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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Child Protection Policy

1.0 Introduction

Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working around children on behalf of the charity. It applies not only to the children under 16 years of age in our care who may be on a gapmonth with the charity, but also protects the many children around where we work, building libraries, digging wells, teaching English or assisting with community work etc. There are three main elements to our policy:

Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work, with and around children.
Raising awareness of child protection issues with staff and volunteers who work with and around children.
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 senior person responsible for child protection. At present this is Neil Kerfoot CEO (UK).

Ensure every member of staff or volunteer knows the name of the designated senior 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 social services if there is an issue raised in connection with the welfare of a child once returned to the UK. Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.

Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

Village by Village is committed to providing safe, enjoyable opportunities for young people. To this end the following "Child Protection Policy" document has been compiled through the examination of principles of good practice as provided by the organisations listed above. The purpose of the Policy is to help protect children placed in our care and protect Village by Village, its staff and volunteers.

In addition to this policy we must be also mindful & respectful of the differences in cultural attitudes towards what the developed west might class as physical child abuse and in-country attitudes towards the education of their children. Even if the practice of hitting children (as a form of correction) is common place in-country it will not be accepted or replicated by staff or volunteers working or volunteering on behalf of the charity.

2.0 Policy Statement

Village by Village wants to ensure that children 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 Village by Village, what it does and what they can expect from us.
- * Making sure that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected and supervised.
- * Providing clear procedures for parents and children to voice their concerns or lodge complaints if they feel unsure or unhappy about anything.

3.0 Aims Of Policy

Village by Village's Child Protection 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 sessions.
- * Ensure children are listened to, given a sense of belonging and kept safe from harm.
- * Support and encourage parents to voice their opinions regarding the welfare of their children.
- * Ensure staff and volunteers who administer sessions are supported and protected.

4.0 Objectives

Specific objectives outline how the policy intends to achieve the stated aims. The objectives are as follows:

- * Undertaking Police checking procedures for staff and volunteers who come into contact with children as part of their duties.
- * Raise Awareness of:
 - i. raise the level of awareness within staff and volunteers of child abuse and the different forms it can take;
 - ii. raise the level of awareness of staff and volunteers about what children are entitled to be protected from;
 - iii. Ensure that all staff can recognise signs which could signify the abuse of a child.
- * Develop effective procedures for
 - i. recording and responding to accidents;
 - ii. recording complaints of alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.
- * Informing parents and children of the procedure for making a complaint to Village by Village

Receiving a signed a copy of this Policy.

5.0 What Is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust. It refers to the damage done to a child's physical or mental health. Children can be abused within or outside their family, at school and even in the sports environment. Child abuse can take many forms:

Physical Abuse - where adults:

- * Physically hurt or injure children (eg by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning).
- * Give children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison.
- * Attempt to suffocate or drown children.

Sexual Abuse - boys and girls are sexually abused when adults (male or female) use them to meet their own sexual needs. This could include:

- * Full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling.
- * Showing children pornographic books, photographs or videos, or taking pictures for pornographic purposes.
- * Grooming children for sexual purposes and/or making inappropriate sexual comments.

Sport situations that involve physical contact (eg supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power over young people.

Emotional Abuse - can occur in a number of ways. For example, where:

- * There is persistent lack of love or affection.
- * There is constant overprotection that prevents children from socialising.
- * Children are frequently being shouted at or taunted.
- * There is neglect, physical or sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse in competitive sport might also include situations where parents or coaches subject children to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations.

Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities may be more vulnerable because:

- * They may have greater difficulty in communicating.
- * They may have less mobility than children without disabilities.
- * They often receive as part of their daily life, intimate physical care, which may provide greater opportunity for potential abusers.
- * They may have a greater number of providers of care than children without disabilities.
- * Their behaviour may be more challenging, which may put them at greater risk.

Professionals need to be aware of these issues when dealing with children with disabilities.

6.0 How Would You Recognise A Child Is Being Abused?

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

- * Unexplained bruising or injuries.
- * Sexually explicit language or actions.
- * Sudden changes in behaviour.
- * Something a child has said.
- * A change observed over a long period of time (eg the child losing weight, or becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt).

However, it is important to note that a child could be displaying some or all of these signs, or behaving in a way which is worrying - this does not necessarily mean the child 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.

Social Services and the Police have a duty under the Children Act to ensure children 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.

7.0 What Should I Do If A Child Tells Me She/He Is Being Abused?

Always

- * Stay calm - ensure the child is safe and feels safe.
- * Show and tell the child that you are taking what she/he says seriously.
- * Reassure the child and stress that she/he is not to blame.
- * Be honest, explain you will have to tell someone else to help stop the abuse.
- * Record in writing what was said as soon as possible.
- * Maintain confidentiality - only tell those it is essential to tell in terms of protecting the child.
- * If a child is being abused by parents/carers seek advice before talking to those people.

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 Social Services/Police.
- * Make the child 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.

8.0 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.

- i. Staff and volunteers should be aware of who they should contact within their organisation (Appendix A).
- ii. 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).
- iii. 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)

Confidentiality

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 children 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.

9.0 Procedure Where An Allegation Is Made Against A Member Of Staff Or Volunteer

In the UK:

Social Services and the Police have a duty under the Children Act to ensure children 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.

In country

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 children. If this is unpractical 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 written within 48 hrs allowing time to seek advice.
3. Once all the evidence has been compiled a decision will be made by the most senior Village by Village person, within 72 hours.
4. The appeal process is in writing to the Village by Village 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 Social Services and the Police will be informed in the UK.
6. If the accusation is unfounded the member of staff or volunteer will return to work immediately.

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 ORGANISATION

Name: Neil Kerfoot

Job/Role: CEO

Address: The Old Sweet Shop, Teme Street, Tenbury Wells Worcs WR15 8BB

Contact Tel. No: UK - 07887 870090 Ghana – 024 9626400

APPENDIX B

REPORT OF SUSPECTED/ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE

(When completing the following, please use extra sheets where necessary).

- * Name of Child
- * Age
- * Any known special factors
- * Parents/Guardians name(s)
- * Home address and telephone number, if available
- * What has prompted the concerns? (Include date and times)
- * Are there any
 - i. Physical signs
 - ii. Behavioural signs
 - iii. Indirect signs
- * Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details
- * Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said
- * Have the parents/Guardians been spoken to? If so, what was said
- Has this been referred to anyone else? If so, give details

APPENDIX C

CONFIRMATION OF UNDERSTANDING & RECEIPT – STAFF/VOLUNTEERS

I..... on the
confirm I agree to the below statements by the signing of my name.

I have received by post, email, download or by hand Village by Village's, Child Protection Policy. By signing below I confirm I have read it's content and commit to it. I am aware of who to contact in an emergency. I accept that if I disregard or disobey their instructions I can be asked to leave.

SIGNED