



## SAEP CODE OF CONDUCT & CHILD/ YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

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**All SAEP staff (which includes volunteers, students and visitors) who have or will have contact with children and young people must sign and abide by this**

This policy aims to protect all children and young people involved in SAEP programmes (and with whom SAEP staff come into contact) from unprofessional or abusive behaviour and neglect. It is guided by the Children's Act (38 of 2005) and the Constitution of South Africa, and the overriding concern is that the interests of the child are paramount. A **child** is defined as anyone under the age of 18, and a **young person** as any learner or student aged 18 and over who is involved in an SAEP programme.

All new staff, who will be working with children and young people must complete an application for the Child Protection Register. This is then posted by SAEP to ensure that there is no prior record of child abuse or neglect.

**Staff, Volunteers, Students and Visitors must also agree never to:**

- Assault or physically abuse children/ young people, or allow them to be abused (this includes bullying between children and young people);
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children/ young people or behave in any way in which this might lead the child/ young person to suspect that this is the intention;
- Develop relationships with children/ young people which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive about or towards children/ young people;
- Exchange money, goods, favours or services for sex with children/ young people;
- Behave in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Have a child/ young person with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised (except where there is good reason and this has been agreed to by the director prior to the arrangement);
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves;
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children/ young people, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;
- Discriminate against, show preferential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Drink or take illegal drugs in the presence of children/ young people, or encourage or allow them to do so. The one exception to this is when young people in the Tertiary Support Programme are over 21 and where it is appropriate to drink moderately with them in a social situation (such as a graduation celebration). However the onus is on the SAEP staff member, volunteer, student or visitor to act as a positive role model, within the law.

- Smoke in front of children (See SAEP smoking policy).

**It is important for all SAEP staff in contact with children/ young people to:**

- Report any cases (or suspected cases) of child abuse/neglect to the social worker/ director at SAEP for official investigation/ reporting if necessary;
- To maintain confidentiality of personal information shared if requested to do so, except if there is a threat of harm/ physical danger to others or to self (eg. suicide) or if required by law not to do so;
- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these risks;
- Always be visible to other adults when working with children except when in a counselling situation, when care must be taken to ensure that the counsellor behaves in a professional manner;
- Report any cases of inappropriate behaviour by children/ young people which might put staff in a vulnerable position, and take steps to minimise risks;
- Address issues with children/ young people which make one feel uncomfortable or vulnerable eg. inappropriate flirting or touching, and if necessary introduce programmes/ discussions to respond to this behaviour;
- Abide by the SAEP dress code;
- Be aware of the cultural context in which SAEP is working;
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed;
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.

**Media Permission**

Those who take photographs/video footage of children or young people must do so with their permission or the permission of those responsible for them at the time. If the images are to be used for publicity other than to communicate SAEP's mission to the public via print or web communication, permission must be sought from the young person or parent/guardian (in the case of a child). Photos/ video footage must be taken with sensitivity to the potential vulnerability of the subject and only published after due consideration that the child/ young person will not be negatively impacted. In cases of doubt the director must be consulted.

**Social Media and ICT (see also SAEP ICTS policy)**

Staff must take care not to 'friend' children/ young people on Facebook or any other social media site unless this is done specifically for work purposes, in which case extreme care must be taken to ensure that no personal information or communication appears which might be deemed unprofessional or inappropriate.

**Agreement and commitment to policy above:** I, ..... (full name) hereby agree to abide by this code of conduct while involved with children and young people through SAEP.

..... (Signature) Date:.....

For further information see UNICEF **CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TOOLKIT** [www.unicef.org/violencestudy/pdf/CP Manual - Introduction.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/violencestudy/pdf/CP Manual - Introduction.pdf)