

# **Child Protection Policy**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Africa Inland Church (AIC) and Chariots for Hope holds in high regard the very serious responsibility to provide holistic care to the children who are living in the Children's Homes. This holistic care includes ensuring the physical, mental, and emotional safety of the children. The children who are under the care of AIC and Chariots for Hope have come from very difficult circumstances of trauma, grief & loss, and otherwise unsafe situations. Therefore, it is even more crucial that each child is completely safe at the Children's Home. This policy is purposed to protect the children from abuse and neglect in agreement with the Constitution of Kenya (2010) as it states in the rights of a child (No. 53).

53. (1) Every child has the right –
- a. to a name and nationality from birth
  - b. to free and compulsory basic education
  - c. to basic nutrition, shelter and health care
  - d. to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment, and hazardous or exploitative labour
  - e. to parental care and protection, (more specific details given in the Constitution)
  - f. not to be detained (more specific details given in the Constitution)
- (2) A child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Child:** Any person under the age of 18

**Abuse:** includes physical, sexual, psychological and mental injury. (As defined in The Children's Act No.8 of 2001, revised in 2007)

**Neglect:** failure to provide adequate food, clothing, education, immunization, shelter and medical care (As defined in The Children's Act No. 8 of 2001, revised in 2007). Chariots for Hope further expands this definition to include the failure of providing adequate emotional and social care for a child.

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**Read this policy carefully and make sure you are aware of the procedures relating to the nature of your work and Chariots' policies relating to abusive behaviour.**  
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## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

1.1. Chariots for Hope recognizes:

1. The paramount importance of the welfare of children and their right to protection from all forms of abuse;
2. It is the duty of anyone, whether employed or volunteer, who is caring for the children to give each one the right of protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.

1.2. Chariots for Hope will:

1. Ensure that members of staff are carefully selected. Any member of staff employed to work directly with children will be subject to Criminal Background Checks;
2. Provide training for staff in protection of children;
3. Appoint the Manager and Assistant Manager to have responsibility for educating the staff and children, and ensuring the implementation of the Child Protection Policy;
4. Take all allegations of abusive behaviour/practice in all forms seriously and respond to such allegations quickly;
5. Provide a Code of Behaviour (see below) for all staff, identifying basic principles when dealing with children, guidance on management of typical risk situations and procedures for dealing with events where abuse and/or neglect of children by others is observed or suspected.

## **2. SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

- 2.1 Physical abuse: Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or willful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.
- 2.2 Sexual abuse: Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child, or willful neglectful failure to prevent exploitation of a child.
- 2.3 Emotional abuse: Actual or likely significant emotional ill treatment, including bullying, harassment, and repeatedly referring or responding to a child in an insulting or derogatory manner thus resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child, or willful neglectful failure to prevent emotional ill treatment to a child. All abuse involves emotional ill treatment.

## **3. CODES OF BEHAVIOUR**

- 3.1 People employed by or otherwise working with Chariots for Hope should observe the following requirements where children are concerned:
  1. Act as positive role models;
  2. Recognize a person's developmental needs, whether a child or adult;
  3. Always put the welfare of a child first;
  4. Set and monitor appropriate boundaries and relationships when working with children, based on openness, honesty and respect for their personal space;
  5. Create and maintain a safe and caring environment that enables children to raise concerns about attitudes or behaviour they do not like;
  6. So far as is possible, avoid situations in which you are alone with children. If necessary, move to a place where you can both be seen by other colleagues or other adults;
  7. Confront situations between children that could be or potentially become abusive e.g. initiation ceremonies, bullying, including those from a child's peers;
  8. Take action if you have concerns about a child's welfare, or if you have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a child;
  9. Support a child making a complaint;
  10. If a child is hurt or distressed, do your best to comfort or reassure them without compromising their dignity;
  11. Avoid any physical contact or behaviour that could be misconstrued;
  12. Where physical contact is necessary, ensure it is in direct response to a person's need. It may be appropriate to hold someone's hand, to put a comforting arm around their shoulder or support/carry them if they have fallen.

13. Any physical contact with children should respect their age and individual stage of development.

3.2 Staff or anyone otherwise working with Chariots for Hope should not:

1. Subject any child to any form of harm, abuse or neglect including calling anyone by derogatory names or caning a child;
2. Slap or hit a child;
3. Shake a person or hold them in such a way that it causes pain;
4. Physically restrain a person except to protect them from harming themselves or others;
5. Take part in horseplay or rough games;
6. Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind;
7. Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves;
8. Allow or engage in sexually suggestive behaviour within a child's sight or hearing, or make suggestive remarks to or within earshot of a child;
9. Give or show to a child anything which could be construed as pornographic;
10. Dismiss an allegation of any sort of abuse relating to a child's welfare;
11. Delay the reporting of an allegation.

#### **4. PROTECTING CHILDREN**

If you witness or suspect abusive behaviour towards a child, use the following guidelines:

4.1 If you suspect a child is at risk:

1. Record the facts, as you know them.
2. Report to the Manager and Chariots for Hope Leadership.
3. Do not make any investigations yourself.

4.2 If you suspect or witness a colleague:

1. You may be the first to recognize that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concern out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment. Such feelings, however must never result in a child continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children who are targeted. These people need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.
2. Do not question your instincts or think 'what if I am wrong?' – think 'what if I am right?'
3. You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as possible to someone you trust within Chariots for Hope leadership.
  - a. It is helpful to be able to pinpoint what practice is concerning you and why,
  - b. You will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds and documentation for the concern.

4.3 If a disclosure or allegation is made to you:

1. Stay calm, listen to what they say without prejudice and accept what they say without judgment.
2. Tell them at the earliest opportunity that you cannot guarantee confidentiality. Explain that your job is to keep them and everyone safe. Therefore, if someone is being hurt or is in danger, then action must be taken. Thank them for sharing this information with you and explain that they can trust you to honor and respect them in the process. It is the goal to honor them and treat the situation with as

- much confidentiality as possible, although others might have to be brought into the situation.
3. Record what you are being told as the person tells it
  4. Check your understanding of the situation as needed and use only open questions when it is necessary to ask a question – e.g. please tell me what happened?
  5. Alert the Manager and Chariots for Hope
  6. Consider what steps might be necessary to ensure the individuals safety.
  7. Do not make your own further allocations.

4.4 If an allegation of abuse is made against you:

1. Advise the Manager, even if you think it is trivial.
2. If Chariots for Hope receive an allegation against you, we will inform you as soon as possible, and you will be asked to take a leave of absence during the investigation.
3. As soon as you become aware of an allegation, make notes of all your actions/contacts with the child in question,
4. Any allegation will be thoroughly investigated, with due regard for confidentiality.
5. All allegations of misconduct will be subject to standard disciplinary procedures, possibly subject to immediate termination, and depending on allegations, potentially being reported to the local authorities.

4.5 Don't let anxiety that you might have jumped to a wrong conclusion deter you from reporting any genuine worries that you have.

4.6 The decision whether or not to contact the appropriate outside agencies, will be taken by the Manager.

## **5. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 5.1 Any information about alleged or actual child abuse will only be disclosed where it is in best interests of the child to do so.
- 5.2 Chariots for Hope has a responsibility to protect the identity of anyone reporting suspected or actual abuse. No such disclosure will be made without careful consultation at the senior management level.

**Acknowledgment of Receipt**  
**Child Protection Policy**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that being of sound mind I have read and understand the AIC-CFH Child Protection Policy.

In summary:

1. I understand that I am prohibited from physically, sexually or emotionally abusing or neglecting a child in any capacity.
2. I understand the policy and that it is written in conjunction with Kenyan Law.
3. I understand the definitions of neglect and physical, sexual and emotional abuse.
4. I understand the Code of Behavior which pro-actively prevents a child from the possibility of abuse or neglect.
5. I understand that I am required to report any witness or suspicion of a child being abused or neglected.
6. I understand that if an allegation of misconduct is made against me I will be asked to leave the children's home immediately while an investigated is done.
7. I understand that confidentiality is preserved to protect the child and any other necessary parties.

I agree to be held responsible and accountable to implement this policy in all spheres of my work.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**\*Please attach a current child abuse history clearance and a criminal history clearance to this acknowledgement.**

To obtain a PA child history clearance:

1. Go to <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>
2. Create a new account. Follow the directions.

To obtain a PA criminal history clearance:

1. Go to <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>
2. Click on the NEW RECORD CHECK button. Follow the directions.

**\*For travelers who are not PA residents, please contact us for information about your state at [information@chariotsforhope.org](mailto:information@chariotsforhope.org)**