

# OPEN ARMS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

## COMMITTEE AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT & CHILD ABUSE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

With regard to the Supreme Court Judgment and guidelines issued in 1997 to provide for the effective enforcement of the basic human right of gender equality and guarantee against sexual harassment and abuse, more particularly against sexual harassment at workplaces and schools, CBSE has issued circulars since 2004 to all the schools, advising them to establish a permanent cell and a committee and to develop guidelines to combat sexual harassment, violence against women and bullying at the schools. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act & Rules, 2012 deals with all manners of sexual offenses, reporting mechanisms, and subsequent penal consequences.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012. These guidelines serve as a method for numerous stakeholders from teachers to community welfare associations to the police to ensure that all possible steps are taken to prevent Child Abuse and empower children to “recognize symptoms of potentially abusive situations. It has further advised the schools to be proactive by developing a conducive atmosphere on the campus, where the status of woman/ girl students is respected and they are treated equally without any bias or discrimination.

Keeping the above guidelines in view, Open Arms International School, Hosur has constituted a Committee Against Sexual Harassment...

## PROCEDURE FOR APPROACHING COMMITTEE

The Committee deals with issues relating to sexual harassment and child abuse at the Open Arms International School. It is applicable to all students, staff and faculty. A complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment may be lodged by the victim or a third party. A written complaint may be addressed to the Chairman of the committee. If the complaint is made to any of the Committee members, they may forward it to the Chairman of the Committee against Sexual Harassment. Here it should be noted that according to the Supreme Court guideline Sexual harassment can be defined as “unwelcome” sexually determined behavior (whether directly or by implication) as:

- Physical contact and advances;
- Demand or request for sexual favors;
- Sexually colored remarks;
- Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other
- Showing pornography and another unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.
- Showing pornography and another unwelcome physical, verbal or non – verbal conduct by the committee:

**The following is sexual harassment and is covered by the committee:**

- Eve-teasing, Unsavoury remarks, Innuendos and taunts,
- Jokes causing or likely to cause awkwardness or embarrassment,
- Gender based insults or sexist remarks,
- Unwelcome sexual overtone in any manner such as over telephone (obnoxious telephone calls)
- Touching or brushing against any part of the body and the like,
- Displaying pornographic or offensive or derogatory pictures, cartoons, or sayings.
- Forcible physical touch or molestation
- Physical confinement against one's will and any other act likely to violate one's privacy.

## **FUNCTIONS AND ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE**

### **1. WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING MODULES :**

Kamaraj International Academy will conduct workshops and peer training sessions for students, parents, and teachers, twice a year. The aim of these workshops will be:

- \* What constitutes abuse and exploitation?
- \* Manner of reporting and complaining (how and to whom)
- \* To address the nature, cause, and effect of abuse
- \* To counter and deal with the consequences constructively
- \* Self-disclosure and safety guidelines for potential instances ahead

### **2. ROLE OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:**

The committee will elect and appoint 15 student representatives (Senior & Junior School) who will play the following roles:

- \* Act as peer complaint mediators, with whom the students can discuss their issues
- \* Participate in peer workshops and work with teachers towards a plan of action
- \* Create peer facilitators within their own grades, who keep a track of any cases
- \* Report and observe the misbehavior of any student for possible abuse/issue

### **3. EMPLOYEE AWARENESS ABOUT POCSO AND CHILD PROTECTION RIGHTS:**

- \* An annexure highlighting safety rules will be circulated and signed by each employee which makes them aware of their rights as well as duties
- \* The act against any form of abuse will be put up at a visible board for easy access
- \* The complaint protocol and manner of reporting will be written alongside and made visible through notice boards and displays.

### **4. MEETINGS AND TIMELY DISCUSSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE:**

The Committee will also hold timely meetings, to discuss the plan of actions, potential cases, queries and updates which will be supervised by the Principal Mr. Jaya Kumar.

This will ensure the functioning and progress of the implemented ideas within the school.

## **ANNEXURE**

### **SECTION I FUNDAMENTALS OF CHILD PROTECTION**

What is a Child Protection Policy?

A Child Protection Policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates the commitment to safeguarding children from harm and makes clear to all in an institution and who come into contact with it what is required in relation to the protection of children, and that child abuse in any form is unacceptable.

Though the main purpose of the policy is to protect children from all forms of harm and create an enabling environment, it is also a tool to enhance the commitment of the organization to provide a child-friendly environment through sensitizing persons associated and enforcing this policy.

- What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse means any form of maltreatment inflicted on a child including physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.

#### **Indicators of Abuse:**

##### **Physical & Sexual Abuse**

- Unexplained burns, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object
- Bite marks
- Anti social, violent, and/or abrasive behavior
- Problems in school
- Fear of adults
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Self-destructive or suicidal behavior
- Depression or poor self-image

##### **Emotional Abuse**

- Nightmares and bedwetting
- Drastic changes in appetite
- Over compliance or excessive aggression
- Fear of a particular person
- Withdrawal, secretiveness, or depression
- Suicidal behavior
- Eating disorders

#### **Article 23**

Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions that ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

#### **Article 28**

Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a

manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

#### **Article 34**

Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

- (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Legal framework for Child Protection in India/Delhi

- A. The Constitution of India
- B. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012
- C. The Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and The Delhi Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Rules, 2009
- D. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009

#### **SECTION II**

Appropriate Standards of Behavior for Staff & Employees Adults should:

- i. Provide an enabling environment for children's personal, physical, social, emotional, moral, and intellectual development.
- ii. Encourage and respect other employee's and children's voices and views.
- iii. Be inclusive and involve all children without selection or exclusion on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or any other status.
- iv. Be aware of the potential for peer abuse (eg: children bullying, discriminating against, victimizing or abusing children).
- v. Develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable children from peer and adult abuse.
- vi. Be aware of high-risk peer situations (eg: unsupervised mixing of older and younger children and the possibility of discrimination against minors).
- vii. Avoid placing oneself in a compromising or vulnerable situation when meeting with children.
- viii. Meet with a child in a public, central location whenever possible.
- ix. Immediately report the circumstances of any situation which occurs which may be subject to misinterpretation.
- x. Make oneself aware and educated on the laws, rules, and guidelines related to child protection as amended from time to time.

#### **Complaint Mechanism:**

- i. Children in institutional care or their representatives can make individual requests or complaints to the director/management of the institution.
- ii. In case of complaints against professional staff such as nurses or teachers, among others, working with and for children, a complaint can be made to the Monitoring Committee.
- iii. The Committee will appoint a person responsible for attending to all complaints brought before it in a time-bound and confidential manner.

### **SECTION III**

#### **Disciplinary Action**

The disciplinary action will be commensurate with the nature of the violation (students)

- Warning
- Written apology
- Bond of good behavior
- Debarring entry into hostel /campus Suspension for a specific period of time Withholding results
- Debarring from exams
- Debarring from contesting elections
- Debarring from holding leadership posts or membership of Committees
- Expulsion
- Denial of admission
- Any other relevant mechanism