



CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

OFENTSE YOUTH WELLNESS

Shaping Stronger Minds For Brighter Days

**Non-Profit Company
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1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 Purpose

This Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy establishes Ofentse Youth Wellness's commitment to protecting high school learners from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. It provides clear guidelines for recognizing, responding to, and preventing harm to learners.

1.2 Why This Policy Matters

As an organization working directly with vulnerable young people, we have a moral, ethical, and legal duty to:

- Create safe environments for learners
- Protect learners from all forms of harm
- Respond appropriately when concerns arise
- Prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children
- Empower learners to speak up about concerns

1.3 Application

This policy applies to all Board members, volunteers, coordinators, partners, contractors, and anyone representing Ofentse Youth Wellness in any capacity.

2. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

2.1 Who is Covered

This policy protects all learners who:

- Attend our workshops (in-person or online)
- Interact with our volunteers or representatives
- Access our resources or services
- Participate in any program or activity run by Ofentse Youth Wellness

2.2 Who Must Comply

All individuals associated with Ofentse Youth Wellness must comply with this policy, including:

- Board of Directors
- Workshop facilitators
- Regional and Provincial Coordinators
- General volunteers
- Contractors and consultants
- Partner organization representatives (when working with us)
- Interns and students
- Visitors to our programs

2.3 All Settings

This policy applies in all settings where we work with learners:

- School premises
- Online workshops and platforms
- Events and community programs
- Communication channels (email, social media, messaging)
- Any location where our programs are delivered

3. DEFINITIONS

"Abuse" means any action or failure to act that causes harm, potential harm, or threat of harm to a child. This includes physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and neglect.

"Child" or "Learner" means any person under the age of 18 years. For our purposes, this includes high school learners aged 13-19 years.

"Safeguarding" means the proactive measures taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

"Child Protection" means the reactive measures taken in response to specific concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

"Harm" means ill-treatment or impairment of health or development, including physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological harm.

"Designated Safeguarding Officer" means the Board member or volunteer appointed to receive and coordinate responses to safeguarding concerns.

"Grooming" means building a relationship, trust, or emotional connection with a child to manipulate, exploit, or abuse them.

"Disclosure" means when a learner tells someone about abuse or harm they have experienced or witnessed.

"Mandatory Reporter" means a person legally required to report suspected child abuse to authorities.

4. POLICY STATEMENT AND COMMITMENT

4.1 Our Commitment

Ofentse Youth Wellness is committed to:

4.1.1 Zero Tolerance: We have zero tolerance for any form of abuse, exploitation, or harm to learners.

4.1.2 Safety First: The safety and well-being of learners is our highest priority in all decisions and activities.

4.1.3 Prevention: We proactively work to prevent harm through safe recruitment, training, and clear boundaries.

4.1.4 Empowerment: We empower learners to understand their rights and speak up about concerns.

4.1.5 Prompt Action: We respond quickly, appropriately, and seriously to all safeguarding concerns.

4.1.6 Accountability: Everyone associated with our organization is accountable for safeguarding learners.

4.2 Our Pledge to Learners

We pledge to:

- Treat you with dignity and respect
- Listen to you and take your concerns seriously
- Create safe spaces where you feel comfortable
- Protect your privacy and confidentiality (with legal limits)
- Never harm, exploit, or abuse you
- Support you if you need help
- Connect you to professional support when needed

4.3 Organizational Values

Our approach to safeguarding reflects our core values:

- **Respect:** Every learner has inherent dignity and worth
- **Trust:** We build relationships based on trust and integrity
- **Transparency:** We are open about our safeguarding practices
- **Collaboration:** We work with schools and professionals to protect learners
- **Continuous Improvement:** We regularly review and strengthen our practices

5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is informed by and complies with:

5.1 South African Legislation:

- Children's Act, 2005 (Act No. 38 of 2005)
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007 (Act No. 32 of 2007)
- Protection from Harassment Act, 2011 (Act No. 17 of 2011)
- Films and Publications Act, 1996 (Act No. 65 of 1996)
- Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (POPIA)

5.2 International Standards:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

5.3 Professional Standards:

- Best practices in youth work and mental health support
- Guidelines from the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)

6. PRINCIPLES OF CHILD PROTECTION

6.1 Best Interests of the Child

The child's best interests are paramount in all decisions affecting them.

6.2 Right to Protection

Every child has the right to be protected from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

6.3 Right to Participation

Children have the right to be heard and participate in decisions affecting them, taking into account their age and maturity.

6.4 Non-Discrimination

All children are entitled to equal protection regardless of race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic.

6.5 Duty to Act

Everyone has a duty to act when they suspect or know a child is at risk of harm.

6.6 Partnership Approach

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility requiring collaboration between our organization, schools, families, and authorities.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Board of Directors

The Board is ultimately responsible for:

- Approving and endorsing this policy
- Ensuring adequate resources for safeguarding
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Receiving regular safeguarding reports
- Ensuring compliance and accountability
- Reviewing the policy annually

7.2 Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Responsibilities:

- Serve as the primary contact for safeguarding concerns

- Coordinate responses to concerns and disclosures
- Liaise with schools, authorities, and support services
- Maintain confidential records of concerns
- Ensure concerns are followed up appropriately
- Provide guidance to volunteers on safeguarding matters
- Deliver safeguarding training
- Report to the Board on safeguarding matters

7.3 Workshop Facilitators and Volunteers

All volunteers must:

- Read, understand, and comply with this policy
- Complete safeguarding training before working with learners
- Create safe, respectful environments for learners
- Maintain appropriate boundaries
- Be vigilant for signs of abuse or distress
- Report all concerns immediately to the DSO
- Never ignore concerns or attempt to investigate themselves
- Model respectful, appropriate behaviour

7.4 Regional and Provincial Coordinators

Additional responsibilities:

- Ensure all volunteers in their area complete safeguarding training
- Monitor compliance with safeguarding practices
- Support volunteers in handling concerns
- Escalate serious concerns immediately
- Maintain oversight of local safeguarding implementation

7.5 All Personnel

Everyone associated with the organization must:

- Know this policy exists and where to find it
- Understand their safeguarding responsibilities
- Report concerns through appropriate channels
- Cooperate with safeguarding investigations
- Maintain confidentiality

8. SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

8.1 Recruitment Principles

We recruit volunteers carefully to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with learners.

8.2 Recruitment Process

All volunteers working directly with learners must undergo:

8.2.1 Application:

- Complete volunteer application form
- Provide full personal details and contact information
- Declare any criminal convictions
- Provide references

8.2.2 References:

- At least 2 references (professional or character references)
- References must be verified through direct contact
- References must confirm suitability for working with children

8.3 Disqualifying Factors

The following automatically disqualify individuals from volunteering:

- Convictions for offenses against children
- Convictions for sexual offenses
- Being on a sex offenders register
- Being barred from working with children
- Previous dismissal for safeguarding concerns
- Providing false information during recruitment

8.5 Ongoing Vigilance

Volunteers must report any arrests, charges, or convictions that occur during their time with the organization.

9. CODE OF CONDUCT WITH LEARNERS

All personnel must adhere to the following standards when interacting with learners:

9.1 Creating a Safe Environment

DO:

- Treat all learners with respect and dignity
- Create inclusive, welcoming spaces
- Use appropriate, professional language

- Be aware of your power and influence
- Model healthy boundaries
- Encourage learners to speak up about concerns
- Work in visible, open spaces where possible
- Keep interactions transparent
- Maintain professionalism at all times

DO NOT:

- Single out learners for special attention
- Show favouritism
- Engage in or tolerate bullying, teasing, or humiliation
- Use language that is demeaning, threatening, or inappropriate
- Share personal problems with learners
- Seek emotional support from learners

9.2 Physical Contact

Guidelines:

- Minimize physical contact with learners
- Physical contact should be age-appropriate, non-invasive, and in response to the learner's needs (e.g., brief pat on shoulder for comfort)
- Never initiate physical contact for your own needs
- Avoid situations where you are alone with a single learner in a private space
- If a learner seeks physical comfort (e.g., after emotional distress), keep contact minimal, brief, and visible to others

NEVER:

- Engage in any form of physical punishment
- Touch learners in ways that could be perceived as sexual or inappropriate
- Engage in rough play or games involving physical contact
- Touch a learner against their wishes

9.3 Communication Boundaries

DO:

- Communicate with learners through official organization channels
- Keep communication professional, transparent, and appropriate
- Copy supervisors or coordinators on relevant communications
- Respond to learners' questions appropriately during and immediately after workshops

DO NOT:

- Exchange personal phone numbers with learners
- Add learners as personal contacts on social media (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.)
- Communicate with learners via personal email or social media accounts
- Engage in private messaging or conversations with learners
- Share personal details about your life with learners
- Meet learners outside of official organizational activities

If a learner contacts you personally:

- Do not respond via personal channels
- Inform your supervisor immediately
- Direct the learner to official support channels (SADAG, school counsellor)

9.4 Online and Digital Safety**For Online Workshops:**

- Use secure, approved platforms only
- Enable waiting rooms and admit learners only when session starts
- Record sessions only with explicit permission and for legitimate purposes
- Ensure appropriate privacy settings
- Never screenshot or share images of learners without consent
- Monitor chat functions for inappropriate behaviour
- Have at least 2 facilitators present for online sessions when possible

Social Media:

- Do not post photos, videos, or information about learners without consent
- Blur faces or obtain written consent before posting any images
- Do not tag learners in posts
- Ensure all content is respectful and appropriate

9.5 Gift-Giving and Money**DO NOT:**

- Give personal gifts to individual learners
- Give money to learners
- Accept gifts from learners (politely decline or donate to the organization)
- Create situations where learners feel indebted to you

Exceptions:

- Organizational gifts distributed equally to all participants (e.g., workshop certificates, informational materials) are acceptable

9.6 Confidentiality and Privacy

DO:

- Respect learners' privacy
- Keep learner information confidential
- Explain the limits of confidentiality upfront
- Only share information on a need-to-know basis

You MUST break confidentiality if:

- A learner discloses abuse or harm
- A learner is at risk of harming themselves or others
- Required by law
- Authorized by the learner (and appropriate)

9.7 Photography and Videography

Before taking photos/videos:

- Obtain written consent from parents/guardians and the school
- Explain how images will be used
- Focus on group activities rather than individual close-ups
- Store images securely

Never:

- Take photos for personal use
- Share photos on personal social media
- Take or share inappropriate or compromising images

9.8 Transportation

General Rule: Volunteers should not transport learners in personal vehicles.

If absolutely necessary:

- Obtain written permission from parents/guardians and school
- Have another adult present in the vehicle
- Use the most direct route
- Document the journey
- Ensure appropriate insurance coverage

9.9 Prohibited Behaviours

The following are strictly prohibited:

- **Sexual abuse:** Any sexual activity with a learner, including touching, exposure, voyeurism, or exploitation
- **Grooming:** Building inappropriate relationships with learners
- **Physical abuse:** Hitting, slapping, shaking, or any form of violence
- **Emotional abuse:** Humiliation, threats, intimidation, or psychological harm
- **Neglect:** Failing to provide necessary care or supervision
- **Exploitation:** Using learners for personal gain or benefit
- **Discrimination:** Treating learners unfairly based on protected characteristics
- **Substance use:** Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs around learners, or providing substances to learners
- **Illegal activity:** Any criminal behaviour involving or affecting learners

9.10 Consequences of Violations

Violations of this Code of Conduct will result in:

- Immediate suspension pending investigation
- Potential termination of involvement
- Reporting to police where criminal behaviour is suspected
- Civil or criminal liability where applicable

10. RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF ABUSE

10.1 Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm

Sexual Abuse:

- Forcing or enticing a child to participate in sexual activities
- Includes contact abuse (touching) and non-contact abuse (showing sexual images, grooming)

Emotional/Psychological Abuse:

- Persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe adverse effects on development
- Includes humiliation, threats, intimidation, isolation

Neglect:

- Failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs
- Includes educational neglect, medical neglect, physical neglect

Bullying:

- Repeated aggressive behaviour intended to hurt or intimidate

- Includes cyberbullying

Exploitation:

- Using a child for personal or commercial gain
- Includes labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, trafficking

10.2 Warning Signs

Physical Indicators:

- Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, or injuries
- Injuries inconsistent with explanation
- Frequent injuries
- Fearfulness of physical contact
- Wearing inappropriate clothing to cover injuries
- Poor hygiene or malnourishment
- Frequent absences from school

Behavioural Indicators:

- Sudden changes in behaviour or academic performance
- Appearing frightened, withdrawn, or anxious
- Regressive behaviour (acting younger than age)
- Aggressive or disruptive behaviour
- Self-harm or suicidal thoughts/behaviours
- Substance abuse
- Sexualized behaviour inappropriate for age
- Fear of specific individuals or places
- Reluctance to go home
- Running away from home

Emotional Indicators:

- Low self-esteem
- Depression or anxiety
- Difficulty trusting others
- Difficulty forming relationships
- Excessive need for approval or attention

Important Notes:

- One sign alone may not indicate abuse

- Look for patterns and combinations of indicators
- Trust your instincts - if something feels wrong, report it
- Cultural differences should be considered but never excuse abuse

10.3 Mental Health Distress vs. Abuse

Remember:

- Mental health challenges (stress, anxiety, depression) are not always caused by abuse
- However, abuse often causes mental health issues
- Treat all concerns seriously and report for professional assessment
- Never assume - let professionals determine the cause

11. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

11.1 Duty to Report

Everyone must report if they:

- Witness abuse or harm
- Suspect abuse or harm is occurring
- Receive a disclosure from a learner
- Become aware of concerning behaviour by a volunteer or staff member

Do not:

- Ignore concerns hoping someone else will report
- Decide the concern is not serious enough
- Investigate yourself
- Wait for proof—suspicion is enough

11.2 How to Respond to a Disclosure

If a learner tells you about abuse or harm:

DO:

- **Listen:** Give them your full attention
- **Believe:** Accept what they say without judgment
- **Stay Calm:** Don't show shock or disbelief
- **Reassure:** Tell them they did the right thing by telling you
- **Explain:** Let them know you need to share this information to keep them safe
- **Document:** Write down exactly what they said as soon as possible (use their words)
- **Report:** Inform the DSO immediately

DO NOT:

- **Promise confidentiality:** You cannot keep this secret
- **Ask leading questions:** Don't suggest answers or fill in details
- **Investigate:** Your role is to listen and report, not investigate
- **Contact the alleged abuser:** Never confront them yourself
- **Make judgments:** About whether it's true or serious
- **Press for details:** One telling is enough - professionals will gather more information
- **Discuss with others:** Only share with the DSO and authorities as required

Example Response: *"Thank you for trusting me with this. I'm really glad you told me. This is important, and I need to share it with people who can help keep you safe. You are not in trouble; you did the right thing."*

11.3 Reporting Process

Step 1: Immediate Report to DSO

- Contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately
- Provide all relevant information
- Do not delay; report the same day, or immediately if serious

Step 2: Documentation Complete an Incident Report Form including:

- Date, time, and location of concern
- Names of individuals involved
- Exact description of what was observed or disclosed (use the learner's words)
- Your observations and concerns
- Actions taken
- Your name and signature

Step 3: DSO Assessment and Action The DSO will:

- Assess the level of risk
- Determine appropriate next steps
- Notify school authorities if appropriate
- Notify police/social services if required by law
- Arrange support for the learner
- Keep the reporter informed (within confidentiality limits)
- Document all actions taken

Step 4: Follow-Up

- The DSO will monitor the situation

- Ensure appropriate support is provided
- Update relevant parties as appropriate
- Review and learn from the incident

11.4 When to Report to External Authorities

Report immediately to police or child protection services if:

- A child is in immediate danger
- Sexual abuse is suspected or disclosed
- Serious physical abuse has occurred or is suspected
- A child has been abandoned or neglected
- Required by law (mandatory reporting)

Emergency Contacts:

- **Police Emergency:** 10111
- **Childline South Africa:** 0800 055 555

11.5 Reporting Concerns About Volunteers/Staff

If you have concerns about a volunteer's or board member's behaviour:

- Report to the DSO immediately
- If the concern is about the DSO, report to the Board Chairperson
- If the concern is about the Chairperson, report to another board member
- The concern will be investigated following disciplinary procedures
- The individual may be suspended pending investigation

11.6 Anonymous Reporting

Anonymous reports will be taken seriously and investigated where possible, though they may be more difficult to follow up on.

Anonymous Reporting Channels:

- Email: [safeguarding@ofentseyouthwellness.org]
- Written report delivered to DSO

11.7 Protection from Retaliation

- No one will face negative consequences for reporting concerns in good faith
- Retaliation against reporters is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action
- False or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action

12. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

12.1 Confidentiality Principles

Learner Privacy:

- Information about learners must be kept confidential
- Share information only on a need-to-know basis
- Obtain consent before sharing (except when safety requires immediate disclosure)

Limits of Confidentiality: Confidentiality must be broken when:

- A learner discloses abuse or harm
- A learner is at risk of harming themselves or others
- Required by law
- Necessary to protect others from harm

12.2 Information Sharing with Schools

- The DSO may share relevant information with school authorities to ensure learner safety
- Information will be shared professionally and sensitively
- Schools have a duty to protect learners and will follow their own safeguarding protocols

12.3 Information Sharing with Authorities

- When reporting to police or social services, share only relevant information
- Cooperate fully with investigations
- Follow legal requirements regarding information sharing

12.4 Internal Sharing

- Safeguarding information is shared on a need-to-know basis within the organization
- Board members may receive anonymized reports for oversight
- Volunteers are informed of general safeguarding updates but not confidential case details

12.5 Record Keeping

- All safeguarding concerns must be documented
- Records are kept securely and confidentially
- Access is restricted to the DSO, Board Chairperson, and authorized personnel
- Records are retained in accordance with legal requirements (minimum 7 years)

13. SUPPORTING LEARNERS AT RISK**13.1 Immediate Support**

When a learner discloses abuse or is identified as at risk:

- Ensure their immediate safety
- Provide emotional support and reassurance

- Avoid causing further distress
- Connect them to appropriate support services

13.2 Referral Pathways

Mental Health Support:

- **SADAG 24/7 Helpline:** 0800 567 567
- **SADAG SMS:** 31393
- **Suicide Crisis Line:** 0800 567 567

Child Protection:

- **Childline South Africa:** 0800 055 555
- **Social Workers:** Through schools or Department of Social Development

School-Based Support:

- School counsellors
- School social workers
- Life Orientation educators

13.3 Ongoing Support

- Follow up with the school to ensure support is in place
- Respect the learner's privacy and dignity
- Do not treat them differently or draw attention to the situation
- Continue to create safe, supportive workshop environments

13.4 Supporting Volunteers

Dealing with safeguarding concerns can be distressing for volunteers:

- Debriefing sessions available after serious incidents
- Access to support from coordinators and DSO
- Reminder that reporting was the right thing to do
- Opportunity to discuss feelings and concerns

14. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF/VOLUNTEERS

14.1 Taking Allegations Seriously

All allegations against personnel are treated seriously, whether:

- Made by a learner, parent, school, or colleague
- Recent or historical
- Against current or former personnel

14.2 Response to Allegations

Immediate Actions:

- The individual is immediately suspended from all activities involving learners pending investigation
- The DSO and Board Chairperson are notified immediately
- Police are notified if the allegation involves criminal conduct
- The individual is informed of the allegation and suspension (unless this would compromise a police investigation)

Investigation:

- An investigation is conducted by the Board or an independent party
- The individual has the right to respond to allegations
- Confidentiality is maintained for all parties
- The investigation is completed as quickly as possible

Possible Outcomes:

- Allegation substantiated: Termination and potential legal action
- Allegation unsubstantiated: Reinstatement with support
- Allegation false/malicious: Disciplinary action against accuser if appropriate

14.3 Support During Investigation

- The learner receives appropriate support and protection
- The accused individual receives fair treatment and opportunity to respond
- Both parties are kept informed of progress (within confidentiality limits)

14.4 Learning from Incidents

After any serious incident:

- Review what happened and why
- Identify any policy or practice gaps
- Implement improvements
- Share learning (anonymized) with the team

15. SAFE PROGRAM DELIVERY

15.1 Risk Assessment

Before conducting workshops:

- Assess the venue for safety
- Ensure adequate supervision ratios

- Identify any specific risks
- Plan how to mitigate risks

15.2 Workshop Environment

Safe Spaces:

- Workshops conducted in appropriate, school-approved venues
- Adequate lighting and ventilation
- Accessible emergency exits
- Appropriate furniture and setup
- No hazards or dangerous equipment

Supervision:

- Minimum of 2 facilitators present at in-person workshops where possible
- Never leave learners unsupervised
- School staff present or nearby

Group Dynamics:

- Establish ground rules (respect, confidentiality, participation)
- Monitor group dynamics and intervene if needed
- Address bullying or disrespectful behaviour immediately
- Create inclusive environments where all feel safe

15.3 Sensitive Content

When discussing mental health topics:

- Use age-appropriate language and examples
- Be mindful of potential triggers
- Provide content warnings where appropriate
- Have resources available (SADAG contact info, school counsellors)
- Never force learners to share personal experiences
- Respond sensitively if a learner becomes distressed

15.4 Managing Distress

If a learner becomes distressed during a workshop:

- Pause and check in with them privately if needed
- Offer to step outside with them (in view of others)
- Provide reassurance and support
- Connect them to the school counsellor if needed

- Document the incident
- Follow up with the DSO

15.5 Accidents and Emergencies

First Aid:

- Ensure facilitators know where first aid is available
- Never provide medical treatment beyond basic first aid
- Always involve school staff for injuries

Emergencies:

- Know emergency procedures for each venue
- Evacuate if necessary following school protocols
- Account for all learners
- Contact emergency services if needed
- Notify parents/guardians through school

Incident Reporting: All accidents, injuries, or emergencies must be reported using the Incident Report Form.

16. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

16.1 Mandatory Training

All volunteers working with learners must complete safeguarding training covering:

- This policy and their responsibilities
- Recognizing signs of abuse
- Responding to disclosures
- Reporting procedures
- Appropriate boundaries and conduct
- Online safety
- Cultural sensitivity

Training Format:

- In-person or online training sessions
- Duration: Minimum 2 hours
- Must be completed before first workshop
- Refresher training annually

16.2 Ongoing Learning

- Regular safeguarding updates at volunteer meetings

- Case studies and scenarios for discussion (anonymized)
- Updates on legislation or best practices
- Access to additional resources

16.3 Specialized Training

Coordinators and facilitators receive additional training on:

- Supervising other volunteers
- Investigating concerns
- Managing difficult situations
- Trauma-informed practices

16.4 Training Records

- All training attendance is recorded
- Volunteers who do not complete training cannot work with learners
- Training records are maintained by the organization

17. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

17.1 Monitoring

The Board and DSO monitor compliance through:

- Regular safeguarding reports
- Observation of workshops
- Volunteer feedback
- Review of incident reports
- Audit of safeguarding practices

17.2 Key Performance Indicators

- 100% of volunteers complete safeguarding training before working with learners
- All safeguarding concerns reported within 24 hours
- All serious incidents reported to authorities as required
- Annual review of policy completed
- Zero substantiated allegations against personnel (aspirational goal)

17.3 Accountability

- The DSO reports to the Board quarterly on safeguarding matters
- Annual safeguarding report included in organizational reporting
- External audits may be conducted

17.4 Continuous Improvement

- Learn from incidents and near-misses
- Incorporate feedback from learners, schools, and volunteers
- Stay updated on best practices
- Revise policy and practices as needed

18. POLICY REVIEW

18.1 Review Schedule

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually as a minimum
- After any serious safeguarding incident
- When legislation or best practices change
- When organizational structure changes significantly

18.2 Review Process

- DSO coordinates the review
- Input sought from Board, volunteers, and partners
- Revised policy approved by the Board
- All personnel notified of changes
- Updated policy published and distributed

18.3 Version Control

- Each version dated and numbered
- Previous versions archived
- Amendment log maintained