

# MIMOSA PRE-PRIMARY & FOUNDATION PHASE SCHOOL

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## MIMOSA SCHOOL SAFETY POLICY AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

*Approved by Mimosa Board on 27 May 2023*

### Guiding principles

Mimosa should be a safe space for all members of the Mimosa community. A place everyone looks forward to entering and where they feel welcomed. Core values of respect, support and inclusion help create this space that celebrates everyone within our community. We work to establish the trusting relationships that enable these feelings of acceptance, security and well-being. We recognise that this is not a once off endeavour and we make a commitment to continuously build a safer and more inclusive environment.

We also recognise that Mimosa is made up of families that are complex and who at times experience difficult life situations. Children and parents move between home, school and other spaces bringing themselves and their life experiences with them. A safe Mimosa is a community responsibility, requiring community agreements and a supportive community network. Parents and teachers take responsibility to keep the doors of communication open to ensure that children are well supported during difficult times such as death and divorce and through adverse life circumstances.

Safety is about containing physical spaces, and emotional and psychological ones, too. Mimosa strives to be a place where everyone, but especially the children, are free to express who they feel themselves to be, to try out different parts, to evolve their identity without fear of judgement, ridicule or harassment. A school that fosters acceptance and actively supports who each individual chooses/recognises/identifies themselves to be.

Mimosa thus aspires to be a safe space for the children of the Mimosa community, in that it recognises and affirms children's right to explore physical, emotional, and social spaces and relationships in a supportive and managed environment. This is an environment in which "risk" and "safety" co-exist, and where the important responsibility to keep children safe is mediated with respect for their right to freely explore and direct their own learning journey. Safety is personally defined, not absolute - what is safe for one child might not be safe for another because every child develops differently.

Our belief is that safety starts in the mind of the children and adults. Children conceptualize safety by exploring boundaries and testing the limits of their physical and social-emotional faculties. Encouraging children to be safe is about working with them to identify and assess risks so they can gain a deeper understanding of what they can and cannot do, rather than removing danger from their environment. Risk-taking can be achieved positively and safely following three important factors: 1) children are given the opportunity to take risks; 2) under adequate supervision of the teachers/carers who will assess if the risk is age-appropriate; 3)

and the relevant, stable, and age-appropriate features in the play environment are maintained, checked and carefully selected by the school.

Mimosa has standard operating procedures in place to safeguard these beliefs and to monitor for safety, manage areas of potential risk and respond to risky situations. These are set out below and have been developed within a framework of reasonable expectation and rely on the cooperation and involvement of staff, parents and children.

## **Specific standard operating procedures**

### **Gates**

- Codes: The codes for the gate are not shared with anyone other than staff and parents/caregivers. Children are not given codes to open the gates.
- Opening and closing gates: Teachers are aware of gates opening and closing to see who is coming in and see that children are far enough away from the gate.
- Sensors: The preschool gate is fitted with sensors to prevent injury.
- Speed: The speed in the alley is maximum 20 km per hour.
- Crossing the alley: A teacher/staff member is always present with Bokanang pupils when they cross in the morning. During the day when classes cross from one school to the other, teachers are in attendance to help them look left and right and check for cars, cross carefully taking the opening and closing of gates into consideration.
- Drop-off and Pickup: George watches in the morning from 7:30am-8:30am and at pick up time (1:00pm-1:30pm) for children getting in and out of cars.
- Alternative pick up info: The gate is open until 1:30pm, thereafter parents/caregivers open the gate and come into school to collect their children. If someone else is collecting a child or there is a playdate, the class teacher and /or George is informed in advance. George will not let children leave if the alternative arrangement has not been communicated to him.
- Parking: Cars enter on Cookham Road, exit on Greenland and park on the right hand side.

### **Outdoors**

- Garden layout: The SMT together with teachers and interested parents/caregivers constantly discuss the layout of the garden. It changes by interest and by season.
- Loose parts: These are checked regularly looking for protruding nails, loose planks, sharp or broken edges, unstable equipment. Children are introduced to the affordances and properties of loose parts.
- Audit: George plus a teacher audits the equipment and grounds for hazards every two weeks. Parents bring hazards that need attention to the notice of George or a teacher.
- Trampoline: No sticks or shoes allowed while jumping on the trampoline. Mats and springs checked regularly.
- Water: Standing water in containers is emptied, especially in summer for mosquitos. Water features have protective nets.

## **Injuries**

- Incident book - All incidents are recorded in the incident book within a few hours of injury, with the details of the person who dealt with it, the course and remedy, and how the family was contacted. Space is left for follow up comments.
- Sharing of information – injuries are shared on the staff whatsapp group.

### *First Aid*

- First aid refers to immediate care provided for minor injuries or illnesses such as small cuts, bruises, scrapes, and minor burns that can be treated on-site by staff trained in first aid.
- All staff are trained to administer basic first aid to children in need of first aid.
- Mimosa has a well-stocked first aid box located in the kitchen.
- Procedure:
  1. For minor bumps children can fetch ice from the freezer to put on the bump.
  2. Grazes, scratches and cuts are washed and if a plaster is needed, it is applied.
  3. No medicine is given without parental consent/consent from a caregiver.
  4. A photo and a message are sent to parents for scrapes/scratches that bleed, bumps that swell, and any injuries that we feel parents/caregivers should be alerted to.

### *Injury:*

- Injury refers to a more serious condition that requires medical attention but is not life-threatening. This can include possible fractures, sprains, possible head injuries, or lacerations that cannot be treated with basic first aid.
- Procedure:
  1. In such cases, staff should provide immediate first aid
  2. A parent/caregiver is called, the injury explained, and their advice followed.
  3. Where a parent/caregiver cannot be reached, a second parent/caregiver (if any are known to the school) will be called, the injury explained, and their advice followed.
  4. Where parents/caregivers cannot be reached, a written message will immediately be sent starting as follows: "Urgently contact [name of staff member] at [mobile number of teacher], [name of child] [provide explanation of injury]."
  5. The most senior member of staff on the premises will manage the injury until a parent/caregiver makes contact. If this staff member is not a member of the SMT, they will also inform a member of the SMT.

### *Serious injury:*

- Serious injury refers to a life-threatening condition that requires immediate medical attention. This can include severe bleeding, anaphylaxis, concussion, or cardiac arrest.
- Emergency Numbers - emergency numbers are up in the kitchen on the wall and all staff are made aware of these.
- Procedure:
  1. A member of the SMT supported by at least one other staff member will take the child directly to a hospital or accompany the medical services provided by Beagle watch.
  2. As soon as possible (after the child's emergency care has been prioritized), a parent/caregiver is called, the injury explained and the hospital to which the

child has been routed provided. The parent/caregiver will be provided in a written message with the SMT member and accompanying staff member's names and mobile numbers.

3. Where a parent/caregiver cannot be reached, a second parent/caregiver (if any are known to the school) will be called with the same procedure as for injuries above followed.
4. Where parents/caregivers cannot be reached, a written message will immediately be sent starting as follows: "Urgently contact [name of staff member] at [mobile number of teacher], [name of child] has been taken to [insert hospital name] due to [provide explanation of injury]."
5. Any medical costs incurred by Mimosa or its staff, will be recovered from the parent/caregiver.

## **Illness and transmission prevention**

### ***Parent/caregiver responsibilities:***

- Parents/caregivers are responsible for monitoring their child's health on a regular basis.
- Parents/caregivers should be up to date with national public sector recommended immunizations.
- A child who is unwell with a fever, respiratory symptoms, vomiting, unexplained rash or an eye infection should be kept at home until recovered.
- Where a child is diagnosed with contagious infection (for example: chicken pox, mumps, whooping cough, measles, rubella, hand foot and mouth disease, norovirus, rotavirus or COVID-19), the parent/caregiver is encouraged to communicate the diagnosis to a class teacher (and with parents/caregivers through the class WhatsApp group) so that other parent/caregivers are aware should their child display similar symptoms.
- Where a parent/caregiver is unsure whether their child has recovered for school return, the parent/caregiver is encouraged to discuss return with the class teacher/s.

### ***School responsibilities:***

- Hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of illness. Children and staff should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently and thoroughly. Emergency hand sanitizer should be available in both kitchens for hand hygiene to be used if there is no water at the school.
- To prevent illness caused by nut allergens among children and staff, Mimosa is nut-free. "Nut-free" means that no peanuts or tree nuts (such as almonds, cashews, walnuts, etc.), or products containing these ingredients, are permitted on school grounds. All staff are responsible for supporting this approach, including creating awareness among the children.
- Where a teacher has been informed by a parent/caregiver that their child has been diagnosed with a serious contagious infection (see above examples), the class teacher will inform the SMT. The SMT will decide on appropriate communication with the class or wider school's parents/caregivers..
- A designated teacher for each class will maintain an up to date record for each child in their class containing:
  - Medical insurance details
  - Vaccinations received
- There are 3 categories of illness set out below. The school's procedures will differ depending on whether the child is up to date with vaccinations (vaccinated child) or

has not been vaccinated or has missed their last required vaccination by more than 6 months (unvaccinated child):

#### *Minor illness*

- Minor illness refers to a cough, sore throat, stomach ache, ear ache or mild fever (<38C)
- Procedure for vaccinated child:
  1. The class teacher will send a message to the parent/caregiver and request the parent to collect their child as soon as possible for home recovery.
  2. The class teacher will monitor the child for further deterioration until collected.
- Procedure for unvaccinated child:
  1. The class teacher will remove the child from the class environment to the sick bay and support the child while awaiting their parent/caregiver's collection.
  2. The class teacher will send a message to the parent/caregiver and request the parent to collect their child as soon as possible for home recovery explaining that the child is being isolated until collection.
  3. The class teacher will monitor the child for further deterioration until collected.

#### *Severe illness*

- Severe illness refers to illnesses that may require immediate medical intervention or may be contagious to others. For example, a child with significant respiratory symptoms, high fever, vomiting, strange unusual behavior (severely lethargic or confused) or other extreme discomfort.
- Procedure
  1. The class teacher will remove the child from the class environment to the sick bay and support the child while awaiting their parent/caregiver's collection.
  2. A parent/caregiver is called, the illness explained, a request made to collect their child urgently and their advice followed until the child is collected.
  3. Where a parent/caregiver cannot be reached, a second parent/caregiver (if any are known to the school) will be called.
  4. Where parents/caregivers cannot be reached, a written message will immediately be sent starting as follows: "Urgently contact [name of staff member] at [mobile number of teacher], [name of child] is ill with [provide explanation of illness]."
  5. Until a parent/caregiver is reached, the SMT will decide whether the child should be taken to a GP or hospital or managed at Mimosa.
  6. Any medical costs incurred by Mimosa or its staff, will be recovered from the parent/caregiver. .

#### **Fire Drill**

- Fire drill maps are up in each class, whistles are located in strategic places, and there is a fire blanket and panic button in each school.

- The school practices a fire drill every term with registers on hand, duties allocated, and emergency numbers and apps up to date.

### **Safety / intrusion**

- Beagle Watch is our service provider. In the event of intruders' teachers encourage children to remain calm. Panic buttons are situated in strategic places in both schools.
- There is a security guard in the alleyway between 2:00pm and 4:30pm

### **Digital safety**

- Laptops: There are controls on computers accessed by children. More especially in the Foundation Phase
- Cell phones: Children may not have cell phones at school.
- Resources network - <https://saferinternetsouthafrica.co.za/>

### **Intra and interpersonal safety**

- Reggio is a relationship-based pedagogy. Social and emotional skills are actively modeled and facilitated to empower children to name and speak their feelings and to address conflict situations through dialogue.
- Lines of communication: Parents/caregivers first line of communication is the class teacher, then the SMT or principal, and thereafter an approach to the Board . A code of conduct is in the process of being developed.
- Protective Behaviours: All children from 3 years old and up, all staff and all parents participate in the PB programme approximately every 18 months. Protective Behaviours (PB) is a practical, empowering approach to personal safety. It is a process that encourages and develops self-confidence alongside skills that help avoid being victimised. This is achieved by recognising a personal concept of safety, trusting intuitive feelings (early warning signs) that tell us when we are feeling unsafe and developing strategies for self-protection. The Protective Behaviours process links safety with an adventurous approach to life. The whole school uses the framework and language of the course to navigate personal and interpersonal boundaries and consent.
- Circle of security parenting: Parents are offered the COS-P training to discover more about building healthy attachment relationships, understanding the needs of their young children, and reflecting on their struggles with parenting.
- Working with the caregiver-relationship: Staff attend this course (or related professional development) on this model of infant and child mental health, examining the /caregiver-infant relationship and gaining an understanding of attachment and infant/child development.
- Child protection: All staff are trained by Luke Lamprecht (Ei8ht) on the legal framework on child sexual protection in South Africa and how to activate child protection.
- Police clearance for all Mimosa staff: All staff require police, sexual offences and child protection register clearance.

## **Well-being**

- Network of partners and service providers: Mimosa has a trusted network of individuals and organisations, to whom we can turn when needed to assist with resources and to offer support to children, parents and families, staff.
- Slow pedagogy: We strive to ensure good food, plenty of outdoor time, extended play periods, restful times to nurture children and staff.
- Building a supportive community: Parents take responsibility for communal wellbeing through formal structures like the Board, Izwi le Mimosa and class representatives, and in less formal ways