

SAFEGUARDING & INCIDENT REPORTING POLICY

Policy Title	Safeguarding & Incident Reporting Policy
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Approved By	Inderjot Singh
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Small Steps Safeguarding & Incident Reporting Policy

Scope of Policy:

This policy applies to all incidents that may arise requiring additional documentation or parent notification, which are not foreseeable by Small Steps.

Staff Training: All Small Steps employees are required to complete Safeguarding training. Currently, Small Steps employees have successfully completed the following Safeguarding training courses:

- *Principles of Paediatric First Aid;*
- *Safeguarding-Child Protection (Level 1);*
- *Safeguarding- Child Protection (Level 2);*
- *Health and Safety (Level 2).*

SSBD DSL: Veronica Lucy Micalizio is the SSBD DSL.

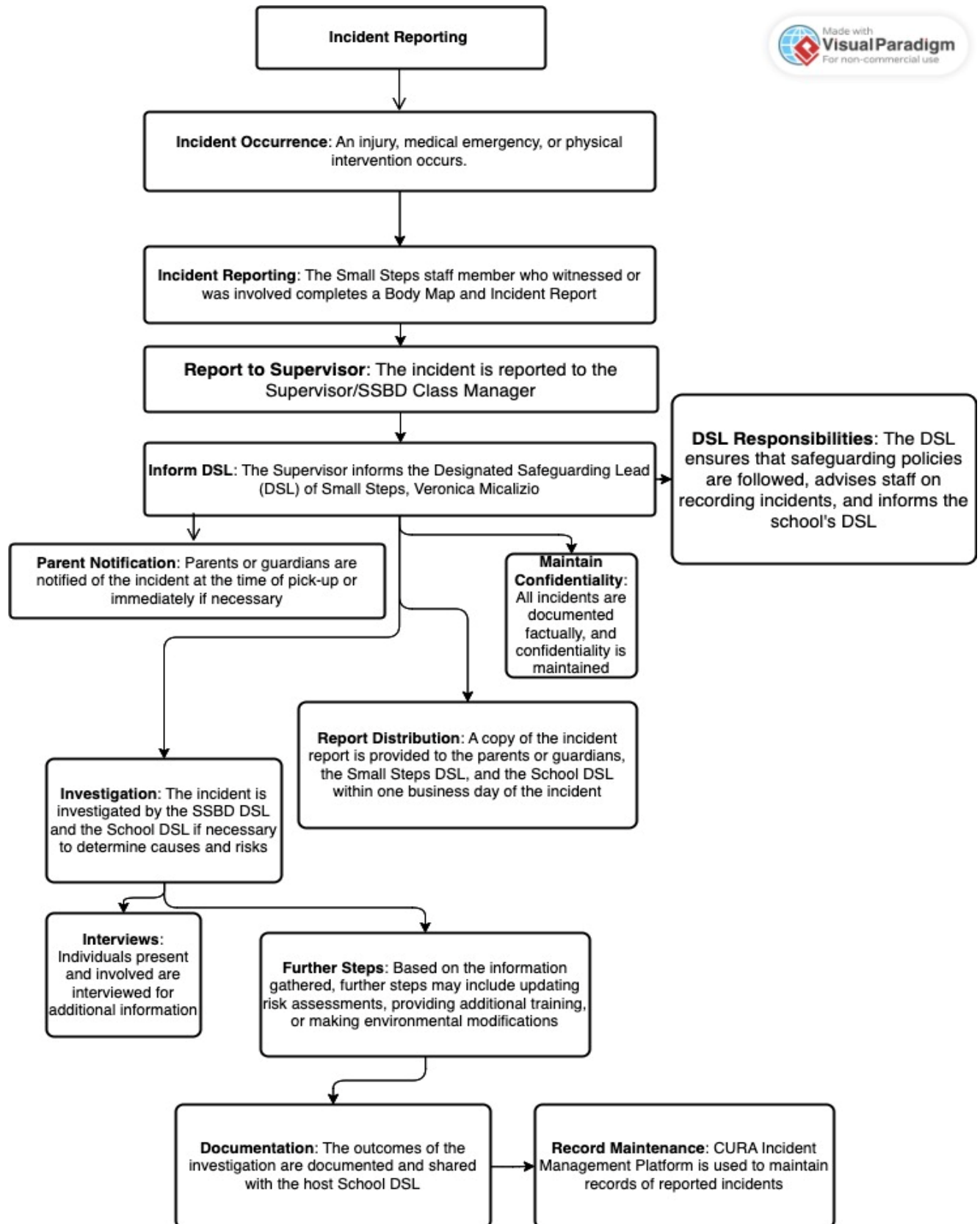
DDSLs: Each SSBD Supervisor/Class Manager is a DDSL.

Incident Reporting

Small Steps is unable to predict all situations that may arise that may require additional documentation or parent notification. If any notable situation occurs pertaining to an injury, medical emergency, or physical intervention required, an incident report will be completed by the Small Steps staff who witnessed or was involved in the incident.

1. **Incident Reporting:** In the event of an injury, medical emergency, or when physical intervention is required, a Body Map and Incident Report shall be completed by the Small Steps staff member who witnessed or was involved in the incident; This includes documenting detailed information beyond the location, date, and time of the incident, such as the context, the individuals involved, and the sequence of events leading to the incident. Interventions which require use of Positive Handling Procedures should also be reported.
2. The **Incident will be reported** to the **Supervisor/SSBD Class Manager** who are each a **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)** and can deputize for the DSL in case of absence;
3. The **Supervisor will in turn, inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) of Small Steps** (Veronica Micalizio, Program Director);
 - a. The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** is responsible for ensuring that SSBD's safeguarding policies are followed by all staff members. They are tasked with creating and enforcing the company's safeguarding policy, training staff to recognize signs of abuse and neglect, maintaining accurate child protection records, maintaining ongoing communication and collaboration of the host School, and

- informing the School D/DSL of any incidents which occur within the SSBD classroom, and/or affect a student of SSBD while in mainstream classes.
- b. The DSL is the main point of contact for any safeguarding or child protection concerns within SSBD. The DSL also advises staff on recording incidents and takes initial steps to inform the school's DDSL or DSL.
 - c. The incident report is reviewed by the DSL of SSBD, and by the host School D/DSL if required;
 - d. Individuals present and involved are interviewed to gain any additional information;
 - e. Investigation is carried out by the School D/DSL if deemed necessary by the School, in order to determine the causes, risks, and to put in place additional measures to ensure such incidents do not re-occur. Investigation of the incident involves a systematic approach to ensure all aspects of the incident are thoroughly examined and documented.
 - f. Further steps are taken based on the information gathered; this may include: updating the individual student Risk Assessment; providing additional training to staff; or applying reasonable environmental modifications.
4. SSBD uses *CURA Safeguarding* Platform to maintain records of reported incidents within Small Steps. CURA's Safeguarding software provides real-time visibility through interactive dashboards and reports, in order to expediate the existing incident management processes. It helps to ensure confidentiality, create a safer workplace, and better manage risks by enabling the reporting, classification, and management of incidents.



Suspicious of Abuse or Neglect

Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report their suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding Lead of Small Steps, who in turn will report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the School. All staff, faculty and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect must be made to the counselor within 24 hours for immediate response.

Reporting:

- a. When a child reports abuse or self-harm or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect is occurring, the staff will report and follow advice from the Small Steps DSL within 24 hours.
- b. The DSL will advise the staff to record the incident and will take initial steps to inform the D/DSL of the school. In all cases, follow
- c. -up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually, and that strict confidentiality is maintained.
- d. In cases of observed injury/bruising, the child will be referred to the school nurse. The injury will be recorded, and information provided to the school-based response team.

Physical abuse: may involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, hair pulling or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child. (These symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as cutting and suicidal ideation). Signs of physical abuse (including but not limited to):

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc. Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Being aggressive towards others
- Being very passive and compliant
- Chronic running away

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve: conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; that they are inadequate or valued only if they meet the needs of another person; age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children; causing children frequently to feel frightened; or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

Signs of emotional abuse (Including but not limited to):

- Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed
- Highly anxious behavior
- Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
- Fear of new situations
- Low self-esteem
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration Attention-seeking behavior
- Persistent tiredness
- Lying

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, regardless of whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Children involved in commercial sex work are victims of sexual abuse, whether they perceive themselves as victims or not.

Signs of sexual abuse (Including but not limited to):

- Pain or irritation to the genital area Vaginal or penile discharge.
- Difficulty with urination Infection, bleeding, STDs.
- Fear of people or places Aggression.
- Regressive behaviors, bed-wetting or stranger anxiety Excessive masturbation.
- Sexually provocative behavior.
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting.
- Being unusually quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive.

- Suffering from what seem to be physical ailments that can't be explained medically.
- Showing fear or distrust of a particular adult.
- Mentioning receiving special attention from an adult or a new “secret” friendship with an adult or young person.
- Refusal to continue with school or usual social activities.
- Age-inappropriate sexualized behavior or language.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child’s health or development.

Grooming: when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer. Young people are often 'groomed' before they are sexually abused. At first, they may be tricked into thinking they are in a safe and normal relationship so they may not know it’s happening or may feel they have no choice but to be abused. It may be hard to identify when someone is being groomed until after they have been sexually abused, because grooming behavior can sometimes look like ‘normal’ caring behavior, however, this is not always the case.

Examples of grooming behavior may include:

- Giving gifts or special attention to a child or young person, or their parent or carer, making the child or young person feel special and/or indebted to an adult.
- Making close physical contact sexual, such as inappropriate tickling and wrestling/play fighting.
- Openly or pretending to accidentally expose the victim to nudity, sexual material and sexual acts (this is classified as child sexual abuse but can also be a precursor to physical sexual assault).
- Controlling a child or young person through threats, force or use of authority making the child or young person fearful to report unwanted behavior.
- Groomers may rely on mobile phones, social media and the internet to interact with children in inappropriate ways and will often ask the child to keep their relationship a secret. The grooming process may continue for months before the offender arranges a physical meeting.

Bullying: unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. The bully intends to hurt, embarrass, or intimidate the victim.

- **Physical bullying** can include: hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, throwing objects, stopping someone from doing something, damaging someone's property, tripping, slapping, and spitting.
- **Emotional bullying** can include: humiliating another student; making nasty or threatening comments; spreading rumors/talking about others behind their back; stealing someone's property; name-calling; excluding an individual; persuading others to exclude another student; intentionally hurting someone's feelings; ganging up against another student.
- **Cyberbullying** can include: text messaging bullying; picture/video-clip via mobile phone cameras; phone call bullying via mobile phones; email bullying; chat-room bullying; bullying through instant messaging; bullying via websites.

This policy ensures that all incidents are documented and communicated effectively, maintaining transparency and accountability within Small Steps.

School Holidays and Summer Camps Procedure

In order to provide continuity and maintenance of essential ABA-based interventions, SSBD offers services during the Term breaks, Summer, and Winter Holidays. The responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students extends beyond the school Term. During the school holidays, it remains crucial to ensure that students have access to appropriate support and guidance.

- The school will provide SSBD with the names of the designated person(s) on duty during each week of all holidays.
- Any safeguarding concerns that arise during these camps will be reported to the named designated person(s).
- The same safeguarding processes and protocols will be followed during the holidays as they are during the Term time, ensuring consistent protection and support for all students.

Off-Duty Handover Procedure

In the case of the prolonged absence of the D/DSL due to holiday, sick leave, or other absence, the following procedure is in place in order to ensure continuity of Safeguarding:

- The D/DSL will nominate a deputy or an alternate person who will assume the role and responsibilities of the D/DSL during their absence.
- The D/DSL will inform the SSBD staff, the School Head of Inclusion, and the School D/DSL of the name and contact details of the nominated person.

- The D/DSL will also ensure that the nominated person has access to all the relevant safeguarding records, policies, and guidance.
- The D/DSL will maintain regular contact, where possible, with the nominated person and provide support and advice as needed.
- Upon their return, the D/DSL will resume their duties and receive a handover report from the nominated person.
- The nominated D/DSL will maintain ongoing communication with the School DSL as required and as previously outlined in this policy.
- Any Safeguarding incidents will be reported as per the policy and records will be kept in accordance with the guidelines.

Resources:

https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/long_term_consequences.cfm

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/child-maltreatment>