



SAFETY POLICY - LEARNERS

1. INTRODUCTION

We believe that the safety of learners in our care is of paramount importance. We endeavour to make our school a safe place for learners, parents, staff and guests.

Matters relating to the Occupational Health and Safety Act are excluded from the application of this policy.

We aim to make learners aware of safety issues and to minimise any potential hazards or risks to enable them to thrive in a safe environment.

2. POLICY APPLICATION

This safety policy is to be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Outdoor Education Policy
- Enrolment Contract

Our induction for staff includes a clear explanation of safety issues so that all adults are able to adhere to our policy and understand their shared responsibility for safety at the school.

Safety issues in this policy are explained to the parents of new learners in order for them to understand how these policies are implemented into the daily life of the school.

First Aid Safety training is attended by teaching staff. Staff members are sent for refresher courses as and when needed to ensure that they stay up to date with their knowledge. We ensure that there is always an overlap of staff on hand to facilitate any emergency that may arise.

When necessary, additional safety training is included in the annual staff training plans and safety is discussed regularly at staff meetings.

Learners are consistently made aware of safety issues through discussions, planned activities, formal lessons and tasks and routines.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT AND FIELD WORK POLICY

Our risk assessment process includes:

- 3.1 Checking for hazards and /or risks both indoors and outdoors, prior to and during our activities and procedures. Our assessment covers safety for both adults and learners.
- 3.2 Addressing any areas which need attention and making concise decisions regarding how best to apply these measures.
- 3.3 Following the required actions as per policy.
- 3.4 Being aware of any food allergies of the learners in our care, as detailed by the parents.
- 3.5 Ensuring arrangements are in place for the care of the learners when away from the registered premises.

3.6 Sufficient and appropriate staff are always present to meet the type of activity being undertaken and to comply with staffing ratios. The minimum required number of staff is two, regardless of pupil numbers. As per the school's Outdoor Education Policy:

- We obtain written consent from parents for all activities which take place off the school premises.
- Contingency plans are put in place in the event of an accident or inclement weather.
- We ensure that, when learners are away from the premises, a first aid box is taken on the trip.
- We ensure that at least two mobile phones accompany a field study or any other outing away from the school premises.
- We ensure that the learners are advised of the appropriate dress and sun protection required for any outing.
- No learner is allowed to use toilet facilities at a venue unless accompanied by a member of staff.

4. LEARNER'S SECURITY

We endeavour to see that all learners are supervised by adults at all times. Whenever there are students on the school premises, at least two adults must be present. Visitors to the school must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times whilst on the school premises.

Our systems deter learners from leaving our premises unnoticed. All external gates are kept closed and/ or locked.

4.1 Arrivals and Departures

4.1.1 Systems are in place for the safe arrival and departure of learners, and the arrival and departure times of adults – staff and visitors – are known.

4.1.2 *Learner's attendance is recorded in the register daily and absentees' names are sent to the main office. The staff member receiving the learner records his / her arrival in the daily attendance register. Any specific information provided by the parents is recorded. Parents are required to notify the school via email or telephone in the event of absenteeism.*

4.1.3 No learner will be given into the care of any person who we DO NOT know. If in doubt, the person's identity is verified by phoning the learner's parent/guardian or the emergency contact number. If anyone other than the learner's parent, or a person listed on the enrolment form, is to fetch a learner from school, we need to be notified in advance either in writing or by a phone call. Information will then be passed on to the relevant staff member/s and recorded.

4.1.4 *Learners in must stay with their teacher until the person collecting them arrives. Any learners remaining after the relevant collection time will be handed over personally to the aftercare teacher.*

5. LEARNER SAFETY

The school will take reasonable measures to ensure the safety of learners during any school activity. In the case of an accident, the Head of school is immediately notified of any injury requiring medical treatment or hospitalisation for a learner, parent or visitor.

The member of staff who witnesses the incident is responsible for reporting the incident. This is recorded in an Incident book. This is done as soon as the accident is dealt with, while the details are still clearly remembered.

The relevant parent/s must be shown the Incident Report and will be asked to sign it as soon as the learner is collected.

In the unlikely event of a terrorist attack, the advice of the emergency services with regard to evacuation, medical assistance and contacting the learner's families will be followed. The Fire Safety procedure will also be followed. The incident will be recorded when the threat has been averted.

5.1 Electrical and Gas equipment

- 5.1.1 All electrical / gas equipment conform to safety requirements and is checked regularly.
- 5.1.2 Electrical switchgear and distribution boxes are not accessible to the learners.
- 5.1.3 Fires, heaters, electrical sockets, wires and leads are properly guarded and the learners are taught and reminded not to touch them.
- 5.1.4 Lighting and ventilation is adequate in all areas including storage areas.

5.2 Storage

- 5.2.1 Learner's personal belongings are to be stored away safely.
- 5.2.2 Resources and materials for learner's use are stored safely.
- 5.2.3 Other equipment and resources are stored safely.
- 5.2.4 Chemicals are stored in a locked cupboard and the keys are kept out of reach of the learner.
- 5.2.5 Cleaning materials are stored in a locked area.

5.3 Outdoor Area

- 5.3.1 The outdoor play area is monitored.
- 5.3.2 The outdoor area is checked and cleared of rubbish daily.
- 5.3.3 Herbicides and pesticides are not used. The plants are routinely inspected to avoid and/ or remove accidental growth of unwanted plants.
- 5.3.4 Outdoor activities are supervised at all times.

5.4 Play Activities

- 5.4.1 Equipment and resources are checked routinely to ensure that they are safe for the ages and stage of the learners.
- 5.4.2 The layout of play equipment allows adults and learners to move safely and freely.
- 5.4.3 Equipment is regularly checked (as set up) for cleanliness and safety; broken items are repaired or discarded.
- 5.4.4 Materials used on equipment – including paint and glue – are non-toxic.
- 5.4.5 Sand is kept clean and renewed regularly.
- 5.4.6 Physical play is supervised at all times.
- 5.4.7 Learners are taught to handle and store gardening tools safely.
- 5.4.8 Safety procedures are introduced through class activities, lessons and class routines.

5.5 Fire Safety

- 5.5.1 Fire doors are kept unobstructed and can easily open from inside.
- 5.5.2 Firefighting appliances conform to required standards, are fitted in appropriate high risk areas of the building and are checked in accordance with the manufacturer specifications.
- 5.5.3 Records are kept of services to fire safety equipment.
- 5.5.4 Our emergency evacuation procedures, which have been approved by the Fire Safety Officer, are:
 - Clearly displayed in the premises.
 - Explained to new members of staff.

- Practised regularly

Please note:

Fire drills will be held at both regular and random intervals. A record is made of the date, time and duration of the drill, the numbers of staff and learners who were present, and the names of any visitor who may have been present at the time.

6. LEARNER PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING LEARNERS

The school works with learners and parents to maintain the welfare and safety of the learners. Learners have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from abuse in any form. Newberry House Montessori School has a commitment to safeguarding learners and promoting their welfare. Should anyone believe that this is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the Head of school at the earliest opportunity.

To this end the school endeavours to:

- Create an environment which encourages learners to develop a positive self-image;
- Encourage learners to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate for their age and stage of development;
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all learners.

6.1 Teachers have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of learners. Teachers will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem and may be the first people in whom learners confide about abuse, which could be physical, sexual, emotional or neglect.

6.2 We will act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All our staff will act in the best interests of the learner.

6.3 The school has a duty to report any suspicion around abuse and has an obligation to investigate such matters without delay.

6.4 Staff will initially raise concerns with the Head of school. The Head of school will then discuss the matter with a parent or school counsellor, whichever is appropriate in the circumstances. Staff responsibilities do not include investigating suspected abuse. However, the teaching staff will keep accurate records of their observations, which will be signed and dated, and of anything said to them by the learner or any other person in connection with the suspected abuse. The Head of school will follow the recommendations of the parent or school counsellor.

6.5 The school endeavours to:

- Ensure that learners are never placed at risk while in the charge of school staff;
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Ensure that parents and families are treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner,
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and alert to the recognisable signs of, and the different ways in which learners can be harmed, including by other learners by, for example bullying (See Bullying and Discrimination Policy)
- Ensure that all staff understand and are familiar with safeguarding procedures;
- Ensure that parents are fully aware of safeguarding procedures when they register with the school and are kept informed of all updates timeously.

7. TYPES OF ABUSE

- **Physical Abuse**

Action will be taken by a member of staff if they have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a learner, including deliberate poisoning; where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that an injury was inflicted or knowingly

not prevented. All signs of marks or injuries to a learner will be recorded as soon as it is noticed by a staff member.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Action will be taken by a member of staff if they have witnessed incident/s where a learner has indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters, or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.

- **Emotional Abuse**

Action will be taken by a member of staff if they have reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a learner caused by persistent or severe emotional abuse and/ or rejection.

- **Neglect**

Action will be taken by a member of staff if they have reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a learner (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the learner's health or development, including failure to thrive.

7.1 Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures

Staff will make an objective record of an observation or disclosure which will include:

- Learner's name
- Learner's address
- Age of the learner and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- Exact words spoken by the learner / injuries or marks seen
- Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- A summary of any discussion held with a parent / carer.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a confidential file. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information or concerns they have with regard to a learner. The school expects all members of staff to co-operate in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the learners.

7.2 Informing Parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made. The incident will be discussed with the parent / carer at the earliest opportunity. Such discussions will be recorded and the parent / carer will have access to these records.

7.3 Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and will only be shared with those who need to be informed. Any information is shared under the guidance of the school counsellor.

7.4 Support to Families

- The school strives to maintain a trusting and supportive relationship among families and staff within the school.
- The school will continue to welcome the learner and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.
- Confidential records kept on a learner can be shared with the learner's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the learner.

- We will do all in our power to support and work with the learner's family, whilst at all times acting in the understanding that the best interests of the learner is paramount.

7.5 Employees of the school

If an allegation is made against a member of staff the incident will be dealt with by the Head of school.

- A full investigation will be carried out to determine how the specific allegation will best be handled, taking all relevant circumstances into account.
- If, in light of the allegation, there could possibly be interference with the normal functioning of the school, the member of staff will be allocated to another area, after due consultation with all parties.
- The school reserves the right to suspend any member of staff on full pay during such an investigation.
- All investigations / interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file.
- Unfounded allegations will result in all the staff members' rights being re-instated.
- All allegations found to have merit will be passed on to the school board and may result in the termination of employment of that member of staff.
- Counselling will be available for any member of the school who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the school and the parents.

8. LEARNER CARE SAFETY – WEAPONS

In order to keep our learners safe, no one may bring or use weapons of any kind on the premises for any reason. This includes firearms, ammunition and any other object that could, in the sole discretion of the school, reasonably be perceived as a weapon.

Persons attempting to bring a weapon onto the premises will be asked to leave immediately. Failure to comply will result in the matter being escalated to the security armed response and /or the Police. Newberry House Montessori School does not own or store any weapons, firearms or ammunition on the property.

9. VISITORS AND SUPERVISION OF VISITORS

All visitor's details are recorded in the School office. A member of staff must accompany visitors to the School at all times.

10. SUPERVISION

Teaching and teaching support staff

- Learners must be supervised at all times.
- Water safety is paramount as learners can drown in only a few centimetres of water.
- Special care should be taken when learners are using apparatus such as a climbing frame and when walking down outside steps.
- Two members of staff will, at all times, supervise primary children's outdoor play and climbing equipment.
- When the learners are outdoors, staff must be aware of bushes, shrubs and plants.

11. LATE COLLECTION AND NON-COLLECTION

11.1 All parents are informed of and agree to comply with an approximate arrival time for their child/ren at the school and the procedures to follow if they expect to be late.

11.2 In the instance of a learner not being collected from the school timeously, and after a reasonable amount of time (*30 minutes*) has passed, the following procedure will be initiated by teaching or aftercare staff:

- Inform the Head of school or a senior member of staff and school office that a learner has not been collected, and if applicable, the learner will be put into aftercare.
- The Head of school or a senior member of staff will check for any information regarding changes to normal routines, parents' work patterns or general information. If there is no information recorded, the parents/carers will be contacted on the numbers provided, for either their home or work. Should the parent / carer not be available / contactable, the emergency contacts will then be contacted as per the learner's records.
- The staff member on duty and one other member of staff will stay behind with the learner (if it falls outside normal operating hours). During normal operating times, normal staff ratios will apply.
- The Head of school or a senior member of staff will telephone all contact numbers available every ten (10) minutes until contact is made. These calls will be noted and recorded.
- Staff members will remain in the building until suitable arrangements have been made for the collection of the learner. The learner's welfare and needs will be the primary priority at all times.

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CONSENT FOR PHOTOS / VIDEOS

During the course of the school programme, photographs and videos of the learners are sometimes taken. This may be for special days (i.e. cultural festivals, etc.), for an article in the newsletter, for use on the school's website, by a parent at a class party, or for the annual class photos by the photographer invited by the school. Unless the parent notifies the teacher or school office otherwise, in writing, when enrolling a learner at Newberry House Montessori School, the parents are deemed to have given their consent for a photograph or video of their learner to be taken at/ by the school.

13. MOBILE PHONES

13.1 In the interest of safety, members of staff and student teachers are not permitted to use their mobile phones while working with the learners, except in the event of an emergency.

13.2 Staff who are away from the school with learners (on field studies etc.) must have a fully charged mobile phone with them at all such times.

14. RECORDS

The following records are kept by the school administration:

14.1 Names and addresses of all staff on the premises, including temporary staff;

14.2 All records relating to the staff's employment with the school, including application forms, references and results of any checks conducted; including a Police clearance certificate;

14.3 Learner's names, addresses and telephone numbers of their parents and/ or other adults authorised to collect the learners from School;

14.4 The names, addresses and telephone numbers of emergency contacts in case of learner's illness or accident;

- 14.5** The allergies, dietary requirements, vaccination records and illnesses of individual learners;
- 14.6** The times of attendance of learners, staff, and visitors;
- 14.7** Accidents and medicine administration records;
- 14.8** Consents for field studies, administration of medication, emergency treatment, and incidents;
- 14.9** Administration of medication:
 - 14.9.1 Prior parental consent to administer prescribed medicine;
 - 14.9.2 Record of the administration of prescribed medicines;
- 14.10** Incident records;
- 14.11** Any dangerous or potentially dangerous incidents, whether such incident resulted in an injury or not, including a gas leak or falling branch. This will be recorded in the Incident book.

REFERENCES:

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), as amended.
The South African Schools, 1996 (Act No.84 of 1996), as amended. (Regulations for the Safety Measures at Public Schools, Government Notice No. 1040 October 2001 as amended).
Fire Arms Control Act, 2000 (Act No 60 of 2000).
Children's Act, 2005 (Act No 38 of 2005)