**ANNEXURE - STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)**

This annexure includes **Flowchart SOP-A**, located on the final page, and serves as a key reference within the School Child Protection Policy (SCPP). It:

* Provides a comprehensive roadmap for the **Complaint cum Suggestion Registration Committee**.
* Guides the committee in handling submissions that may be complaints, suggestions, or both.
* Helps navigate through various categories, scenarios, and stages of child protection concerns.
* Offers structured guidance to support consistent and effective decision-making.
* Reinforces confidence and clarity in the committee’s actions.

Every complaint received must first be classified or categorised in accordance with the **scenarios** outlined in the flowchart SOP-A and documented using the prescribed format provided in this annexure. It must be then addressed by the relevant redressal committee through a defined set of corrective measures—supportive or punitive (refer to the **Annexure** - Corrective Measures) —which may be either:

* **Interim**, while the Complaint cum Suggestion Registration Committee and/or the relevant Redressal Committee, or the court of law is conducting an enquiry; or
* **Final**, based on the verdict of the relevant Redressal Committee, or the court of law.

**1. A. COMPLAINTS’ CLASSIFICATION**

**1. B. SUGGESTIONS’ CLASSIFICATION**

**2. SUBMISSION (COMPLAINT/SUGGESTION) DOCUMENTATION**

Every submission received by the Complaint cum Suggestion Registration Committee, whether verbal or written, undergoes a documentation process.

* All actions and measures taken in response to a complaint are --------------.
* This documentation is **confidential** and treated -----------.
* Similarly, all actions and measures taken in response to a **suggestion**, whether by the relevant **redressal committees** or the **school management committee (SMC)**, --------------.

**Complaint Format:**

The Committee must classify/categorise the nature of every complaint and register it per the following format. Moreover, the format includes anecdotal remarks where necessary.

1. *-------------------*
2. *-------------------*
3. *-------------------*
4. *Date and time #2*: the date and time of the incident, if available. In cases where the date and time of the incident are a series of incidents, specify the period of the incident.
5. *Scenario:* *-------------------*
6. *The environment of the incident*: *-------------------*
7. *Current custody of the child: -------------------*.
8. *-------------------*
9. *-------------------*

**Marking Type:** Complaint or Suggestions \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Not for Consideration **|** Miscellaneous **|** For Consideration

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Reason for the Marking Type**

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**The recommended Relevant Redressal Committee or the School Management Committee.**

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**Complaint cum Suggestion Registration Committee Members:**

**Name/Designation/Date/Sign:**

**#1**

**#2**

**Note:**

1. *Handling Submissions Containing Both Complaints and Suggestions:*------------
2. *Frivolous or Trivial Submissions:* -------------------
3. *Out-of-Scope Submissions:* ----------------
4. Valid Submissions: -------------------------

**3A. COMPLAINT/SUGGESTION REGISTRATION AND PROCESSES TO BE FOLLOWED**

1. *Who can be a complainant or provide a suggestion?* ---------------
2. *Where to register a complaint/suggestion?* ----------------
3. ----------------
4. *-----------------*
5. *----------------*
6. *Verbal complaints/suggestions:* -------------------are as follows:
7. The **Committee’s Chairperson and the School Child Protection Officer (SCPO)**, along with any other committee member(s) *(excluding student members)*.
8. **Either the Chairperson or ----------------------**.

These members shall:

* **Segregate--------**.
* ------------ **SOP-A**.
* **Document** ------------.
* If the submission is a **suggestion**, ----------------.
* Proceed with **---------------**
* May conduct a ------------------.

**3B. PRIORITISING COMPLAINTS**

If the **\***Chairperson is unavailable at the time of receiving, opening, or documenting a complaint, the School Child Protection Officer (SCPO), along with other committee member, must take the following actions based on the scenario:

* **Scenarios 1 or 2** (Criminal – **\***POCSO Act): The complaint must be reported or forwarded to the Chairperson within **one hour** of its receipt.
* **Scenarios 3 to 5** (Other Criminal Offences): The complaint must be reported or forwarded to the Chairperson within **one hour** of its receipt.
* **Scenario 7** (Non-Criminal): The complaint must be reported or forwarded to the Chairperson within **two hours** of its receipt.

**\***Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012

Subsequently, all complaints must be forwarded to the respective redressal committees for

* **Scenarios 1 or 2** (Criminal – POCSO Act): within 24 hours of its receipt.
* **Scenarios 3 to 5** (Other Criminal Offences): within **??** hours of its receipt.
* **Scenario 7** (Non-Criminal): within **??** hours of its receipt.

**3C. CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS**

1. *Mandatory Reporting of POCSO Cases:*In **scenarios 1 and 2**, the Chairperson, the School Child Protection Officer (SCPO), or the **Redressal POCSO Committee** must report the incident to the authorities within 24 hours, such as the **Police, SJPU, DCPU, CWC, POCSO E-Box or Helpline 1098.**

**Caution:** ------------------------.

1. *Preliminary Enquiry for POCSO Cases* **scenarios 1 and 2***:*

While only police authorities are authorised to conduct formal investigations under the POCSO Act, the Chairperson, the School Child Protection Officer (SCPO), or the **Redressal POCSO Committee** may conduct a preliminary or immediate enquiry to assess the situation. A counsellor, if possible, must be involved in this process. This assessment includes:

* *Severity of the Offence:* Determining if the offence is petty, serious, or heinous.
* *Relationship of the Abuser:* Identifying whether the abuser is within the child's family, school circle or outside.
* *Parental Notification:* Deciding if informing the parents or guardians is in the child's best interest, especially if a parent is the alleged abuser.
* *Immediate Safety Needs:* Evaluating if the child requires urgent medical attention and/or safe custody.

1. *Ensuring Medical Care:*-----------------

**\***MLC refers to cases that have both medical and legal implications. Typically, an MLC involves injuries, incidents, or situations where legal action or investigation is required, such as sexual assault, road traffic accidents, gunshots, etc. MLC plays a significant role in understanding the severity of the situation, making it a crucial starting point for police investigations in criminal cases. **Annexure -** POCSO Act, A Summary, By Project CACA

1. *Ensuring Safe Custody of the Child:* For **Scenario 1 and 2** cases where the accused resides at the child’s home, -------------------------
2. *POCSO Act Precedence:* --------------------
3. *False Complaint under POCSO Act:* --------------------
4. ***\*****JJ Act Precedence:* --------------------------
5. *PoSH Committee:* The school’s Internal PoSH Committee, constituted under the **\***PoSH Act, may handle complaints under **Scenario 3**----------------

**\***The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

1. *Preserving the crime scene*: The Chairperson, School Child Protection Officer (SCPO) or **Redressal POCSO Committee** may temporarily ---------------------.

**Caution: .**

**4A. THE CHALLENGE**

**Scenario 1** falls under the POCSO Act, while **Scenario 2** falls under both the POCSO Act and the JJ Act, making these scenarios the most challenging for schools. The challenges arise due to the following reasons:

* \*The burden of proof under the POCSO Act lies with the accused.
* A child may change their statement at a later stage.
* In some cases, failure to report or delay in reporting may be considered 'abetment' of the crime, which is punishable under the POCSO Act with the same penalty as that prescribed for the offender.
* Under the POCSO Act, reporting the case to the authorities is mandatory, regardless of the circumstances, and the Act does not specify a time frame for reporting.
* The POCSO Act and the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act contain no provisions to address scenarios where relationships between children are **\*\*** consensual, as such consent is not recognised as valid under the law.

**\*** However, this does not mean that the accused has no right to defend themselves.

**\*\*** However, an increasing number of judgments by honourable high courts have delivered verdicts that do ---------------------------.

**Some verdicts by honourable High Courts:**

In *State v. Hitesh (2025) –* Hon’ble Delhi High Court, ------------------------

In *Sabarivasan v. Inspector of Police (2019)*, the Madras High Court quashed charges under the POCSO Act against a young man accused of kidnapping and -------------------

In *Vijayalakshmi v. State* (2021) – Hon’ble Madras High Court quashed the criminal proceedings against the accused, who was facing trial under the POCSO Act, 2012 -----------------------

**4B.** **Scenario - Consenting Children:** In a school-based context, complaints involving consensual relationships between children with a small age difference are not uncommon. In such cases, -------------------

**4C.** **Accidental Touch:** In a school-based scenario, -----------------------.

**Flowchart SOP-A – Classification of Scenarios:**