- Staff must promptly report professional misconduct involving harm to students to the Commissioner under the Teachers Act.

6. Protocols with Partner Agencies

- The school maintains contact with local agencies, including the MCFD, Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agencies, and the RCMP.

- Employees must familiarize themselves with the protocols and contact information provided in **Appendix A**.

7. Staff Training and Review

- Annual training is provided to all employees, contractors, and volunteers, covering:
 - Recognizing child abuse and neglect.
 - Reporting protocols.
 - Prevention measures.
- Annual reviews of this policy and related legislation are conducted.

8. Quick Reference: Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

Physical Indicators:

- Unexplained bruises, burns, or fractures.
- Persistent injuries or inadequate supervision.
- Poor hygiene or persistent hunger.

Behavioral Indicators:

- Sudden withdrawal, fearfulness, or aggression.
- Reluctance to go home or discuss home life.
- Age-inappropriate sexual behavior or knowledge.

Emotional Abuse Indicators:

- Low self-esteem, depression, or anxiety.
- Suicidal ideation or self-harming behaviors.

Sexual Abuse Indicators:

- Pain or bleeding in the genital area.
- Sexually transmitted infections or unexplained pregnancy.

Refer to **Appendix B** for a comprehensive list of indicators.

Appendices

Appendix A: Contact Information for Partner Agencies

- 1. Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD):**
 - a. Toll-Free: **1-800-663-9122** (available 24/7).
 - b. After-Hours Helpline: **310-1234** (no area code required).
- 2. Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agencies:**
 - a. Contact information for local Aboriginal-focused child welfare agencies.
- 3. Police:**
 - a. Emergency: **911**.
 - b. Non-Emergency (Surrey RCMP): **604-502-6500**.

Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What is Child Abuse?**
 - a. Includes physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- 2. When is There a Duty to Report?**
 - a. When a child is likely to be harmed, sexually exploited, neglected, or emotionally harmed.
- 3. What Information Should Be Reported?**
 - a. Child's name, age, and location.
 - b. Immediate safety concerns.
 - c. Relevant details about the alleged abuse or neglect.

Appendix C: Legislation and Government Protocols

Relevant laws include:

- Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA).
- Teachers Act.
- BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect.

Appendix D: Glossary

- **Appointed School Official (ASO):** Responsible for handling child abuse cases within the school.
- **Aboriginal:** Includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

- **Child Welfare Worker:** Delegated under CFCSA to investigate child protection cases.

This policy reflects Sikh Academy's commitment to safeguarding children and adhering to FISA BC and BC Independent Schools standards.