

STJOSEPH'S HOME
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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1 Introduction

St. Joseph's Home (SJH) provides 24-hr nursing care and rehabilitation therapy for children experiencing life threatening and life limiting conditions.

SJH does this by treating and supporting medically fragile children through

1. 24-hr general and specialised nursing care
2. Rehabilitation therapy
3. Support for children and families to ensure a better quality of life
4. Educational/ school support
5. Respite
6. Palliative care

This policy is informed and guided by the following:

1. The South African Constitution
2. Children's Act, No 38 of 2005
3. Child Care Amendment Act (Act 96 of 1996)
4. Protection of Personal information Act of 2013 (POPIA)
5. White Paper on Rights of People with Disabilities
6. Child Justice Act, 75 of 2008
7. Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act of 2007

2 Nature and Purpose of This Policy

1. St Joseph's Home is aware and actively engaged in issues related to the health and well-being of children and child safety.
2. This often entails asking sensitive questions to children making them particularly vulnerable whilst ensuring safety at all times.
3. We recognise the importance of protecting children and for this reason all staff are trained to ensure that any engagement with children is governed by strict ethical principles that ensure that no harm comes to our patients, and also protect the employees and contractors from false accusations. St Joseph's Home provides direct clinical services in the form of nursing care and rehabilitation in the facility for patients.
4. In order to ensure safety all around , we endeavour to work with children on issues related to child safety ensuring they are empowered and educated.

3 Definitions

1. Staff: all employees, full and part-time, programme volunteers and students that have any contact with children or access to the facility.
2. Contractors: all individuals working for St Joseph's Home on contract or in terms of a Memorandum of Understanding.
3. Child: all individuals under the age of 18 years.

4 Principles and Guidelines for Child Protection

1. Only parents and legal guardians can provide consent and children can only provide assent.
2. No interventions will be conducted unless the consent has been obtained from the parent/legal guardian.
3. No photographs or images will be captured unless the consent has been obtained from the parent/legal guardian as well as verbal assent from the child where applicable the child's cognitive capacity and age.
4. The identity of all children is to remain anonymous unless specifically stated otherwise.
5. Treat all children with respect regardless of differences of religion, age, culture, gender, ability and economic conditions.
6. Allow children to have a say in decisions that affect them and listen earnestly to their concerns.
7. Engage in appropriate behaviour and use language that is not intended to shame or humiliate children in any way.
8. Take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe and comfortable to answer questions when participating in interventions and programmes.
9. No child should ever be placed at risk of harm in any way.

5 Preventative Measures

5.1 Recruitment and Selection

1. St Joseph's Home follows stringent recruitment processes in line with our employment policies and procedures to ensure that all staff who are recruited meet the requirements.
2. Reference checks are done on all potential recruitment of which at least one written reference from a previous employer is kept on file.
3. When commencing employment, all staff are required to attend an induction course where St Joseph's Home present staff policies, procedures and guidelines are discussed in detail to ensure there are no misunderstandings.

4. Staff are required to sign confidentiality agreements, which further safeguards the integrity and confidentiality of the child.

5.2 Screening

All St Joseph's Home staff will be screened in accordance with this policy.

All St Joseph's Home staff and volunteers will be screened against both the National Child Protection Register and the Sexual Offences Register as and when necessary.

5.3 Written Application

1. All potential staff must provide a CV with basic information from the applicant and will include previous experience with children, references and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions.
2. The CV will be maintained in a secure, confidential personnel file at the St Joseph's Home administrative office in line with the POPI Act.

5.4 Criminal Background Check

1. Full police clearance will be required for all staff members and repeated every five years.
2. Random checks against the child protection register will be carried out.
3. Applicants will not be considered for positions when checks show evidence of convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to the mission of the St Joseph's Home.
4. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction at the recruitment stage may also terminate an individual's application.

5.5 Overall consent forms

SJH has a consent form that covers media, transport and interventions. These are to be completed.

- 5.6 Standard Operating Procedures are formulated per Department and can be found in the Public Drive under the Child Protection folder
SOPs will be in line with the SJH child safeguarding policy

5.7 Children taken off-site

All children taken offsite will have to be granted permission by the relevant clinical managers using the correct documentation.

6 Staff Training

1. All St Joseph's Home staff will receive training on the child safeguarding policy.
2. Staff should be subjected to a training workshop at the commencement of their employment. Child protection must form a component of all staff and supervisors induction.

In the event that training cannot happen, staff must read and sign an acknowledgement stating their understanding and acceptance of the policy.

7 Induction

1. All staff will receive an orientation that includes:
 - a. Review and receipt of the St Joseph's Home Code of Conduct - an original signed copy will be kept in the individual's personnel file
 - b. Review of policies related to safety, transportation, prevention and reporting of child abuse and emergency procedures.
 - c. Training in recognizing signs of suspected child abuse.
 - d. Training in the prevention of "bullying"
 - e. Supervisors will be trained on hiring and screening potential staff members
2. Staff training and orientations will be updated and refreshed each year.
3. Documentation of all training will be maintained in each individual's personnel file.
4. St Joseph's Home will offer educational information and resources around child protection and abuse to staff and families.
5. Staff will be trained in crisis management to be able to respond appropriately when safeguarding situations arise.
6. All staff will be trained and kept accountable regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect that are disclosed to them during the course of their work with the children.

8 Reporting

1. All St Joseph's Home staff must regularly inform all children about the following:
 - a. The importance of reporting abuse or neglect to a responsible adult
 - b. The process to follow when making a report of abuse or neglect to St Joseph's staff
 - c. What children can do if they report abuse or neglect to a St Joseph's Home staff member and no action is taken.
 - d. Suspicious or inappropriate engagements between staff and children
2. All St Joseph's Home areas and venues must display a list of emergency contact numbers and names of staff for children to use if they need to report abuse or neglect.
3. For purposes of this policy, "abuse", in relation to a child, means any form of harm or ill-treatment deliberately inflicted on a child, and includes—
 - a. Assaulting a child or inflicting any other form of deliberate injury to a child

- b. Sexually abusing a child or allowing a child to be sexually abused
 - c. Bullying by another child
 - d. A labour practice that exploits a child
 - e. Exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm the child psychologically or emotionally
 - f. Peer-to-peer abuse
4. Supervisors are skilled to perform and address any performance-related issues that may have a negative impact on children.
 5. Any irresponsible and unprofessional behaviour must be reported immediately to the Line Manager. “Irresponsible and unprofessional behaviour” is defined as follows:
 - a. 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.
 6. The safety of children is always our priority and therefore strict action is taken when there are concerns reported, and the disregard of the Child Protection Policy is witnessed or suspected.
 7. The process below must be followed by all internal and external St Joseph’s Home staff and contractors.

STEP 1:

1. All St Joseph’s Home staff will verbally report known or suspected child abuse to their line manager immediately and follow this up with a written report immediately thereafter.
2. Further steps will be followed according to the incident reporting policy.

STEP 2:

1. Once the official investigation has been completed, St Joseph’s Home may pursue internal disciplinary proceedings, as and when necessary.
2. A detailed report must be submitted of findings pertaining to any investigations.
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.
4. Any person who is found guilty of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position with the St Joseph’s Home.
5. Should the findings be criminal in nature, the St Josephs Home has an obligation to report the matter to the South African Police Services.

9 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

1. Any child making use of St Joseph’s Home ICT equipment must be supervised by a staff member at all times.

2. If children are making use of St Joseph's Home ICT equipment, the equipment must be child-friendly. For example, if children are accessing the internet on a St Joseph's Home computer, the computer must have child safeguarding software installed such as parental control or net nanny.
3. Use of ICT to generate, access or be in possession of child pornography is illegal and should be reported in accordance with national laws
4. "Pornography" is defined as follows:
'pornography' means any image, however created, or any description of a person, real or simulated, of an explicit or sexual nature that is intended to simulate erotic feelings, including any such image or description of such person-
 - (a) Engaged in an act that constitutes a sexual offence;
 - (b) Engaged in an act of sexual penetration;
 - (c) Engaged in an act of sexual violation;
 - (d) Engaged in an act of self-masturbation;
 - (e) Displaying the genital organs of such person in a state of arousal or stimulation;
 - (f) Unduly displaying the genital organs or anus of such person;
 - (g) Displaying any form of stimulation of a sexual nature of the female breasts;
 - (h) Engaged in sexually suggestive or lewd acts;
 - (i) Engaged in or as the subject of sadistic or masochistic acts of a sexual nature;
 - (j) Engaged in any conduct or activity characteristically associated with sexual intercourse; or
 - (k) Showing or describing the body, or parts of the body, of that person in a manner or in circumstances which, within the context, violate or offend the sexual integrity or dignity of that person or any other person or is capable of being used for the purposes of violating or offending the sexual integrity or dignity of that person or any other person.
5. Staff found in possession of pornography will be suspended pending a formal investigation. This may lead to dismissal depending on disciplinary outcome.
6. Staff found guilty of sharing age inappropriate content (music, movies, stories, photographs, media) with children will be disciplined.
7. Staff are not permitted to share their electronic devices with children. This includes mobile phones.
8. Pictures, materials and personal information regarding children is kept in a secure password protected file or locked file cabinet as per the POPI Act
9. Staff are not permitted to take or share patient photographs except where written consent has been obtained for that specific purpose.
10. All patient information and record keeping is guided by the POPI act.

10 Supervision

1. Supervision of child, programmes/wards, facilities and staff will be designed to protect child and staff at all times.
2. Practices to ensure a safe and caring environment will include:
 - All staff members will have their photo taken for an ID badge that will be worn at all times while on duty.(as and where possible)The badge will also include the person's name. A copy of the photo will be included in each individual's personnel file.
 - 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.
 - All sites of operation will have access to a telephone or cell phone on location during operating hours.
 - Staff will be aware of the whereabouts of children at all times; including bathrooms, locker rooms, or showers.
 - a. Facilities will be well lit indoors and out.
 - b. Guests, service and contractors will sign-in to all facilities.
 - c. Staff will never release child to anyone other than the authorised parent(s),guardian(s), or an individual authorised by parents in writing or verified by phone.
3. Sign-in and sign-out will be in place for all children going off site and returning..
4. Staff will check for signs of physical injury or emotional abnormality each time a child is admitted or return to SJH.
5. Staff will utilize constructive methods for maintaining group control and managing child behaviour.
6. Staff will not change the clothes of a child without protecting their privacy.

11 Contact with Child

1. Staff members should develop positive relationships with children while admitted to St Joseph's
2. The following practices will be followed to ensure the protection of both child and staff outside of St Joseph's Home programmes or activities.
 - Staff will not engage or communicate with children admitted to SJH whilst off duty or on leave.
Staff contact with children post discharge from SJH needs to be with consent of legal guardian(s).
 - Staff will appear and behave in a manner consistent with the mission and values of St Joseph's Home at all times while on or off duty; including electronic, written and verbal communications.

12 Communications

1. St. Joseph's Home will promote positive values and child protection strategies in its programmes, facilities, with parents and in the community.
2. Parents will be made aware that they cannot take photographs of other children.
3. Parents will receive regular verbal feedback about the treatment and therapy received and schedules; feedback regarding their child's participation in programme including behaviour and general health; and an introduction to the programme staff.
4. Caregivers will be allowed to observe programmes at any time as appropriate.
5. Caregivers will be made aware of St Joseph's Home 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 is not allowed to contact child outside of SJH. This is included in the parent orientation programme.
6. St Joseph's Home will designate a spokesperson to the media and community in the event of any incident concerning abuse or neglect.

13 Dissemination of the policy

1. The St Joseph's Home is committed to ensuring that all relevant parties are informed about its policy and understand the importance of keeping children safe.
2. The St Joseph's Home Child Protection Policy is:
 - a. Circulated and discussed with all St Joseph's Home employees, contractors and consultants.
 - b. Circulated and discussed with all existing and potential funders.
 - c. Circulated and discussed with all board members.
 - d. Circulated and discussed with the external stakeholders with whom St Joseph's Home collaborates. Made available for download on the St. Joseph's website and all social media channels

14 Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed and updated by St Joseph's Home Management Team every 3 years.

15 Reputational risks to SJH

All staff are to ensure that no reputational risk comes to the St Joseph's home by ensuring that all children are kept safe in line with this policy.

16 Child Safeguarding governance accountability

In line with our policy , this policy is to be upheld by :

- 1 Board of Directors
- 2 CEO
- 3 Management Team
- 4 Employees

Adopted on _____ 2021 by St. Joseph's Home Board of Directors.