

Child Protection Policy

of iSMART Academy & O.S.C.S.



03.10.2024

Introduction

This policy will enable iSMART Academy & O.S.C.S. to demonstrate its commitment to children with whom it works alongside. iSMART Academy & O.S.C.S. acknowledge its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

Scope

The policy and procedures apply to all staff members. From herein, references to staff include staff, volunteers and trustees. iSMART Academy & O.S.C.S. will ensure that it has made clients aware of its safeguarding policy.

The iSMART Academy Coordinator will provide all staff with this policy and ensure they understand it. This policy will also explain the reporting process should they be concerned about a fellow member of staff.

Policy Statement

The policy and procedures are in place in order for staff and volunteers to work to prevent abuse and know what to do should a concern arise. They will enable iSMART Academy & O.S.C.S. to:

- Promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm and abuse occurring.
- Ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.

Definition

A child is defined in the Nigerian law called Young People's Act as:
"anyone who has not yet reached their 15th birthday even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or are in hospital."

Responsibilities of iSMART Academy & O.S.C.S.

All staff will work to:

- a) Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to children.
- b) Promote the wellbeing of children in safeguarding arrangements.
- c) Raise awareness of safeguarding to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.
- d) Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult or child.
- e) Address what caused any abuse or neglect where appropriate if it occurred on Ododuma property or in an iSMART Academy workplace/office.

iSMART Academy & O.S.C.S. will:

- f) Respond appropriately when abuse has or is suspected to have occurred.
- g) Ensure that all employees who work in iSMART Academy & O.S.C.S. have a police clearance and 2 references.

Responsibilities of iSMART Academy Staff & O.S.C.S. and Volunteers

- a) To follow the safeguarding policy and procedures at all times, particularly if concerns arise about the safety or welfare of a child.
- b) To participate in safeguarding training and maintain current working knowledge of safeguarding.
- c) Always discuss any concerns about the welfare of any client or child with their iSMART Academy Coordinator or O.S.C.S. Principal
- d) Remain alert at all times to the possibility of abuse.

Definitions

Physical abuse:

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse:

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse:

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Neglect:

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse and exploitation that fall within these categories. They are child exploitation, cyberbullying and online abuse, criminal exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery, domestic abuse, FGM, honour based abuse, grooming, missing.

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts. People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be people in positions of trust; they may also be relatives, friends, neighbours, or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

Responding to People who have Experienced or are Experiencing Abuse

iSMART Academy & O.S.C.S. recognise that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of abuse is never easy.

Responding if iSMART Academy or O.S.C.S receives an Allegation

- A. Reassure the person concerned.
- B. Listen to what they're saying and believe them.
- C. Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible.
- D. Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- E. Tell them that the information will be treated seriously.
- F. Ask questions to ensure you gather the full facts but do not start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions.
- G. Use the vulnerable child's own words where possible.
- H. Do not promise to keep it a secret.
- I. Tell the child what you are going to do next and explain that you will need to get help to keep him/her safe.

If you witness abuse or abuse has just taken place, the priorities will be:

- 1. To inform the iSMART Academy coordinator.
- 2. To call NAPTIP (iSMART Coordinator)
- 3. To preserve evidence.
- 4. To keep yourself and others safe.
- 5. To call an ambulance if required. (Principal or Coordinator)
- 6. To record what happened in the agreed place/file/log.

Allegations made against a Member of Staff

- If a member of staff has information which suggests a member of staff has:
- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offense against, or related to, a vulnerable child.
- Behaved towards a vulnerable adult/child in a way that has indicated she/he is unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults/children
- The member of staff should immediately report this to the iSMART Academy Coordinator.
- If the allegation is made about the iSMART Academy coordinator, staff must inform the Board.

Recording and Managing Confidential Information

iSMART Academy & O.S.C.S. is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information regarding safeguarding issues should be shared only with those who need to know.

All allegations/concerns should be recorded in the agreed place/file/log where safeguarding concerns are recorded. The information should be factual and not based on opinions.

Record what the person tells you, what you have seen and names of witnesses if appropriate.

The information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with iSMART Academy's Data Protection Policy.

Best practice and safeguarding in iSMART Academy & O.S.C.S.

It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:

- be aware of situations which may present risks and manage them
- plan and organize the work and the workplace so as to minimize risks
- as far as possible, be visible in working with children

- ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised or discussed
- ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
- talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns
- teach about safeguarding in Life skills lessons
- empower children – discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- have extended physical closeness with a child
- take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.
- respecting their privacy (no presence when they are changing clothes etc.)

Staff and others must never:

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive

I have read and agree to uphold this policy and understand that actions will be taken against me if I do not follow or actively support it.

Date

Name

Signature
