

LIFEFORTE INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

In line with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Governing Body and Staff of Lifeforte International Schools have set the following as objectives where child welfare is concerned:

- To ensure that the learning and living environment and atmosphere is happy, inclusive, safe and welcoming
- To regard all students as individuals; who will be valued, respected and treated with consideration and kindness throughout the school and the wider community
- To help our students discover their own potential and abilities, and follow their unique path to success through a broad based and varied learning experience
- To achieve a unique blend of academic and moral excellence so laying the foundation for our children to take their place as future global leaders

1.1 As a School we are fully aware of our role in protecting and supporting students while in school

There are three core elements to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Prevention

By reinforcing a positive school atmosphere

By teaching and giving pastoral support to students

Protection

By following laid down procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns

Support

To students and staff who may have been abused

1.2 This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the Lifeforte organisation

2. SCHOOL COMMITMENT

As a school we recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, peer support and clear lines of communication with trusted adults helps all children and especially those at risk of suffering abuse.

Lifeforte School will therefore

- Establish, maintain and see to the observance of an ethos (an open door Policy) where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to. This will be achieved by displaying and reminding the children of the ethos of the school on a regular basis.

- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty. This will be achieved through talking to the children during school assembly and on a one to one basis
- Include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe and /or communicate their fears or concerns about abuse
- Include in the curriculum material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life.
- Ensure that every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and agencies responsible for child welfare and protection

3. FRAMEWORK

Child protection is the responsibility of ALL members of staff (academic and non-academic)

Members of staff have a vital role to play in

- Helping to identify welfare concerns and indicators of possible abuse or neglect at an early stage
- Referring those concerns to the appropriate quarters
- Contributing to the assessment of a child's needs and where appropriate to ongoing action to meet those needs

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the person responsible for Child Protection issues in school. Her roles include:

- Co-ordinating action within the school and liaising with the state Child Welfare Centre and other agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse
- Ensuring that the school has an active Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and that directors and staff are familiar with it
- Acting as a source of advice within the school
- Ensuring that staff are familiar with the policy and procedures
- Ensuring that all directors and staff members know what to do if they suspect that a child is being abused.
- Referral of individual cases of suspected abuse
- Liaising with agencies about individual cases
- Organising training on Child Protection within school

4.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Principal include

- Being familiar with current guidelines on Child Protection and Safer Recruitment and be aware of changes to the regulations
- Undertake appropriate training on Child protection and understand the different types of child abuse
- Liaise regularly with the CEO about Child Protection procedures in school
- Ensure that the school has an active Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and that directors and members of staff are familiar with it
- Ensure that accurate records are being kept by the school and that the Child Protection file is up to date

5. PROCEDURES

Lifeforte School will;

- Keep staff informed about Child Protection procedures via all staff training led by the CEO
- Keep staff updated via staff meetings, welfare meetings and management meetings.
- Ensure that all new members of staff receive one to one training from the CEO or her delegate before commencing work in the school.
- Ensure that information on Child protection procedures is also contained in the staff handbook
- Ensure all other adults in school will be updated on the schools Child Protection procedures and how to voice their concerns to the CEO or other persons delegated by her before working in school
- Keep parents informed of the School's duties and responsibilities under the Child Protection procedures by a publication to that effect and via the school website

6. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Lifeforte School will ensure that the CEO, the CEO's delegate and Principal attend training relevant to their roles.

All staff within school, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity and irrespective of their role that come into contact with children will receive basic Child Protection training delivered by the CEO or her delegate.

Staff will be kept informed of current Child Protection issues via direct training and update meetings by the CEO or her delegate.

Support networks will be made available to staff if there are concerns or queries

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

Lifeforte School will consider it priority to ensure that every adult working in school will understand the need for

Confidentiality through staff meeting updates and through induction processes led by the CEO

Members of academic staff will be trained to never guarantee confidentiality to a child as they may need to act on a disclosure to protect the interests of the child

If a child expressly asks for the information to be kept secret, the adult must be honest, open and calmly and sensitively explain to the child that they cannot promise to keep the matter a secret as they have a duty to look after the interests of the child and this will include reporting the information divulged to the appropriate person – the CEO

In dealing with a disclosure by a child or any concerns over child welfare, the adult in question should make a written report of the concern to the CEO . The procedures for dealing with concerns are outlined in Appendix 2 of this Policy.

Lifeforte School will ensure that any disclosure of personal information to others will have regard to the laws regulating child protection in the state

Where it becomes necessary to disclose personal information to third parties, the school will obtain the consent of the subject of that information in line with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, European Convention on Human Rights – Article 8. In cases where consent may not be possible or desirable and the safety and welfare of a child dictate that the information should be shared, Lifeforte School will share such information bearing in mind the justifiability of disclosure and the particular facts of the case.

8. RECORDS AND MONITORING

It is an important part of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to record any concerns held about a child or children within our school.

Initial concerns about the welfare of a child will be recorded on an INTERNAL NOTIFICATION OF CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN FORM (please find attached) to this Policy and which all members of staff have received during Child Protection Training. The CEO will have copies available.

Teacher and where applicable Student Welfare Officer/House Parent written notes will be recorded on the Internal Notification of Child Protection form and held by the CEO

Children about whom there are concerns will be monitored by the adult most closely in contact with that child – teacher or House Parent/Student Welfare Officer. The CEO will be updated on a regular basis (at least weekly) and additional notes added to the concerns form

All Child Protection pro-formas and records are kept in the CEO's room in a locked cupboard/drawer. Access to the Child Protection records is only available through the CEO or Delegate

Only relevant professionals in school who have contact with the child will be informed that the child is being monitored. In cases where it is appropriate, the parents/guardians will be informed that monitoring is being undertaken but not when this would put the wellbeing of the child at risk.

It is the responsibility of the CEO to collate concerns by staff but all staff have a duty to record concerns using the Initial Concern Form.

It is the duty of the CEO to make the decision as to the point when concerns warrant a referral.

If a child moves or transfers between schools, the CEO will ensure that the appropriate records are transferred to the receiving school.

All notes for children leaving the school will be photocopied and sent on to the relevant schools. The original notes will be placed in a sealed envelope with the child's name and date of birth written on the front. This envelope will then be held in a secure place for seven (7) years.

9. SUPPORTING STUDENTS AT RISK

9.1 The school recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. We also recognise that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others in such instances the school will adopt a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

9.2 Lifeforte School will endeavour to support pupils through:

- The curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self motivation
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives all students a sense of respect, value and self worth
- A consistent approach which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays
- Constant liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families, in-line with appropriate confidentiality parameters
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever possible and so long as it is in the child's best interests to do so
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations

10. SAFER SCHOOLS, SAFER STAFF

Recruitment, Selection and Supervision of Staff

Our Recruitment Policy

Choice of Candidate

The school experiences a low rate of staff turnover however; we receive applications year round from members of the public wishing to join the school's workforce. These applications are kept in a file in the Principal's office.

The Executive Director of Studies & Curriculum and the Principal of the school working under the guidance and direction of the CEO are primarily responsible for recruiting new staff.

When there is a vacancy, the Executive Director and the Principal may do one of the following;

1. Go through applications submitted and shortlist likely candidates
2. Request that the head of department affected head hunt for suitable candidates and have them submit the relevant documents
3. Source for staff to be hired on contract basis

Selection Method

The Selection Panel

This usually comprises the Executive Director (Curriculum and Studies), Principal, a head of Department and or Principal Teachers in consult with the CEO

Scrutinising and Short Listing

At this stage, candidates' application documents will be scrutinised to ensure that the information provided is consistent, does not contain discrepancies and to identify any gaps in employment.

Tests and Interview

Candidates will be asked to prepare as for a formal examination in their subject of expertise. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to bring documentary evidence of their identity – a full birth certificate or a passport/photo driving licence or some form of photograph identification. Where appropriate, change of name documentation may be requested of candidates.

Interviews are conducted face to face and candidates are required to answer questions prepared in advance by the selection committee. Questions will seek to explore the candidate's views in the following areas;

Motivation and reasons for working with the organisation and with children in particular

Views about control and punishment

Perceptions about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour towards children

Ability to form and maintain professional relationships

Understanding of the principle of safeguarding children

The Principal of the school is the official charged with the responsibility for taking and retaining notes of questions asked and answers given at the interview.

At the conclusion of the interview, the panel members will separately score the candidates. Then the scores will be shared and a discussion on their reasons for the score for each candidate.

The final decision to appoint a candidate or not will be based on an evaluation of the information obtained in all stages of the recruitment process.

Appointments will be made solely on the basis of a person's experience, ability and suitability to perform the role

Offer of Appointment to Successful Candidates

Any offer of appointment made will be conditional on the satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks including;

1. Receipt of two satisfactory references
2. The completion of a staff verification exercise as detailed below. Candidates will be required to submit;

A referee/guarantor form duly filled and signed

Photocopies of all academic and professional certificates signed by the referee/guarantor

Two passport pictures; one with the candidate's name signature and date written on the back and the other with the referee/guarantor's signature and date on the back.

The referee/guarantor must have known the applicant for at least 5 years and be one of the following;

- Legal Practitioner of the status of a Principal Partner or Partner
- Medical Practitioner
- Bank official (in an executive post at least)
- A recognised member of the clergy
- Head of a reputable institution
- High ranking official in the civil service
- A respected community leader

All documents submitted in this regard will be kept in files opened in the name of the applicant on resumption of duty. New members of staff will be assigned a supervisor usually a senior member of department under whose guidance/tutelage he will work for a period of not less than 3 months. The supervisor will be required to give a confidential report on his opinion of the candidate's experience, his sense of responsibility, their appreciation/comprehension of the nature of their duties and their ability to work effectively and safely with children.

General Conduct

In Lifeforte School we understand the importance of making certain that all adults working with children understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities attached to it place them in a position of trust. This guidance provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviour for all adults working with children in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts within the school.

In order for the safe and effective running of the school, the following rules apply to all employees:

- Employees must not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substance during working hours
- Alcoholic drinks or illegal substances must not be brought into or consumed on school premises
- Gambling, betting, touting or distribution of pamphlets are prohibited on school premises
- Raffle or lottery tickets must not be sold on school premises

Selling and buying of articles of any kind is prohibited on school premises.

Liability

The effective teacher is concerned for the welfare of students and takes measures to insure their welfare. Nevertheless, it is well to be aware of the possible consequences of negligence.

The teacher is legally responsible to act in a reasonable and prudent manner at all times.

Specifically the teacher must do the following:

Never leave students unsupervised. Leaving a classroom without another responsible adult present is leaving students unsupervised.

Require students to conduct themselves in an orderly, safe manner and administer such disciplinary actions **EXCEPT CORPORAL PUNISHMENT** as are reasonable and proper in any situation involving student misconduct.

Report any unsafe condition in the room or on the premises to the Principal so that it may be corrected.

Smoking at Work

Smoking is not permitted in any area of the school premises at any time. Any breaches will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure and could potentially lead to dismissal.

Physical Contact with Students

Spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting or the use of any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviour is strictly prohibited. While the use of appropriate touching is part of daily life and is important for student development, a teacher and staff member must ensure that they do not exceed appropriate behaviour. If a child or other

staff member specifically requests that he or she not be touched, then that request must be honoured without question.

This policy does not prevent touching a student for the purpose of guiding them along a physical path, helping them up after a fall, engaging in a rescue or the application of Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or other emergency first-aid. Nor does it prohibit the use of reasonable force and touching in self-defence or in the defence of another. Restraining a child who is trying to engage in violent or inappropriate behaviour is also allowed. Only such force as necessary to defend one's self or another or to protect property is legally allowed. Excessive force is prohibited.

School Discipline: The Parents hereby confirm that they accept the authority of the Head and of other members of staff on the Head's behalf to take all reasonable disciplinary or preventative action necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of each pupil and the School community as a whole. The School's disciplinary policy which is current at the time applies to all pupils when they are on School premises, or in the care of the School, or wearing School uniform, or otherwise representing or associated with the School.

Investigative Action: A complaint or rumour of misconduct will be investigated. The Pupil may be questioned and a member of staff designated by the Head to conduct a search of his or her belongings in appropriate circumstances. All reasonable care will be taken to protect the Pupil's human rights and freedoms and to ensure that his/her Parents are informed as soon as reasonably practicable after it becomes clear that the Pupil may face formal disciplinary action.

Procedural Fairness: Investigation of a complaint which could lead to expulsion, removal or withdrawal of the Pupil in any of the circumstances explained below shall be carried out in a fair and unbiased manner. All reasonable efforts will be made to notify the Parents or education guardian so that they can attend a meeting with the Head before a decision is taken in such a case.

Divulging Information: Except as required by law, the School and its staff shall not be required to divulge to Parents or others any confidential information or the identities of pupils or others who have given information which has led to the complaint or which the Head has acquired during an investigation.

Drugs & Alcohol: The Pupil may be given the opportunity to provide a urine sample under medical supervision if involvement with drugs is suspected, or sample of breath to test for alcohol consumed in breach of School discipline. A sample or test in these circumstances will not form part of the Pupil's permanent medical record.

1. What should Staff do if they have concerns about a child or young person in school?

Teachers or Student Welfare Officers/House parents who are concerned about a child's welfare or who believe that a child is or may be at risk of abuse should pass any information to the CEO as soon as possible or within 24 hours.

Chief Executive Officer – Mrs. Sarah Olubi-Johnson

Executive Director (Mentoring & Child Support) – Dr. Olukunle Sokoya

These are the people responsible for taking action where the welfare or safety of children or young person is concerned. If staff is uncertain about whether their concerns are indeed 'child protection' they are encouraged to discuss with the CEO who will assist in determining the most appropriate next course of action.

Members of staff are trained never to

Do nothing/assume that another member of staff will act or is acting

Attempt to resolve the matter themselves

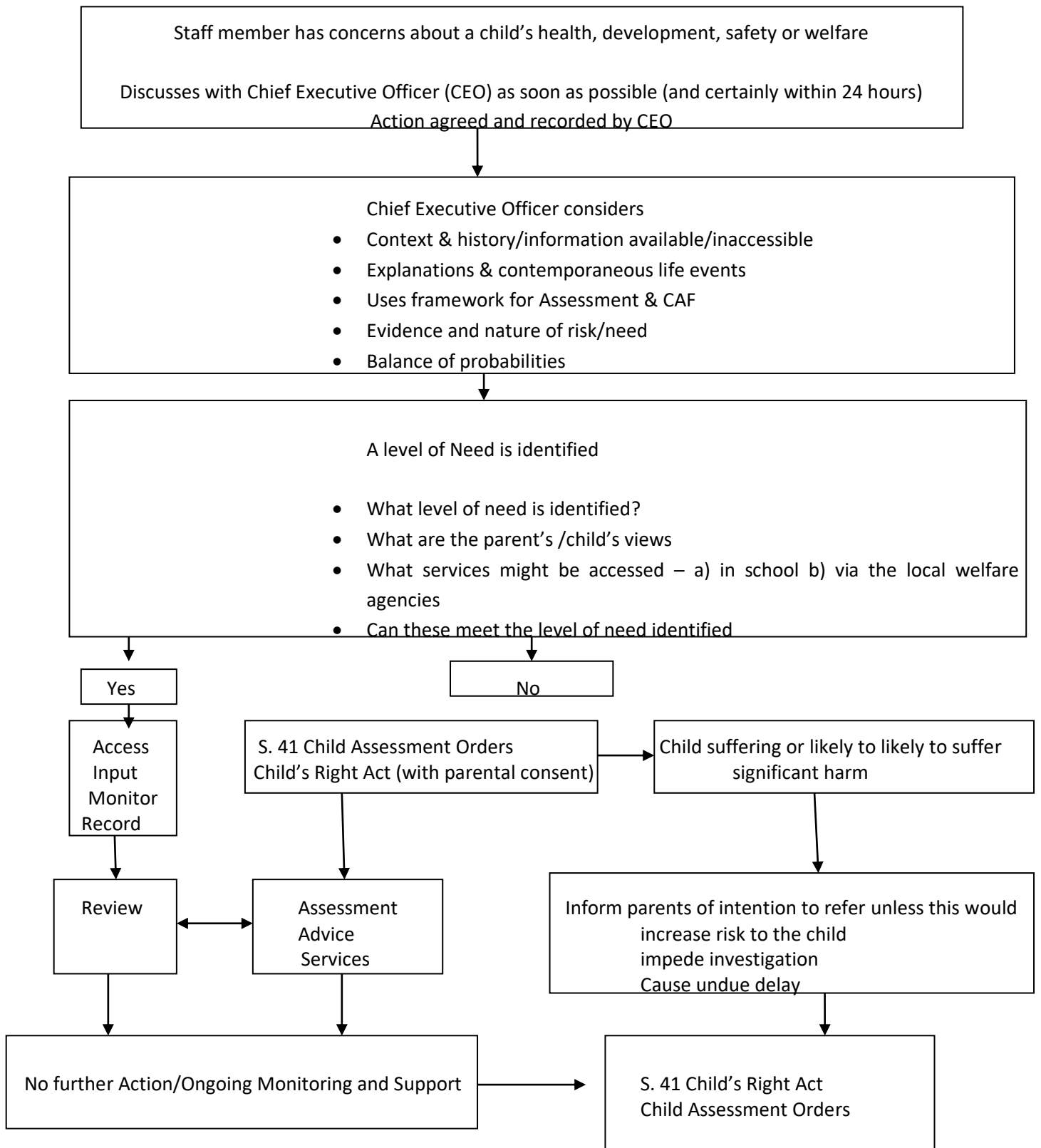
The CEO would consider the following:

- Is the situation to be classified as a risk or need
- Can the level of need identified be met by the school or by referral to local child welfare agencies
- What resources are available to the school and what are their limitations if any
- Is the level and or likelihood of risk such that a child protection referral needs to be made?
- What information is available to me: child, parents, family and environment
- What information is inaccessible and what is its significance
- Who do I/don't need to speak to now and what do they need to know?
- Where can I access appropriate advice and support
- If I am not going to refer, then what action am I going to take?

2. Feedback to Staff who report concerns to the designated senior person

The dictates of confidentiality may render it impossible or inappropriate for the CEO to give a feedback to staff who report concerns to them. Information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only and the CEO will decide which information needs to be shared, when and with whom. The aim of this is to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

APPENDIX 1: TAKING ACTION ON CHILD WELFARE/PROTECTION CONCERNS IN SCHOOL



APPENDIX 2: TALKING AND LISTENING TO CHILDREN

Where a student is willing to confide in a member of staff, the member of staff should;

- Be accessible and receptive
- Listen carefully and uncritically at the child's pace
- Take what is said seriously
- Reassure children that they are right to tell
- Tell the child that you must pass this information on
- Make sure that the child is ok
- Make a careful record of what was said

A member of staff should NEVER

- Investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse
- Make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets' to children
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action
- Jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc
- Speculate or accuse anybody
- Investigate, suggest or probe for information
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved
- Offer opinions about what is being said or the persons allegedly involved
- Forget to record what they have been told
- Fail to pass this information on to the correct person (the CEO)