



## **Sexual Molestation/Abuse Prevention Policy**

This document is a summary of the measures in place to prevent child abuse. Several current federal and state laws are referenced. In the event that a state or federal law changes and conflicts with any policy summarized below, New Orleans Charter Science & Mathematics High School (a.k.a., "Sci High") shall abide by the revised law.

### **Screening of Employees and Volunteers**

The hiring process at Sci High includes:

- Submission of a resume that includes prior employment and previous experience working with children (depending on position hired for);
- Confirmation that the applicant has not been convicted of nor pled nolo contendere to any crime listed in LA R.S. 15:587.1(C)(which includes crimes related to abuse and neglect of children) or similar crimes as defined under the statutes of other jurisdictions;
- A personal interview with staff who are trained to recognize signs of child abuse and/or grooming behavior;
- Documented reference checks from at least 2 persons conducted by staff who are trained to ask questions that would elicit reasons why prior employers would not rehire an applicant; and
- In accordance with LA R.S. 15:587.1(C), a background check conducted by the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information and by the Federal Bureau of Investigation that surveys the arrest and criminal records of all jurisdictions in which the applicant/prospective employee has resided.

Most volunteers who work at Sci High never have any opportunity to interact with children unsupervised by staff. These volunteers include parents/guardians who chaperone field trips and groups who visit our schools in the summer (when school is not in session) to assist with projects such as painting and sorting books.

On the rare occasions where a volunteer would regularly interact with children, the volunteer would first have a personal interview with staff who are trained to recognize signs of child abuse and/or grooming behavior and have a background check performed (as described above for staff).

Sci High has a policy in place requiring all staff members to alert their principal within 24 hours of being arrested for sexual offenses involving minors and other crimes, and instances of child abuse or neglect, or convicted or pleading nolo contendere to any crime.



## **Training**

All school staff and volunteers who regularly work with students must, on an annual basis, take the online training for mandatory reporters created by the Louisiana Department of Child and Family Services. This training covers how to recognize signs of child abuse and neglect and how to report such to the appropriate authorities. A certificate of training completion must be submitted by each employee and volunteer to Sci High to document attendance and satisfactory completion of the training. Sci High has documented in its personnel manual that failure to complete the training and submit the completion certificate may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Additionally, all staff and volunteers who regularly work with students are trained annually on the organization's other policies (described in sections below) that help prevent child abuse and their obligations under Title IX. Attendance is taken at this annual training, staff sign off on having received and understanding the policies, and disciplinary action up to and including termination for violating any policy (including the policy requiring training) is written in the organization's personnel manual.

All staff members who are involved in the Title IX grievance policy are trained on their responsibilities.

## **Prevention Measures**

Sci High has a variety of policies in place to limit the potential for child abuse. These include:

- Prohibiting employees and volunteers from sharing personally identifiable student information with external parties without parent consent;
- Permitting employees and volunteers to engage with students via electronic communication only when done so for school-related and school-sanctioned purposes and using means provided by Sci High;
- Maintaining the ability to monitor the usage of its electronic communications systems by staff and students;
- Getting parental permission for students to use any websites or apps that collect any student information;
- Maintaining best practices for how Zoom or other similar online platforms should be used if students are engaged in virtual learning;
- Prohibiting employees and volunteers from engaging with students through their personal social media accounts;



- Prohibiting transportation of students in private employee-owned or volunteer-owned vehicles, except under emergency circumstances in which case at least two adults must be present;
- Prohibiting employees and volunteers from engaging in dating, romantic, and/or sexual relationships with students;
- Prohibiting employees and volunteers from covering all of the interior windows of their classrooms and offices;
- Prohibiting employees and volunteers from being alone with students unless specifically required by their job and with their supervisor's permission (e.g. counseling, therapy, mentoring, etc.);
- When one-on-one situations are necessary between students and adults (e.g. counseling, therapy, mentoring, etc.), ensuring that these interactions occur near regularly-populated hallways, offices, or other areas;
- Prohibiting the corporal punishment of students;
- Ensuring that students with significant age differences are never alone in an unsupervised setting;
- Limiting unsupervised student movement through the schools by requiring hall passes or similar staff permission;
- Having staff members as hall monitors positioned near restrooms to monitor restroom usage when students leave their classroom to use the restroom;
- On field trips, sufficient adult chaperones accompany students to ensure there will be adequate supervision;
- On field trips with an overnight component, students sleep in rooms with at least two other students with each student having their own bed, and adults sleep two to a room with their rooms in the middle of block of student rooms when possible;
- Ensuring staff members monitor student transitions in hallways;
- Ensuring staff members monitor student meals, recess, and other outdoor play;
- Regularly reviewing outdoor spaces on campus to ensure there are no places for students to hide from staff supervision; and
- Promptly investigating and issuing appropriate consequences, up to and including termination or expulsion, for instances of child abuse or other inappropriate interactions towards a child.

### **Identification of Potential Abuse and/or Grooming Behavior**

All school staff and volunteers who regularly work with students must, on an annual basis, take the online training for mandatory reporters created by the Louisiana Department of Child and Family Services. This training covers how to recognize signs of child abuse and neglect, how to recognize behavior of potential abusers, and how to report such to the



appropriate authorities. A certificate of training completion must be submitted by each employee and volunteer to Sci High to document attendance and satisfactory completion of the training. Sci High has documented in its personnel manual that failure to complete the training and submit the completion certificate may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Additionally, all staff and volunteers who regularly work with students are trained annually on the organization's other policies (described in section above) that help prevent child abuse. Attendance is taken at this annual training, staff sign off on having received and understanding the policies, and disciplinary action up to and including termination for violating any policy (including the policy requiring training) is written in the organization's personnel manual.

School leaders and other staff members who regularly observe teachers and other employees are also trained on how to recognize potential "grooming" behavior and how to respond to it.

### **Reporting of Abuse and Other Problematic Behaviors**

All employees at Sci High are mandatory reporters as defined by Louisiana state law and must report any instances of known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authority. Additionally, all employees at Sci High are required, under Title IX, to report any instances or known or suspected sexual assault or sexual harassment of students occurring at school or at a school-controlled event to the schools' Title IX Coordinator.

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Staff members are also trained to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Head of School or Dean of Students (or equivalent role which may have a different title). The Head of School or Dean of Students ensure that the proper authorities have been contacted. They also report the incident to the Director of Finance & Human Resources who ensures the incident is reported to the organization's insurance carrier when appropriate.



## **Investigations**

Sci High cooperates with authorities investigating alleged incidents of child abuse or neglect to the extent permitted by law.

Sci High has a grievance policy in compliance with Title IX that dictates how it investigates Title IX complaints.

When necessary to conduct an investigation on its own that does not fall under Title IX, the Head of School or General Counsel may conduct the investigation, or the organization may hire an external party to do so.

## **Protection of Victims**

During a Title IX investigation, Sci High offers supportive measures and protection to the alleged victim as described in its Title IX grievance policy, as required by federal law.

During investigations that do not fall under Title IX, Sci High offers supportive measures and protection to the alleged victim to ensure that they are treated with dignity and compassion and removed from situations and potential interactions that could be harmful.

## **Response to Confirmed Abuse**

In the event that an abuse allegation against an employee or volunteer is confirmed, Sci High will terminate the relationship with the employee or volunteer.

In the event that an abuse allegation against another student is confirmed, Sci High will take appropriate disciplinary action, which may include recommendation for expulsion. Sci High will also ensure that the abuser is removed from situations where they might encounter the victim at school or school-sponsored events.

Sci High will communicate the results of its investigation to the student victim and the victim's family and maintain communication while the student is enrolled, unless the family was the source of the abuse.

The Director of Finance & Human Resources will notify the insurance carrier when abuse perpetrated by an employee, volunteer, or fellow student is confirmed. The Head of School will be or designate a media spokesperson. The Head of School and Director of Finance & Human Resources will review the organization's policies to determine if any should be changed to prevent future incidents of child abuse.