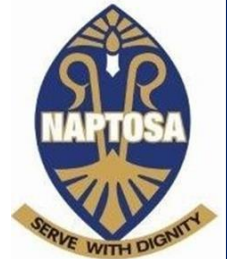


# NATIONAL NEWS FLASH



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## Child Protection Week – 29 May – 05 June

Child Protection Week is an annual campaign in South Africa aimed at raising awareness about the rights of children and promoting their well-being and protection. The Constitution provides a legal framework for the protection and promotion of children's rights:

1. Section 28: Is dedicated to the rights of children. It recognizes the rights of children to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse, or degradation. It also enshrines the right of children to basic nutrition, shelter, healthcare, and social services.
2. Section 28(2): This subsection emphasizes the importance of promoting children's best interests in all matters concerning them. **It requires the state and other relevant institutions to take appropriate measures to ensure the protection and well-being of children.**

How then are we failing our children daily when the supreme law of the land makes provision for their safety?

Children are the cornerstone of our society and the embodiment of our hopes and dreams for a brighter future. As a society, it is our collective responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of our children, both within the confines of their educational institutions and in the broader community. Incidents like the brutal rape and murder of 17-year-old, Palesa Malatji, a grade 12 pupil from Ntsako Secondary School, who left school after attending extra classes, is totally unacceptable!

NAPTOSA calls on the relevant authorities to increase the visibility of active policing near our schools and in the broader communities. Our police are responsible for maintaining public safety and preventing crime, including Gender Based Violence (GBV). They have the authority to enforce laws and intervene in situations that involve violence or potential harm to individuals. By actively patrolling communities, responding to calls, and conducting investigations, police officers can deter potential perpetrators and prevent GBV incidents from occurring.

Proactive policing is crucial in safeguarding children from various forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation. Effective policing requires a comprehensive approach, including training officers in trauma-informed practices, addressing biases, fostering community trust, and promoting accountability within police departments.

NAPTOSA appeals to the ministries of Education and Police to enforce collaboration with child welfare agencies, schools, and community organisations to ensure the safety and well-being of our children.

The fourth quarter 2022/23 crime statistics released by the South African Police Service (SAPS) revealed that 164 206 people were victims of contact crimes between 1 January 2023 and 31 March 2023. This equates to 70 Murders a day and one contact crime committed every 50 seconds of every day. Murders and assault with intent to do Great Bodily Harm (GBH), in the children's categories, both saw significant decreases in the latest quarter, while attempted murder went up. Sixty-one fewer murders were reported against children, a 19.9% decrease, while six fewer children were assaulted, a 0.3% decrease. Attempted murder increased by 8.8%, or 29 cases, in the latest quarter. Any crime committed against a defenseless being is a cause for concern. The time for lip service is over! We need to start acting, to break the cycle of violence.

Modeling good behavior in front of children is of utmost importance to eliminate violence and social ills in society. Children are highly influenced by the actions and behaviors they observe in their immediate environment. By exhibiting positive and pro-social behaviors, adults can contribute significantly to shaping the attitudes, values, and behaviors of children, leading to a more peaceful and harmonious society.

Between January and March this year, 8 murders, 14 attempted murders and 84 rapes occurred on the premises of educational facilities, including daycare centres and universities. This is alarming, as schools are supposed to be safe havens. Protecting our children in schools and communities is a critical responsibility that has far-reaching implications for their growth, well-being, and prospects. By prioritising their physical safety, emotional well-being, education, and protection from exploitation and abuse, we create spaces where children can flourish. Building safe environments also fosters trust, resilience, and a sense of empowerment, enabling children to develop into responsible, productive, and fulfilled members of society.

**Let us unite in our commitment to safeguarding our children and creating a brighter and safer future for all.**

**Mr BL Manuel**

**Executive Director**