



PRESS RELEASE

Kinderland takes substantial moves to enhance child management in its centres

20 FEBRUARY 2024: Following the child mismanagement incidents reported in August 2023, an Independent Review Committee (IRC) was convened. The IRC was tasked with examining the lapses and gaps that led to the incidents at the two affected centres, and whether these were systemic across all Kinderland centres. The IRC shared its findings in a report to ECDA. The report concluded that the incidents and lapses that took place were specific to the two affected centres.

Even before the IRC concluded its findings and submitted its report, Kinderland had already proactively embarked on efforts to address the underlying factors that led to these incidents. As an immediate remedial action to the incidents, the following steps were taken:

- Upon the completion of the internal Disciplinary Inquiry, disciplinary measures were meted out to the staff involved at the two affected centres.
- Centre Leaders' (CLs) daily centre walkabouts have been further reinforced with in-depth documentation to monitor classroom activities and ensure our children's well-being.
- Kinderland also offered counselling services to all families at the two centres.
- Kinderland installed closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras across all its centres by November 2023, ahead of the 1 July 2024 deadline stipulated by ECDA for all centres to install CCTV systems.

Kinderland acknowledges ECDA's statement on 20 February 2024 regarding the completed independent review of Kinderland's child management practices. Kinderland is also committed to working closely with ECDA, parents and community partners to prevent repeats of such incidents as well as continue to deliver high quality standards of care and education for our children, which have been a hallmark of its 45-year history.

Beyond the immediate remedial measures to address these incidents, Kinderland has proactively rolled out enhancements to its systems across all Kinderland centres with the aim of bringing about holistic long-term improvements. These efforts have not gone unnoticed, as they have been highlighted in ECDA's release as well.

In this regard, Kinderland has made robust improvements to three of its existing child management systems, namely the Teacher Training Monitoring System (TTMS), Child Management Monitoring System (CMMS) and the Whistle Blowing System (WBS).

These improvements all point towards one single aim – to continue delivering high quality care and education for our children, underpinned by the trust placed upon us by generations of parents over the last forty-five years. Further details about these enhancements can be found in the Annex following this release.



Kinderland wholeheartedly apologizes to the affected families over the lapses that took place which led to the incidents at the two affected centres. As a longstanding provider of early childhood education for over four decades and as responsible stewards of the community, we also regret the collective concern this episode has raised among parents and the general public. We have proactively put in place measures to do better based on lessons learned from these incidents.

The incidents from 2023 were a sobering reminder of the challenges that come with maintaining high standards of child management. With these enhancements, we want to assure parents and members of the public that proper child management measures have been put in place. We seek to forge ahead by working closely with the community in realising this effort.

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ANNEX

Within this Annex, the enhancements to the three aforementioned systems, Teacher Training Monitoring System (TTMS), Child Management Monitoring System (CMMS), and Whistle Blowing System (WBS), are elaborated for your reference.

Teacher Training Monitoring System (TTMS)

Kinderland has moved to further strengthen the TTMS. This is aimed at ensuring that all our teachers are well equipped with the most updated child management skills and know-how through onboarding orientation and training. These training modules are focused on topics such as code of conducts, child supervision as well as classroom management strategies.

These refinements ensure that our children are nurtured by teachers who are not only equipped with the latest skillsets but are also nimble and robust in their teaching and practice of said skills.

At present, teachers receive training by internal specialists and external local and international education professionals. We have now implemented additional measures such as higher frequency of relevant training modules to ensure that teachers' knowledge and skillsets are maintained at high standards.

At the same time, regular evaluations and assessments are included together with refresher courses to ensure that teachers remain nimble in their knowledge and application on child management strategies. More importantly, this improved system helps Kinderland HQ monitor whether staff have attended the necessary training modules and attained the competencies to work with children effectively.

Child Management Monitoring System (CMMS)

Kinderland has enhanced the CMMS to ensure better supervision and enforcement on child management by CLs and supplemented by closer monitoring at HQ. This is to safeguard the well-being of all children entrusted to us. Enhancement to this system includes an online report system that would highlight vital areas covered in the CLs daily walkabouts.

In the event that an inappropriate behaviour or misconduct has been reported, the system will automatically trigger an alert to HQ Operations, which will then address the issue in rapid time. The proactive implementation of this system will bring about quicker detection and prompt follow up, which are crucial elements in ensuring child safety.

Whistle Blowing System (WBS)

Kinderland conducted a review and enhancement of its current whistle-blowing process which led to the development of a more comprehensive WBS. Its objective is to encourage all



employees to take proactive action in reporting inappropriate child management, ensure accountability and uphold an ethical and transparent workplace culture. The management has also reiterated that it is safe for all employees to step forward and report any inappropriate practices, and reassured their feedback will remain strictly anonymous.

In this improved WBS, a potential whistle-blower is encouraged to reach out to any of the following personnel, regardless of hierarchy order: respective CLs, Cluster Heads, the Human Resource Department (HRD) and the General Manager.

The new WBS will also include more channels of feedback such as instant messaging platform and online whistle-blower form. This is in addition to existing multiple channels such as in-person feedback, calls, email and written letter for staff and educators to raise any concerns. The enhanced system encourages timely reporting of inappropriate practices, as it is vital for child safety and to minimise the risk of child mismanagement.

Kinderland is developing the WBS as a proprietary online platform to better capture and track all whistle-blowing concerns from the start of the report to the conclusion of investigation. This is to ensure that all concerns are addressed and managed timely with appropriate intervention, as well as to allow critical issues to be escalated to HQ Operations and management simultaneously with anonymity assured.

Other Initiatives

Besides the three systems of child management, Kinderland HRD has introduced the Human Resource Wellness Partners (HRWP) which is a crucial step in prioritizing the well-being of our educators.

The roles of HRWP include engaging our educators regularly by visiting them at centres, individually or in small groups, to build a healthy relationship of trust. They conduct surveys across the centres to gauge the well-being of our educators and offer follow-up counselling arrangements as needed.

Identifying educators in need of professional counselling is important. In addition to the freelance counsellors engaged since August 2023, an in-house professional counsellor was recruited in January 2024. This team of counsellors is dedicated to providing support for all our educators.

The collaboration between HRWP and counsellors will continue, ensuring support for all Kinderland centres and striving to enhance the overall well-being of our educators. This partnership not only promotes mental health for sustained professional excellence, but also fosters a supportive and positive work environment.