



## **DOWEN COLLEGE LAGOS**

### **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

1. This Safeguarding and Child Protection policy applies to all staff, including managers and board of governors, volunteers, students, parents/guardians, or anyone working on behalf of Downen College Lagos.

#### **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a. Protect children who receive Downen College Lagos educational services.
- b. Provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and protection.

Downen College Lagos acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance, best practices and requirements.

#### **3. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT**

Downen College Lagos recognises that:

- a. The welfare of the child is paramount as enshrined by the Child's Right Law, 2007
- b. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, religious belief, ethnicity or socio-economic background have a right to equal protection from all types of abuse.
- c. Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experience, dependency, communication needs and other issues.
- d. Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other relevant agencies is essential in promoting children's welfare.

#### **4. DEFINITIONS**

- **Child:** any person under 18 years of age as provided by the Child's Rights Law 2007 Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria

- **Disclosure:** Information given to a staff member by a child, parent, caregiver, or third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- **Child Protection:** Child protection is the process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. It involves measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse and neglect.
- **Child Protection Unit, Ministry of Youth & Social Development:** the department responsible for safeguarding the development of the child through the prevention of all forms of abuse against children, coordinating response and investigation of suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found to be in need.
- **Designated Person for Child Protection:** the manager/supervisor or designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff when they have a concern about an individual child or want advice about child protection policy.
- **Disclosure:** information given to a staff member by a child, parent, caregiver, or third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- **Physical abuse** includes acts of violence such as punching (hitting with a fist), kicking, whipping, beating with an object, choking, smothering, trying to drown, intentionally burning, or using or threatening to use a gun, knife, or other weapon, regardless of whether or not it results in obvious physical or mental injury. It is not focused on acts of discipline, although many of those perpetrating the violence may be doing so in the name of "discipline".
- **Safeguarding-** Safeguarding is a term which is broader than 'child protection' and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health and development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- **Significant Harm:** Some children are in need of help and intervention because they are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests and promotion of the welfare of a child. Significant harm can be considered as the severity of maltreatment, the degree, extent, duration, and frequency of abuse and neglect; the extent of premeditation; the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements.
- **Social worker:** A social worker is a qualified social worker who is in charge of a case, including receiving and responding to child concerns and referrals.

- **The Specialised Police Unit in the Nigeria Police (presently referred to as the Juvenile Welfare Centre)** is the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with the Child Protection Unit and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.
- **Sexual abuse:** Includes any act that involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. It is not necessary for the child to be aware that the activity is sexual, and the apparent consent of the child is irrelevant. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:
  - **Contact abuse:** Touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.
  - **Non-contact abuse:** Exhibitionism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography, or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.
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- **Social Worker:** Social care qualified professionals with case responsibility including receiving and responding to child concerns/referrals.

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  - **Non-contact abuse:** exhibitionism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.
- **Emotional Abuse:** any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include:
  - Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.
  - Exposure to family or intimate partner violence.

**Neglect:** Neglect is the most common form of abuse and it has the potential of seriously impairing the child's health or development. Forms of Neglect include

- **Physical-** Looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, (underweight), not providing the necessities of life like a warm place, food and clothing.
- **Emotional-** Not providing comfort, attention and love.
- **Neglectful supervision-** Leaving children without someone safe looking after them, (no safe home to return to).
- **Medical Neglect-** Failure to present child for timely immunization, persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or not taking care of health needs.
- **Educational or Vocational Neglect-** Allowing chronic truancy, failure to enroll in school or vocational training centers or inattention to education.

## 5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- a. Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- b. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1999
- c. Child's Rights Act, 2003

- d. Lagos State Child's Rights Law, 2007
- e. Prevention Against Domestic Violence Law, 2007
- f. Criminal Law of Lagos State 2011
- g. The Family Court of Lagos State (Civil Procedure) Rules 2012
- h. EO/BRF/005OF2014, Lagos State Sex Offenders Monitoring Programme And Mandated Reporting, 2014

## **6. SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION**

Dowen College Lagos will seek to keep children safe by:

- a. Providing a safe and secure environment for all children
- b. Protecting and valuing them, listening to and protecting them
- c. Creating an environment that encourage children to develop positive self image
- d. Encouraging children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- e. Sharing information about child protection and good practices with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- f. Ensuring everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognize, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people.
- g. Ensuring appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- h. Sharing concerns with relevant agencies and involving parents and children appropriately.
- i. Ensuring appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- j. Preventing the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals.
- k. Ensuring robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation

## **7. CHILD PROTECTION REPRESENTATIVE**

**Ms Yinka- Babalola who is also the school counsellor will be the school representative on Child safety concerns.** If any member of staff has any child safety concerns, they should discuss them with her. She will take on the following responsibilities:

- a. Ensuring that the policy is being put into practice;
- b. Being the first point of contact for child protection issues;
- c. Keeping a record of any concerns expressed about child protection issues;
- d. Bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the management and contacting the State Authority or if appropriate;
- e. Ensuring that paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate supervision;

- f. Ensuring that everyone involved with the organisation is aware of the identity of the Child Protection Representative.
- g. The Child Protection Representative leads the Child Safety Committee which is made up of other student counsellors.

## **8. DEALING WITH SUSPECTED CASES OF ABUSE**

School staff will listen to and work closely with parents to make sure each child feels safe and protected in the school environment.

- a. If you suspect that a child is being abused, you should report it to members of the Senior management who are bound to report it to police or the Lagos State **Domestic & Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT)**. (Phone number is \*6820# send)
- b. Staff should tell the teacher responsible for child protection. They will take suitable action based on procedures set out by the local safeguarding children board, letting the authorities know where it is required.
- c. Once the authorities are told, they will decide what to do. The school's role is then limited. School staff will not take part in an investigation, though they may be called on to give information. They may also be asked to give support to the child or young person.

## **9. PREVENTING INAPPROPRIATE RELATIONSHIPS AT SCHOOL**

It's a crime to have a sexual relationship with a child aged under 18. It's also an offence for an adult to have a sexual relationship with a young person under 18 if the adult is in a 'position of trust' with that young person.

This covers relationships between school staff and students. It applies as long as the young person is under 18 and even if they are over the age of legal consent, though there are some defenses which can apply in limited circumstances.

## **10. DISSEMINATION**

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Downen College Lagos. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organization.

## **11. MONITORING**

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances as approved by the Board of Governors:

- a) Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- b) As a result of any other significant change or event.

***Signed: Principal/Head of School Mrs. Adebisi Layiwola      Date: Aug 30, 2021***