

Health & Safety

6. PlayFACTO School Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

The **PlayFACTO School Child Safeguarding Policy** is designed to protect children and young people from harm and ensure their well-being.

We believe every child has the right to feel safe, valued, and free from abuse. All members of our community (staff, vendors, partner agencies, children, and families) share the responsibility of fostering a secure environment. We are committed to promoting the welfare of all children and upholding the highest standards of child protection in everything we do.

Policy Rationale

PlayFACTO School recognises that effective child safeguarding relies on clear procedures, strong collaboration with relevant agencies, and a community of staff and volunteers who are confident and capable in identifying and responding to child protection concerns

The PlayFACTO School Child Safeguarding Policy is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Singapore's Children and Young Persons Act 1993 (2020 revised edition) (*Refer to Annex 6A*).

We expect all individuals and organisations connected to the PlayFACTO School community to act with integrity and place the safety and well-being of children above all else. This policy applies to everyone who interacts with our school such as staff, vendors, partner agencies, parents, and visitors.

Definitions and Terminology

Child or Young Person

Under Singapore law, a *child* is defined as a person below 14 years of age, while a *young person* refers to anyone aged 14 years and above but below 16 years. According to the *United Nations*

Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is any individual under the age of 18.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding refers to the actions and systems that **PlayFACTO School** implements to keep students safe from harm, to promote their health and well-being, and to ensure they grow up in a secure and nurturing environment. This includes taking proactive steps to reduce risks and enable every child to thrive.

Child Protection

Child protection is a specific aspect of safeguarding. It involves taking direct action to protect individual children who are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or harm.

Significant Risk of Harm

This term describes the level of concern at which protective intervention is required to act in the best interests of the child.

Code of Conduct

A set of guiding principles, values, and behavioural expectations that direct the actions and decision-making of all members of the **PlayFACTO School** community, helping to ensure that children's rights and welfare are always prioritised.

Risk Management

An ongoing process through which **PlayFACTO School** identifies, evaluates, and addresses potential risks associated with school activities and programmes, with the goal of preventing harm to children.

Safeguarding Leads (Centre Heads)

Specially trained staff members who are responsible for receiving and responding to concerns about child safety. Centre Heads play a key role in leading safeguarding practices within **PlayFACTO School**.

6.1 Recognising Abuse

Child abuse is when a parent or caregiver, whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm, or risk of serious harm to a child. There are many forms of child maltreatment, including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, and emotional abuse.

While most cases of child abuse may be easily spotted by observable external injuries, physical signs may be deliberately hidden at times and cases of psychological abuse are even more elusive.

These indicators may not necessarily point to child abuse, but they should alert us to be wary and find out more about the child's circumstances at home to provide help or support if needed.

6.2 Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is commonly characterized by physical injury resulting from practices such as punching, beating, shaking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child.

Possible Indications/Signs

- Unexplained injuries (bruises, cuts or burns)
- Frequent absences
- Fearful behaviour towards adults

6.3 Emotional / Psychological Abuse

Emotional abuse tends to be a chronic behavioural pattern directed at the child where their self-esteem and social competence is undermined or eroded over time.

A child can also experience emotional abuse by being exposed to a dysfunctional environment, which includes domestic violence.

Emotional Abuse includes harsh, humiliating, belittling, threatening, scapegoating, or degrading responses of any kind.

Possible Indications/Signs

- Low self esteem
- Anxiety or Depression
- Excessive withdrawal or aggression

6.4 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when someone uses their power, force, or authority to involve child/children in sexual activity.

Possible Indications/Signs

- Knowledge of sexual language inappropriate for age
- Sexualised behaviour
- Avoidance of certain people or places
- Exhibitionism
- Fondling of private parts

6.5 Neglect

Neglect is characterized by the failure to provide for the child basic needs. This can occur through direct and deliberate action or by omission of deliberate inaction to care for the child. This may include deprivation, isolation, poor hygiene, consistent lack of supervision and unattended medical problems.

Possible Indications/Signs

- Poor hygiene
- Malnourishment
- Constant tiredness
- Frequent lateness or absences

6.6 Peer on peer abuse

It is recognised that children and young people can be vulnerable to various forms of abuse, exploitation, and harm inflicted by their peers—those of the same or similar age. This type of abuse can include physical violence, sexual harassment or assault, emotional abuse, bullying (including cyberbullying), and coercive or controlling behaviours.

Possible Indications/Signs

- Unexplained injuries
- Reluctance to attend
- Aggressive or controlling behaviour
- Changes in friendship groups

The Children and Young Persons Act provides the legal basis for the protection and intervention by relevant authorities if a child (below the age of 14) or young person (from 14 years of age to below 16 years of age) is found to be abused or neglected.

(Refer to Annex 6A – Convention on the Rights of the Child)

(Extracted from MSF Policy on Protection and Welfare of Children 2016)

6.7 Dealing with Disclosure from a Child or Young Person

A disclosure occurs when a child shares information that raises concern they may have been abused in the past, are currently experiencing abuse, or may be at risk of abuse. Disclosures can be sudden, unexpected, or spoken impulsively. At times, the child or young person may hesitate, withdraw, or change their mind partway through sharing.

If a child or young person discloses something to you, it is important to respond with care, calmness, and reassurance. Keep the following principles in mind to support them appropriately.

*(Refer to Annex 6B on **Do's** and **Don'ts** when encountering such cases)*

For further information and details – visit the following:

Convention on the Rights of the Child

<https://www.unicef.org/northmacedonia/convention-rights-child>

Children and Young Person Act 1993 – Singapore Statutes

<https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/CYPA1993>

Children and Young Persons Act (Chapter 38)

Children and Young Persons Regulations (2020)

Conferred by section 88 of the Children and Young Persons Act, the Minister for Social and Family Development (Singapore)

<https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/CYPA1993-S512-2020>





A child is any person under the age of 18. 1	All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason. 2	When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job. 3	Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention. 4	Governments should let families and communities guide their children as they grow up, they learn to use their rights in the best way. The more children grow, the less guidance they will need. 5	Every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way. 6	Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognised by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them. 7			
Children have the right to their own identity – an official record of who they are, which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back. 8	Children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after – for example, if a parent hurts or does not take care of a child. Children whose parents don't live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child. 9	If a child lives in a different country from their parents, governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together. 10	Governments must stop children being taken out of the country when this is against the law – for example, being kidnapped by someone or held abroad by a parent – when the other parent does not agree. 11	Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously. 12	Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people. 13	Children can share their own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents can guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to properly use this right. 14			
Children can join or set up groups or organisations, and they can meet with others, as long as this does not harm other people. 15	Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation for good name from any attack. 16	Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in language that all children can understand. 17	Parents are the main people responsible for bringing up a child. When the child does not have any parents, another adult will have this responsibility and they are called a "guardian". Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child. Governments should help them. When a child has both parents, both of them should be responsible for bringing up the child. 18	Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them. 19	Every child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after properly by people who respect the child's religion, culture, language and other aspects of their life. 20	When children are adopted, the most important thing is to do what is best for them. If a child cannot be properly looked after in their own country – for example by living with another family – then they might be adopted in another country. 21			
Children who move from their home country to another country as refugees because it was not safe for them to stay there should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country. 22	Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community. 23	Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy. 24	Every child who has been placed somewhere away from home – for their care, protection or health – should have their situation checked regularly to see if everything is going well and if this is still the best place for the child to be. 25	Governments should provide money or other support to help children from poor families. 26	Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this. 27	Every child has the right to education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children's rights and never use violence. 28			
Children's education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights, culture and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment. 29	Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion – even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live. 30	Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities. 31	Children have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly. 32	Governments must protect children from taking, making, carrying or selling harmful drugs. 33	The government should protect children from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse, including by people forcing children to have sex for money, or taking sexual pictures or films of them. 34	Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of). 35			
Children have the right to be protected from all other kinds of exploitation (being taken advantage of), even if these are not specifically mentioned in this Convention. 36	Children who are accused of breaking the law should not be killed, tortured, treated cruelly, put in prison forever, or put in prison with adults. Prison should always be the last choice and only for the shortest possible time. Children in prison should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family. 37	Children have the right to be protected during war. No child under 15 can join the army or take part in war. 38	Children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so they can get back their health and dignity. 39	Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. There should be lots of solutions to help these children become good members of their communities. Prison should only be the last choice. 40	If the laws of a country protect children's rights better than the Convention, then those laws should be used. 41	Governments should actively tell children and adults about the Convention so that everyone knows about children's rights. 42			
These articles explain how governments, the United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of Child – and other organisations work to make sure all children enjoy all their rights. 43-54							 CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD	THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD – THE CHILDREN'S VERSION The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect children's rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child explains who children are, all their rights, and the responsibilities of governments. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children. This text is supported by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.  unicef for every child	

Do's	Don'ts
Report: Do report the matter to the Centre Head	<i>Do not leave any records, notes lying around. All information be it verbal or written must be treated as Private and Confidential.</i>
Listen: If the child has told you how they were abused, listen, and make a record to inform the school later. *The child may be very scared about what might will happen next	Do not: - Show shock or disgust - Ask personal and intrusive questions - Guess or make assumptions - Show that you are suspicious that they are making it up - Make negative comments about the suspected abuser - Make promises that you cannot be sure of e.g., 'Everything will be alright' - Agree to keep what the child has said a secret
Calm: Do keep the child as comfortable as possible. Engage the child in some simple activities to keep him/her calm.	- Do not divulge any information to the parent/caregiver when they come to fetch their child. Wait for further instructions from your Centre Head/Centre Manager
Accompany: Do ensure that there is always a teacher with the child. Get assistance from your colleagues to mind your class while you are away with your student.	<i>Do not leave your class unattended while you are away.</i>
No secrets: Reassure the child that you have a responsibility for keeping them and other children safe.	<i>This also means that you cannot agree to keep it a secret and will have to inform someone who can help</i>
Safety: Do keep the child away from his/her peers if the child is injured or unstable.	<i>Do not scold, isolate, and ignore the child.</i>
Reassure: Reassure the child that they were not to be blamed for what had happened and that you are glad you could help.	<i>Do not make child feel as if he/she has done something wrong.</i>
Confidentiality: Do keep all information Private and Confidential *Provide as much assistance to the school/school counsellor as much as possible	<i>Do not engage with parents who may have information on the case. Refer them to the school.</i>

Reporting and Responding to Concerns

At PlayFACTO School we are committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for every child. We recognise the vital role that staff, vendors, partner agencies and parents play in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns. It is essential that all individuals are equipped with the appropriate knowledge and procedures to ensure timely and appropriate action is taken to protect children and young people from harm.

Safeguarding at PlayFACTO School includes preventing and responding to all forms of abuse, neglect, violence, and exploitation. Our aim is to ensure that every child feels safe, supported, and valued.

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Responding to Safeguarding Concerns outlines the steps to be taken when a concern is raised. This includes reporting, investigating, and responding appropriately. *Refer to Annex 6 (Health & Safety) – Safeguarding*

All safeguarding concerns will be addressed promptly following a report. While it is not the responsibility of staff or community members to investigate or determine whether abuse has occurred, it is their duty to recognise and report any indicators of concern—no matter how minor they may seem at the time.

PlayFACTO School works closely with community support services and the Child Protection Service to ensure a coordinated and effective response to any safeguarding issues, always prioritising the welfare and best interests of the child

Safeguarding leads will use (*Annex 6C*) and the Crisis Management (*Annex CM 1*) flow charts to guide them on how to manage these concerns.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

Designation	Roles
Chief Executive Officer	Responsible for all safeguarding concerns related to staff in PlayFACTO Schools.
Director Of Schools	Responsible for all safeguarding concerns related to students in PlayFACTO Schools.
Audit & Compliance	Responsible for safeguarding leads and staff training and auditing the centres on their readiness in SOP
Cluster Manager	Responsible for ensuring safeguarding leads and staff are familiar with SOP across centres under their charge
Centre Heads	Responsible Safeguarding Leads for their Centres and ensuring that SOP are well implemented in their centres