

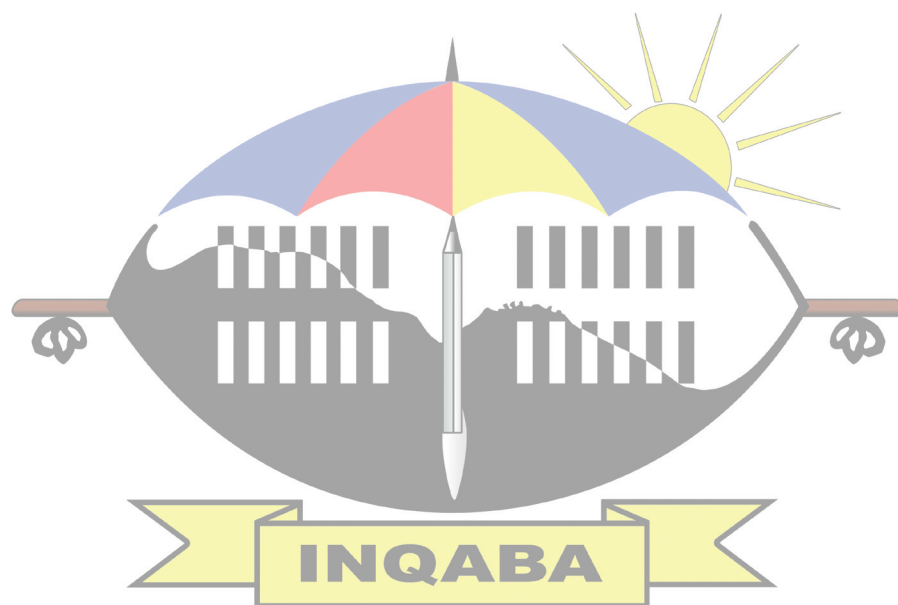
KINGDOM OF ESWATINI



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

VIOLENCE PREVENTION & RESPONSE STRATEGY

2020



Care and Support for Teaching and Learning

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FOREWORD

The Government of Eswatini Ministry of Education and Training has a responsibility to provide inclusive, equitable and quality education for all, in an environment free from any forms of violence and abuse. The Ministry is realising that schools are no longer safe spaces for teaching and learning. The escalating prevalence of violence in schools poses a challenge for the Ministry to ensure the attainment of educational outcomes in all the levels of the education system. This in turn yields serious repercussions to the socio-economy of the country.

In responding to the problem, the Ministry has seen it proper to develop an education specific Strategy to prevent and respond to violence within the school setting. **The Ministry therefore, presents The Ministry of Education and Training Violence Prevention and Response Strategy 2020**, which aims at eradicating all forms of violence in schools and ensure that they are safe spaces for teaching and learning.

The development of the five year Violence Prevention and Response Strategy will contribute to the achievement of the country's vision as articulated in the National Development Strategy Vision 2022, "ensuring that Eswatini is among the top 10% of the medium development group of countries founded on sustainable economic development, social justice and political stability." The Strategy seeks to practically operationalize the National Education and Training Sector Policy 2018 on its mission to promote a safe and protective enabling environment in Eswatini schools, through Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) National Model of the Kingdom of Eswatini. This is a framework promoting a holistic well-being of a child, which has been mainstreamed in all the levels of the education system.

The country has prioritised the eradication of violence especially gender based violence in all settings. Strides towards prioritizing this pandemic includes the development of a National Strategy to End Violence in Eswatini 2017-2022. The Education Strategy will respond to the aspirations of the National Strategy, that of systematically eradicating all forms of violence in the country. The Strategy is guided by all the National Legal Frameworks protecting the rights and welfare of a child, including amongst others, the National Constitution of 2005, Children's Protection and Welfare Act 2012 and the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act 2018.

The Education Strategy hinges on a multi-sectoral approach in preventing and responding to violence in and around schools. A wider stakeholder consultation led to the development of the final product of the strategy. It identifies key areas of intervention and strategically places different critical players towards consented efforts in addressing the problem.

The Strategy shall be reviewed every five years to integrate emerging issues around violence. Stakeholders are invited to acquaint themselves with the strategy so that efforts drawn towards eradicating violence in and around schools are systematically guided by the strategy.



Mr Bertram B. Stewart

The Principal Secretary for Ministry Education and Training

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

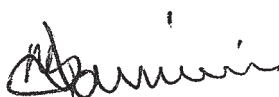
The Ministry of Education and Training would like to extend its sincere appreciation and thanks to UNICEF for the financial and technical support on the development of the Ministry of Education and Training Violence Prevention and Response Strategy 2020. Appreciation also goes to UNICEF Education Specialist Mr Victor Nkambule for his assistance in the process. We also recognize the contribution by all the stakeholders who worked diligently in providing technical guidance and contributing valuable ideas informing the development of this comprehensive strategy to prevent and respond to violence in and around schools, namely Swaziland National Association of Teachers, Eswatini Principals Association, School Managers, Royal Eswatini Police Service, Swaziland Action against Abuse, Church Forum, Department of Social Welfare, Department of Gender and Family Issues, Moya Centre and UNESCO.

Sincere gratitude is extended to the department of Educational Testing, Guidance and Psychological Services (ETGPS) in the Ministry of Education and Training for spearheading and expediting the process of the development of the Strategy. In particular we wish to acknowledge Ms. Dumisile Masuku-

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A special thanks goes to the Director ETGPS Ms. Lindiwe N. Dlamini for her championship, leadership and guidance from inception and through to the finalization of the document. Our profound gratitude goes to the MoET Senior Management for their contribution and support.

The Ministry also appreciates the Consultants Ms. Karen Holley and Ms. Karen Muller for their technical guidance and efforts throughout the process including collection and collating of information from different sources to inform drafting of the strategy.



Dr. Ntombenhle L. Dlamini

Director of Education and Training

ACRONYMS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SADC	South African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRGBV	School-related gender-based violence
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

GLOSSARY

Bullying	Behaviour that is repeated over time, includes deliberately harmful or aggressive behaviour and involves a power imbalance between the victim of the bullying and the perpetrator of the bullying. Injury or discomfort is inflicted through physical contact, verbal attacks or psychological manipulation.
Child	A person under the age of 18.
Community-based Organizations	A public or private non-profit organization that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and works to meet community needs.
Complex Post-traumatic Stress Disorder	A psychological disorder that can develop in response to a prolonged, repeated experience of interpersonal trauma in a context in which the individual has little or no chance of escape.
Corporal punishment	Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light.
Curriculum	The specific learning standards, lessons, assignments, and materials used to organize and teach a particular course.
Cyberbullying	A type of psychological bullying that includes repeated unkind comments, criticism or threats that are sent using information and communication technology, such as mobile phones, emails and social media.
Disclosure	The gradual process of a victim informing others, either directly or indirectly, of their abuse.
Dissociation	A disruption in the usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity and perception of the environment.
Domestic violence	Violent or aggressive behaviour within the home, typically involving the violent abuse of a spouse or partner.
Educators	A person who provides instruction or education and who is registered as such in terms of regulations or legislation.
Emotional abuse	Emotional abuse is a form of abuse, characterised by a person subjecting or exposing another person to behaviour that may result in psychological trauma.
Gender	Gender refers to the role of a male or female in society, known as a gender role, or an individual's concept of themselves, or gender identity.
Gender-based violence	Violence that is perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes and is enforced by unequal power dynamics.
Gender resocialisation	Gender resocialisation, also known as gender transformation, is the process of addressing unhealthy and inequitable gender norms and transforming them into healthy and equitable ones.

Harassment	Any improper and unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person. Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions that tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate or embarrass another or that create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
Intimate partner violence	Intimate partner violence (IPV) is domestic violence by a current or former spouse or partner in an intimate relationship against the other spouse or partner.
Physical abuse	Physical abuse is any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person by way of bodily contact.
Positive discipline	Positive discipline is a discipline model used by schools, and in parenting, that focuses on the positive points of behaviour. It is based on the idea that there are no bad children, just good and bad behaviours.
Post-traumatic stress disorder	A condition of persistent mental and emotional stress occurring as a result of injury or severe psychological shock, typically involving disturbance of sleep and constant vivid recall of the experience with dulled responses to others and to the outside world.
Psycho-social support	Psycho-social support assists individuals and/or communities to heal the psychological wounds and rebuild social structures after a traumatic event.
Obsessive-compulsive disorder	A personality disorder characterised by excessive orderliness, perfectionism, attention to details, and a need for control in relating to others.
School safety	School safety is defined as schools and school-related activities where students are safe from violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use. Safe schools promotes the protection of students from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying, and the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds.
School-related gender-based violence	Acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes and enforced by unequal power dynamics.
Sex	Classification of people as male, female or intersex, assigned at birth, based on anatomy and biology.
Sexual abuse	the forcing of undesired sexual acts by one person to another.
Suicide ideation	Also known as suicidal thoughts; thinking about or having an unusual preoccupation with suicide.
Tibi tendlu	The term refers to family secrets and relates to the belief that matters should be kept within the family, and that outsiders should not interfere.

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PART A: INTRODUCTION

1 Addressing Violence in Schools in Eswatini

The Violence Prevention and Response Strategy is a framework for addressing violence in schools. The ultimate goal of this strategy is to eradicate violence in schools and ensure they are safe for all learners and educators. Effective teaching and learning can only take place in a safe and secure school environment. Safety is a precondition for learning since learners learn and educators teach more effectively when schools provide a safe environment. School safety includes the total learning environment, including learners, the school and its grounds, educators, parents, caregivers and the community (Xaba: 2006). A safe school is defined as one that is free from danger and possible harm, where non-educators, educators and learners can work, teach and learn without fear or ridicule, intimidation, harassment, humiliation or violence (Squelch: 2001). A safe school is, therefore, one that is physically and psycho-socially safe.

2 What Is the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy?

The development of the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy is in fulfilment of the *Southern African Development Community (SADC) Policy Framework on Care and Support for Teaching and Learning* (2015) which provides, amongst other matters, for the protection of learners from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Policy Statement 15 calls for Ministries of Education to develop policies on the protection of learners from violence at schools, and provides as follows:

Develop a comprehensive education sector child protection policy that obliges and guides the development of school policies and practices that protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation at school, at home and in the community.

The Violence Prevention and Response Strategy is a comprehensive document that outlines the vision, guiding principles and minimum standards for preventing and responding to violence in schools in Eswatini. It aims to create safe schools where learners and educators are not at risk of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, and provides key stakeholders with detailed guidance on how to discharge their responsibilities to ensure the eradication of all forms of violence in schools. The strategy describes what procedures for preventing and responding to violence must be established, implemented and monitored. It also outlines the roles of learners, school personnel, parents, communities and government stakeholders in this regard.

3 Purpose of the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy

For this reason, it is important to ensure that schools are safe places for learners and educators. The purposes of the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy are, therefore, as follows:

- To identify key types of violence in schools in Eswatini;
- To ensure that schools are safe, caring and supportive teaching and learning environments;
- To provide a standardised national approach that assists schools to establish environments for learning that are free from the risk of violence;
- To provide support for individual schools to devise policies that respond to violence within their own contexts;
- To create an empowered school population;
- To provide guidance on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders with respect to violence prevention and response;
- To develop an integrated referral and case management system;
- To identify key areas of intervention for the prevention of violence in schools; and
- To assist schools to integrate prevention interventions into their curricula.

PART B: BACKGROUND

1 The Need for a Violence Prevention and Response Strategy

1.1. Violence in Eswatini

Violence in Eswatini has been increasing at such an alarming rate that it has led to the Government spearheading the *National Strategy and Action Plan to End Violence in Swaziland* and referring to the violence in the country as a national disaster. This is supported by the statistics provided in the National Study on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children in Swaziland which supplied the following data (DPMO: 2016):

- Nearly three-quarters of children experience routine violence in the form of violent discipline;
- More than one in every three girls reported experiencing some form of sexual violence during childhood;
- Eswatini has the highest prevalence of sexual violence during childhood compared to eight other countries that have done similar surveys, including Cambodia, Haiti, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe; and
- Nearly three in every ten (28.5 per cent) girls reported experiencing emotional violence during childhood, mostly from family members.

Research findings and police statistics reveal that the most common form of violence is gender-based violence (GBV) and it affects women and girls disproportionately. Intimate partner violence is the most common form of violence experienced by women, and children are particularly vulnerable to violence, especially sexual abuse (DPMO: 2016). On average, one-fifth of women between the ages of 15 and 49 are beaten by their husbands or partners and this form of violence is so commonplace that it is at risk of becoming acceptable. The UNICEF Study on Violence against Women and Children (2017) identified the sexual abuse of children as a major problem and that violence against female children was highly prevalent in Eswatini. This violence continues into young adulthood with nearly two in three Swazi females aged between 18 and 24

having experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. The perpetrators of sexual, physical and emotional violence were family members or people the victim knew from the neighbourhood. The most common location in which sexual violence occurred was the home, public areas like open fields, the journey to and from school, school buildings and school grounds.

Since violence is very prevalent in Eswatini, it follows that children will be exposed to violence at a very high rate. The findings of the Study on Drivers of Violence Against Children (DPMO: 2016) show that nearly three quarters of children in Eswatini experience routine violence. The study revealed that 88 per cent of children experience violent discipline, 38 per cent experience sexual violence, 32 per cent are subjected to bullying, 31 per cent to physical violence and 28 per cent to emotional violence.

1.2. Violence in schools in Eswatini

Schools are not isolated institutions, and the violence that takes place in schools is a reflection of the violence that is taking place in the broader community and within the families of individual learners. The UNICEF (2014) report, *Hidden in Plain Sight*, provides a global perspective on abuse perpetrated against children and has highlighted the following prevalent forms of abuse against children, most of it occurring within schools:

- Bullying is the most prevalent form of violence in schools and affects more than one in three students between the ages of 13 and 15 worldwide,
- Sexual violence is perpetrated against 120 million girls under the age of 10 worldwide;
- More than 80 per cent of students in some countries experience corporal punishment at school;
- Marginalised groups are at increased risk of abuse with girls with disabilities experiencing sexual violence twice as much as girls without disabilities;
- Bullying that targets minority and disadvantaged groups is one of the most common forms of bullying, with reports of up to 60 per cent of children belonging to

these groups being bullied in some countries; and

- Cyber-bullying overlaps with school bullying but is becoming more significant with the increased use of technology.

Research has identified the following factors as contributing to violence in schools:

- Lack of awareness amongst educators of school-based violence and the processes that are meant to deal with sexual violence;
- Lack of capacity at school level to prevent, identify and address incidents of school-based violence;
- Reluctance on the part of schools to take action against educators who abuse learners;
- Lack of safe, secure, welcoming physical spaces within school settings;
- The use of teaching and learning strategies and disciplinary methods that reinforce violence;
- Curricula and teaching methods that do not equip learners with key knowledge and life skills to engage in healthy peer relationships and violence prevention;
- Educators' backgrounds are not screened prior to employment, which means that abusers are able to re-enter schools again and again; and
- Absence of meaningful consequences for perpetrators perpetuates the violence.

The following are common types of violence experienced within the school context (Veriava et al: 2017):

- Physical assault: applying physical force or the threat thereof to a child;
- Bullying: repeatedly subjecting a learner to frightening or intimidating treatment, which can result in:
 - ▶ Physical harm to the child or their property;
 - ▶ Emotional harassment;
 - ▶ Making the learner fear for their safety or that of their property; and
 - ▶ The creation of an environment that is counter-productive to learning;
- Corporal punishment: any deliberate act against a learner to punish them that inflicts pain or physical discomfort, and can include but is not limited to:
 - ▶ Smacking, slapping, pinching or hitting with a hand or an object;
 - ▶ Refusal to allow a learner to go to the toilet;
 - ▶ Denying meals, drink, and protection from the elements;
 - ▶ Pushing or pulling a learner with force;
 - ▶ Forcing the learner to do exercise; and

- ▶ Throwing things at a learner;
- Gender-based violence: violence directed against a person because of their gender, including:
 - ▶ Any gendered or sex-based discrimination, harassment and violence;
 - ▶ Rape and sexual harassment; and
 - ▶ Discrimination against minority and disadvantaged groups;
- Sexual violence: any form of violence that is of a sexual nature, including rape and sexual assault;
- Sexual harassment: unwelcome sexual attention, which includes:
 - ▶ Suggestive behaviour;
 - ▶ Messages or remarks of a sexual nature;
 - ▶ Intimidating or humiliating behaviour of a sexual nature;
 - ▶ An implied or express reward for complying with a sexually-oriented request;
- Emotional abuse: any treatment which diminishes a person's sense of identity, dignity and self-worth, including:
 - ▶ Confinement and isolation;
 - ▶ Verbal assault, humiliation, and intimidation;
 - ▶ Ignoring, or excessive criticism;
 - ▶ Being over-familiar and disrespectful; and
 - ▶ Unreasonably ordering a person around or using a learner for child labour;
- Gangs: groups that have a sense of unity and try to intimidate and commit violent acts or other crimes and defend themselves using violence; and
- Harassment: engaging in conduct that causes harm or threatens harm, including:
 - ▶ Following, watching, pursuing or accosting a learner;
 - ▶ Sending messages or letters that induce a sense of discomfort or fear; and
 - ▶ Loitering near a place where the learner lives, goes to school or waits for transport.

From a study examining multiple high schools in Eswatini, the findings showed that all schools in the study had experienced instances of physical and emotional abuse, sexual harassment and gender-based violence (Tumwine: 2014). Notably, the majority of victims in cases of sexual harassment did not report the incidents for fear of reprisals from the offenders and community. UNICEF (2012) has noted the growing culture of girls not reporting sexual harassment due to fear or reprisals from neighbours and relatives. Learners in Eswatini were

incapable of conceptualising a safe learning environment and were unable to define what was meant by the concept. They saw it as referring to external elements, such as a fence around the property, as opposed to internal violence within the school (Tumwine: 2014).

The impact of bullying on learners was investigated in a study that examined the effects of bullying on teenage girls in Eswatini high schools. It was found that the academic lives of victims were “badly compromised” by the bullying and resulted in an increase in truancy and school drop-out rates (Tshotsho and Thwala: 2015; Siziya, Muula and Rudatsikira: 2017). Bullying was found to be rife in Eswatini high schools and no action was taken, even when children reported the effects and stresses endured. In addition, there is a severe lack of counselling for victims (Tshotsho and Thwala: 2015). The bullying (and physical and emotional abuse) was not only executed by fellow learners, but instances of emotional abuse at the hands of educators were also recorded (Tumwine: 2014).

Alcohol and drugs, particularly marijuana, are common in schools during the Marula season (Tumwine, 2014). Drunken learners regularly become violent, and girls are likely to be the most vulnerable. While still an early phenomenon, gang culture (and its inherent violence) tends to follow close on the heels of drug use and production.

An evaluation was conducted in Eswatini of the process, impact, efficiency and effectiveness of the Eswatini child-friendly schools as part of the Inqaba project, and it was found that protection inside and around the school was not always guaranteed and that numerous children had been sexually abused by other children at school (Ministry of Education and Training: 2015). It was argued that the main area of concern was outside the school, when learners have to walk to and from school, since many have to walk long distances through the veld using unsafe rural paths. Children are not protected from physical and sexual violence on route to school, and cases of rape have been reported. Children, especially girls, reported feeling unsafe on these journeys, and in some regions 25 per cent of the learners indicated that they never felt safe. The journey to and from school definitely presents serious concerns for their safety (Ministry of Education and Training: 2015).

1.3. Reasons for violence

Drivers of violence include structural factors, institutional factors, community factors, interpersonal factors and individual factors (DPMO: 2016). Structural factors refer to economic and social policies that inadvertently increase poverty and inequality, gender norms and inequality and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Gender norms and inequality have contributed to the lack of female empowerment and the dependence of women on males for survival (UNFPA: undated). Social norms within Eswatini promote male dominance and female submissiveness; women are blamed for causing the violence and are expected to accept it. This creates a culture of silence around domestic violence, which, in turn, perpetuates the abuse. Economic and social policies that inadvertently cause poverty and unemployment are also drivers of violence since they give rise to stress and conflict within families and the potential for abuse. In addition, poverty results in increased vulnerability, especially for children and orphans, which makes them more susceptible to violence (UNFPA: undated). The Extended National Strategic Framework for HIV and AIDS has also identified HIV and AIDS as a driver of violence since they influence risk factors such as orphanhood, frequent changes in carers and harmful community beliefs.

Institutional factors refer to the norms surrounding corporal punishment at school, which make its use acceptable, the lack of confidential reporting mechanisms and the lack of follow-up in reporting violence. Community factors that act as drivers of violence include reluctance to intervene in the family life of others, community silence, the belief that people in positions of power have impunity, gender norms, harmful community myths and/or beliefs, risky places and events, community perceptions on the rights of children and discipline, silence around sexual violence against boys, and attitudes towards children and childhood (UNFPA: undated).

Interpersonal factors include domestic violence in the home, drug and alcohol use, family structure, family stress, family secrets, and quality of familial relationships. Individual factors include being in a position of power over a child, parents' own experiences of violence, temperament and anger management, whilst the community factors include lack of confidential spaces for reporting and support (UNFPA: undated).

1.4. Barriers to reporting violence

The UNICEF (2007) study found that over half of the incidents of child sexual violence were not reported to anyone. The primary reason provided by females for not reporting was that they did not know that what they had experienced was abuse. They were also afraid that they would be abandoned if they reported the abuse. According to the UNICEF (2007) findings, this indicates a lack of understanding of what sexual violence is and how and where to report. The same pattern was found in cases relating to physical violence, where women only sought help in 20 per cent of the cases, despite the fact that in 25 per cent of the cases there were injuries serious enough to consult a doctor.

There are various barriers to reporting violence, and chief amongst those are what is referred to as *tibi tendlu* or family secrets (DPMO: 2016). This refers to the fact that these issues are kept within the family, and therefore others are also reluctant to get involved.

In the school setting, there are a number of reasons why learners do not disclose abuse. These include, as mentioned above, cultural norms. Educators are regarded with great respect in the community and learners find it extremely difficult to report abuse perpetrated by an educator. They believe that they will be penalised for reporting or that they will be made to fail their grade as punishment for disclosure. This is exacerbated by the stigma attached to abuse, particularly sexual abuse, and learners do not wish to be shamed and humiliated in front of their peers. In addition, the procedures to be followed when reporting are unclear and many learners are unaware of these. There is a lack of comprehensive educator training and educators are thus ill-equipped to identify and respond to cases of abuse.

1.5. Impact of violence

Exposure to and experience of violence has far-reaching consequences for both educators and learners, in terms of mental and physical well-being, education and health. In addition, exposure to violence in childhood is linked to the later acceptance and even use of violence (UNESCO and UN Women: 2016). The impact of violence, including sexual violence, has both short-term and long-term consequences for those exposed to it.

The impact of violence on health includes physical injuries, which range from bruises to stab and even gunshot wounds, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV. The secondary health consequences include eating disorders, substance abuse and risky sexual behaviour. The impact on mental health is significant, and includes anxiety, depression, anger or hostility, low self-esteem, suicidal ideation, attempts and actual suicide, self-harm, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), shame, obsessive-compulsive disorder, dissociation and loss of memory (UNESCO and UN Women: 2016).

The impact of violence is compounded when it occurs within a school setting, because violent behaviour within the school environment interferes with the educational process (Volkh and Snell: 1998). Violence affects the behaviour of students in numerous ways, which, in turn, makes it difficult for educators to teach. Students are disruptive and aggressive and cause disturbances in class. Other outcomes include regression in younger children, a lack of concentration, an inability to study, falling grades, non-school attendance and dropping out of school. It contributes to changes in the behaviour of learners who accommodate their lives to avoid the threat of violence. For instance, some children walk longer distances to school to avoid areas where they feel unsafe; they do not attend school-related events; they avoid certain places in the school or on school grounds and even drop out of school. Learners, who spend their time thinking about violence and reorganising their lives to avoid violence, are wasting valuable time and energy which could otherwise be spent on learning or play (Volkh and Snell: 1998). Toilets at schools have been highlighted as one of the most dangerous places for female learners, and consequently many children avoid toilets at school and have persistent health problems as a result.

In addition to the above, the impact of violence has significant financial implications which include direct costs such as medical treatment, and indirect costs such as lost productivity, reduced employability and a decrease in the quality of life.

2 Legislative and Policy Context

The Violence Prevention and Response Strategy gives effect to a number of international, regional and national instruments that aim to eradicate violence.

International policy environment

1. Eswatini is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948 which entitles every human being to the right to life, liberty and security. All persons are equal before the law and no one shall be tortured or subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
2. Through the Cairo Declaration from the International Conference on Population and Development (United Nations: 1994), Eswatini committed to improving the political, social, health and economic status of women through education.
3. Eswatini is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
4. The UN Sustainable Development Goals requires in Target 5.2 the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls while Target 16.2 aims at ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children.
5. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) was ratified by Eswatini in 2004, and Article 7 has been interpreted to mean that all States Parties must protect children from corporal punishment.
6. Eswatini has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which acknowledges the inherent human rights of all children and obligates Eswatini to act in accordance with it, and to ensure that its domestic laws are consistent with the provisions of the CRC. Article 19 of the CRC places an obligation on States Parties to, "[T]ake all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child."

Regional instruments

1. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) Article 16 provides similar protection. It states that, "Children should be protected from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and

especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse."

2. SADC CSTL Policy Framework 2015 articulates that Ministries of Education of all Member States should commit in harmonizing their policies to address barriers to education that often affects and aggravates education exclusion amongst children especially vulnerable groups of children.

National legislation and policy environment

The government of the Kingdom of Eswatini has shown a commitment and effective leadership in preventing and responding to violence in the country. A number of legal frameworks are in place to address violence and gender-based violence in the country.

1. **The National Constitution of Eswatini of 2005:** provides for, and guarantees, the respect and protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms of equality.
2. **The Children's Protection and Welfare Act of 2012:** addresses issues of violence against children
3. **Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018:** prohibits violence in all settings and adequately addresses sexual offences and domestic violence
4. **The National Gender Policy 2010:** it emphasizes on the attainment of a sustainable environment in which girls and boys, men and women will have equal opportunities to participate in and to benefit from all aspects of development and at all levels for the improvements of quality of life.'
5. **The National Children's Policy of 2009.** National Plan of Action for Children (2011–2015) is intended to guide all partners implementing programmes aimed at providing services to children. It is a concerted effort by the government to ensure that all the rights and basic needs of children are fulfilled, upheld and protected
6. **The National Education and Training Sector Policy of 2018.** The policy position is that violence in schools in any form, including threats, harassment and bullying which is perpetrated by or against learners, teachers or other staff or visitors is totally unacceptable.
7. **National Strategy to End Violence in Swaziland 2017–2022:** The strategy identifies key gaps and further recommends multi-sectoral strategic actions towards ending violence in the Kingdom of Eswatini

Other Legislatives:

1. The Education Act of 1981
2. The Teaching Service Act of 1982

PART C:

VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE STRATEGY FOR ESWATINI SCHOOLS

1 Vision and Guiding Principles

1.1. Vision

The vision of the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy is to create safe schools for learners and educators and to strive for the total eradication of violence in the school environment.

1.2. Guiding principles

The vision of the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy is supported by the following guiding principles:

- A human rights-based approach must be followed which respects and promotes the fundamental rights of all persons, with particular emphasis on the best interests of learners;
- There must be alignment with the Constitution and other relevant legislation;
- There must be a commitment to ensuring gender equality and the reduction of gender vulnerability;
- Schools should be caring and conducive environments that are safe from violence where learners and educators are protected;
- Principles of fairness and consistency must be adhered to so in order to ensure just treatment for all;
- Community engagement and participation is essential to ensure ownership and a reduction in vulnerabilities;
- Safe schools are the responsibility of a community partnership among government ministries, administrators, teachers, trustees, support staff, learners, parents, police and community partners; and
- The principles of gender equity must be applied to ensure improved and equitable distribution and access to comprehensive services for all learners and educators.

2 Goals to Be Achieved

There are a number of goals that must be achieved in order to eradicate violence in and around Eswatini schools. These goals are identified as the key pillars or result areas for addressing and responding adequately to violence in schools. It is in these seven pillars that the strategy will be implemented. The pillars are outlined as follows:

1. Policy Enabling Environment

The introduction and alignment of laws, national policies and action plans that recognise the need for prevention and response to violence in schools;

2. The creation of a safe and secure school environment

The creation of safe and secure school environment and more conducive to teaching and learning, and includes the enforcement of codes of conduct that specify ethical norms and standards of behaviour for all school staff, learners and their parents;

3. Curriculum as a Prevention Tool

The use of education to play a key role in addressing the root causes of violence by introducing curricula that prevent violence and promote gender equality and by training educators to be able to provide learners with the tools necessary to achieve these outcomes;

4. Clear, Safe, and accessible Response Mechanism

The introduction of clear, safe, accessible, child-sensitive and confidential procedures and mechanisms for reporting incidents of violence, assisting victims and referring cases to the appropriate authorities is key in responding to violence.

5. Partnerships and Collaboration

The engagement of key stakeholders in strategic partnerships to ensure sustainable change; the sustainability of interventions and services to ensure long-term benefits and effectiveness

6. Capacity Building of Educators

In order to respond to violence in and around school, educators must be aware of the various dynamics that impact on violence both in the community and within the school. Schools should ensure that teachers are well capacitated on the issues of violence and school related gender based violence.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The introduction of a clear monitoring and evaluation framework so that the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy is informed by research and data to ensure progress towards addressing the issue.

3 Minimum Standards to ensure the Implementation of the Strategy

The following sections describe in details on how to ensure each of the seven pillars in the strategy are implemented. In order to achieve the vision of the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy, the following minimum standards for ensuring that schools are safe spaces for teaching and learning were identified by stakeholders during the consultative process.

3.1. Policy Enabling Environment

A safe school environment requires clearly articulated school-based policies that are in alignment with national policies and legislation, are established through collaboration among all stakeholders, including learners and communities, and which are implemented fairly and consistently (MOE: 2018). Policies develop norms for behaviour that are considered to be acceptable. These norms, introduced through school-based policies, must be promoted, discussed and practised in the daily doings of the school. Policies must state clearly that violence will not be condoned and policy-based strategies must be devised to guide behaviour towards a caring and supportive school environment (MOE: 2018). For policies to be effective,

they must be clear and set out well-defined referral procedures so that learners and parents are certain about the processes that need to be followed in cases of reporting procedures.

In order to ensure ownership of the school policies, these should be signed by the learners and/or their parents or guardians to confirm their agreement to upholding the contents of the policies. Policies must be disseminated to all learners and parents or guardians. Individual schools must develop policies that respond to the context of the school environment, but all policies must be approved by the Office of the Ministry of Education and Training.

A safe and secure Schools must meet the following minimum standards:

1. Schools should establish policies and procedures to deal with the following matters:

- ▶ Violence or abuse against children;
- ▶ Self-harm;
- ▶ School building security;
- ▶ School outings and trips;
- ▶ Bullying, including cyber, verbal and physical;
- ▶ Corporal punishment;
- ▶ Substance abuse and weapons;
- ▶ Gang activity;
- ▶ Identification of learners at school;
- ▶ Visitors to the school;
- ▶ Use of cellular phones and tablets;
- ▶ Security during children's commute to and from school; and
- ▶ Codes of conduct for educators and learners.

2. Schools should ensure that the school policies and codes of conduct established are aligned to the Ministry of Education and Training Acts and policies.

3.2. Creation of safe, secure learning environment

The provision of a safe, secure learning environment requires not only that physical infrastructures and spaces are safe, but that the school is welcoming to students, parents and others in the community to encourage engagement and accountability. The creation of safe schools requires a positive and healthy climate where all members of the school community feel safe, included, valued, accepted and actively engage in positive

behaviours (MOE: 2018). This is important in preventing inappropriate behaviour. Research has shown that children have an instinctive need to connect with others, and those who feel a sense of connection with their families, communities and school are less likely to misbehave (Shochet et al: 2010). This sense of connectedness can be promoted in the school environment where educators and staff create opportunities for learners to be valued, appreciated and involved in their school community (MOE: 2018).

The physical infrastructure of a school is important since the research has shown that acts of violence are perpetrated in and around school buildings, school grounds and on the way to and from schools. Areas of particular concern are toilets, empty classrooms, passages and dormitories, as well as the perimeter of school grounds (UNESCO and UN Women: 2016). Violence can be promoted by poorly designed or managed infrastructure, such as bad or no lighting, broken locks, physical isolation and inadequate supervision of facilities (UN Women: 2013).

A safe, secure learning environment should meet the following minimum standards:

1. School location, grounds and access routes:
 - ▶ Secure fencing or walls around the school with lockable gates;
 - ▶ Entrances to schools monitored and cleared of bushes;
 - ▶ Visitors to the school must be checked in and out by security;
 - ▶ Lighting improved and maintained in and around school grounds;
 - ▶ Audits conducted regularly with learners and staff to identify unsafe areas.
2. Infrastructural requirements:
 - ▶ Ensure good visibility into all buildings in the school
 - ▶ monitoring of all educational spaces e.g. laboratories, libraries
3. Availability of hygiene facilities:
 - ▶ Availability of separate, lockable toilets for boys and girls, male and female educators and school staff;
 - ▶ Ensure boys' toilets and girls' toilets are not close to each other;
 - ▶ Toilets must be in a location that ensures the protection of learners.

4. Monitoring and maintenance:

- ▶ Regular monitoring by school security, educators and staff of spaces where children are most vulnerable;
- ▶ Regular checking and maintenance of broken lights and toilet facilities (locks on doors).

5. Transportation:

- ▶ Increase safety on the way to and from school;
- ▶ Establish safe routes to and from school that are patrolled or implement shared transport options;
- ▶ Determine school starting and ending times so as to ensure children are able to walk together in groups for purposes of safety.

6. Availability of psycho-social support systems, including anger and stress management for both learners and educators;

- ▶ Availability of guidance teachers;
- ▶ Availability of a counselling room;
- ▶ Extra curricula clubs and activities

3.3. Curriculum as a Prevention tool

The vision of the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy is to eradicate all forms of violence at schools. The key to achieving this vision is to prevent all forms of violence in and around schools.

Learners in Eswatini are exposed to many factors that increase their risk of being exposed to or engaging in violent behaviour or becoming involved in substance abuse and gang activity. Prevention aims at identifying and responding to these risks before dysfunctional behaviours occur and to strengthen protective factors. This is achieved through the development of educational content that addresses violence and its underlying causes and the creation of a safe, supportive environment, and by the training of educators so that they are able to understand and respond effectively to these risks.

Curriculum is an important vehicle for addressing violence in schools since a change in paradigm is achieved through education that encourages learners to question, negotiate and challenge violence and gender discrimination. Learners must be able to recognize what constitutes violence and abuse, how to protect themselves from harm, and how to take action to avoid harm to others (UNESCO and UN Women: 2016).

Curriculum approaches to preventing violence in schools should meet the following minimum standards:

1. Inclusion of curriculum content that responds to preventing violence:
 - ▶ Curriculum to address gender awareness and violence prevention, including body safety;
 - ▶ Curricula and teaching materials promoting positive values, gender equality and tolerance;
 - ▶ Explicit teaching of social and emotional learning skills;
 - ▶ Teachers modelling non-violent, non-gendered ways to deal with conflict;
 - ▶ Teaching of comprehensive Life Skills Education.
2. Providing educators with the necessary training and skills to prevent and respond to violence in schools and so that they are able to model non-violent, non-gendered ways to deal with conflict
3. Provision of safe places where programmes and activities focusing on violence prevention can take place

3.4. Clear, Safe, and accessible Response Mechanism

Responses to violence in and around school

When acts of violence do occur, there must be clear, safe and accessible procedures and mechanisms in place for reporting incidents, assisting victims and referring cases to the appropriate authorities. Reporting mechanisms refer to those systems that enable a victim or witness to report misconduct and crimes that have taken place. These mechanisms are important to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and to ensure that they are unable to harm any other learners (UNESCO and UN Women: 2016).

A Clear, safe, secure and confidential response mechanism should meet the following minimum standards:

1. Providing easily accessible, child-sensitive and confidential reporting mechanisms:
 - ▶ Clear adjudication processes to ensure confidence in the processes;
 - ▶ Confidentiality must be ensured.
 - ▶ Learners made aware of the different options of reporting including helplines (9664,951,999, SMS U-REPORT to 8500) improvised reporting boxes as well focal points such as Guidance Teachers, A member of School Support Teams (SSTs) and other structures in place within the school.

2. Providing counselling and support for victims, perpetrators and witnesses and also learners:
 - ▶ Safe, easily accessible, child-sensitive counselling rooms;
 - ▶ Confidentiality must be ensured;
 - ▶ Support for educators and staff who deal with these matters.
3. Referral to law enforcement and health-care services:
 - ▶ Guidance on systems and networks for victims and witnesses;
 - ▶ Educators should be informed of law enforcement procedures and what local services and organizations exist for victims that can offer further support.
 - ▶ Protocols and guidelines are in place for escalating cases of violence to appropriate referral structures
 - ▶ Schools develop local directory of services where victims can be referred to for additional support
4. Protection of learners when they are required to be involved in disciplinary processes as a witness are clearly laid down and implemented.

3.5. Capacity-building of educators

In responding to violence in and around school, educators must be aware of the various dynamics that impact on violence both in the community and within the school. This involves an understanding of the dynamics relating to gender, power and socialisation. Educators should practise equality within the school environment and ensure that boys and girls receive the same respectful treatment and attention, follow the same curriculum and enjoy teaching methods that are free from stereotypes and gender bias (UNESCO and UN Women: 2016). To achieve this, educators must be able to engage with gender issues and the dynamics of different forms of violence.

Educators also need capacity-building support in effective classroom management techniques that promote respect, peace and tolerance. Educators also need to be provided with strategies and skills for maintaining discipline in a positive way, in addition to information about institutional codes of conduct and how to respond appropriately to students who are experiencing, witnessing or perpetrating violence (UNESCO and UN Women: 2016).

Capacity-building minimum standards for educators should include the following:

1. Availability of pre- and in-service training for educators to provide them with more knowledge and skills for dealing with:
 - ▶ Gender resocialisation;
 - ▶ Dynamics of relevant forms of violence, including the identification of risk factors and the impact of violence on learners;
 - ▶ Positive discipline, classroom management and the resolution of conflict;
 - ▶ Referral procedures and case management;
 - ▶ Psycho-social support skills.
2. Support for educators on how to be more interactive and less didactic in their approaches to teaching.
3. Capacity building on all national legal frameworks protecting the rights of a child and MoET Acts and Policies.

3.6. Partnership and Collaboration

Programmes and policies on school safety are strengthened when they involve parents and the broader community. Central to this effort is helping learners and their families feel valued and personally invested in keeping their schools safe. For school safety to be effective, there has to be collaboration with the entire local community, including government agencies, police, social services and non-governmental organizations. Since a comprehensive school safety policy should focus on prevention, intervention and response, the assistance and expertise of other role-players in the community becomes important.

Partnership and collaboration minimum standards include the following:

1. Protocols for parent involvement in school activities;
 - ▶ Procedures for communicating with parents;
 - ▶ Provide platforms for parents and guardians to discuss SRGBV related issues and advocating for positive discipline ethos
2. Creation of partnerships with government agencies and community-based organizations.
 - ▶ School formalize linkages with the nearest health care services, Police, Social Welfare and other non – governmental organisation approved by the Ministry of Education and Training.

3.7 Monitoring and evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation system should provide greater accountability and transparency of programmes being implemented and should highlight changes, thereby improving

policy-making and resource mobilisation. Monitoring and evaluation enables stakeholders to identify the most promising or successful interventions and practices, thus enabling the facilitation of information about what works and what does not work. In addition, it supports advocacy endeavours by providing the necessary data that can influence policy-makers.

Monitoring and evaluation strategies should include the following:

- Monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track interventions;
- Indicators on safe schools to track progress;
- Comprehensive data collection systems and system-wide monitoring, including the development of questionnaires to be used in schools;
- Evaluations to assess impact and efficacy; and
- Methodological, ethical and safety considerations.

4 Roles and Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders

The successful implementation of the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy will depend on the effective coordination of a multi-sectoral approach involving the key stakeholders listed below.

4.1 Ministry of Education and Training

The Ministry of Education and Training will be responsible for the following:

- Taking the lead in developing and implementing policies and guidelines pertaining to keeping schools safe and free from violence;
- Ensuring cases of violence are treated with urgency;
- Ensuring that cases of violence are pursued;
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions that have been undertaken to ensure that schools in Eswatini are safe and free from violence;
- Ensuring adequate budgeting for the successful implementation of safe schools; and
- Identifying champions to drive the strategy and to ensure that it is implemented.

4.2. Regional Education Officers

Regional education officers will be responsible for providing an enabling environment that will empower schools to successfully initiate and perform activities that are necessary for the creation

of safe schools. The responsibilities include the following:

- Delivering training on the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy;
- Providing assistance to operationalise the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy;
- Ensuring schools comply with policies and legislation;
- Ensuring monitoring and evaluation is taking place at school level;
- Providing counselling services and make referrals for learners and educators with urgent needs;
- Providing capacity-building for educators on how to address the social and emotional needs of learners and others at schools;
- Developing a system for receiving and managing reports of incidents of violence from schools;
- Providing technical support to educators to ensure curriculum content is delivered in an inclusive, gender equal manner that contributes to positive discipline practices.

4.3 Schools

School management teams are responsible for:

- Ensuring that structures, policies and procedures are in place and aligned with existing legislative frameworks;
- Formulating policies for schools;
- Reporting on their school's safety achievements;
- Ensuring that continuous in-house, school-based workshops on violence, prevention and response are organized and implemented;
- Providing a safe, conducive learning environment for learners;
- Creating partnerships with individuals and organizations to capacitate the school; and
- Ensuring that complaints of violence are investigated, reported and pursued.

4.4 Educators

Educators play a critical role in the successful implementation of the Violence Prevention and Response Strategy so it is important that its implementation involves full educator engagement and that educators have a clear understanding of the reasons for the adoption of the Strategy. Educators have the following responsibilities and duties:

- Reporting reasonable concerns about a learner's safety at school;
- Reporting reasonable concerns about a learner's safety outside the school building;

- Adhering to the Educator Code of Conduct;
- Implementing policies;
- Modelling positive behaviour;
- Treating fellow educators, learners and parents with respect;
- Assisting in the development of the safety plan for their school;
- Engaging with school policies on school safety and knowing the relevant procedures and guidelines;
- Being approachable by creating a conducive environment so that learners are able to confide;
- Practising positive discipline when managing disruptive behaviour;
- Reporting misdemeanours;
- Encouraging learners to report cases of violence;
- Responding to bullying and violence in terms of school guidelines; and
- Forming positive relationships with parents and/or guardians.

4.5 Learners

Learners are responsible for:

- Adhering to the Learner Code of Conduct;
- Helping to create a conducive learning and teaching environment;
- Treating fellow learners, educators and school personnel with respect;
- Participating in decision-making regarding the creation of safe schools;
- Reporting incidents of abuse, including threats of abuse; and
- Taking care of themselves and their fellow learners.

4.6 Parents and guardians

Parents and guardians have the following responsibilities:

- To be respectful to school personnel;
- To engage in activities that will improve their parenting skills and ability to contribute to the healthy development of their children;
- To provide their children with a home environment that is conducive to learning and free from violence;
- To ensure that their children are safe when they go to school;
- To promote healthy behaviour in the home; and
- To adhere to the principle of positive discipline.

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