

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Pinefields School

At Pinefields School our biggest concern is the safety and wellbeing of the child. We therefore follow the following procedure.

The principal is accountable for implementing, managing and sustaining the policy and procedures. All staff members are legally bound to report all matters of suspected child abuse.

Should any of the following incidents occur, an incident report must be completed at the office and the incident discussed with the principle to take further actions:

- Any physical marks or bruises on the child's body or severe marks
- A pattern of the parents not attending to the child's medical needs
- Pattern of domestic violence that the child reports on at school
- A pattern of concerning events or behaviour, i.e. fetching the child consistently very late
- Pattern of behaviour that seems to suggest child neglect or lack of supervision
- Pattern of alcohol or drug-related events that the child mentions or the school witness
- Child displays sexualised play at school or mentions inappropriate knowledge for his/her age about sex
- A child involves another child in sexualised play on the school premises

In the following instances the police or child protection services needs to be contacted:

- Child has bruises indicative of an object or handprint
- Child reports domestic violence that involves a weapon of any kind
- Child is not picked up after school
- Child reports critical risk or injury due to possible neglect or lack of supervision
- Child comes to school under the influence of drugs/alcohol or unknown medication
- Child reports sexual abuse, has blood-stained clothes or underwear

WHEN CHILD ABUSE IS SUSPECTED

Gather information as soon as you suspect child abuse. Continue to do so consistently and document all information gathered. This information needs to be treated as highly confidential.

Report your suspicion and the information with the principal or the designated person at the school.

Remain objective in your reporting; do not allow personal matters, feelings or pre-conceptions to cloud your judgement.

PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW

After the principal or designated person at the school has been informed they will report the abuse or suspected abuse to the South African Police, Department of Social Development, Department of Health and Social Welfare.

Parents are normally the first point of contact. The designated person from the school will discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events.

Parents WILL NOT be contacted if the parent is the perpetrator of the abuse and that informing them may put the child in greater danger.

It is important to remember that it is not the work of the staff to determine and investigate any suspicion of child abuse but to contact the professional role players.
