



# Shining Stars Childhood Care & Education Centre

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Shining Stars is an advocate for our children and has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given oversight responsibility for children, all our staff and volunteers shall be supportive, engage in safe and respectful interactions with our children and provide a high standard of care at all times.

We recognize our fundamental duty of care towards all our children. Protection and welfare of children is paramount because all children have the right to be free from harm. This includes a duty to protect children from harm or risk of harm as a result of misconduct by our staff or partners, poor practice or delivery of our programs and operations.

Shining Stars is dedicated to safeguarding the children in our care from harm and abuse. We intend to accomplish this by following best practice procedures to protect them and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities. We aim to strictly comply with the Cayman Islands Children.

Shining Stars commits to:

- a. Protecting all children (regardless of culture, gender, language, ability, race and religious belief) from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and ensuring that all children are treated respectfully with regard to their rights and feelings.
- b. Ensuring all staff are trained and provided with a common understanding of child protection issues for guidance and are equipped to practice the established child protection procedures.
- c. Effectively managing staff through clear processes, and supervision.
- d. Supporting children who may have been abused.
- e. Responding promptly, sensitively and appropriately to all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse.
- f. Working in partnership with parents and children to ensure proper communication and actions shall be undertaken to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

### ***Staff Code of Conduct (See Appendix 8 for complete Staff Code of Conduct expectations)***

The following excerpts from the Cayman Islands Staff Safeguarding Policy for Schools v1 12-Aug-2016 outlines appropriate and expected physical behavior, verbal and digital communication, and general conduct for staff and volunteers, and serves as our reference.



### **Physical Behavior**

Staff interaction with children should be done in open, public spaces. If one-on-one meetings are necessary for education or emergency purposes, they should be conducted in a public area, in a room where the interaction can be observed, or in a room with the door left open and another adult is notified about the meeting.

The child should be given the option of having another adult present. If a child is unable to request the presence of another adult, Shining Stars should ensure that another adult is present whenever feasible.

Staff must not transport children in their personal vehicles, even in emergency situations. Shining Stars will only transport children in line with Shining Stars Transportation Policy which speaks to the permitted use of private motor vehicles by contractors to or from centre activities. A permission slip must be signed by the parent or guardian before going on a trip. The teacher to children ratio is complied with during planned trips. Parents are allowed to accompany their children.

### **Appropriate/Inappropriate Behavior**

Appropriate physical behavior includes contact that maintains physical boundaries at all times and only consists of public and nonsexual touches such as: pats on the upper back and shoulders, holding hands to cross the street safely, child-initiated hugs, high fives and support with toileting or changing clothes.

Inappropriate physical behavior includes contact that abuses, exploits, or harasses the child such as: slapping, shaking, pinching, hitting, punching, pushing, grabbing, kicking, patting the buttocks, touching/exposing private body parts, intimate/romantic/sexual contact, showing pornography or involving children in pornographic activities.

### **Communication**

Staff shall use caution and discretion in all verbal, nonverbal, and digital communication with children. All staff shall be guided by principles of professionalism and integrity. Communication between staff and children shall be transparent and about centre activities, with the exception of counseling relationships and other topics, such as the child's well-being, hobbies, interests, weekend, summer activities etc.

### **Appropriate/Inappropriate Verbal Communication**

Appropriate verbal communication includes praise and/or positive reinforcement with a pedagogical purpose when used consistently and equally for all children.

Inappropriate verbal communication includes yelling, threatening, ridiculing, use of expletives, degrading comments, profanity, sexual insinuation or risqué jokes.



## **Appropriate/Inappropriate Digital Communication**

Appropriate digital communication comprises emails and/or text messages using Centre's email address/phone with pedagogical purpose and subject to periodical monitoring.

Inappropriate digital communication includes allowing access to electronic devices that may expose children to inappropriate conduct, and private messaging via social media and/or online gaming communities.

## **General Conduct**

### **Shining Stars Staff shall:**

- a. Treat all children with respect and provide safe and supportive interactions that foster their social, emotional and academic development.
- b. Comply with all mandatory reporting procedures.
- c. Cooperate fully with any investigation of misconduct or child abuse, and respond promptly to requests from investigating agencies (i.e. Royal Cayman Islands Police Service officers and Department of Children and Family Services Social Workers).

### **Shining Stars Staff shall NOT:**

- a. Engage in bullying as defined in the anti-bullying policy.
- b. Use or be under the influence of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs in the presence of children.
- c. Give individual children gifts without the knowledge of the child's parents/caregivers.

### **Other considerations:**

- a. For the safety of the child and/or his/her peers, safe handling practices will be observed by the staff, and if a staff is found not religiously performing the right care and handling, Shining Stars shall be forced to immediately terminate the staff or report to authorities.
- b. Children who are in diapers or are toileting training will be changed at regular intervals based on the child's needs. The children will be changed in a manner that allows the child privacy while allowing the intimate care occurrence to be visible by other adults.
- c. Toileting accidents: If a child has a toileting accident and is not able to clean or change him/herself, the child shall be assisted by member/s of staff assigned to the respective class. In such situations two members of staff may be present and expectedly the parent/s shall be informed verbally during pick-up time that such accident happened. For children who are able to clean/change themselves, staff will respect children's privacy during toileting, dressing and undressing. Staff will keep distance from children, encourage them to do as much as possible for themselves, only help if the child asks for help or can't manage by themselves. Staff will always support and encourage children to change in a manner that provides privacy, minimizes anxiety and encourages independence.

Shining Stars policy advice is that it is not essential to have two staff present at all times in the bathrooms. Windows were placed in the bathroom doors for enhanced visibility and accountability.

Wet or soiled clothing will be sealed in a plastic bag and sent home for washing at pick-up.

Soiled underwear may be disposed of at staff discretion due to hygiene practices.

- d. If a child needs to change clothes due to spills or other accidents consideration (b and c shall be applicable

## **Reporting Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect**

### **Definition of Child Abuse**

Child Abuse is defined as any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads, or could lead, to injury or harm to a child. Child abuse can be categorized into four different types: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger, and can be an adult, or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, this shall be considered a child welfare and protection issue for both children and child protection procedures will be followed for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

- Physical Abuse: intentional actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent injury through neglectful actions.
- Child Sexual Abuse: any sexual act, including non-contact acts, with a child performed by an adult or an older child, including but not limited to:
  - sexual touching on any part of the body, clothed or unclothed
  - penetrative sex. including penetration of the mouth
  - encouraging a child to engage in a sexual activity, including masturbation
  - intentionally engaging in sexual activity in front of a child
  - showing children pornography, or using children to create pornography
  - perpetuating, encouraging or allowing for the sexual exploitation of a child (giving things to a child in exchange for performing sexual activities)
  - exposing oneself or saying sexual things
- Emotional Abuse: actual or likely severe negative impact on a child's emotional, psychological and behavioural development, resulting from persistent or severe emotional/psychological ill-treatment.
- Neglect: severe or persistent failure to provide for a child's physical, emotional or basic needs.

### **Legal Requirement to Notify – Children Act (2012 Revision), Part IIIA.32A**

If a teacher, principal, counsellor or other employee/volunteer in an institution established for the care and education of children has a reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is being abused or neglected, and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person's work, that person shall notify the Department (Department of Children and Family Services) of the suspicion as soon as practicable after s/he forms the suspicion.

A person who contravenes this section commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of five thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term of one year or both.

A notification under this section shall be made by employees and volunteers of Shining Stars following Shining Stars' reporting procedures (see Appendix 1).

### **Responsibilities of Shining Stars Employees and Volunteers**

Shining Stars' Child Protection Officers are: Primary Child Protection Officer – School Manager, Secondary Child Protection Officers – Assistant Teacher and Assistant Teacher/SENCO. Child Protection Officers will report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect, including disclosures, of children in our care immediately to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

If a staff member receives a disclosure of abuse from a child, or forms a suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected, s/he must complete the *Internal Child Protection Reporting Form* (Appendix 7) available at the Shining Stars office and submit to the CPO. The report must be made as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the suspicion/disclosure, but by no later than end of day). Then, the CPO will complete and submit a MASH referral form as soon as possible (by no later than within one hour of receiving the report).

Where deemed necessary (in time sensitive situations, for example, where there are concerns about the child going home or if the child is in imminent danger), an immediate telephone call to the MASH is necessary. If after hours, the telephone report shall be made directly with the RCIPS. The telephone referral will be followed by a written referral to the MASH, utilizing the above form, within the specified time frame.

Depending upon availability, either the centre's coordinator, principal, director and/or owner will be informed that a child protection matter was referred to the MASH, without any further details.

In deciding whether or not to report an incident or situation of suspected abuse/neglect, it is not required that the person making the report have proof that abuse/neglect has occurred.



Any uncertainty in deciding to report suspicion shall be resolved in favor of the child and the report made immediately.

The employee or volunteer will report what has been said by the child or what has been observed leading to the suspicion of child abuse/neglect, including the context of that information. While clarifying questions may be necessary and appropriate, there shall be no attempt by the employee to interview the child, as the role of investigation lies with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and/or the Family Support Unit (FSU) of the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service (RCIPS). The child shall be protected from repeated disclosures.

Documentation of what is said (or of any injuries) is important. The child's own words shall be used as much as possible.

If the child is injured, the employee/volunteer shall seek appropriate medical attention for the child, should it be deemed necessary, and inform the principal, director, owner or designated safeguarding lead of the action.

The employee or volunteer referring the suspected case of child abuse/neglect must not contact the parents, unless otherwise indicated by a MASH officer.

Given the sensitive nature of child abuse/neglect referrals, the employee or volunteer should not expect feedback following a referral. Children Act, (2012 Revision) Part IIIA.32C provides protection to the notifier and requires that the receiver of notification of suspected child abuse (DCFS/FSU) shall not disclose the identity of the notifier to any other person other than in the instance of communicating to another person acting in the course of official duty. Only in cases when "the court is satisfied that the evidence is of critical importance in the proceedings and that failure to admit it would prejudice the proper administration of justice" will a notifier be called to provide evidence. In these instances, Shining Stars management will provide support to the individual, e.g. by assigning another staff member to accompany her/him at a hearing.

The requirement for reporting reasonable suspicion of child abuse/neglect applies whether or not the information was initially extended in confidence. This requirement also applies whether the information comes directly from the child or indirectly from another employee, volunteer or community member.

When making the referral to DCFS, how the parents become informed will be discussed and the best course of action agreed upon with that agency.

A record of follow-up contact made to external agencies regarding a referral made shall be kept by the Primary Child Protection Officer in a separate file in the office (see Appendix 5). All reports or documents relative to any form of child abuse or neglect shall be kept safely, properly and confidentially filed in the office of the principal in a locked filing cabinet accessible only by designated persons.

If a staff member is alleged or suspected of child abuse or neglect, following consultation with the MASH, the staff member will be spoken with by management, and sent home pending investigation (see Appendix 1).

Should DCFS or the RCIPS need to interview a child at Shining Stars, it is not Shining Stars' responsibility to inform parents of the interview; however, the subject of parent notification will be discussed with DCFS/RCIPS and a decision taken in the best interest of the child. Shining Stars staff shall follow the RCIPS/DCFS Contact with Children procedures (see Appendix 6) and assist the DCFS/RCIPS officers by providing an appropriate interview space and arranging discreetly for the child to be interviewed. The DCFS worker/RCIPS Officer may request that a Shining Stars employee be present during an interview to offer support to the child. If the worker/officer does not ask for child support, the Shining Stars representative may make this request on behalf of the child.

If it is necessary for DCFS/RCIPS to remove the child from Shining Stars during the investigation, Shining Stars staff shall comply with this request, following Shining Stars' Removal of Child procedures (Appendix 6).

Following investigation, an appropriate representative from Shining Stars will participate in DCFS case conferences and liaise with DCFS staff on behalf of the child, as required.

Shining Stars Management will make sure that all staff and volunteers are trained and know how to respond to concerns and are kept up-to-date with policy and practice, including teaching children about staying safe. Staff are required to comply with Ministry of Education child protection training requirements, including refresher sessions, as advised by management. Staff are responsible for providing management with certificates of required training, and ensuring that their certifications are up-to-date.

**When following procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse/neglect, the safety and welfare of the child will always dictate which course of action is to be pursued. Any uncertainty shall always be resolved in favour of the child's best interest. When in doubt, consult the MASH.**

## **Safe Environment**

Shining Stars shall provide and maintain a safe environment both indoors and outdoors. Glass doors have been installed into all of the classrooms and the office to ensure visibility into these spaces. A transparent half-glass door has been installed in the boy's and girl's bathrooms to aid with supervision of staff during the provision of intimate care. Latches on non-classroom exterior doors have been installed. In addition, there are cameras in all classrooms and the dining area which parents are allowed to view in real-time via closed circuit cameras. There are no cameras in the bathrooms, the kitchen (no children allowed inside), the office or outdoors.

## **Visibility**

All staff will be aware of the need for visibility. Shining Stars management will ensure visibility within the centre through the following:

- All classroom doors have windows
- All spaces inside classrooms shall be visible from the hallways, or in camera footage
- Landscaping that ensures open, visible spaces with no possibility of concealment
- No locked classrooms or children's bathroom doors
- Interior classroom windows shall not be obscured
- All areas are well lit
- Locked unused areas or room accessible by staff only

## **Supervision**

Shining Stars will ensure that the activities of children and staff are adequately supervised by implementing the following:

- Adequate supervision in the classroom, as per the established formula for staffing as dictated by the Education Council Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education.
- Adequate playground and non-classroom supervision (for example, hallways and dining room)
- Periodic walk-throughs of the building and its grounds by senior management to ensure there are no unidentified person on site

## **Access**

Shining Stars will ensure that access to children and staff is controlled by implementing the following:

- Limiting outside access to the centre through the main lobby and posting a sign in the lobby directing visitors to wait in the lobby until they are helped by a staff member





- Shining Stars staff is alerted to requests for entrance via a doorbell type system located at the main front entrance and the main playground entrance.
- Requiring that all visitors, volunteers, and contractors sign in at the main office and wear a visitor badge identifying them at all times
- Ensuring all staff are aware of restrictions to noncustodial parents' access to a child or children
- Requiring that children entering or leaving at times other than typical arrival or dismissal do so only with parental permission, except in the case of emergency
- Requiring that when removing a child from the centre, parent/guardian should notify the Centre's office and sign the child out
- Ensuring that all fences, gates, and so on surrounding the grounds are functioning properly and in good repair

### **Child Protection Policy Statement of Receipt and Agreement**

I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to children at Shining Stars I am subject to a criminal background check. My signature confirms that I have read and understood the Child Protection Policy, and that I agree to comply with the standards contained therein. I understand that any action that violates this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from Shining Stars Childhood Care & Education Centre.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 1: Shining Stars' Procedures for reporting suspicions of child abuse/neglect**

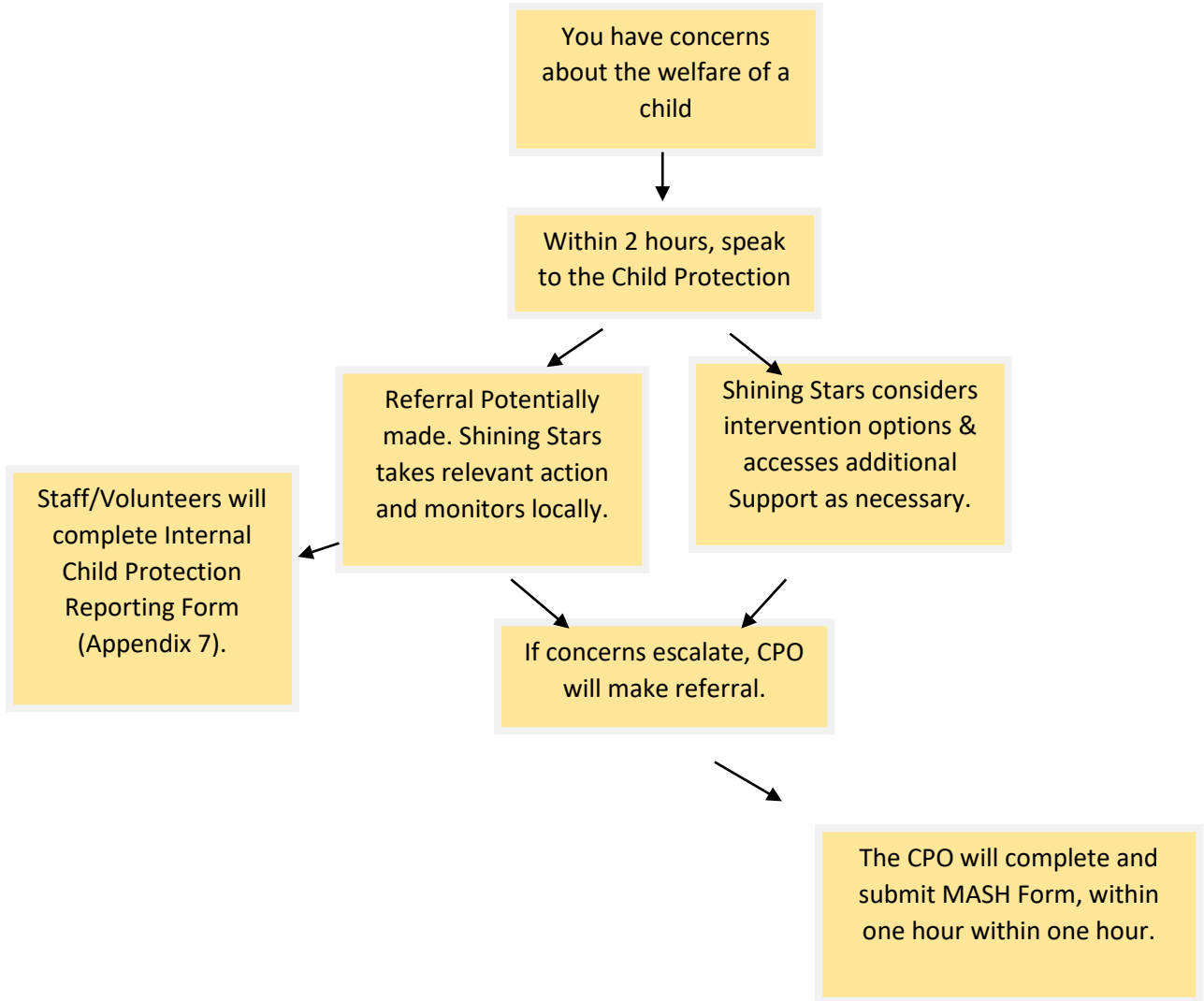
### **If alleged offender is not a staff member:**

1. Employee/Volunteer has reasonable suspicion of child abuse and/or neglect.
  - In the case of disclosures, employees and volunteers will respond appropriately (see Appendix 4) and refrain from asking leading questions, ensuring to ask open ended questions to obtain necessary information for a referral (e.g. How did you get that bruise? Tell me more about what happened).
2. Employee/Volunteer will report initially to the Primary Child Protection Officer or in the absence of, to one of the Secondary Child Protection Officers. As soon as possible (within 1 to 2 hours), employee/volunteer will complete the *Internal Reporting Form* (Appendix 7) and submit it to the CPO, ensuring to document what has been said by the child and/or what has been observed leading to the suspicion of child abuse/neglect, including the context of that information. (see *Appendix 7*)
3. The Child Protection Officer will complete and submit the MASH referral form within one hour of receiving the report.
  - Where necessary, for example, in emergency situations where the child is in imminent danger/there are concerns about the child going home, the CPO will call the MASH immediately. If there is uncertainty whether a referral is needed, the CPO will call MASH for guidance and information prior to making a report.
  - If indicated by the MASH that a referral is not required, the report is kept and noted
4. Child Protection Officers will liaise with each other.
5. Child Protection Officer will await further instruction or intervention from MASH.
6. If after hours, the telephone report shall be made directly with the RCIPS. The telephone referral will be followed by a written referral to the MASH, complete and submitted by the designated CPO.
7. All referrals and internal reports are kept separately from the child's permanent record and accessible only by the designated officers.

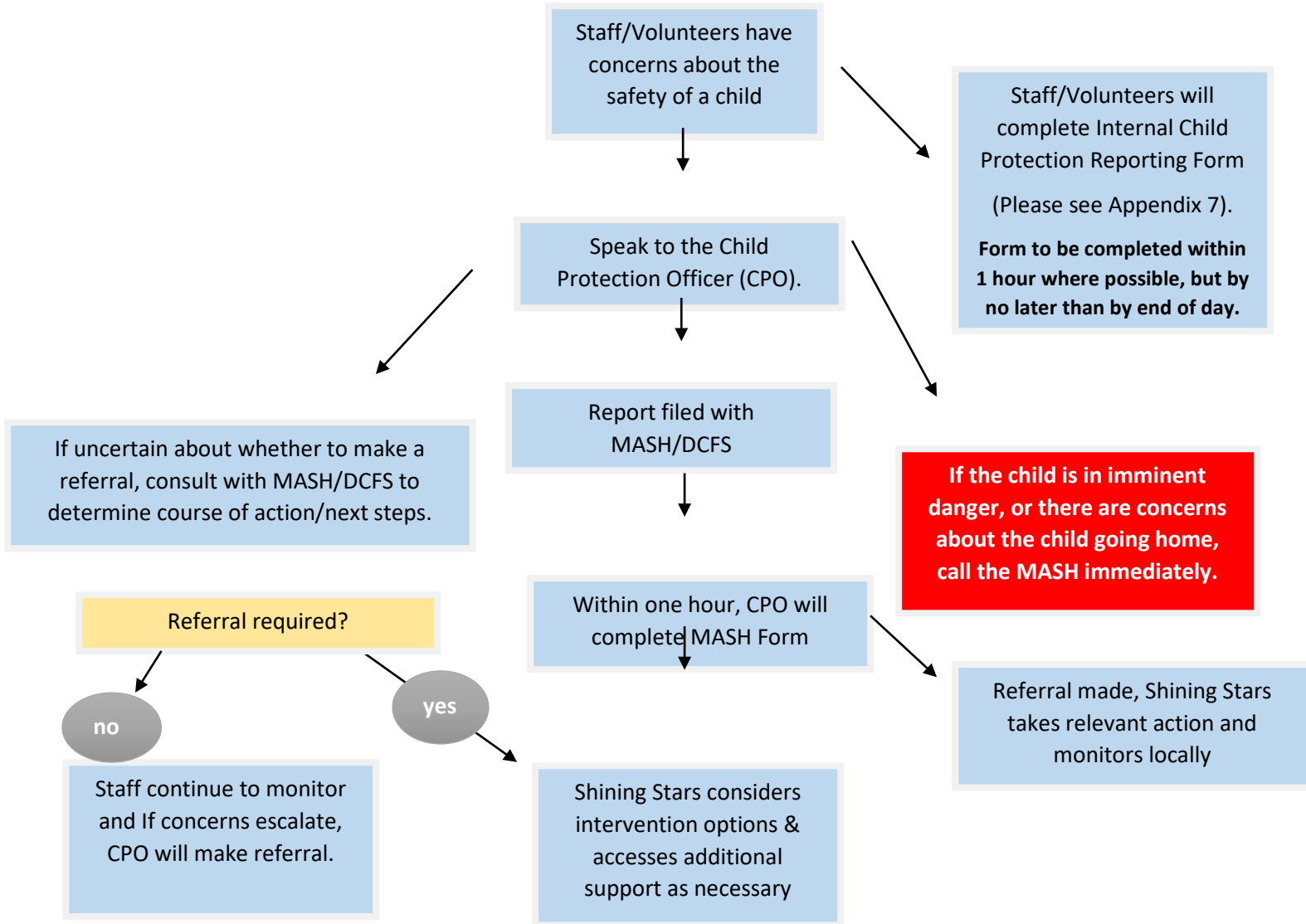
### **If alleged offender is a staff member:**

1. Follow steps 1-7 above.
2. Child Protection Officers together with the Principal and the Director will meet to determine the next steps; subsequent actions will be identified and the need for disciplinary action assessed (disciplinary action must be recorded and noted in employee's file). Following consultation with the MASH, the staff member will be spoken with by management and sent home pending investigation. If there is no reason to submit MASH report at the time of the report, the Primary CPO will carry out an internal investigation to ascertain if there were any policy violations. Investigation and outcomes are documented and placed in an employee's file. If an allegation is made against the Primary CPO, the Principal or Director shall carry out the internal investigation in the same fashion.
3. Within 24 hours, the Primary CPO e-mails [EduChilProtection@gov.ky](mailto:EduChilProtection@gov.ky), providing the following information, ensuring not to include any identifying information regarding the case:
  - Date the referral was made to the MASH
  - Nature of the allegation (e.g. sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, etc.)

**Appendix 2: Flowchart 1 - Procedures if you have concerns about a child's welfare but the reasonable suspicion threshold has not been met**



### Appendix 3: Flowchart - Procedures for Reporting Suspicions and Disclosures of Child Abuse/Neglect



**CAUTION:**  
Do not  
Contact parents  
unless indicated by  
MASH that it would be  
appropriate to do so.  
  
Do not investigate.

#### Appendix 4: Responding to Disclosures

DO	DON'T
Stay calm	Panic or look shocked
Listen and be attentive	Rush the child
Start with open ended questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Tell me more about what happened</li> <li>✓ I notice you have a bruise; how did that happen?</li> </ul>	Ask leading questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X Did mommy do this to you?</li> <li>X Were you at your dad's house?</li> <li>X Did you get hit with a belt?</li> </ul>
Follow up with age appropriate closed questions if needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Who did this?</li> <li>✓ When did this happen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Not appropriate for preschool/lower primary (elementary) aged children*</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Where did this happen?</li> <li>✓ How often does this happen (<i>older children</i>), or</li> <li>✓ Has this happened before (<i>younger children</i>)?</li> </ul>	Minimise the child's experience, make assumptions, or offer explanations
	Imply the child is lying, or suggest the child is to blame (avoid why questions)
	Criticise the alleged perpetrator
	Press the child
	Try to deal with it yourself
	Ask the child for details about what the abuser did
	Show disgust or alarm
Make appropriate plans to ensure the child feels safe & supported following a disclosure (e.g. "would you like to go outside with your friends, or would you prefer to stay here?")	Scare the child, or make promises that "things will be fine"
	Make judgments about or suggest consequences for the abuser
Tell the child, in a reassuring and age appropriate way, what will happen next.	Decide on your own whether to talk with a parent/guardian.
Consult with MASH before talking with the child's parent(s) or sending the child home.	Discuss the situation with anyone other than the relevant designated persons (Child Protection Officer in your setting, Social Worker, investigating Police Officers)
Focus the discussion on the child's needs	
Tell the child it is not his or her fault	

\*Avoid "when?" questions as preschool children have a very different sense of time. It is better to tie "when" questions to temporal indicators or event signposts such as asking if school was out, if it was before breakfast, or after lunch, during Christmas break etc. ([https://protectchildren.ca/pdfs/TTT\\_Interview\\_Guide](https://protectchildren.ca/pdfs/TTT_Interview_Guide))



**Appendix 5: Record of Follow-Up to a Referral (for Shining Stars File)**

<b>Child's Name:</b>					
<b>Referrer's Information</b>					
<b>Name:</b>			<b>Title:</b>		<b>Phone:</b>
<b>Date/Time referral given to CPO:</b>			<b>Date/time referral submitted to the MASH, and by whom:</b>		
<b>Agency Contacted</b>					
<b>Name of Social Worker:</b>			<b>Date(s) contacted:</b>		
<b>Name of RCIPS Officer:</b>			<b>Date(s) contacted:</b>		
<b>FOLLOW-UP</b>					
<b>Follow-up calls to DCFS</b>			<b>Follow-up calls to RCIPS</b>		
<b>Name DCFS SW:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Outcome:</b>	<b>Name RCIP Officer:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Outcome:</b>
1.			1.		
2.			2.		
3.			3.		
4.			4.		



## **Appendix 6: Record of Follow-Up to a Referral (for Shining Stars File)**

### **RCIPS/DCFS Contact with Children at Shining Stars Early Childhood Care and Education Centre**

#### **Outline**

In certain circumstances it may be necessary for a member of the RCIPS and/or DCFS to meet and have a confidential discussion with a child without the consent or knowledge of the parents/guardians. In some cases, it may also be necessary for the child to be removed from Shining Stars by DCFS/RCIPS Officers without the consent or knowledge of the parents/guardians. If either of these actions are taken, the circumstances requiring the meeting and /or removal will have been carefully considered by the relevant agencies and appropriately authorised.

However, Shining Stars has a duty of care to all of our children, and it is essential that when a member of the RCIPS or DCFS arrives at our centre to meet a child that the protocol below is followed.

#### **Shining Stars Protocol**

If a member of the RCIPS/DCFS visits Shining Stars and requests to see a child the following protocol must be followed:

- Shining Stars Staff/Administration immediately informs Child Protection Officer (CPO) that DCFS/RCIPS are on campus and wish to speak with a child.
- CPO meets the Officers and confirms their identity by requesting to see their DCFS/RCIPS issued ID Cards.
- CPO ascertains the purpose of the visit and facilitates the initial meeting in an appropriate space. The CPO should support the child during the meeting with the agreement of the attending Officers.
- If the Officers subsequently need to remove a child from the centre the CPO must ensure that the proforma below is completed and stored appropriately.
- The DCFS/RCIPS Officers are expected to inform the parent/guardian that the child has been removed from Shining Stars before the centre closes for the day.



**DCFS/RCIPS Removal of a Child from  
Shining Stars Early Childhood Care and Education Centre**

<b>RCIPS/DCFS Officer Details</b>			
Name:		ID Number:	
Name:		ID Number:	
<b>Child's Details</b>			
Name:		DOB:	
<b>Parental Consent</b>			
Is the parent/guardian aware that the child is being removed from Shining Stars?		YES	NO
If No, what is the justification for removal without consent?			
Who will inform the parent/guardian that their child had been removed from Shining Stars (name and ID number of RCIPS Officer or DCFS Social Worker)?			
When will the parent/guardian be informed that their child has been removed from Shining Stars (NB: the agreed time must be before the child's usual collection time)?			
<b>Signatures</b>			
Name:	Signed:	Date:	Time:
Name:	Signed:	Date:	Time:
Name:	Signed:	Date:	Time:

**When completed this form will be retained by the Centre's Child Protection Officer**





**Appendix 7: Internal Child Protection Reporting Form**

**CHILD PROTECTION AND REPORTING POLICY**

**Internal Child Protection Reporting Form**

*(To be completed by Centre Staff and Volunteers)*

All staff and volunteers must fill out this form and submit it to the CPO or if not available to one of the other CPO's and if not available to centre Principal or Director if they have a safeguarding concern regarding a child.

Child's Name	Age	Class Name

Your name	Your position in the setting

*State relevant information, such as description of any injuries, conditions and the child's behavior or mood along with the circumstances that led to the suspicion, observation or disclosure of the abuse or neglect.*

*Provide any additional information that could be helpful in determining the cause of the child's information.*

<b>Your Name</b>		<b>Your Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>			

*This form is to be completed and submitted to CPO within 1 hour if possible. But no later than by the end of the school day.*

## Appendix 8: STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Updates	Who Updated	Comments
March, 2025	Stuart	

### Contents

1.2	PURPOSE .....	2
1.3	POLICIES AND PROCEDURES .....	2
1.4	ATTENDANCE, TIMEKEEPING AND APPOINTMENTS .....	2
1.5	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT .....	3
1.6	ALCOHOL, DRUG ABUSE, SMOKING AND E-CIGARETTES .....	3
1.7	MEDICATION .....	4
1.8	HEALTH, SAFETY AND HYGIENE .....	4
1.9	MOBILE PHONES AND CAMERAS .....	4
1.10	INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES .....	5
1.11	SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES .....	5
1.12	SOCIAL CONTACT .....	5
1.13	DRESS CODE AND APPEARANCE .....	6
1.14	ACCOUNTABILITY .....	6
1.16	TEAM AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING .....	7
1.17	CONFIDENTIALITY .....	7
1.18	GIFTS AND REWARDS .....	7
1.19	BABYSITTING/OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT .....	7
1.20	VULNERABLE SITUATIONS .....	8
1.21	WHISTLEBLOWING .....	8
1.22	DECLARATIONS AND CHANGES OF CIRCUMSTANCES .....	9
1.23	PARENTS GUARDIANS AND CAREGIVER RELATIONSHIPS .....	9
1.24	OES .....	9
1.25	SUMMARY .....	10



## **SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

“We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and require all staff, contractors and volunteers to share this commitment.”

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This Code of Conduct applies to you if you are an employee of Shining Stars Childhood Care & Education Center whether employed on a permanent, temporary or casual basis. All employees must follow this Code. Deliberate breaches of the Code will be treated as a disciplinary offence. We ask that staff use their common sense and act reasonably within the conditions provided in this document.

### **1.2 PURPOSE**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behavior towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enhancing experiences children gain from positive relationships with staff. More importantly, it is intended to assist staff by offering guidance on prudent conduct. Consequently, the purpose of this code of conduct for Shining Stars staff is:

- To identify boundaries and responsibilities.
- To agree communication and accountability.
- To explain what is expected of you as an employee.
- To ensure staff demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our children to do the same.
- To ensure that staff avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- To help staff understand what behavior is and is not acceptable.

The Code of Conduct should also be read in conjunction with your job description, your contract of employment, grievance procedures, and disciplinary procedures, complaint procedures and all policies and procedures relevant to Shining Stars.

### **1.3 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Shining Stars has a range of policies and procedures which apply to all staff. These are available from the office. All staff must read the policies and comply with their terms. Failure of any staff member to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken against them.

### **1.4 ATTENDANCE, TIMEKEEPING AND APPOINTMENTS**

- Staff are required to comply with the rules relating to notification of absence set out in the Contract of Employment.
- Staff are required to arrive at work promptly and be ready to start work at their contracted starting times. Staff are required to remain at work until their contracted finishing times. The Center provides a sign in and out system for recording staff attendance. This system is used to calculate salary, monitor absences and overtime.

- Staff must obtain management authorization if they wish to arrive later or leave earlier than their normal start and finish times.
- Persistent poor timekeeping may result in disciplinary action.
- Employees must make their appointments outside of normal Center hours or during the downtime between noon and 2:30pm. We appreciate that it is sometimes difficult to make appointments such as with Doctors or Dentists at a time that is convenient for both the employee and the Center. In most cases, the Center requires you to make appointments on your own time. However, when this is not possible, appointments must be scheduled at the beginning or end of a shift and agreed with management.

## **1.5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

It is expected that a childcare practitioner will continually update their knowledge and skills through a life-long learning approach.

- At all times, a childcare practitioner should not undertake an activity in which they do not feel competent, or is outside their area of practice and knowledge
- The Nursery at all times acknowledges the strengths and limitations of a childcare practitioner's expertise and will ensure there is regular appraisal and assessment.
- There is mandatory training that all staff should undertake. Staff need to identify what is expected and ensure they attend these sessions. This will be discussed during your induction and as a continuous process.

Shining Stars is committed to your development and we will advise on other training courses that might be relevant. Training is also provided at staff meetings and other in-house sessions.

## **1.6 ALCOHOL, DRUG ABUSE, SMOKING AND E-CIGARETTES**

- The consumption of alcohol on the premises is strictly forbidden unless it is part of an agreed event authorized by management, such as a staff barbecue. Any employee who is found consuming alcohol on the premises or is found to be intoxicated at work will face disciplinary action under the disciplinary procedure. Please be aware that even if you are not found to be intoxicated, coming into work suffering from the immediate after effects of alcohol may also impair your ability to perform your role to the required standards. A breach of this procedure is considered an act of gross misconduct and can lead to immediate dismissal.
- The possession, use or distribution of drugs for non-medical purposes on the premises sites is strictly forbidden. Any member of staff who is found to be intoxicated at work will face disciplinary action under the disciplinary procedure. A breach of this procedure is considered an act of gross misconduct.
- Smoking is forbidden on the premises. Any member of staff who is found in breach of this is considered to have committed an act of gross misconduct.
- Staff have a duty and responsibility to ensure they do not smell of smoke at any time during working hours. Cigarettes, matches and lighters must be kept securely away from the children.

- Electronic Cigarettes - Although they are generally thought to be less harmful than smoking real cigarettes, electronic cigarettes still contain the addictive chemical nicotine as well as other toxic substances. Consequently, for the purposes of this code of conduct, the smoking of substitute cigarettes is deemed to be the same as smoking the real thing. Therefore, please observe our no smoking rules.

## **1.7 MEDICATION**

- Staff must not be under the influence of any medication which may affect their ability to care for children. If a member of staff is prescribed medication by their doctor that may affect their ability to perform work, then this should be discussed with Management.
- Medication must be kept locked away from children in the designated location.

## **1.8 HEALTH, SAFETY AND HYGIENE**

Shining Stars strives to minimize the incidence of workplace risks. Through continuous improvement of standards and comprehensive use of risk assessments we seek to remove the causes of accidents/incidents and ill health.

Staff is provided with a Health and Safety induction when joining Shining Stars and on-going training.

All activities should be carried out with the highest regard for the health and safety of staff, children and visitors. Staff are responsible to carry out tasks in accordance with training received e.g. manual handling and to wear protective clothing provided where appropriate

Staff should be role models to the children in terms of their own health and hygiene. Leading by example is the best way to teach good behaviors and decorum to children. For example:

- Have clean, neat and tidy appearance
- Encourage children's awareness of physical development (exercise, diet, rest and risks)
- Show the importance of hydration (drink plenty of water).
- Show how keeping fit is important to optimum development of the mind and body.
- Show how to take risks safely

## **1.9 MOBILE PHONES AND CAMERAS**

- Members of staff must keep personal mobile phones switched off and in a secure place except during lunch period and break times. Mobile phones are not permitted in bathrooms.
- It is recognized that in certain situations it may be necessary for staff to have a mobile phone for the use of the setting e.g. on a field trip. The use of a mobile phone must not detract from the quality of supervision and care of the children.
- Personal mobile phones or similar devices must not be used to take photographs of children.
- Members of staff must only use cameras provided by the setting to take photographs of children. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action.

## **1.10 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**

Staff must not use any ICT services for copying, storing, sending or retrieving unacceptable material. "Unacceptable material" includes any documents, messages, information, graphics or other electronic data that:

- Breach Cayman Islands legislation
- Contain offensive, pornographic or obscene language or material
- Contain defamatory or slanderous language or material
- Denigrate, insult or ridicule another person
- Intimidate, bully or harass another person
- Adversely comment on integrity, personality, honesty, character, intelligence, methods or motives of another person unless it is factual response to a formal reference request.
- Provide or facilitate the use of computer hacking tools or virus toolkits.

Staff must not use the Internet, external electronic mail, external telephone fax or any other form of electronic communication to transmit sensitive, subversive information, including:

- Opinions that do not reflect the policies of Shining Stars.
- Information that could damage Shining Stars' reputation and standing in the community

## **1.11 SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

- Staff must ensure that social networking sites are set as private so that only authorized persons can have access to them.
- Staff must not accept or invite any children or their families to use their private sites.
- Staff must never contact any children or their families using their private social networking sites.
- Staff must never upload any photos, comments or information about the setting or any persons linked with it.

## **1.12 SOCIAL CONTACT**

All staff are expected to uphold professional boundaries. Staff have a duty to approve any planned social contact with children and their families with their manager. Confidentiality of employment must be adhered to and respected during social contact. In summary staff should:

- Ensure all contact with existing children or their parents is of a professional and of a childcare related nature.
- Consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature of their work and position.
- Always approve any planned social contact with children or parents with senior colleagues.
- Advise senior management of any social contact they have with a child or parent with whom they work, which may give rise to concern.
- Understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified (parents becoming dependent.)

- Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of Shining Stars or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of staff.
- Criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are unacceptable and will lead to dismissal.

### **1.13 DRESS CODE AND APPEARANCE**

Shining Stars requires school uniforms with appropriately branded shirts. Staff should wear comfortable black trousers or below knee skirts.

Staff should wear clothing which:

- Is comfortable, allows free movement and is appropriate to their role.
- Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.
- Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.
- Is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans.

Staff should ensure hands and nails are kept clean and long hair is tied back. Nail varnish remover should not be brought into the Center. Jewelry should be minimal to avoid safety implications. Any obviously visible tattoos or piercings should be discussed with Management as to their suitability commensurate with your role.

### **1.14 ACCOUNTABILITY**

Staff are accountable to Shining Stars for undertaking those activities that are associated with the job/role. Staff must inform their immediate manager if they do not feel competent to undertake any activities and must request reasonable/appropriate training.

Staff have a duty to report any behavior by colleagues that raises concern.

A childcare practitioner has a duty to respect families by:

- Valuing their cultural diversity, opinions and choices.
- Being non-judgmental.
- Planning contacts/appointments with the parent.
- Seeking clarification and not assuming.
- By listening and responding appropriately.
- By acknowledging her/his own limitations.
- Maintaining appropriate behavior and activities between the family and her/himself

Staff have a responsibility to challenge any discriminatory remarks or behavior against other staff members, visitors, children and their families.

Staff have a duty to notify the Center of changes to personal details, change of address, telephone number and relevant health issues.

Staff must avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

### **1.16 TEAM AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

Staff are required to work cooperatively within teams and respect the skills, expertise and contribution of their colleagues. They are expected to treat others fairly and without discrimination. Staff must communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing. As required, they must share their knowledge, skills and expertise with other team members in order to improve practice.

Staff must work with other members of Shining Stars to promote a care and learning environment that is conducive to safe and ethical practice. If the care environment deteriorates, the practitioner must report this to Management.

In keeping with best practices and building a successful team, the Queen's English is the only language authorized to be spoken in the Center unless communicating with a non-English speaking parent or guardian or when teaching a foreign language to children.

### **1.17 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Staff must guard against breaches of confidentiality by protecting information from improper disclosure at all times and follow all appropriate policies.

Staff must only disclose information outside the immediate team if:

- It can be justified as being in the public interest (usually where disclosure is essential to protect the child or someone else from risk or significant harm).
- This is required to do so by law or by order of the court.
- There is an issue of safeguarding, and s/he must then act at all times in accordance within national procedures.

Most staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a child is bullied by another child (or even by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedure. Until qualified by Management, incidents must not be discussed outside the Center, including with the child's parent/guardian or caregiver nor with colleagues.

### **1.18 GIFTS AND REWARDS**

Staff should not accept significant personal gifts from our customers, suppliers or other agencies with whom the Center has contact. All gifts with a perceived value of over CI\$20 must be declared to Management.

### **1.19 BABYSITTING/OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

If a Caymanian or Permanent Residence status employee offers a babysitting or transportation service then this is a private agreement between the parent and employee in which Shining Stars is not a party and will not be held liable. Non-Caymanians are not allowed to perform paid services for anyone except Shining Stars per CI law.

It is not acceptable for a member of staff to transport a child by car unless they follow the Shining Stars Transportation Policy.



## 1.20 VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

As a key person you must discuss intimate care routines with the child's parents. Safe procedures must be followed at all times.

- Employees should always encourage the child to undertake self-care tasks independently, where developmentally appropriate.
- Ensure employees understand the extent and limitations of their role in applying basic care and hygiene tasks for minor abrasions and understand where an injury might require more experienced intervention.
- Employees need to be vigilant of neglect or abuse caused outside the nursery and to report any signs to Management.
- Employees must not be placed in situations which render them vulnerable. Where this is unavoidable, full and appropriate risk assessments are conducted and agreed for lone working situations.
- Employees must be prepared to report any actions of another individual they deem inappropriate to senior management.
- When one to one situations are unavoidable, employees must take precautions to reduce the vulnerability of both the child and the adult, for example, informing colleagues of the situation, leaving room doors open.

## 1.21 WHISTLEBLOWING

Whilst we expect all our colleagues, both internal and external, to be professional at all times and hold the welfare and safety of every child as their paramount objective, there may be occasions where this does not happen.

It is vital that all team members talk through concerns they may have with Management at the earliest opportunity to enable any problems to be ironed out as soon as they arise.

If, in the course of your employment, you become aware of information which you reasonably believe tends to show one or more of the following, you **MUST** use the Centre's disclosure procedures:

- That a criminal offence has been committed or is being committed or is likely to be committed.
- That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal requirement.
- That the health or safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be, endangered.
- That the environment, has been, is being, or is likely to be, damaged.
- That information tending to show any of the above, is being, or is likely to be concealed.
- That you challenge discriminatory behavior and report any incidents.
- That a person has violated Shining Stars policies.

Where you reasonably believe one or more of the above circumstances listed above has occurred you should promptly disclose this to Management in writing with a detailed narrative of why they formed their belief including when/where/what they observed or heard on a paper with their signature, date and time so that appropriate action can be taken.

Employees will suffer no detriment of any sort for making such a disclosure in accordance with this procedure. For further guidance in the use of the disclosure procedure, employees should speak in confidence to Management.

## **1.22 DECLARATIONS AND CHANGES OF CIRCUMSTANCES**

Employees are expected to declare all convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that affect suitability.

A childcare practitioner has a duty to notify Management of any changes of circumstance which may affect their suitability to work with children.

Police Clearance records will be provided to the Center by the staff at the employee's cost.

## **1.23 PARENTS GUARDIANS AND CAREGIVER RELATIONSHIPS**

- Staff must maintain a professional relationship with parents and caregivers at all times.
- Each member of staff must recognize that parents and caregivers need feedback regarding their children and that this must be given in an open, honest and friendly manner. The relationship with parents and caregivers must not become overly familiar such that it clouds the impartiality of your judgement and action.
- Whilst there is always the possibility of a member of staff having a close relationship with a parent or caregiver outside of the Center, you must avoid any conflict of interest or undue favoring of a child. Where such a relationship arises the member of staff should immediately inform the Management to discuss any action to be taken.
- Where a member of staff finds that they have a prior close relationship to a child in the Center through such means as a family relationship or close friendship then Management must be made aware of this immediately and may require the member of staff to change rooms to avoid any conflict of interest or risk of undue favoring of the child.

## **1.24 OES**

OES is the Office of Education Standards. It reports directly to Ministry of Education and is independent and impartial. OES inspects and grades educational institutions including early childhood centers.

Having a well-respected OES rating is important because it is a consideration for a parent/guardian when choosing a daycare for their child(ren).

All staff are required to share the Center's belief and aspiration to uphold the highest standards at all times, such that when we are inspected by OES, we can demonstrate outstanding practice.

Consequently, staff are expected to understand and contribute towards our self-improvement and evaluation plans. The plan examines:

- What we are doing now?
- What we are aiming to do?
- How well are we doing by comparison to previous years?



- What areas of quality practice need to be maintained?
- What areas of practice need to be improved?
- How do we plan to achieve our goals in the future?

## **1.25 SUMMARY**

It is important that staff understand the Center's policies and procedures.

Staff must be appropriately trained and work in partnership with others to maximize success.

Staff must maintain client confidentiality and act accordingly with communications.

Staff have a duty of care to all parties associated with the Center.

Failure to comply with this code of conduct may lead to disciplinary action.

The Nursery will act with integrity, sensitivity and in a manner that will be deemed as reasonable in all its dealings with staff.

Feedback from staff is welcomed that will help us improve this code of conduct.

## **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT STATEMENT OF RECEIPT AND AGREEMENT**

I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to children at Shining Stars I am subject to a criminal background check. My signature confirms that I have read and understood the Staff Code of Conduct, and that I agree to comply with the standards contained therein. I understand that any action that violates this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from Shining Stars Childhood Care & Education Centre.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_