Child Protection Policy
From Physical or Mental Abuse
and Sexual Abuse, Misconduct, and Molestation

Heart Math Tutoring ("Heart") does not permit actual or threatened acts of physical or mental abuse, sexual abuse, sexual molestation or sexual misconduct ("Abuse") to occur in the workplace or at any activity sponsored by or related to Heart Math Tutoring. In addition, Heart takes responsible steps to prevent and report known or suspected abuse occurring outside of activities sponsored by or related to Heart Math Tutoring.

Abuse, as defined in this policy, includes child maltreatment, which is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child. This includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and neglect. (For more information, refer to SC General Statute 63-7-310). Abuse, as defined in this policy, includes maltreatment by any adult.

In order to make this "zero – tolerance" policy clear to all employees, volunteers, and board members, Heart Math Tutoring has adopted the following mandatory procedures that all employees, volunteers, board members and victims must follow to prevent and report Abuse.

1. The **Volunteer Recruitment, Training, and Screening** process shall include the following:

    a. **Volunteer Application** – Every volunteer working with students within the Charleston County School District (CCSD) system and/or within Heart programming is required to complete a written application that will set forth appropriate background information and expectations.
    b. **Training** – During Heart's 60-minute orientation session, and prior to working with students, the Heart Program Coordinator assigned to the prospective volunteer will deliver training covering Heart's Tutor Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy. The Program Coordinator will ensure that all volunteers certify that they have reviewed and accept Heart's policies by signing the Acknowledgement of Receipt of Heart's Child Protection Policy (from Physical or Mental Abuse and Sexual Abuse, Misconduct and Molestation) and Tutor Code of Conduct. The Heart Program Coordinator will review this policy and complete this training individually with any volunteers who sign up after the commencement of the school year.
    c. **Background Check and Screening** – All potential volunteers will be subject to a criminal background check conducted by CCSD or, if not volunteering within CCSD, conducted by contractors to Heart. The Heart Program Coordinator will meet and interview each prospective volunteer in a 60-minute small-group orientation session prior to the prospective volunteer working with students. During orientation, volunteers are made aware of the requirement to disclose the existence of any prior claims of inappropriate behavior with respect to youth. The background check and screening must be completed prior to interaction with youth, and the results could preclude participation in the program.

2. The **Employee Recruitment, Training, and Screening** process shall include the following:
    a. **Employment Application** – Every prospective Heart employee working with students within the Charleston County School District (CCSD) system is required to complete a written application that will set forth appropriate background information and require disclosure of

any prior claims or allegations of sexual abuse or other inappropriate conduct. Employees are also required to provide at least three individuals as references to the good character of the prospective employee. The Heart hiring manager is required to contact these references and confirm the good character of the prospective employee before employment begins.

b. **Training** – All Heart employees will review and sign Heart's Child Protection Policy, along with other organization policies, within the first three days of employment. All Heart employees working with students are required to complete a child abuse prevention and reporting training, annually in advance of in-school programming beginning for each school year. Training includes topics such as identifying and reporting suspected child abuse, safe practices in schools, Heart's child protection policy, general awareness and monitoring of volunteer behavior (name tags, distance to/from tutoring locations, supervision).

c. **Background Check and Screening** – All potential employees will be subject to a criminal background check conducted by contractors to Heart, and the background check will include appropriate inquiries regarding any previous record of sexual abuse or other unlawful activity by the potential volunteer. Potential Heart employees will be asked screening questions regarding the existence of any prior claims of inappropriate behavior with respect to youth.

3. **Additional Preventative Measures**
   a. To the extent reasonably possible, no one adult (employee or volunteer) from Heart will be alone in a room with one student. (Spousal units are considered to be one person, for this context.)
   b. Per the Tutor Code of Conduct, appropriate physical contact between adults and students is limited to high fives, fist bumps, and handshakes. Hugs and hand holding may only occur if initiated by a student, in a location visible to at least one other adult, and are never required or expected. Volunteers and employees are encouraged to model appropriate boundaries by refraining from initiating physical contact beyond the above. Lap sitting, inappropriate jokes, and *any uninvited touch*, regardless of nature, are considered inappropriate interactions. For virtual tutoring sessions, all communication with students must occur through Heart-approved platforms only. Private messaging, direct contact through personal accounts or phone numbers, and any communication outside of Heart-sanctioned channels are strictly prohibited. Virtual sessions should be conducted in a manner that could be observed or recorded, and volunteers and employees should avoid one-on-one virtual interactions with students outside of scheduled, program-sanctioned sessions.
   c. Heart will obtain written confirmation that volunteers have completed the CCSD or Heart-sponsored background check prior to volunteers working with students and at least one other time during the school year.

4. **Record Retention of Policies**
   a. Heart Math Tutoring will retain a copy of all signed Acknowledgements of Receipt of Physical and Mental Abuse and Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct and Molestation Policy in accordance with the document retention policy of Heart Math Tutoring.

5. **Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse**
   a. Any adult (volunteer or staff) who becomes aware of incidents of violent or sexual offense or misdemeanor child abuse of abuse or suspected abuse is responsible for reporting the incident in accordance with applicable laws. Suspicions or disclosures should be reported

to the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) 24-hour, toll-free hotline at 1-888-CARE4US or 1-888-227-3487 and to Charleston Police Department (911) or CPD Crime Stoppers tip line at 843-554-1111. Heart staff will be available to assist in making this report.

b. Any volunteer who becomes aware of an incident of abuse or suspected abuse is required to report this to Heart's Program Coordinator as soon as possible, who will also notify the Program Manager within 24 hours. Any staff who becomes aware of an incident of abuse or suspected abuse is required to report this to their Program Manager as soon as possible. The Program Manager will report it to the Vice President of Finance and Business Operations who will report it to the Chief Executive Officer. If the incident occurred in a CCSD school, the Heart Program Manager is responsible for reporting it to the appropriate school staff, including the school principal. A Heart Math Tutoring internal incident report will be filed with the Vice President of Finance and Business Operations and kept on record.
c. The Heart Program Coordinator and Program Manager will become aware of and adhere to any policies also in place by each individual school or school district.
d. In the event that a suspected incidence of abuse is reported alleging Abuse by a Heart volunteer or employee, the Heart volunteer or employee in question will be temporarily suspended from duties while an investigation takes place.
e. In the event that a suspected incidence of abuse is reported, the volunteer and/or staff member making the report shall not disclose any information related to the incident to anyone other than individuals mentioned above, to include Heart staff, appropriate school staff, SCDSS, and law enforcement (if applicable).

6. <u>Retaliation Prohibited</u>
   a. Heart Math Tutoring prohibits retaliation against anyone, including an employee, volunteer, board member, student or individual, who in good faith reports Abuse. Retaliation against a participant in the investigation is also prohibited.
   b. Anyone who retaliates against someone who has made a good faith allegation of prohibited conduct or intentionally provides false information to that effect will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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I, _____ (please print name), acknowledge that I have received and read the Heart Math Tutoring Child Abuse Policy (from Physical or Mental Abuse and Sexual Abuse, Misconduct, and Molestation). I understand that I am bound to follow the policy and understand the consequences in the event that I fail to do so.

_____ _____

SIGNATURE **DATE**

_____

FULL NAME