NWST Child Safety and Protection Policy

This Policy is issued on the authority of the Board of Trustees, Nairobi Waldorf School Trust.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Name……………………………………………………………

Signature………………………………………………………..

Date………………………………………………………………

POLICY AMENDMENTS

Serial No.	Amendment	Date of Amendment	Nature of Change	Name and designation of the authorized person	Signature authorizing the person

FORWARD

Children have a right to survival, development, Education, protection, and participation amongst other rights. The NWST takes its responsibility seriously and will endeavor at all times to provide the safest possible environment for the children in its care.

We will take all necessary and reasonable steps to safeguard the interests, rights, and well-being of those children with whom the NWST is in contact and will advocate to strengthen the protection and promote the rights of all children in our Larger Community.

I, therefore, want to call upon all the stakeholders of the NWST to be at the forefront of implementing principles and procedures as set out in this document to protect the children from any possible abuse and exploitation by all stakeholders who are working with or have contact with children

This is a new policy in our institution and I wish to categorically state that adherence to this policy is a mandatory requirement for all the NWST Stakeholders as we nurture and develop our Children into wholistic beings.

This policy has been developed by the office of the NWST SD and is responsible for its enforcement not only in this policy but also in other policies that work in conjunction with it. The policy is reviewed from time to time

This Policy is reviewed and enforced by the School Director, of Nairobi Waldorf School Trust.

Name…….………………….………………….……….……

Signature………………….………………….……………….…..

Date…….………………….………………….………………….…..

ABBREVIATIONS

NWST   **Nairobi Waldorf School Trust**

SD   **School Director**

DSD   **Deputy School Director**

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INTRODUCTION

The welfare and safety of students[1] are paramount in the NWST Policies and Procedures. At NWST, we intend to provide a safe and loving environment where students are nurtured and cared for in a way that allows them to become all they are capable of being (developing into wholistic beings). This includes valuing them, regarding them positively, and treating them with respect and care.

Having a common set of expectations will also serve to protect staff [2] interacting with students from invalid reports of inappropriate behavior. By putting these guidelines into place, a staff's interaction with a student is much more transparent to others and less likely to be interpreted incorrectly. The staff assumes the full burden of setting and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all interactions with students.

The NWST, calls upon the entire Community to be at the forefront of ensuring that the environment is very safe and conducive for all our children while they are in school and even at home.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

WALDORF ETHOS AND PRACTICES

The NWST Operates within the Waldorf ethos and practices that work in conjunction with the Kenyan constitution and many other binding international human rights instruments including; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the United Nations General Assembly Resolution S-27/2: A World Fit for Children and The Convention on the Rights of the Child. In Kenya, the Children's Act 2001 and the recently promulgated constitution elaborately protects the child and outline clearly the consequences of default. NWST has committed to abide by local law. Concerning the treatment of students, where local law is more prescriptive or strict than the guidelines here, then local law must be followed. The Nairobi Waldorf School Trust (NWST) will not hesitate to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law as well as what is stipulated in the NWST Standard Operations Manual.

Children are defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as being under 18 years old. However, The Nairobi Waldorf School (NWST) considers any student (regardless of age) in the school protected until they are no longer in the school.

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[1]Throughout this document the term **"student"** refers to children in the care of NWST, regardless of age.

[2] Throughout this document the term "**adult"** refers to anyone 18 years of age and older.

[3] Throughout this document the term **"staff"** refers to anyone employed by NWST, casual workers on NWST property, anyone doing business with the NWST, Expatriates (both long and short term), interns, volunteers, and anyone else contracted by NWST.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The most effective way to ensure child safety is to ensure that all staff are vigilant. By being vigilant in adhering to the following standards for interaction with students, we hope to keep our students safe.

This Code of Conduct includes but is not limited to, the following expectations of the staff.

Visibility: All work with students should be planned in a way that minimizes risks as far as possible. This includes being visible to other staff when working with students. This can be accomplished by planning activities in areas where other staff are present and at a time when other activities are occurring. It can also be accomplished by installing windows in classrooms and other rooms occupied by students or by keeping the doors open.

Isolation: At least two unrelated staff should be present in group work with students. Isolation can be avoided by not being alone with one student. For example, being in an enclosed place with only one student is not recommended but rather having two or more students.

Accountability: All staff are expected to interact with students in a mature, capable, safe, caring, and responsible manner, with a high level of accountability. All staff are responsible for giving and accepting feedback from others to maintain high professionalism and integrity in interactions with students.

When ministry to a student involves one-on-one contact, the following procedures should be followed:

1. Always be accountable to other staff regarding your interactions with students.
2. Parents and/or supervisors are to be notified beforehand of any activities with students in isolation (e.g., transporting a student, keeping a student after school, tutoring).
3. Counseling or other necessarily confidential meetings with students should be done in a place where the staff and student are visible to others such as in an office with a window in the door and only when another staff is in close vicinity, aware that the meeting is occurring, and is willing to stay in the vicinity until it is completed.
4. In an emergency, such as needing to transport a student alone or supervise a student alone, find an additional person to be involved if at all possible, or notify whoever is available.

Balancing Power and Control: When working with children, balance the age, size, strength, power, and authority between staff and students to help lower the risk. For example, staff should avoid being in an isolated place with a student alone but rather have two or more students or a sibling play in the room while talking to a student after school.

Supervision: Supervision also reduces risk. The various Heads of Departments, and Pedagogical Team Leaders, should periodically and randomly inspect classrooms, offices, work areas, and other areas where students and staff are together.

Differential Treatment: Staff should avoid favoring or showing differential treatment to particular students to the exclusion of the student in a derogatory or embarrassing way.

Technology: Technology should be used appropriately to protect students from abuse and exploitation. For example, filters can be used to prevent individuals from showing inappropriate internet content to

students.

Discipline: Discipline should be used to teach and correct rather than punish. The intention here is to clarify which actions are more likely to approach physical or emotional abuse than they are to be good, healthy forms of discipline. The following actions are considered abusive:

- Derogatory name-calling
- Ridicule
- Humiliation or shaming
- Publicly singling out a student for negative treatment or exclusion
- Yelling at, belittling a student, or other forms of hostile or rejecting treatment
- Hitting (including slapping) or any behavior that assaults a student
- Pushing
- Holding a student against their will outside the goals of protecting them from danger
- Providing them with medical care
- Keeping them from harming themselves or others.

Touch:

1. Touch should be in response to the need of the student and not the need of the staff.
2. Touch should be open rather than secretive. For example, a hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
3. Touch should always communicate respect for the student. Staff should avoid doing things of a personal nature for students that they can do for themselves, including dressing, bathing, etc.

The following signs of affection are generally appropriate: verbal praise, side hugs, or shoulder-to-shoulder hugs. For smaller students, touching their hands, faces, shoulders and arms, arms around their shoulders, hugs, or holding them when others are present. Staff should monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

The following behaviors are inappropriate or are perceived as inappropriate:
- Touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs
- Showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a student
- Flirtatious or seductive looks
- Any form of affection that is unwanted by a student
- Sexually-suggestive or explicit language
- Showing sexually-suggestive pictures or videos or playing sexually-suggestive games with a student

Verbal Interaction: Staff should use words to support and encourage a student, such as praise, positive reinforcement, and appropriate jokes. Inappropriate verbal interaction includes the following:

- Shaming

- Belittling
- Humiliating
- Name-calling
- Using harsh language that may frighten
- Threaten
- Humiliate the student
- Cursing
- Making derogatory remarks about the student, their family, and/or their place of origin.
- Inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development
- Telling derogatory or sexual jokes
- Making sexually suggestive comments
- Telling inappropriate secrets
- Inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with students.

Monitoring Student-to-Student Behavior: The following actions involve abuse or inappropriate behavior of one student to another and are to be avoided:

- Bullying
- Hazing
- Derogatory name-calling
- Ridicule or humiliation
- Publicly singling out another student for negative treatment or exclusion
- Student-to-student inappropriate sexual touch
- Inappropriate sexually explicit language
- Showing sexually explicit images
- Hitting or slapping
- Pushing
- Pulling ears
- Holding against their will
- Assaulting another student

Dress Code: Staff should come to work clean and dressed appropriately and modestly. They should avoid indecent exposure of body parts, no cleavage or stomach showing shirts, no skirts above knee length, no tank tops, and no tight or clingy clothing. The Supervisor reserves the right to send staff home due to inappropriate dressing, with the deduction of their hours missed from their pay. Blatant disregard for the dress code will result in termination.

Confidentiality and Privacy: Every child has a right to privacy and confidentiality. In this regard, no NWST Staff /Stakeholder without the permission of the NWST Board or the Management shall be allowed to share unnecessary information about any NSWT child or student by virtue of their position. A child's right to privacy and confidentiality shall be respected by all.

Use of Student images: Since images of children are often exploited and children are vulnerable to trafficking and abuse, NWST is committed to respecting our students' dignity and identity. This

includes but is not limited to:

1. Responsible use of students' images and stories.
2. Awareness of the extra confidentiality and protection needed by students when communicating their stories (e.g. students orphaned by or living with AIDS, victims of abuse, etc.)

DEFINITIONS

CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse can be defined as the ill-treatment of a child under the age of 18 (or any student under the care of NWST) by a parent, caretaker, someone living in their home, or any adult or staff who works at NWST in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. Abuse of a student is any action (or lack of action) that causes injury or endangers or impairs a student's physical, mental, or emotional health and development. Child abuse can be physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or neglect. All forms of abuse and neglect are harmful to the child.

The legal definition of abuse refers to actions against individuals under the age of 18. However, NWST defines abuse to include all students under our care. In addition, the following actions may involve abuse of one student to another and should be prohibited: bullying, hazing, derogatory name-calling, ridicule or humiliation, or singling out a student for negative treatment or exclusion.

NWST confines its policy and procedures to protection from the following kinds of maltreatment of students: sexual abuse, physical abuse, verbal and emotional abuse, and neglect.

TYPES OF ABUSE

Sexual Abuse
Sexual abuse is the involvement of a student in sexual activity. Sexual activity can be between a student and an adult or another student who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust, and power. This may include but is not limited to:

a) **Verbal:** Remarks which include sexual threats, innuendoes, comments about a student's body or appearance, solicitation, inappropriate sexual talking, obscene phone calls or SMS, obscene or inappropriate sexual talking via the internet or Facebook, inappropriately affectionate comments, or any verbal expression with intent to arouse or stimulate; in summary, any obscene communication.

b). **Visual**: Indecent exposure, showing or taking of suggestive pictures, asking to see under a student's clothes for any reason, peeping, leering, or staring. Visual sexual abuse also includes voyeurism[4], exhibitionism[5], the showing of pornographic material of genitals, or the showing of any sexual activity or simulated sexual activity such as masturbation or intercourse.

c). **Physical Touching:** Fondling, sexual touching, masturbation in front of or to the victim, rubbing, holding, and kissing. Further examples include oral, genital, anal, and breast

stimulation; penetration by the penis, fingers, or any other body part or object, of mouth, anus, or vagina; physical contact with a person's clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or in the case of a female, breast.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is inflicted physical injury or pain, corporal punishment, or unjustified punishment. Physical abuse includes:

- Slapping
- Caning
- Punching
- Beating
- Kicking
- Biting
- Shaking
- Burning
- Holding underwater
- Pulling ears
- Pinching
- Making students kneel on rough ground and walk on their knees
- Throwing things at a student (chalk, pencils, rubbers)
- Inappropriate punishment (placing a child in a cupboard or giving punishments that are too large in comparison to the offense)
- Holding against one's will

Emotional and Verbal Abuse

Emotional abuse is acting toward a student that causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the student's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. Such acts include:

- Patterns of belittling
- Denigrating
- Scapegoating
- Threatening
- Scaring
- Humiliation
- Screaming
- Blaming
- Discriminating
- Ridiculing
- Name-calling
- Racial/tribal comments
- Creating a climate of fear in the classroom
- Other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers, and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. Neglect also includes depriving a child of their basic needs of food, warmth and shelter, emotional and physical security and protection, medical and dental care, cleanliness, education, and supervision.

[4] **Voyeurism**: obtaining sexual gratification from seeing sex organs and sexual acts; one who habitually seeks sexual stimulation by visual means

[5] **Exhibitionism**: a perversion marked by a tendency to indecent exposure

[6] **Hazing:** harassing, exacting humiliation tasks as a form of initiation into a group, playing rough practical jokes upon.

BREACHING OF THE POLICY

The welfare and safety of students are paramount in the Nairobi Waldorf School Trust (NWST) Policies and Procedures.

The NWST, calls upon the entire Community to be at the forefront of ensuring that the environment is very safe and conducive for all our children while they are in school and even at home.

However, we may have cases where this Policy is breached. In such circumstances and scenarios, this should be reported immediately either directly or indirectly to any of the NWST Board Members, or the Management team, and the information will be guarded with the lot of Confidentiality it deserves.

Consequences of a Breach of the Policy

Any parent, member of school staff, or student may notify the NWST Pedagogical Chair, Deputy School Director, or the School Director of a possible breach of this policy. They will investigate the complaint or report given and if satisfied that a breach has occurred:

 a. One will be culpable by the Law.

 b. Summary dismissal.

c. Warnings with restrictions.

d. Transfer to another Campus.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed from time to time by the Constitution of Kenya, Waldorf Ethos, and, Children's Acts

This Policy also will work in conjunction with the following policies:

 1. NWST Complaints and Raising Concerns Policy.

 2. NWST Communication Policy.

3. NWST Conflict Resolution Policy.

4. NWST Whistleblowing Policy.