



SCS Staff Code of Conduct for Child Safety

Introduction

The welfare and safety of children are paramount in SCS's policies and procedures. SCS's intent is to provide a safe and loving environment where children are nurtured and cared for in a way that allows them to learn and grow in order to become all they are capable of being. 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 adults interacting with children from invalid reports of inappropriate behaviour. By putting these guidelines into place, an adult's interaction with a child is much more transparent to others and less likely to be interpreted incorrectly. Adults¹ (including members, employees and volunteers) assume the full burden of setting and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all interaction with children.

The definitions and guidelines below take into consideration international definitions of child sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and neglect. In light of our very multinational workforce, we have modeled our policies on the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) definitions and standards and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child definitions and standards. ISPCAN is the only multidisciplinary international organization that brings together a worldwide cross-section of committed professionals to work towards the prevention and treatment of child abuse, neglect and exploitation globally. Built on varied legal systems and cultural traditions, the Convention is a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations. These basic standards set minimum freedoms that should be respected by governments. UNICEF's mission is to uphold this standard. [192 of the 195 countries](#) in the world today are [UN members](#).

SCS has made a commitment to abide by local law. With regard to the treatment of children, where local law is more prescriptive or strict than the guidelines here, then local law must be followed.

Our intent is not to be overly prescriptive in how parents raise their children. However, these guidelines need to be succinct and clear and use language that is generally understood by speakers of English and is consistent with other networks and external bodies that are also seeking the best for children. We assume that each person will use good judgment in applying these guidelines in their family and/or work setting.

The most effective way to prevent abuse of children is to be vigilant. By being vigilant in adhering to the following standards for interaction with children, we hope to protect children from abuse.

This Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following expectations of staff.²

¹ Throughout this document the term "adult" refers to anyone 18 years of age or older.

² Throughout this document the term "staff" refers to SCS members, employees, and volunteers.

Within the work situation

In any situation with children we should use as many of these safeguards as possible with a minimum of at least one. This will reduce risk and demonstrate professionalism and wisdom resulting in healthy interaction with children.

1. Visibility

All work with children should be planned in a way that minimizes risks as far as possible. This includes being visible to other adults when working with children.

This can be accomplished by planning activities in areas where other adults are present and at a time when other activities are occurring. It can also be accomplished by installing windows in all classrooms and other rooms occupied by children or by keeping doors open.

2. Overcoming Isolation

At least two unrelated³ adults should be present in group work with children. An adequate number of adults should supervise youth events, especially overnight activities.

Isolation can also be overcome by avoiding being alone with one child. For example, take two or more children to the bathroom together, rather than only one; drop off siblings last in a carpool or take your own child along when providing rides, or employ the principles of visibility (explained above) or accountability (explained below).

3. Accountability

All staff are expected to interact with children 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 in order to maintain a high level of professionalism and integrity in interactions with children.

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

- Always be accountable to other adults regarding your interactions with children.
- Parents and/or supervisors are to be notified beforehand of any activities with children, for example, before transporting a child, keeping a child after school, a youth activity, or when tutoring a child.
- Counseling or other necessarily confidential meetings with children should be done in a place where the adult and child are visible to others such as in an office with a window in the door and only when another adult is in close vicinity, aware that the meeting is occurring, and willing to stay in the vicinity until it is completed.
- In an emergency situation, such as needing to transport a child alone or supervise a child alone, find an additional person to be involved if at all possible, or notify whoever is available.

4. Balancing Power and Control

When working with children balance the age, size, strength, power, and authority between staff and children to help to lower risk. This can be done by such things as sending two same age children to the

³ Not from the same family.

bathroom together with an adolescent or adult helper, dropping off siblings last in a carpool, or having a friend play in the room while talking to a student after school, or inviting two or more students to your home to work on a project.

5. Supervision

Supervision also reduces risk. Program administrators should periodically and randomly inspect classrooms, offices, work areas and other areas where children and adults are together.

6. Differential Treatment

Adults should avoid favoring or showing differential treatment to particular children to the exclusion of and in the presence of others, or excluding children in a derogatory or embarrassing way in the presence of others.

Within the work situation, the family or other settings where children are present: Technology

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

Discipline

Discipline should be used to teach and correct rather than punish. Our 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 may involve abuse and are to be avoided: derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation or shaming, publically singling out a child for negative treatment or exclusion, yelling at (loud speech that harms by bringing emotional degradation) or belittling a child or other forms of hostile or rejecting treatment. Other behaviors to be avoided include: hitting (including slapping) or any behavior that assaults a child. Also, to be avoided are pushing or holding a child against their will outside the goals of protecting them from danger, providing them medical care or keeping them from harming themselves or others. Physical discipline by a parent of their own children, such as spanking or paddling, is not considered abuse as long as it is reasonable, not done in anger, and causes no bodily injury to the child.

Touch

Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children but unhealthy touch is abusive, the following guidelines apply:

- Touch should be in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult.
- 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.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult. It should be with the child's permission and resistance from the child should be respected.
- Touch should always communicate respect for the child. Adults should avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they are able to 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 children, touching their hands, faces, shoulders and arms, arms around their shoulders (when culturally appropriate), hugs, or holding them when others are present.

The following behaviors are inappropriate or may be perceived as inappropriate and should not be engaged in: touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs except to keep infants or young children clean or healthy; showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child; sleeping with a child not your own or lying on a bed with a child not your own; flirtatious or seductive looks; any form of affection that is unwanted by the child; sexually-suggestive or explicit language, showing sexually-suggestive pictures or videos or playing sexually-suggestive games with a child; any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature.

Adults should monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

Verbal Interaction

Adults should use words to support and encourage a child, 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 or humiliate the child, cursing, or making derogatory remarks about the child, their family, and/or their place of origin. Inappropriate verbal interaction also includes inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development, telling derogatory or sexual jokes, making sexually suggestive comments, telling inappropriate secrets, or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with children.

Final comments:

Parent Involvement

Parents are responsible for knowing where their children are at all times. Therefore, parents should be informed of planned school activities (e.g. trips included in the schedule for the term) and be expected to sign a consent form.

Monitoring Child-to-Child Behavior

The following actions may involve abuse or inappropriate behavior of one child to another and are to be avoided: bullying, hazing,⁴ derogatory name-calling, ridicule or humiliation, publically singling out another child for negative treatment or exclusion, child-to-child inappropriate sexual touch, inappropriate sexually explicit language, showing of sexually explicit images, hitting, slapping, pushing, holding against their will, or otherwise assaulting another child.

⁴ Harassing, exacting humiliating tasks as a form of initiation into a group, playing rough practical jokes upon.

Acknowledgement Statement

I acknowledge that I have read the above, agree to abide by it. I agree to attend the annual SCS training in Child Safety Awareness and Prevention.

I declare that I have not engaged in sexual abuse, physical abuse, a pattern of emotional abuse, or neglect of a child. If I have engaged in any of these abusive actions, they have been reported to the SCS board and director and I have either successfully concluded the required follow-up or am engaged actively in it. Further, I have never been the subject of a complaint, disciplinary action, or dismissal by an employer, church, ministry, or other volunteer organization following an allegation of any such acts. Nor have I been the subject of an investigation of such acts by civil authorities. If I have been the subject of an allegation of such acts, regardless of the outcome of the allegation, I have notified the director.

I understand my responsibility to report abuse and other inappropriate conduct toward a child to the director or principal of my area of assignment who will take appropriate actions.

I understand SCS takes allegations of child abuse seriously and that abuse in any form will not be tolerated. I understand that SCS will cooperate with civil authorities in the investigation of any report of abuse.

I have read this acknowledgement form and voluntarily sign it.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

