

Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children Child Safeguarding Policy

1 Introduction

At the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children (HKSPC), our vision is to lead and excel in keeping children healthy, happy and safe. Our mission is to provide for and promote the care, education and social development of children and families in partnership with the community. HKSPC believes that all forms of abuse are violations of a child's human rights and are thus detrimental to a child's holistic development.

HKSPC is committed to the safeguarding of children. All children have an equal right to protection regardless of their age, gender, ability, culture, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity. HKSPC's Child Safeguarding Policy defines child abuse and provides guidelines and principles for responding to and handling suspected child abuse incidents. It also introduces measures to strengthen safeguarding of children.

HKSPC recognizes that there is variability in the cultural norms, parenting and child-rearing practices within the local community, and is committed to addressing child safeguarding matters sensitively, with strict adherence to the laws of Hong Kong and any relevant rules and regulations.

All staff and related third parties at HKSPC have a fundamental legal, professional and ethical obligation to support and protect the children under our care. We take all allegations of child maltreatment and harm seriously and is committed to preventing abuse of all forms.

2 Purpose

In fulfilling HKSPC's vision, mission and its core values, the safety and wellbeing of children is of paramount importance.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff who work for and engage with us are skilled, confident and have the necessary support to meet their responsibilities in safeguarding children from violence and engaging positively with them in ways that enhance the achievement of our mission; and children and their parents or guardians we work with are aware of our

responsibilities to prevent and respond to any harm against them arising from actions and behaviours of our staff and related third parties within our premises, and the channels for reporting such incidents.

3 Policy Statement

At HKSPC, we believe in the inherent rights, freedom, dignity and equality of children. Children is extremely vulnerable and deserve higher standards of protection.

HKSPC has zero-tolerance for maltreatment of any kind against children. We are committed to the upholding of the rights of children, creating and proactively maintaining an organisational culture and operational environment that prevent, deter and detect any actions (intended or unintended) that place children at risk of any form of violence and harm.

Any violation of this policy will be treated as a serious issue and will result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment or for related third parties any other available remedy.

4 Guiding Principles

This policy is based on the laws of Hong Kong and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which China is a signatory. HKSPC is responsible for the provision of a safe and nurturing environment for all children it serves, and it acts on child safeguarding concerns to ensure timely and appropriate actions. To emphasize the principle of confidentiality, we take all precautions to ensure the security of confidential information, including but without limitation to children's information.

5 Scope of the Policy

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of all staff and related third parties who participate in the work of HKSPC. This policy applies to all HKSPC staff and related third parties. All HKSPC advisors, members of the Executive Committee and its Committees, staff and related third parties are required to comply with HKSPC's Child Safeguarding Policy.

6 Whistleblowing Policy

HKSPC is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. HKSPC expects and encourages the employees and related third parties (e.g. partners, contractors, suppliers, volunteers and instructors, etc.) who have concerns about suspected misconduct, malpractice or irregularities within HKSPC to come forward and voice those concerns. We will endeavour to respond to the concerns fairly and properly. The Whistleblowing Policy of HKSPC applies under its Child Safeguarding Policy.

7 Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the personal data, including staff and children information, obtained in the course of day to day business should be protected both legally and ethically under Article 14 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights (Cap. 383), PDPO and the relevant professional code of ethics or practices (e.g. the Code of Practice of the Social Workers Registration Board). However, in exceptional cases, depending on the circumstances, disclosure may be justified when disclosure of the information is necessary, such as in the case of a report to the Hong Kong Police Force concerning suspected criminal activities.

8 Handling Procedures

HKSPC is committed to a child-centred and coordinated approach to keeping all children safe. Effective safeguarding practices range from preventive measures, awareness raising, education, training, response and reporting mechanisms, and diligent follow up procedures on allegations of maltreatment or neglect.

9 Implementing Child Safeguarding in Practice

9.1 Awareness

HKSPC shall ensure that all persons working for or on behalf of the organisation are aware of its high standards of child safeguarding behaviour.

9.2 Safe Recruitment Practice

HKSPC is committed to practicing safe recruitment and selection of staff. A statement is included in all job advertisements and recruitment communication: “HKSPC is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our children. All applicants must be willing to undergo thorough background checks and child safeguarding screening.”

10 Implementation, Monitoring and Review

This policy should be reviewed at regular intervals by the Child Safeguarding Focal Point at least every three years or whenever there are changes in relevant legislation and/or government guidelines.

The Risk Management, Compliance & Internal Audit Department (RMD) is responsible for monitoring the effective implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure in HKSPC.

Key Contacts:

- HKSPC's Child Safeguarding Consultant, Ms Gloria LAU Yin-ling, is the Designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point (CSFP) (Tel: 3184 6609/2691 0188; Email: csg@hkspc.org)
- Audit and Risk Management Director, Mr. William YUE, is the Head of RMD (Tel: 3184 7260; Email: williamyue@hkspc.org)

Date of Establishment:	8 December 2022
Date of Approval by Executive Committee:	8 December 2022
Effective Date:	8 December 2022
Next Date of Review:	8 December 2025