



NOVA PIONEER
SCHOOLS FOR INNOVATORS & LEADERS

CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Version 1.3

SOUTH AFRICA

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. As an educational institution, Nova Pioneer fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and ensuring that the best interests of the child are upheld as our utmost priority.
- 1.2. Nova Pioneer also recognises the need for policies and procedures that provide for both proactive and reactive approaches to child safety. This policy therefore provides for both Child Protection - ensuring the organisation and all its stakeholders are able to react and respond when a child is at risk or experiencing significant harm, as well as Safeguarding - implementing a proactive approach to prevent harm and promote the welfare of all children.
- 1.3. In our mandate to protect children, our staff are trained to ensure that any engagement with children is governed by strict ethical principles to ensure that no harm comes to those who participate in our programmes, and also protect the staff and contractors from false accusations. Furthermore, these principles ensure procedural fairness for our children, employees and contractors.
- 1.4. This policy is informed and guided by the following:
 - 1.4.1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - 1.4.2. Child Justice Act, 75 of 2008
 - 1.4.3. Children's Act, No 38 of 2005
 - 1.4.4. The South African Constitution
 - 1.4.5. Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act of 2007

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the protocol is to:

- 2.1. assist all learners who are victims or perpetrators of child abuse, deliberate neglect or any sexual offences
- 2.2. provide guidance and procedures for all stakeholders within the Nova Pioneer community including employees, parents, volunteers and contractors, to:
 - 2.2.1. Identify;
 - 2.2.2. Intervene
 - 2.2.3. Report; and
 - 2.2.4. Provide support in cases of child abuse, deliberate neglect and to children who are victims of sexual offences.
- 2.3. all stakeholders have a clear understanding of their roles in combating child abuse and sexual offences against children.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. Staff: all employees, full and part-time, and programme volunteers that have any contact with children or access to facilities
- 3.2. Contractors: all individuals working for Nova Pioneer on contract or in terms of a Memorandum of Understanding.
- 3.3. Child / Children: all individuals under the age of 18 years.

- 3.4. Child Protection: refers to external systems and structures, i.e. the country and institutions in the country. These are generally reactive measures.
- 3.5. Safeguarding: Safeguarding refers to the internal processes, structures and systems that exist in an organisation. These are generally proactive measures.

4. Principles and Guidelines for Child Protection

- 4.1. This policy applies to all staff, service providers, parents, learners and volunteers working in the school. There are five main elements to this policy:
 - 4.1.1. Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in vetting the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
 - 4.1.2. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
 - 4.1.3. Providing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
 - 4.1.4. Support for learners who have been abused (and/or allegedly abused) in accordance with a child protection plan that is done in consultation with the child concerned and their parent(s)/guardian(s).
 - 4.1.5. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
- 4.2. We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school should, therefore:
 - 4.2.1. Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
 - 4.2.2. Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
 - 4.2.3. Include opportunities in the Physical, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Life Skills Curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.
- 4.3. Nova Pioneer endeavours to follow procedures and take account of guidance issued to:
 - 4.3.1. Assign a designated senior person(s) (Designated Safeguarding Officer(s)) for child protection. The role should be held by the identified staff member at each campus and details surrounding responsibilities are included in their job description.
 - 4.3.2. Programme interventions will not be conducted unless the consent has been obtained from the parent/legal guardian as well as a signed assent from the child (if old enough to do so).
 - 4.3.3. Photographs or images of a child will not be captured unless the consent has been obtained from the parent/legal guardian as well as a signed assent from the child (if old enough to do so). Parents/Guardians are required to sign an "Image Consent" form during the enrollment process and before the child begins school.
 - 4.3.4. Only parents/legal guardians of a child can provide consent whereas children can only provide assent.

- 4.3.5. The identity of all children is to remain anonymous, unless express permission to reveal the identity has been given by the parent/legal guardian.
- 4.3.6. Treat all children with respect regardless of differences in religion, age, culture, gender, ability and economic conditions.
- 4.3.7. Allow children to express their feelings about decisions that affect them and listen earnestly to their concerns.
- 4.3.8. Engage in appropriate behaviour and use language that is not intended to shame or humiliate children in any way.
- 4.3.9. Take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe and comfortable to answer questions when being interviewed and/or when participating in programmes and interventions.
- 4.3.10. A child should never be placed at risk of harm in any way.
- 4.3.11. All spaces where children interact with adults need to offer visibility for the mutual protection of child and adult, ensuring confidentiality where necessary.

5. Recruitment and Selection

- 5.1. Nova Pioneer follows stringent recruitment processes to ensure that all staff who are recruited understand and commit to the Nova Pioneer Policies and Procedures.
- 5.2. Reference checks are done on all potential employees.
- 5.3. Before commencing employment all staff are required to read and acknowledge that they understand all of Nova Pioneer's policies, procedures and guidelines.
- 5.4. All full and part time Nova Pioneer staff will be screened in accordance with this policy. All Nova Pioneer staff will be screened against both the National Child Protection Register, the Sexual Offences Register and Police Clearance.
- 5.5. All service providers such as outsourced cleaning companies, extracurricular and sports providers must ensure that all of their staff that work with Nova Pioneer are screened against both the National Child Protection Register, the Sexual Offences Register and Police Clearance. This is part of Nova Pioneer's service agreement with the company.
- 5.6. Written Application
 - 5.6.1. All potential staff must complete a written application form that will request basic information from the applicant.
 - 5.6.2. Applicants are required to complete a questionnaire on the organisation's Application Tracking System.
- 5.7. Personal Interview
 - 5.7.1. A personal interview (either in person or virtually) will be conducted with the applicant by management staff to discuss the position and the applicant's talents, qualifications and abilities.
 - 5.7.2. Multiple and/or group interviews may be conducted when deemed appropriate.
- 5.8. Reference Checks
 - 5.8.1. All applicants must provide at least three (3) references.

- 5.8.2. References may be personal or professional and be presented in written form or by providing phone contact information.
- 5.8.3. All references will be confirmed by Talent staff and documented in the applicant's file.
- 5.9. Criminal Background Check
 - 5.9.1. All new employees are required to submit a Police Clearance certificate not more than 6 months old before starting employment
 - 5.9.2. Applicants will not be considered for positions when Criminal and Policy checks show evidence of convictions for an offence involving children and/or for offences involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to the mission of Nova Pioneer.
 - 5.9.3. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction/pending charges on the application form may also terminate an individual's application.
- 5.10. Training and Education
 - 5.10.1. All staff will receive an orientation and onboarding that includes:
 - 5.10.1.1. Review and receipt of the Nova Pioneer Employee Code of Conduct which must be signed and stored on the employee's profile on the organisation's HR Management Software System.
 - 5.10.1.2. Review of policies related to safety, transportation, prevention and reporting of child abuse and emergency procedures - within the first week of their activation
 - 5.10.1.3. Training in recognising signs of suspected child abuse
 - 5.10.1.4. Training in the prevention of "Bullying"
 - 5.10.1.5. Managers will be trained on hiring and screening potential staff members.
 - 5.10.2. Staff training and orientations will be updated and refreshed each year
 - 5.10.3. Documentation of all training will be maintained by the organisation.
 - 5.10.4. Nova Pioneer may from time to time offer educational information and resources for the community, parents and child through workshops, programmes, and the use of printed and/or audio-visual resources.
 - 5.10.5. Should any external speaker address any group of Nova Pioneer students, including members of the SAPS, at least two members of staff need to be present at the address, and the address may only take place with the knowledge and approval of the School Leader.
 - 5.10.6. It is advisable that a follow up session take place with the students involved in order to further discuss or debrief the message that was given by the guest speaker. This is particularly important if the message was of a sensitive or possibly triggering nature.
 - 5.10.7. Include opportunities in the curriculum, or through internal/externally run workshops, for children to develop an understanding of sexual health and the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.
 - 5.10.8. Staff are also equipped with the necessary containment skills to be able to respond appropriately when situations arise in the classroom or on the sportsfield or playground.

6. The Role of Employees and Affiliated Persons in Child Protection

6.1. The main responsibilities of various employees in the organisation are as follows

6.1.1. School Leader:

- 6.1.1.1. Serve as the primary contact for safeguarding concerns.
- 6.1.1.2. Oversee the implementation of the school's safeguarding policy.
- 6.1.1.3. Provide training and guidance to staff on safeguarding matters.
- 6.1.1.4. Coordinate with external agencies, such as social services and law enforcement.
- 6.1.1.5. Maintain accurate and confidential records of safeguarding issues

6.1.2. Designated Safety Officer:

- 6.1.2.1. Assist the School Leader with all safeguarding-related issues.
- 6.1.2.2. Step in for the School Leader with regard to issues of child safety when they are unavailable.
- 6.1.2.3. Help distribute safeguarding information and facilitate training.
- 6.1.2.4. Attend one training course every two years;
- 6.1.2.5. Ensure all temporary and permanent staff, all parents and all students are aware of who the Designated Safeguarding Officer on their campus is, their responsibilities and how to contact them.
- 6.1.2.6. Keep secure written records, separate to the student's main file, of all concerns relating to the student regardless of whether the matter required referral or not;

6.1.3. School Leadership Team:

- 6.1.3.1. Promote a culture of safeguarding throughout the school.
- 6.1.3.2. Allocate resources for safeguarding training and initiatives.
- 6.1.3.3. Regularly review and update safeguarding policies.

6.1.4. All Staff Members:

- 6.1.4.1. Recognize and report signs of abuse or neglect promptly.
- 6.1.4.2. Foster a safe and supportive environment for students.
- 6.1.4.3. Understand and adhere to the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 6.1.4.4. Participate in safeguarding training and workshops.

6.1.5. Organisational Leadership

- 6.1.5.1. Ensure compliance with legal safeguarding requirements.
- 6.1.5.2. Conduct annual reviews of safeguarding policies and practices.
- 6.1.5.3. Provide oversight and support to the School Leader and safeguarding team.

6.1.6. Psychosocial Learning Staff

- 6.1.6.1. Offer emotional and social support to students.
- 6.1.6.2. Identify and address potential safeguarding concerns in a pastoral context.
- 6.1.6.3. Collaborate with the School Leader and Designated Safety Officer to tackle specific student issues.

6.1.7. External Agencies and Partners

- 6.1.7.1. Work with the school to support at-risk students.
- 6.1.7.2. Provide specialized services, such as counseling or mental health support.
- 6.1.7.3. Engage in multi-agency meetings to coordinate responses to safeguarding matters.

6.1.8. Parents & Guardians

- 6.1.8.1. Stay informed about the school's safeguarding policies.
- 6.1.8.2. Report any concerns regarding their own or other children.
- 6.1.8.3. Engage in discussions about safeguarding practices and support the school's initiatives

7. Reporting and Disclosure

7.1. Duty to Report Abuse

- 7.1.1. The Children's Amendment Act imposes a mandatory duty on the designated categories of persons to report instances of abuse or neglect to the relevant authorities. Failure to comply is a criminal offence and may also result in civil liability for damages if the child concerned suffers further injury as a result of failure to report.
- 7.1.2. According to the Children's Act (No. 38 of 2005) teachers are listed amongst the professional persons obliged to report child abuse cases 110(1) of the Act. Such persons who on reasonable grounds conclude that a child has been abused in a manner causing physical injury; sexually abused or deliberately neglected, must report that conclusion in the prescribed form to a Designated Child Protection Organization (DCPO); the provincial Department of Social Development (DSD) or a police official. Other professional persons listed in the act include "psychologists, members of staff or volunteer workers at a partial care facility; drop-in centre or youth centre". Nova Pioneer interprets this to mean any and all persons working for or with any of its schools and who interact with or are in the vicinity of children as being responsible for the protection of its children
- 7.1.3. The duty of the school, its staff and affiliates, regardless of their capacity, is *always* to report the suspected abuse. If the staff member suspects the child may not be telling the truth, there is still the obligation to report. The authorities will determine the necessary measures after the incident has been reported.
- 7.1.4. Mechanisms for anonymous reporting at age-appropriate level will be available on all campuses.
- 7.1.5. All Nova Pioneer campuses must regularly inform all children about the following:
 - 7.1.5.1. The importance of reporting suspected abuse or neglect to a responsible adult
 - 7.1.5.2. The process to follow when making a report of suspected abuse or neglect to Nova Pioneer staff

- 7.1.5.3. The process for children to follow when they report suspected abuse/neglect to Nova Pioneer staff and action has not been taken
- 7.1.5.4. All Nova Pioneer campuses and programme venues must display a list of emergency contact numbers for children to use if they need to report abuse or neglect.
- 7.1.6. For purposes of this policy, “abuse”, in relation to a child, means any form of harm or ill-treatment deliberately inflicted on a child including the following types of abuse:
 - 7.1.6.1. Physical abuse: Deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating a child. New legislation within South Africa ruled that the common-law defence of “reasonable chastisement” is no longer in line with the Constitution and the use of physical discipline is illegal.
 - 7.1.6.2. Neglect: Neglect is ultimately the failure to provide for a child's basic care needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. e.g. the child does not grow and/or loses weight, is pale and emaciated, withdrawn and/or does not reach developmental milestones within the normal age-range.
 - 7.1.6.3. Sexual Abuse: Occurs when others use or exploit children sexually for their own gratification, gain or gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including e-technology, social media, etc.). Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by a person from any age group or gender. Disclosures relating to sexual abuse are reported directly to investigative authorities.
 - 7.1.6.4. Emotional abuse/Psychological abuse: Emotional abuse, also called psychological abuse, may also involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones, by a child's peers. Symptoms of emotional abuse may include bedwetting, soiling and continual complaints of headaches, nausea, and/or stomach pain for which there is no physical cause. Emotional abuse is also inherent in all other forms of abuse and maltreatment.
 - 7.1.6.5. Domestic Violence: It is important to recognise that many children will be living or have lived in home environments where

domestic violence is a factor, and these environments have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional well-being as well as putting them at risk of significant harm.

- 7.1.6.6. Corporal Punishment: means any punishment in which physical force or action is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or harm. It involves, but is not limited to, hitting ('smacking', 'slapping', 'spanking') children in any environment or context, including the home setting, with the hand or instruments such as a whip, stick, belt, shoe or wooden spoon. It can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, caning, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding, or forced ingestion
- 7.1.6.7. Initiation Practices: means any act which in the process of initiation, admission into, or affiliation with, or as condition for continued membership of, a school, a group, intramural or extramural activities, interschools sports team, or organisation endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person, undermines the intrinsic worth of human beings by treating some as inferior to others, subjects individuals to humiliating or violent acts which undermine the constitutional guarantee to dignity, undermines the fundamental rights and values that underpin the Constitution of South Africa, impedes the development of a true democratic culture that entitles an individual to be treated as worthy of respect and concern or destroys public or private property.
- 7.1.6.8. Gender-based Violence: Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following: physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family [and in the community], including battery, sexual abuse of female children, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution and violence perpetrated or condoned by the State.
- 7.1.6.9. Peer-on-Peer Abuse: Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider peer associations. Peer-on-peer abuse can take various forms,

including (but not limited to) serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence and abuse, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour and/or prejudice-based violence including, but not limited to, gender-based violence. Online peer-on-peer abuse is any form of peer-on-peer abuse with a digital element, for example, “sexting”, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, peer-on-peer grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content, and harassment.

7.1.6.10. Child Sexual Exploitation: Involves exploitative contexts or situations where young people receive something (e.g food, mobile phone credit, accommodation, gifts, drugs, money, or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. CSE can take many forms, ranging from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs or groups. What marks exploitation, is an imbalance of power in a relationship. For example, the perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. It is important to note that some young people who are being exploited do not display outward signs of abuse.

7.1.6.11. Female Genital Mutilation: There is currently no acknowledgement by the government that FGM exists in South Africa. Within the South African legal context, The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination (Equality Act) outlaws discrimination of any person on grounds of gender and culture, including FGM. Under Section 12(2), the Children’s Act explicitly prohibits genital mutilation or circumcision of female children

7.1.6.12. Statement on Preventing Radicalisation: The school works within the curriculum to promote tolerance and respect for diverse views while challenging prejudice of any kind. We are an inclusive school that values fostering a sense of belonging for our children. Whilst we accept that “extremism” is a global threat, South Africa has not been identified as having an active radical group operating in its territory. Given that the school is governed by South African laws and regulations, there is currently no legal duty to implement prevention strategies in this regard. Should the need arise to address radicalisation, the school should adhere to local policies and guidance, in addition to working collaboratively with members of the school community

7.1.7. In addition, responsible parties within the school community including employees, volunteers and parents who have a reason to believe that the child is a danger to themselves (cutting, suicide, self harm thoughts,

etc.) are also mandated to report this to the Safeguarding Officer or School Leader.

- 7.1.8. Any irresponsible and unprofessional behaviour must be reported within 24 hours to the School Leader or Designated Safeguarding Officer. "Irresponsible and unprofessional behaviour" is defined as follows:
- 7.1.8.1. Any conduct or speech that might potentially cause emotional, physical or psychological harm to a child and in doing so, violates any rights the child may have in terms of the South African constitution, the Children's Act and the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act.
 - 7.1.8.2. Any conduct or speech that breaches the appropriate professional organisation's Code of Conduct.
- 7.1.9. If a staff member has reason to believe that a child is a danger to themselves (cutting, suicide, self-harm thoughts) it is critical that this is reported.
- 7.1.10. Staff members are legally obliged to submit such reports. Failure to do so could result in personal liability.
- 7.1.11. The safety of children is always our priority. Therefore strict action is taken when concerns, whether witnessed or suspected, in breach of the Child Protection Policy, is reported.

7.2. Process for Reporting Abuse:

- 7.2.1. The process below must be followed by all internal Nova Pioneer staff:

Step 1	
1.1	<p>Staff will report known or suspected child abuse immediately or as soon as practically possible, taking note of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Child's name, address and telephone number. b. Parents or guardians name and telephone numbers. c. Reasons for concern and any relevant statements made by the child. <p>Inform the designated Nova Pioneer personnel in writing of the incident immediately upon the incident coming to light. This report should be done in both verbal and written format.</p>
1.2	<p>Staff will follow an internal chain of command for the reporting of abuse, making all reports to the Designated Safety Officer or School Leader. The Direct Line Manager should be informed as needed.</p>
Step 2	
2.1	<p>The School Leader and Designated Safety Officer, in partnership with Nova Pioneer's Director of Schools and Senior Leadership, are responsible for assessing the validity of the complaints and it should be reported to the authorities outlined in step 3 within 3 days of the incident of abuse or the suspicion of abuse.</p>

Step 3	
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After investigation by the designated personnel in step 2, the alleged perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct or any action that puts students at serious or ongoing risk (e.g. harassment, hitting, verbal abuse) will immediately be suspended pending an investigation - If the child is in immediate danger the perpetrator must be suspended immediately even before further investigation is undertaken.
3.2	<p>After investigation by the designated personnel in step 2, the incident of abuse or neglect should be reported as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified (unless the parent or guardian is suspected of child abuse) b. The appropriate authorities will be notified, consistent with applicable legislation such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the school social worker; ii. SAPS - Family Violence Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit in the case of a sexual offence; iii. a designated social worker in the case of abuse other than a sexual offence; iv. Social Worker from a Child protection organisation such as a Child Welfare Society or the Department of Social Development, or the Child Protection Officer of the South African Police Services. v. the parents of both the learner victim as well as the alleged learner offender. c. If the alleged perpetrator is a student under the age of 18, refer to clause 7.4 of this policy d. Each school must have a list of such contacts in their area available to all staff which can be found alongside this policy on NovaHUB
3.3	<p>The following should be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The name of the person making the call; b. The name of the intake worker receiving the call; c. The date and time of the call; and d. The action proposed by the person to whom the abuse has been reported.
3.4	<p>Completion of Form 22: Reporting of Abuse or Deliberate Neglect of a Child (Regulation 33)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Form 22 is duly completed and submitted to the Provincial Department of Social Development by the School Leader. b. Form 22 must either be hand delivered or couriered to the offices of the Provincial Department
Step 4	
4.1	The social worker (and the police in some cases) will interview the child as soon as possible.
4.2	All staff must cooperate with this process, as and where requested by the relevant authorities.

4.3	If response is slow and particularly if the child remains at risk, the referring person should follow up until the child is safe.
Step 5	
5.1	Once the official investigation has been completed, Nova Pioneer may pursue internal disciplinary proceedings, as and when necessary.
5.2	A detailed report must be submitted of findings pertaining to any investigations.
5.3	In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a management team will be formed to investigate the circumstances of the incident.
5.4	The team should act only in consultation with an attorney.
5.5	Any person who is found guilty of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position with Nova Pioneer.

- 7.3. External contractors will report any suspected child abuse or neglect to their Nova Pioneer line manager. Thereafter, the same process as outlined above will be followed.
- 7.4. If the alleged abuse has been committed by a Nova Pioneer student who is under the age of 18 years, the following steps should be taken:
 - 7.4.1. for a student under the age of 10 years, they must be referred to a probation officer in accordance with Section 5.1 of the Child Justice Act as children below 10 cannot be arrested or charged. The probation officer must assess the child within 7 days of the notification;
 - 7.4.2. for a student over the age of 10 years, they must be referred to a probation officer in accordance with Section 5.1 of the Child Justice Act. A preliminary inquiry must be held within 48 hours of arrest if a child is arrested and remains in detention; or within the time periods specified in the written notice or summons. The inquiry determines:
 - 7.4.2.1. If the child should be diverted from the criminal justice system.
 - 7.4.2.2. Whether the child needs care and protection.
 - 7.4.2.3. If the case should proceed to a formal trial.
- 7.5. If the suspected abuse is from the child's parent(s) or guardian(s), the designated Nova Pioneer personnel outlined above should report the suspected abuse to the authorities listed in 3.2

8. Information and Communication Technology

- 8.1. The Nova Pioneer Information Technology Policy and Social Media Policy refer. All technology use (either with school-based or personal devices) must be in compliance with the above policies.

9. Supervision

- 9.1. Nova Pioneer's Employee Code of Conduct should also be referenced as a guide for the professional, appropriate and safe behaviour in relation to children.
- 9.2. Supervision of children, programmes, facilities and staff will be designed to protect children and staff at all times.
- 9.3. Management staff may make unannounced visits to all education activities.
- 9.4. A minimum of two staff should be assigned to each programme and operating site where possible
 - 9.4.1. This is particularly important where an adult/staff member is working one-on-one with a child, a second adult/staff member should be present.
 - 9.4.2. Where an adult/staff member is working with a group of children, a second adult/staff member may not be necessary as the group will have multiple witnesses present.
 - 9.4.3. At no time may an external service provider help a student change their clothes e.g. for swimming lessons. Only a registered teacher may help a student change and only if necessary.
- 9.5. Staff members will never be alone with an individual child where they are not observable by others.
- 9.6. Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room. All storage, maintenance and utility area doors will be secured when not in use.
- 9.7. All campuses and activity venues will have access to a telephone or cellphone on location during operating hours.
- 9.8. Children will never be left unsupervised; including in bathrooms, locker rooms, or showers.
- 9.9. Written restroom use practices will be in place.
- 9.10. Facilities will be well lighted indoors and out.
- 9.11. Guests, service and contractors will sign-in to all facilities.
- 9.12. Staff will never release children to anyone other than the authorised parent(s), legal guardian(s), or an individual authorised by parents/legal guardians in writing or verified by phone.
- 9.13. Sign-in and sign-out will be in place for all programmes.
- 9.14. Staff will check for signs of physical injury or emotional abnormality each time a child reports to class.
- 9.15. Staff will utilise constructive methods for maintaining group control and managing child behaviour.
- 9.16. Staff will not disrobe a child other than outer garments without the presence of another staff member.
- 9.17. Staff will avoid changing clothes in front of a child/children.

10. Contact with Child

- 10.1. It is understood that caring and quality staff will develop positive relationships with children while involved in Nova Pioneer programmes.

- 10.2. Staff will not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for children outside of Nova Pioneer programmes and activities, including baby-sitting or private instructions.
- 10.3. Staff will not communicate with children outside of Nova Pioneer programmes via written, electronic or other means without express management approval.
- 10.4. Staff will appear and behave in a manner consistent with the mission and values of Nova Pioneer at all times while on or off duty; including electronic, written and verbal communications.

11. Communications

- 11.1. Nova Pioneer will promote positive values and child protection strategies in its programmes, facilities, with parents and in the community.
- 11.2. Parents will receive regular written information about the programmes content and schedules; feedback regarding their child's participation in programme including behaviour and general health; and an introduction to the programme staff.
- 11.3. Parents will be allowed to observe programmes at any time as appropriate
- 11.4. Parents and the community will be made aware of Nova Pioneer child protection efforts through regular written and/or electronic communication including: the staff code of conduct, abuse prevention training for staff and child, how to report suspicious behaviour and that staff are not allowed to contact children outside of programmes.
- 11.5. Nova Pioneer will designate a spokesperson to the media and community in the event of any incident concerning abuse or neglect.

12. Dissemination of the Policy

- 12.1. Nova Pioneer is committed to ensuring that all relevant parties are informed about its policy and understand the importance of keeping children safe.
- 12.2. Nova Pioneer's Child Protection Policy is:
 - 12.2.1. Circulated and discussed with all current and future employees, contractors and consultants.
 - 12.2.2. Circulated and discussed with all parents and guardians
 - 12.2.3. Circulated and discussed with all current and future board members.
 - 12.2.4. Circulated and discussed with the communities with whom Nova Pioneer collaborates.

13. Review History

- 13.1. 01 December 2019

Document Reference	Previous Section
1.2.3	Removed Child Care Amendment Act (Act 96 of 1996) – as the Act has been repealed.
2.2	Reworded Clause 2.2 and added a sentence relating to procedural fairness.

5.4	Removal of “who work directly with children” from clause to make it explicit that All Staff are screened against relevant registers.
6.5	Added Clauses 6.5.1 and 6.5.2 relating to the process of dealing with external speakers.
7.2	Added the word “suspected” to Clause 7.2.1 and Clause 7.2.2 and amended Clause 7.2.3 to read as follows “The process for children to follow when they report suspected abuse/neglect to Nova Pioneer staff and action has not been taken”
7.4.2	Any act that amounts to an offence in terms of Chapter 3 of the Sexual Offences Act.
7.4.3	Removal of “Bullying by another child” as this is covered in our Bullying Policy.
7.4.3	Added new clause relating to Deliberate Neglect.
7.7	Amended clause - 7.7 If a staff member has reason to believe that a child is a danger to themselves (cutting, suicide, self-harm thoughts) it is also mandatory that this is reported using the schools referral process.
7.10	Added an additional requirement to Step 3 under Clause 7.10. This step makes it explicit that Form 22 must be completed and submitted to the Provincial Department of Social Development by the School Leader. Form 22 must either be hand delivered or couriered to the offices of the Provincial Department
7.12	Added clause 7.12 to include abuse committed by a Nova Pioneer student under the age of 18 and to Align with requirements from the Child Justice Act.

13.2. 10 March 2025

Document Reference	Amendment
1.2	Reference to both Child Protection as a reactive measure and Safeguarding as a proactive measure
4.0	Updated the section on “Principles and Guidelines for Child Protection” to elaborate on core principles that underpin the policy and Nova Pioneer’s approach to child protection and safeguarding
6.0	Addition of a section on “The Role of Employees and Affiliated Persons in Child Protection”
7.1 & 7.2	The addition of a section on the “Duty to report” any and all instances of abuse or neglect to the relevant authorities and the consequences of not reporting.
7.5	Addition of section 7.5 which provides details of the types of abuse in relation to children and the definitions thereof including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical abuse - Neglect - Sexual abuse

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotional abuse/Psychological abuse - Domestic Violence - Corporal Punishment - Initiation Practices - Gender-based Violence - Peer-on-Peer Abuse - Child Sexual Exploitation - Female Genital Mutilation
7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move of “Inform the designated Nova Pioneer personnel in writing of the incident within 24 hours of the incident coming to light” from step 2 to step 1. - Addition of “This report should be done in both verbal and written format.” to step 1.1 of the reporting procedure
7.2	Update of step one (1) of the reporting procedure being that any suspected abuse must be reported immediately to the Designated Safety Officer or School Leader. The Direct Line Manager/Supervisor may be informed but should not be the first line of reporting.
7.2	Addition to step 3.1 of: If the child is in immediate danger the perpetrator must be suspended immediately even before further investigation is undertaken.
7.2	Addition step 3.2: “Each school must have a list of such contacts in their area available to all staff.”
7.2	Expansion of list of local authorities to report to (step 3.2)
9.1.	Addition of “Nova Pioneer’s Employee Code of Conduct should also be referenced as a guide for the professional, appropriate and safe behaviour in relation to children.”
12.2.2	Addition of: “Circulated and discussed with all parents and guardians” to section on Dissemination of the policy

14. Approval of Policy

Person Responsible	Title	Date of Approval	Effective Date
Belinda Godfrey	MD: South Africa	December 2019	January 2020
Nneamaka Eziukwu	Director of Schools, South Africa	10 March 2025	10 March 2025

15. Storage

- 15.1. This Policy will be stored electronically in the Nova Pioneer Team Drive Labelled NP Policies. Access to this drive will be granted to all staff at Nova Pioneer by the Nova Pioneer Policy Committee.

16. Policy Tracking and Review

Version	Review Date	Date of Approval	Effective Date
Version 1.1	January 2018	January 2018	February 2018
Version 1.2	November 2019	December 2019	January 2020
Version 1.3	March 2025	10 March 2025	10 March 2025