

Approved by:	Managing Director		
Owner of the document	Valya Todorova	Issue date	September 2015
Position	Administrative Manager	Replaces version of:	N/A
Department	ABC KinderCare Centre	Ref. No	ABC_043_01

ABC_043_01 Child Protection Policy

General Purpose	<p>The purpose of the Policy is to provide basic principles and rules in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of ABC staff - Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times - Ensure that all staff are alert to the signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including by other children i.e. bullying, discriminatory behaviour. - Ensure that all staff is trained how to proceed in case of concerns of child abuse. - Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures - Keep the child at the centre of all we do. <p>Regularly review and update the policy with the staff members. The Policy helps to identify the main responsibilities of the Staff members during their working time being in charge of taking care of the children.</p> <p>ABC Kinder Care Centers work in order to ensure a commitment to safeguard children from harm and to make clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the Centre is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously</p>						
Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Main principles 2. Purpose 3. Scope 4. Types of child abuse 5. Reporting Procedure 6. Roles and responsibilities 7. Confidentiality 						
Participants/Interested Persons:	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Managing Director</td></tr> <tr><td>Administrative Manager</td></tr> <tr><td>Head Teacher</td></tr> <tr><td>Teacher</td></tr> <tr><td>Assistant</td></tr> <tr><td>Cleaning lady</td></tr> </table> <p>Each of the listed staff members shall have knowledge of and shall apply the rules described in this document.</p>	Managing Director	Administrative Manager	Head Teacher	Teacher	Assistant	Cleaning lady
Managing Director							
Administrative Manager							
Head Teacher							
Teacher							
Assistant							
Cleaning lady							
References	<p>ABC_010 Communication & Relationships with Families Policy ABC_048 Accident Procedure ABC_007 Policy for Parents Meeting Law On Child Protection, amend. and supplemented. SG. no.8 of 29 January 2016.</p>						

Policy

1. Main principles

1.1. ABC Team endeavor to provide a safe and well supervised environment for every child at ABC is defined as:



- To protect all children from physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect, with a strong focus on the

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child's stability and developmental needs and awareness of cumulative harm;

- To prevent the impairment of children's health or development;
- To ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

1.2. ABC KinderCare Centre supports the children in order to protect them from maltreatment and has robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered in this policy; therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the other ABC policies, procedures and instructions.

1.3. ABC KinderCare Centre complies with the Child Protection Act and other relevant legislation, with the focus on the best interests of the child, including appropriate development, promoting stability, being aware of cumulative harm and keeping all children connected to their community and culture.

1.4. ABC works with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in their life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

1.5. All ABC Staff member are obliged by law to report all concerns regarding the immediate safety, abuse, vulnerability and cumulative harm of a child in their care to the following relevant organizations:

- The State Agency for Child Protection
- Social Assistance Directorate.
- Ministry of Interior.

1.6. ABC offers trainings and gives information to the Staff member in order to assist them to recognize signs and symptoms of child abuse and to develop awareness of the effects of cumulative harm on children.

1.7. To safeguard children and promote their welfare ABC does the following steps and actions in order to achieve the purposes in the policy:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image;
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Always listen to children and respect their individuality.
- In case of need share information with other agencies as appropriate.

1.8. ABC Staff has the duty to protect and promote the welfare of the children. Due to the many hours of care ABC provides, often the Team members are the first people to sense that there is a problem. They could be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. ABC has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

1.9. If there is any reason to believe that a child in ABC is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect all rules, instructions and procedure included in the Policy shall be follow by ABC Team.

2. Scope

The policy covers all methods, actions and responsibilities of ABC Team in order to protect the welfare and well-being of all children in the Centres. ABC has a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to ABC attention. All staff shall work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child.



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3. Types of child abuse

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but will help ABC staff members to understand better of form a belief that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

Children may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the Manager.

All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into the Centre shall be recorded by the staff member who welcomed the parents. The Head Teacher shall be informed ASAP. It's Head Teachers responsibility to inform the Manager in case of need.

If the accident or the incident happened during the time when the child attending ABC, all Staff members shall follow strictly all steps and instructions included in ABC_048 Accident Procedure and shall fill up ABC_021_01 Accidental Form according to the rules in the procedure. In case some of the ABC Staff has the concerns that some accident or incident could be connected with some kind of child abuse, all reports and accidental forms shall be used as evidence or a reason a meeting with the parents to be organized. All this information and concerns shall be discussed first with the Manager by giving him/her all collected information about the issue using ABC_046 Child Abuse Reporting Blank. The report shall be sent via e-mail to the Manager (see below 4. Reporting Procedure, 4.3.). The Manager will take the decision if a meeting with the parents has to be organized. By organizing a meeting with the Parents ABC Team has to follow the included instructions in ABC_007_01 Policy for Parents Meeting (4. Informal Parents Meeting).

3.1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse 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 feigns the symptoms, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

3.2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child though it may occur alone.

3.3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. This may include non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention.

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This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important **not** to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth.

3.4. Neglect

Neglect is 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 involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Recognition of Abuse or Neglect:

Abuse or neglect of a child is caused by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting: by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger.

4. Reporting Procedure

4.1. If a Staff member has formed a belief on reasonable grounds that any child:

- has been abused physically, sexually, emotionally, or
- is experiencing persistent neglect, persistent family violence where there is a likelihood of significant harm to the child whose actions or behaviour may place them at the risk of significant harm
- who appears to have been abandoned and/or no other person is caring properly for the child,

the Team member shall report his/her concerns with the Manger as soon as possible. The given information to the Manger shall be reported in written by using ABC_046 Child Abuse Reporting Blank. Information about the way of report is outlined in 4. Reporting Procedure, 4.3.

4.2. ABC_046_ Child Abuse Reporting Blank shall include the time and the date, any observations or concerns in regard to any concern held for a child. The report shall be made at the first opportunity, but in no case longer than forty-eight hours after there is reasonable cause to believe that the child or adult has suffered abuse or neglect. The report shall include the identity of the accused if known.

4.3. After discussion with the Teacher of the Group the Manger will take the decision how the situation to be approached and whether the concerns could be discussed with the parents.

4.4. If the decision to meet the parents is taken, the incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity. If the individual Parents meeting shall be organized ABC Team shall follow the steps included in ABC_007 Policy for Parents Meeting (4. Informal Parents Meetings). The report of this kind of meeting (ABC_055_01 Informal Parents Meeting_MEMO form) shall be filled up according to the rules in 4.5. and the included steps in ABC_007 Policy for Parents Meeting (4.2.7).

4.5. ABC Staff shall make an objective record of any observation or disclosure including the following information in the Report:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Date of birth and age of the child
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure

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- Exact words spoken by the child
 - Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen
 - Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses
 - The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time;
 - The names of any other person present at the time
 - Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate)
 - In case of need and depending of the case ABC Management shall provide the presence of more than one representative of ABC
 - Before the MEMO of the meeting to be sent to the parents via e-mail it shall be signed by the representatives of ABC
 - ABC_055_01 Informal Parents Meeting MEMO is an official document which could be used by other Institutions in the future and shall be kept according to the rules described in ABC_007 Policy for Parents Meeting (4.2.7)
 - All information discussed on the Meeting and included in the MEMO is strictly confidential
 - Access to this information is allowed only to the meeting attendants.
- 4.6. ABC staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.
- 4.7. Its manager's responsibility to make the decision is there a reason the local authority to be informed.
- 4.8. In the case of a serious incident the Manager shall notify the following of the event within 24 hours the relevant Public Authority:
- The State Agency for Child Protection
 - Social Assistance Directorate.
 - Ministry of Interior
- 4.9. The representatives of the relevant Public Authority may ask questions and request information about:
- The child's name, age and address
 - Name of parents, caregivers or guardians and their addresses
 - Names of sibling/s, age/s and addresses
 - Language spoken in the family
 - Background or cultural status
 - Any services being received by the child or family
 - Staff member's relationship to the child
 - Reason for the report and nature of concerns for the child
 - Time and dates of incidents of abuse
- 4.10. If a staff member is contacted by the representatives of the relevant Public Authority regarding the child in their care and are requesting information about the child, the staff member shall request their identification refer the call to the Manager or to the Head Teacher if he/she is absent. The Manager shall take their name and switchboard number and phone back to confirm their identification.
- 4.11. If the representatives of the relevant Public Authority are requesting information about a child as part of an initial investigation, the Manager is obliged to provide such information.
- 4.12. Where there is ongoing involvement with a family and a representative of other involved agencies, the Manager shall be provided with filled up Release of Information Form that has been signed by the family included in ABC_055_01 Enrollment Registration Information Packet Form.
- 4.13. If the representatives of the relevant Public Authority wish to visit and/or interview a child at the Centre

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the Manager or the Head Teacher must be present. The Manager must be notified before the interview takes place. Interviews can be conducted at the Centre without parental consent or knowledge. When representatives arrive at the Centre ABC staff members shall ask to see identification before allowing them to have access to the child.

4.14. If the representative of the relevant Public Authority needs to remove a child from the Centre, staff members/Manager must notify the parents (It is the responsibility of the relevant state agency) to advise the parents/guardians of the details in accordance with their requirements.

5. Reporting against ABC Staff member or volunteer

In the case of an allegation being made against a staff member or volunteer by any person/s in relation to child abuse of a child in their care the following steps shall be taken:

- 5.1. The allegations shall be reported immediately to:
 - The manager (cell phone number 0889 229 666)
 - If the situation could be described as a crisis, the Managing director shall immediately inform the senior management of the Group in the face of VMFG CEO and the Board of Directors of VMFG.
- 5.2. In the case of a serious incident the Manager shall notify the senior management of the Group in the face of VMFG CEO and the Board of Directors of VMFG of the event within 24 hours.
- 5.3. Strict confidentiality is to be maintained regarding the allegation, as well as during and after the investigation process. No-one in ABC should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to their families. Media enquiries should be referred to the Manager or inform the senior management of the Group in the face of VMFG CEO and the Board of Directors of VMFG if he/she is absent.
- 5.4. While the complaint is being investigated a number of options may be taken in regard to the staff member's contact with the child concerned/other children:
 - The staff member may be moved to another children's room
 - The child may be moved to another children's room
 - The staff member may be required to undertake non contact duties (either within or out of the Centre)
 - The staff member may be requested to take leave
 - Action may be undertaken under HR_019 Process Manual – Disciplinary Proceedings.
- 5.5. Support mechanisms shall be in place for children, families, other staff members when an allegation is made as well as throughout and after the investigation. It is not always possible to assess whether Staff members not directly involved in the incident have been traumatised or whether other children or staff members in the Centre have been affected. In some cases reactions do not surface immediately.
- 5.6. Staff members are to be supported upon return to work after a false allegation is made.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1. Managing shall:

- be responsible that adequate child protection policy and procedures are in place;
- be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the child protection policy and related procedures;
- take the appropriate actions to ensure that parents are kept informed about any doubts of child abuse;
- make the decision to inform the local authority in case of need;
- keep a written file of all child abuse situations, times and contacts after the incident.

6.2. Head teacher shall:



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- Be responsible for monitoring the keeping of the Policy;
- supervise ABC Team's reaction and actions in case of doubts of child abuse;
- to keep informed the Manger about any case of doubts of child abuse.
- be aware of child protection issues.

6.3. Teacher shall:

- keep an follow the policy
- train and introduce the policy in front of the colleagues which is supervisor;
- inform the Head Teacher or the Manager about any doubts of child abuse;
- constantly supervise each child and shall have direct visual observation at all times;
- be familiar with the rest of the policies mentioned in the current document.

7. Confidentiality

Every effort shall be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information shall be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- ABC Management
- The parents of the child
- The person/the team member making the allegation
- Social Services/police in case of need;
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

All information shall be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Forms

ABC_064_01 Informal Parents Meeting MEMO
 ABC_046_01 Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Blank
 ABC_021_01 Accidental Form
 ABC_063_01 Release of Information Form
 ABC_055_01 Enrollment Registration Information Packet Form

Definitions

Serious incidents	Sexual assault or abuse, neglect or abandonment, abuse that can end in death
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Compulsory Control Procedures	Covered Risk	Type of control	Method of control	Frequency of the control	Person responsible for the process
Continual supervision by the persons responsible for strictly following the Child Protection Policy	Accuracy Validity Completeness Limited access	Preventive	Manual	Daily	Head Teacher

