



Child Protection Policy Southside Christian Homeschool Academy

General Purpose Statement

Southside Christian Homeschool Academy (SCHA) seeks to provide a safe place and secure environment for the children who participate in our group. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of SCHA from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff from false accusation.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “worker” includes both paid and unpaid persons who work with children.

Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a) Six Month Rule

No person will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until she has been known with SCHA for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

b) Written Application - Resume

All persons seeking to instruct at SCHA must complete a written resume. The resume will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, reference and employment information. The resume will be maintained on file with SCHA.

c) Personal Interview

Upon completion of the resume, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

d) Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references may be checked.

e) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all instructors and study hall monitors.

Prospective applicants will be informed that SCHA runs a background check. Applicants will follow directives given by SCHA to apply for background check. Results will be sent directly to SCHA. If an applicant refuses or fails to complete the background check, he or she will not be selected to instruct for SCHA.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by SCHA Leadership Board on a case-by-case basis considering all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonest, illegal substances, indecency, and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check results will be maintained in confidence on file with SCHA.

Adult to Student Ratio

Youth classes will have only one adult instructor in attendance during the class session. In the event that there are less than three students in attendance for any class, the classroom doors shall remain open and in direct sight of the open door. Alternatively, if there are less than three child in the classroom, all children will be seated so they are in plain view through the classroom door window.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is an action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological, or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling, and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – deprived a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Instructors may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that any individual involved in the care of children at SCHA becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the SCHA Leadership Board for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at SCHA or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The person alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
3. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the organization will comply with the statutory requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The organization will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. The insurance company will be notified, and the organization will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The organization will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors will remain open as much as possible and never locked unless there is a lock-down situation. There are windows in the doors, so closing the door is acceptable when quiet is needed for classroom instruction.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at SCHA. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, parents and students will abide by SCHA Sick Policy as outlined in SCHA General Guidelines.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of SCHA not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with Individual SCHA Instructors to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

Please reference SCHA General Guidelines for details.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be contacted. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report, will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

SCHA will provide this child protection policy to all new instructors and all members of SCHA.