



***Bold
Learners.
Brave
Thinkers.***

CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY LIONHEART ACADEMY

Children need to feel safe at home, school, and in the community.

Listen to their stories and meet their emotional needs.

If a child shows signs of stress or trauma, offer emotional support and, if necessary, professional help.

Teach children how to handle conflicts wisely, without resorting to violence.

Physical punishment is not a solution. Replace it with educational and loving discipline methods.

Motivate children to talk about their feelings without fear.



Our Commitment

At LionHeart Academy, the safety, well-being, and dignity of every student—from Preschool through High School—are our highest priority. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where every child is respected and valued. Through our Pastoral Care Policy and this Safeguarding Policy, we ensure that all students can thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

This Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy provides clear, actionable guidance for all employees—academic, administrative, and volunteers—on how to recognize, report, and respond to child protection concerns. All staff receive regular training and are expected to understand and fulfill their responsibilities in upholding this commitment.

The welfare and safety of every child at LionHeart Academy is paramount.

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse refers to any act or failure to act that results in physical, emotional, or psychological harm to a child. Abuse may be intentional or due to negligence, and it may occur in person, online, or in institutional settings.

Forms of Abuse

Abuse may take several forms, including but not limited to:

1. Physical Abuse

Inflicting or failing to prevent physical injury (e.g., hitting, shaking, burning).

2. Neglect

Failing to meet a child's basic needs for food, shelter, supervision, and medical care.

3. Sexual Abuse

Engaging a child in sexual activity, including exploitation or inappropriate exposure.

4. Emotional Abuse

Ongoing emotional maltreatment, such as rejection, threats, isolation, or belittlement.

5. Online Abuse / Cyber Exploitation (new)

- Bullying, grooming, or exploitation through digital platforms, including social media.



Recognizing and Identifying Abuse

- Staff must be alert to signs of abuse, which may present as:
- Unexplained injuries or frequent absences.
- Sudden behavioral changes, withdrawal, or anxiety.
- Academic regression or reluctance to attend school.
- Inappropriate knowledge or sexualized behavior.

Safeguarding Across Age Groups

Early Years (Preschool & Kindergarten)

- Strict adherence to staff-to-child ratios.
- Supervised transitions, naptime, toileting, and meal times.
- Training in non-verbal cues and behavioral red flags.

Primary & Middle School

- Regular emotional well-being checks via the pastoral system.
- Extra support for children with learning needs or family disruptions.
- Mandatory classroom supervision and open-door policies.

High School & Adolescents (Opening 2026/27)

- Digital citizenship and cyber safety education.
- Safe avenues to report peer-on-peer harassment or grooming.
- Increased access to in-school counseling and mental health services.

Bullying: A Child Protection Issue

Bullying is considered a form of abuse and is addressed seriously at LionHeart Academy.

Key approaches include:

- Prevention through awareness programs.
- Immediate intervention by staff.
- Support for victims and appropriate consequences for perpetrators.
- Involvement of families in both resolution and prevention.



Confidentiality & Information Sharing

- Staff must not promise secrecy to a child.
- Disclosures must be handled with professionalism and compassion.
- Only relevant individuals (e.g., Designated Safeguarding Officers) should be informed.

Information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis and documented securely.

Responding to Disclosures: The 5 R's

1. **Receive:** Listen calmly without interrupting.
2. **Reassure:** Affirm the child did the right thing by speaking up.
3. **Respond:** Avoid asking leading questions; use open-ended ones if needed.
4. **Record:** Note details promptly and accurately, using the child's words.
5. **Report:** Immediately notify the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Code of Conduct for Staff

All personnel must follow high standards of professionalism and boundaries, including:

- Meeting in open, visible spaces with children.
- Avoiding physical contact unless necessary and appropriate.
- Following protocol for toileting, changing, or assisting younger students.
- Using age-appropriate and respectful teaching materials.

Recruitment & Training

- All employees undergo reference checks and background screening prior to hiring.
- Staff receive mandatory annual safeguarding training.
- Contractors and visitors are supervised and briefed on safeguarding procedures.
- Identification badges must be worn at all times.

Reporting & Referral Procedures

- Any concerns or disclosures must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) immediately.
- Incidents must be documented in a confidential and timely manner.
- Where appropriate, referrals will be made to:
 - Ministry of Women & Children Affairs
 - Local police or child protection services
 - Other relevant authorities or support organizations

Parental Partnership

- We encourage open communication with parents and guardians. If you suspect abuse, neglect, or misconduct affecting your child or another student, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer. All concerns are handled with discretion, care, and professionalism.

Contact Information

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):

Ms. Makeda Leake | makeda.leake@lionheart-academy.org | +251.945.239.722

Deputy DSO / Pastoral Lead:

Name | [Email] | [Phone Number]

Management Team:

[Name(s)] | [Emails] | [Phone Numbers]

