



PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

29 August 2023, 23:20 hours, Singapore

KINDERLAND ADDRESSES VIDEOS CIRCULATING ONLINE REGARDING STAFF TREATMENT OF CHILDREN AT WOODLANDS MART AND CHOA CHU KANG CENTRES

Incident at Woodlands Mart

1. Kinderland would like to address the questions and matters arising from videos showing how a teacher was handling some children under her care at Kinderland Woodlands Mart.
2. In the videos circulating since the morning of 28 August 2023, a teacher (Teacher A) is shown in separate incidents – in one she is seen smacking a boy on his bottom with a book a few times, in another she is shown pushing a boy's head back to drink water, and in the third video, she is seen using her thumb and index finger to hold the face of a girl to have her continue to drink water.
3. Kinderland was made aware of the videos when the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) contacted Kinderland on 17 August 2023 for an investigation.
4. Three staff of Kinderland Woodlands Mart met ECDA on 17 August 2023, and one on 18 August. The staff were shown the videos and advised to review Teacher A's behaviour. ECDA also imparted to the staff some guidelines on dealing with this incident: reaching out to the parents of the affected children, reporting the investigation to the Kinderland HQ and a proposed action plan to deal with the matter at hand.



5. Based on the timestamp on the videos, the videos were recorded between 27 and 30 June 2023. At the point of recording, there were only two teachers in the classroom, Teacher A and a newer teacher still under probation (Teacher B).
6. Kinderland HQ then started a Disciplinary Inquiry (DI). The DI addressed the issues with Teacher A and counselled her. Teacher A was remorseful and apologised for her behaviour for those few times.
7. Concurrently, the Principal of Woodlands Mart and Teacher A reached out to the parents of the affected children, to inform them and apologise for the rough handling of their children.
8. The Principal also asked after the well-being of their children and their feelings towards school. All three parents said that they did not notice anything amiss, nor any physical injuries and that their children were behaving normally.
9. Upon completing the DI, Kinderland HQ requested for Teacher A to be dismissed on 28 August 2023.
10. When the DI committee reached out to Teacher B, Teacher B did not admit to taking the videos of the incidents, nor posting them. She instead said that she had seen the videos from her friends.
11. ECDA and the police are investigating this matter.

Background

12. There have been rumours circulating on the nationality and particulars of the teachers in question. We will address this here.



13. Teacher A, a Singaporean, 33, is an experienced and certified childcare teacher. She joined Kinderland in March 2020. Prior to joining Kinderland she had worked in another pre-school centre.

14. Kinderland conducts Parents Survey annually. Teacher A had consistently received good testimonials from parents, as shown below:

“She has always been so thoughtful and caring towards E.”

“Teacher [A] has been with my son since infant care and I love how she updates about the things my son improved on”

“[She] is very patient, loving and always update the child 's progress to the parent all the time.

“Always ready to update parents regarding our child, always cheerful to greet and send off children. Child gets excited to enter school.”

(names edited to protect the children's privacy)

15. Teacher A also got along well with the other teachers in the centre and was always helpful.

16. Teacher B, Singaporean, 37, had joined Kinderland Woodlands Mart in May 2023. She had held previous appointments in other preschool centres.

17. Teacher B was assigned to work with Teacher A in the classroom.

18. Within three months, Teacher B tendered her resignation and left Kinderland on 29 July 2023. During her exit interview, she did not mention any dissatisfaction and indicated that recognition for her work, supervisors management and opportunities to use her abilities are good. She cited having to look after her ailing mother as the reason for her resignation.

19. The affected children were all below the age of three at the time of the incidents.



Kinderland's Response

20. First and foremost, Kinderland has once again reached out to and apologised deeply to the affected parents and children of Kinderland Woodlands Mart.
21. Kinderland is profoundly grateful that some of the parents have accepted our apology and remedial measures, to which they have our fullest assurance that we continue to place the utmost priority on the education and welfare of children under our care.
22. Currently, two of the affected children are doing well. The mother of the third child has posted on social media that her daughter woke up screaming last night, which she attributes to the incident.

Incident at Kinderland Choa Chu Kang

23. Another video surfaced on 29 August 2023 on social media showing a teacher hitting a boy on his head at the Choa Chu Kang centre.
24. The Principal of the centre has likewise reached out to the parents of the boy and offered our apologies. She has also filed a report to ECDA and the teacher has been suspended.

New measures to be in place

25. Going forward, Kinderland will put in place new measures that will better address the welfare of both children and teachers in both centres.
26. Kinderland will also be enhancing our current policy to manage the mental health of new and current teachers with weekly and monthly meet up sessions with the principal to have a better feel of issues on the ground.



27. At present, Kinderland has a Pre-school Management App where photos and videos of our children are posted regularly by teachers to update parents on their child's progress. We will be reinforcing the continued use of this app among teachers.
28. Presently, Kinderland has CCTVs cameras installed along the common corridors, entrance and exits of the centre. CCTV cameras in classrooms had always been a matter of concern with protecting the privacy of the children. Following these incidents, we will be expanding the installation of CCTVs in all classrooms and children activity areas at these two centres.
29. At the same time, Kinderland HQ has provided an additional point of contact for parents to directly contact the centres and Kinderland HQ in case of any matters.
30. As part of new teacher orientation, Kinderland will also be fine-tuning our "feedback and comments" procedures for staff and teachers to highlight matters of concern, or issues that will help us better our service, with a direct line to Kinderland HQ on a non-prejudice basis, should they need to bring up any matters that they do not feel comfortable bringing up within the centres.
31. We hope that this will give our teachers added confidence that Kinderland strives hard to ensure that the welfare of all staff, teachers and children are always a priority.
32. Our teachers, principals and staff at Kinderland remain committed to upholding this trust you have placed in us and we will continue to work together constructively for our children to grow holistically.

Moving Forward

33. We would like to assure the public and parents that for over 45 years, Kinderland has placed the holistic development and welfare of our children at the core of what we do.



34. With over 60 centres in the region, and 1,000 teachers looking after more than 5,000 children every single day, we trust that our policies, guidelines, procedures have helped to provide a caring and conducive environment for learning for those who work and learn with us.
35. While isolated and rare incidents do happen, Kinderland has taken, and will continue to take, a proactive stance in addressing issues that arise and will continue to uphold a zero-tolerance policy of no abuse to anyone, child or adult.
36. At this point, we have received six requests for withdrawals of children from the two centres. Kinderland will do our utmost to ensure the children are well placed and taken care of during the transition period. 200 children are currently enrolled at the two centres.
37. We would also like to remind the public that the actions of one teacher do not reflect the attitudes or actions of the other hundreds of teachers in Kinderland. Our teachers deserve the respect and appreciation for the good work they do every day for our children, and it would be appreciated that they do not become targets for slurs or negative comments.
38. We would also like to thank the parents and public who have written in to us personally, as a show of their support during this challenging time for our staff and teachers. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your support and acknowledging the good work we have done throughout the years.
39. Kinderland thanks you for your time and concern, and looks forward to working constructively with all involved to work for the better good.

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Website: <https://kinderland.com.sg>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KinderlandSG/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/kinderlandsg/>

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About Kinderland

Established in 1978, Kinderland has since been a leading provider of quality infant care and bilingual preschool education for children aged two months to six years. A member of the Crestar Education Group, Kinderland has a network of 15 centres across Singapore, the brand has built a robust presence nationwide and is recognised for its unique curriculum that thoughtfully combines Western education methodologies with the Eastern emphasis on moral values and interpersonal relationships.

At the heart of Kinderland's teaching philosophy lies a strong emphasis on music. This innovative approach not only enriches language literacy but also stimulates cognitive development in young children. Kinderland takes pride in a variety of music programmes available across all its centres, involving activities such as stage performances and pianica ensembles. These programmes provide children with unique opportunities to build self-confidence, learn teamwork, and nurture a lifelong appreciation for music.

Adding to its innovative pedagogy, Kinderland Academy @ Yio Chu Kang stands out as Singapore's first and only preschool offering a marching band programme since 2010. This ground-breaking initiative provides an extraordinary platform for our young learners to perform at prominent public events and venues, including the Singapore World Water Day and the PassionArts Festival.

Locations: <https://kinderland.com.sg/centres-information/>

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Issued for and on behalf of **Kinderland** by Affluence PR Pte Ltd.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Angela Sim

angela@affluencepr.com

Hp: +65 9698 8485

Lini Chew

linichew@kinderland.com.sg