CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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# INTRODUCTION

One of Our Moon’s key imperatives is to ensure the safety and well-being of our students, as well as the children associated with our charity.

According to the UNCRC, a child is every human being below the age of 18 unless national law recognizes the age of majority earlier. The majority of our students are between the ages of 16 and 19 years old at the start of our programme. Although some, therefore, are considered adults, we still need to have a policy in place that protects all young people in our care. With this in mind, we tend to refer to our students as young people. This policy refers to all children and young people under our responsibility no matter their ages.

Our policy applies to all staff, in-house staff, associates, funders, consultants, general workers and volunteers working with and around young people on behalf of the charity. It also includes all students and young people with whom Our Moon works.

Through this policy we would like to positively influence the practices of families within the Our Moon community.

**There are five main elements to our policy:**

1. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with and around children and young people.
2. To ensure the safety and well-being of our students as well as our in-house staff’s children.
3. Raising awareness of child protection issues with staff and volunteers who work with and around children and young people.
4. Building linkages between policy elements focused specifically on the abuse of children and policy elements focused on staff relations and behaviour.
5. Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.

In addition to the above we will also:

Ensure we have a nominated focal point person responsible for child protection – this is Ntasuwila Nambao Mushitu, Assistant to The Executive Officer.

Ensure every member of staff or volunteer has the details of the focal point person responsible for child protection.

Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated person responsible for child protection.

Notify the social welfare department in Chibombo, Zambia, if there is an issue raised in connection with the welfare of a child. Follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.

Our Moon is committed to providing safe, enjoyable opportunities for young people.  To this end, the following "Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy" document has been compiled through the examination of principles of good practice.

The purpose of the policy is to help protect children and any young people placed in our care, and to protect Our Moon, its staff and volunteers.

Our Moon, through staff training, will encourage its staff to seek alternative ways of disciplining their children as well as encourage the nurturing of their children’s minds. Our Moon does not condone any form of abuse.

# PRINCIPLES

Core values of Our Moon:

* We believe young people should have greater opportunities to succeed
* We celebrate the diversity of our people and programmes
* We value our people – it is only through their skill, passion and expertise we can deliver quality programs
* We operate with accountability and transparency
* We ensure the highest standards of safety and ethical behaviour to protect young people and children
* We believe children are meant to be nurtured and not taken advantage of. It is not right for a child to grow up in fear and so all children deserve to feel loved and protected.

Our Moon will ensure that young people are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in any activities organised by this organisation and delivered by its staff and volunteers.

We will endeavour to do this by:

* Providing parents, staff and volunteers with information about Our Moon, what it does and what they can expect
* Making sure that staff and volunteers are carefully selected and supervised
* Organizing an induction process for all new staff, volunteers and any associate to confirm the conduct expected of them
* Enabling new members of staff and volunteers to attend training in child protection/safeguarding and keeping children safe
* Ensuring every individual knows who the focal point person is
* Providing clear procedures for parents and young people to voice their concerns or lodge complaints if they feel unsure or unhappy about anything.

# AIMS OF POLICY

Our Moon’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is provided as part of an induction package to all staff and volunteers.  The aims of the policy are as follows:

* Create a healthy and safe environment for all
* Ensure young people are listened to, given a sense of belonging and kept safe from harm
* Ensure staff and volunteers who are involved in working with young people are supported and protected
* Inform children, co-workers, board members, family and community members, volunteers and partners (sponsors, donors, journalists, governmental authorities, etc.) about the child protection policy and related procedures (awareness, prevention, reporting, responding).

# WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Definitions of the four main categories of abuse:

**Physical abuse: the actual or potential physical harm caused by an action or lack of action, which is reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust.**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, spanking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning and suffocating. It can also mean causing physical harm to a child by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child. The incidents may be single or repeated.

**Sexual abuse: the activity between a child and an adult or another child who, by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power; the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person**.

Child sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact and penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect and negligent treatment: the inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the development of the child in: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and which causes, or has a high probability of causing, harm to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.**

This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

**Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that adversely affects his or her self-perception and development.**

It may involve conveying to the child that he or she is worthless, unloved, and inadequate, or there only to meet the needs of another person; or imposing inappropriate expectations upon him/her. Acts include restricting movement, threatening, scaring, discriminating, scape-goating, corrupting, ridiculing, degrading, bullying, humiliating (e.g. asking potentially embarrassing questions, demanding potentially embarrassing action) or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

# IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

**CHILD-TO-CHILD ABUSE**

Allegations or concerns regarding the abuse of a child by another child need to be responded to with particular sensitivity; nevertheless, they have to be dealt with through the child protection procedures. All work with young people who have committed abuse requires an effective approach which ensures the protection of people affected, while at the same time supporting the young person in challenging and changing his/her behaviour. Any such approach requires:

* the recognition that a child who has abused another child differs significantly from adults who have committed similar offences, very young children (under 10) may not be fully aware of why he or she has committed abuse and what the consequences are
* keeping in mind that the best interest of the child is the primary consideration in all decisions made - for both the victim and the abuser.

VIOLATION OF CHILDREN’S PRIVACY

The protection of a child’s privacy refers to private data of the child as well as pictures, texts, films, etc. about children which are produced for publicity purposes.

Children and even their parents or caregivers might not always be aware of a specific form of emotional abuse which might occur in fundraising, public relations or communication. A child’s privacy is, for instance, violated by the production of unauthorised publicity material (pictures, films, texts, etc.) featuring the boy or girl, or by presenting sensitive information within a context that reveals the child’s identity. It has been agreed that all photographs of families and their children will be incidental to the material and they will not be named.

Our students, however, will waive their right for anonymity and will allow their stories to be told and for their names to be published. This is not only for marketing purposes, but the students are inspiring young people and are great role models for other young Zambians. Through their stories, they will motivate other young people to strive to contribute to Zambia’s development. All words will be agreed in advance of publication with the students – we will expect most text to be written by the students themselves.

# HOW WOULD YOU RECOGNIZE A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED?

There are signs that could alert you to the fact that a young person might be being abused.  These would include:

* Unexplained bruising or injuries
* Sudden changes in behaviour
* Something a young person has said
* A change observed over a long period of time (e.g. the young person losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt).

However, it is important to note that a young person could be displaying some or all of these signs or behaving in a way which is worrying - this does not necessarily mean the young person is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs, you may just feel something is wrong.  If you are worried, it is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse, but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it.

The Department of Social Welfare and the Police have a duty under the laws of Zambia to ensure young people are protected and to help those who have been abused.  They are trained to deal with child abuse and should be contacted when there are concerns.  They will give you advice and take responsibility for any action which is necessary.

# WHAT SHOULD I DO IF SOMEONE TELLS ME SHE/HE IS BEING ABUSED?

**Stay calm**: Although you may feel anxious or scared, it’s important to maintain your composure

**Listen carefully**: Appear relaxed and listen attentively. Show and tell the child that you are taking what she/he says seriously

**No secrets**: Be honest, let the child who is disclosing to you know as soon as possible that you have the responsibility to keep others safe, therefore you may need to pass on the information to someone who can help

**Continue at the child’s pace**: Do not pressure the child into talking. Do not ask leading questions

**Reassure the child:**The child may be afraid of their abuser, afraid that their friends will find out or that they will be blamed. Reassure the young person and stress that she/he is not to blame

**What will happen next:** Tell the child they have been very brave. If a young person is being abused by parents/carers seek advice from Our Moon’s Child Protection Officer/focal point person. Report and record in writing what was said as soon as possible.

**It is not the role of the person who encounters suspicion or actual abuse to decide whether or not abuse has occurred. The task is for child protection agencies.**

**Never:**

* Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
* Make promises you cannot keep
* Enquire into details of the abuse.  It is not your role to carry out an investigation - that is up to the Department of Social Welfare/Police
* Make the young person repeat the story unnecessarily
* Take sole responsibility - consult someone else (the person in charge, or someone you can trust), so that you can protect the child and gain support for yourself.

# RESPONDING TO ALLEGED OR SUSPECTED INCIDENTS OF CHILD ABUSE

There are a number of steps to be taken to ensure that information on suspected or alleged incidents of child abuse are reported and followed up.

* 1. Staff and volunteers should be aware of who they should contact within their organisation (Appendix A).
  2. Everyone should also be aware of who they should contact outside the organisation if they are inhibited for any reason in reporting the incident to someone within the organisation (Appendix A).
  3. If an incident has been reported and you are unhappy about the response, use another contact (Appendix A).

**Recording the Incident**

In all situations that give cause for concern, it is extremely important to record the incident, regardless of whether or not a referral is subsequently made to a statutory agency.

An accurate note should be made of:

* the time and date of the incident or disclosure

* the parties who were involved

* any physical signs, behavioural signs or indirect signs

* record clearly and factually exactly what was said (Appendix B).

It is important that although information should be treated in the strictest confidence, the legal principle that "the welfare of the child is paramount" means that any consideration of confidentiality should not override the right of the young people to be protected from harm.

Information of a confidential nature should only be communicated on a "need to know" basis and everyone should be aware that you can never promise to keep secrets.

# PROCEDURE WHERE AN ALLEGATION IS MADE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF OR VOLUNTEER

**In Zambia:**

1. Once an incident has been reported, the member of staff or volunteers will automatically be removed from any tasks that involve working with or around young people and children. If this is impractical, they will be asked to remove themselves from the project/village/work area until an investigation into the incident has been completed.

2. At the same time the accused member of staff or volunteer will be told the circumstances of the event and asked to comment first verbally (this response will be noted by the interviewer) and then to confirm their response in writing within 48 hrs allowing time to seek advice.

3. Once all the evidence has been compiled, a decision will be made by the Executive Officer Our Moon person, within 72 hours.

4. The appeal process is in writing to the Our Moon board of Trustees in the UK and their ruling is final

5. If the accusation is upheld the member of staff or volunteer will be asked to leave the project and the Department of Social Welfare and/or the Police will be notified

1. If the accusation is unfounded the member of staff or volunteer will return to work immediately.
2. Depending on the nature of an allegation, for instance Child Sexual abuse, the case will be reported to authorities and will be dealt with according to the laws of Zambia.

**In the UK**:

Social Services and the Police have a duty under the Children’s Act to ensure young people are protected and to help those who have been abused.  They are trained to deal with child abuse and will be contacted when there are concerns.  They will give advice and take responsibility for any action that is necessary.

OUR MOON’S STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Safety and well-being of our students and other young people is a key value of the charity. That is, ‘We wish to ensure the safety and ethical behaviour to protect young people’. Consistent with this value, our philosophy, detailed in induction materials for staff and volunteers, is to ensure the safety and well-being of every young person and child involved in or around our programmes. This means that the environment is friendly and that clear procedures are in place for reporting concerns about young people’s safety.

# ATTACHMENT 1: CHILD-SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR OUR MOON STAFF, TRUSTEES, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS

Our Moon believes that all young people have a right to safety and security. The Charity has a well-deserved reputation for valuing the rights of young people and children. Therefore, the Charity will refuse access to any personnel who may be working or associating with young people, who refuse to undertake a child-related employment checks, according to our policies and state statutory requirements.

The Our Moon Child Safety Code of Conduct for Staff, Boards, Volunteers and Contractors (Child-Safe) has been established for the above reasons.

1. Compliance with Applicable Laws and Standards - all child-related Charity activities must comply with all applicable national and local legal requirements
2. All staff and volunteers who will have direct contact with young people must have undergone child protection screening prior to commencing duties – otherwise they must always be supervised by someone who has undergone the screening
3. Contractors or visitors who do not have child protection screening must be supervised at all times by a person who has
4. Staff are to be recruited with a focus on their understanding of young people’s needs
5. All staff and volunteers who will be working with young people must be trained, updated and oriented to child-related issues, with particular reference to reporting procedures. These issues will be reinforced during staff supervision and meetings
6. All staff and volunteers are to sign the ‘Our Moon Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form’ (see attached).

**CHILD-SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. Staff, visitors and contractors are not to engage in inappropriate behaviour towards young people – their language must be child-friendly and physical contact must be appropriate. Inappropriate language, gestures or harmful physical contact with young people will not be tolerated
2. All staff, families and volunteers must report any concerns about child safety or well-being to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, the Executive Officer or the President of Trustees
3. Communal eating for all in-house staff and their families will be encouraged to make sure all in-house staff children have access to 3 meals a day. It will be up to the wives to prepare a rota for cooking and cleaning up
4. All in-house staff must consent to their children taking part in after school lessons and activities arranged for them by Our Moon
5. No organization actively encourages sexual, physical or emotional abuse, but there are cultures that can inadvertently support abuse. We aim to put an end to certain cultures that may exist within the community, such as a:
   * Silent culture: a silent culture is one in which abuse is not an acceptable topic for discussion. As an organization we need to allow the issue around abuse to be discussed openly
   * Sexualized culture: a culture that tolerates sexually inappropriate comments, innuendos and language towards or around children and young people
   * Complacent culture: a culture that allows young people and children to use inappropriate or abusive language and behaviour, or allows distorted or stereotypical attitudes towards gender roles, sexuality and relationships to go unchallenged
   * "This is a good" culture: can occur where people are not sufficiently worried about the dangers of abuse, or where staff or volunteers do not have appropriate knowledge of or training in actual or potential risks.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

* The policy of Our Moon is to inform the relevant state department, as soon as practicable, if there is a concern about a young person who may be at risk. This is the responsibility of the Executive Officer, Child Protection Officer or the President of Trustees
* Our Moon have documented reporting procedures, approved by the Board of Trustees. These are included in pre-employment training for staff and volunteers and in written orientation/handover materials
* Wherever possible, the young person’s family is to be informed if their child is reported to state authorities as a suspected young person at risk.
* Our moon will take appropriate steps to ensure that children are aware of their right to be protected from abuse and participate in their own protection.
* Children may approach any adult staff they trust to report abuse by any person, whether staff, volunteer or any other child or adult. This will keep the reporting procedure simple and responsive to the needs of the children

BREACHES OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Any failure by staff or volunteers to follow reporting guidelines will be dealt with by the Chair of Trustees. Any failure by the Chair of Trustees will be dealt with by the Board of Trustees.

Managing Breaches:

Depending on the severity of the breach, the person in breach will be offered:

• Further training

• A disciplinary interview and counselling

• Cessation of duties/expulsion from programme.

## STATE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM FOR CHILD-SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

I\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_have read the Code of Conduct and agree to abide by its policies. I understand that I will not be permitted to serve under Our Moon until the form has been read and signed. The failure to abide by the policies could result in the termination of my scholarship, as well as legal action in accordance with Zambian Child Protection Laws.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_        Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Designation\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Witness**

Name

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_         Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Designation\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## AGREEMENT TO BEING PHOTOGRAPHED

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ agree to being photographed to publicise the work of Our Moon.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_        Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Role\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Witness**

**Name**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_         Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Role\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX A: WHO TO CONTACT

Everyone should be aware of who to contact within their organisation and appropriate contacts outside if they are concerned about a child who may be being abused

1. WITHIN OUR ORGANIZATION

The first person to contact is:

Name: Ntasuwila Nambao Mushitu

Job/Role : Assistant to The Executive Officer

Address: The Buchizya Farms, Chipanshya, Chibombo

Contact phone number: +260976455377

Contact email : ntasuwila.nambao-mushitu@ourmoon.org.uk

If this person is unavailable, then either of the below should be contacted:

Name: Justin Buchizya Mushitu

Job/Role: Executive Officer

Address: The Buchizya Farms, Chipanshya, Chibombo

Contact phone number: +260962566163

Contact email: [justin.mushitu@ourmoon.org.uk](mailto:justin.mushitu@ourmoon.org.uk)

Or:

Name: Helen Leale-Green

Job/Role: President of the Board of Trustees in Zambia. CEO of Our Moon

Address: The Coach House, Hurstwood Lane, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 8YA, UK

Contact phone number: +447720287904

Contact email: helen.leale-green@ourmoon.org.uk

# APPENDIX B: REPORT OF SUSPECTED/ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE

Please fill out this form, using extra sheets where necessary. If it can’t be completed using a computer, then please scan to ensure we also have a soft copy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| INCIDENT REPORT | |
| Date and time |  |
| Completed by:  Name  Role |  |
| Reported by (if different):  Name  Role |  |
| Name of the child:  Age  Gender  Ethnic identity  Religion  Any disability |  |
| Nature of concern - what the child said, what someone told you, physical signs and behavioural indicators |  |
| When and where did this happen? |  |
| Who else was present? |  |
| What did the child say and what did you observe about the child if they were telling you directly? |  |
| Any relevant observations about the child in the past - eg has their behaviour changed |  |
| What you said to the child - about confidentiality and their response |  |
| The name, address, contact number - if known of the alleged abuser |  |
| Your response to the child and what you said |  |
| Your opinion - if this is relevant and useful- but make sure you state when something is your opinion and or when it is fact |  |
| Who you have told - any advice received, or action taken |  |

# APPENDIX C: SERVICE USER PROTECTION

**STAGE 1 – Responding to allegations of abuse (reporting)**

A MEMBER OF STAFF/VOLUNTEER OBSERVES OR IS MADE AWARE OF EVENTS WHICH MAY CONSTITUTE ABUSE

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

IF THE EVENTS SUGGEST THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE AMINISTRATOR/SUPERVISOR THE STAFF MEMEBER MUST REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR

THE MEMBER OF STAFF REPORTS THIS IMMEDIATELY TO THEIR SUPERVISOR

MEMBER OF STAFF IS PROTECTED UNDER ZAMBIA WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

THEIR CONCERNS ARE LOGGED USING A REPORTING FORM

THE MEMBER OF STAFF RECEIVING THE CONCERN MUST ENSURE THE RELEVANT PERSON IS INFORMED. E.g THE ADMINISTRATOR, SOCIAL WORKER AND DIRECTOR

THE RELEVANT DIRECTOR/ADMINISTRATOR/SOCIAL WORKER WILL REPORT THE ALLEGATIONS TO THE APPROPRIATE LOCAL AUTHORITY,SOCIAL WELFARE

NOTIFICATION MAY NEED TO BE MADE TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE UNDER THE APPROPRIATE REGULATION

THE MEMBERS OF STAFF/VOLUNTEER MAY NEED TO BE SUSPENDED OR TEMPORARILY RELOCATED

NO INVESTIGATION SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN AT THIS STAGE

**STAGE 2 – Responding to allegations of abuse (Investigation)**

An internal investigation should only be undertaken where the organisation has been freed to do so by the Local Authority who are leading the investigation.

FOLLOWING REFERRAL – A SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY MEETING WIL BE HELD

ORGANISATION FREED TO UNDERTAKE INTERNAL INVESTIGATION

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION UNDERTAKEN

INVESTIGATOR IDENTIFIED

NO LEGAL ACTION TAKEN

LEGAL ACTION TAKEN

INVESTIGATION UNDERTAKEN

INVESTIGATION RECOMMENDS NO FURTHER ACTION

INVESTIGATION RECOMMENDS DISCIPLINARY ACTION

SERVICE USER INFORMED OF OUTCOME

FOLLOWING OUTCOME OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

INCIDENT CLOSED

ACTION TAKEN UNDER ORGANISATION DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES