**Child Safeguarding Policy of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

## **Definition of a child**

As guided by the Children’s Act 41 of 2007 (as amended), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ defines a child in this policy as any person under the age of 18 years.

**Introduction**

According to Section 28(2) of the South African Constitution, “A child’s best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child.” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that all children and youth receiving services are protected as best as can be while being served by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) has been developed in the best interests of children (including youth under 18 years of age) who are in contact with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ team members.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is committed to safeguarding children to the maximum possible extent from deliberate or inadvertent actions and failings that place them at risk of any harm. This policy intends to offer a framework for the protection of children at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ supports the rights and welfare of its entire staff. Through this policy, we seek to create a safe and respectful workplace that promotes the rights and safety of all that engage in it. This includes ensuring that the rights of staff members are upheld. This policy applies to all \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ staff, management board members, volunteers, independent contractors (referred throughout this policy as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ staff, volunteers or others to whom this policy is applicable) who come into contact with children receiving services through the various programmatic interventions.

# Policy Statement:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ declares that:

* The welfare of the child is paramount.
* All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be treated equally.
* It will take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
* All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse of children will be taken seriously and acted upon swiftly and appropriately.

# Ethical Practice

All staff and volunteers should adhere to the following principles and action:

* To treat every child with dignity and respect regardless of differences of ethnicity, religion, age, ability, gender, sexual orientation and economic circumstances,
* Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a positive role model to children and as a representative of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Immediately raise any concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child in accordance with the reporting process described in this document.
* Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations). If a situation requires interaction with a child in a private space inform a family member, colleague or person present in close proximity.
* Encourage open communication, listen to children, take their concerns seriously and allow them to have a say in the decisions that affect them.
* Treat all children equally and with respect and dignity.
* Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person’s consent has been given.
* Engage with parents/caregivers wherever possible, e.g. encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child.
* Have written parental consent before children participate in activities (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Child Indemnity and Confidentiality Form).
* Have consent not only from the child’s parent or guardian (covered in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Child Indemnity and Confidentiality Form) but also from the child if photos of them will be used on social media or other public platforms.
* Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children, displaying socially acceptable behaviour, being respectful and treating others with care and dignity.
* Always giving constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
* Keeping a written record of any engagements or referrals involving a child beneficiary.
* To build trust with the children \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ serves by always explaining who you are and what is your role or what the purpose of engaging with the child is.
* Respect the cultural values of the child and family especially when entering their life space.
* It is mandatory to report any form of abuse and neglect once identified or disclosed. Follow the reporting guidelines as outlined in the Child Protection Protocol guideline document.
* Take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are not placed at risk of abuse.
* All \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ staff and volunteers will have (or have proof of application) a valid police clearance certificate before they can be formally employed or contracted.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will submit the details of all staff to be checked against the Child Offender Register (annually).

# Unethical Practice

The following are regarded as unethical/poor practice and should be avoided by all who come in-contact with children:

* Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse a child.
* Develop sexual relationships with children or relationships with children that in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
* Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or perpetrate any form of emotional abuse or reducing a young person to tears as a form of control.
* Discriminate against, show differential treatment, favour children to the exclusion of others.
* Expose a child to inappropriate images, films and websites including pornography and extreme violence.
* Take inappropriate images and/or video footage of children.
* Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
* Using enticing methods such as giving children money, eats, toys to be able to win their trust in you for your selfish interests.
* Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
* Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes.
* Place a child at risk of abuse by not taking all reasonable steps to protect children who are being served by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative towards a child.
* Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
* Photograph or film a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians.
* Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way. Touching should only be in response to the need of the child; be only with the child’s permission (except in an emergency); avoid the breasts, buttocks and groin; and be open and non-secretive.
* Have a child/children with whom \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ works stay overnight at their home unsupervised (unless in the context of specific situations such as camps, in which case other adults need to also be present and all ethical practices listed in point 2 above are adhered to).

# Special Circumstances

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a child in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ team member’s car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/guardian and the child involved. If during the care a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ team member accidentally hurts a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ team member’s actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ team member has done, that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ team member must report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents/guardians should also be informed of the incident.

# Key Child Protection Strategies

**5.1 Awareness and Information**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will ensure that all staff and volunteers and others to whom this policy is applicable are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.

**5.2 Prevention**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will ensure, through awareness and good practice that staff and volunteers and others to whom this policy is applicable minimise the risks to children.

**5.3 Reporting**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will ensure that staff and volunteers and others to whom this policy is applicable and other relevant adults are clear what steps to take where there are incidents to report or concerns to raise regarding the safety of children. Please see sections 5.5, 6, 6.1 and Appendix A of this policy for the steps.

If a child reports to or confides in a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ team member about abuse to themselves in the home, their school, from within their community or anywhere else, that team member must within a maximum of 2 working days report this to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Managing Director/Coordinator/Manager/Leader/Supervisor so that the circumstances can be reported to the local social worker to take the matter further. If circumstances require more action than that, then the Managing Director/Coordinator/Manager/Leader/Supervisor will guide the team member in the filling out and submission of a:

FORM 22 A

REPORTING OF ABUSE OR DELIBERATE NEGLECT OF CHILD

(Regulation 33)

[SECTION 110 OF THE CHILDREN’S ACT 38 OF 2005]

**5.4 Responding**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will ensure that action is taken to investigate complaints relating to the safety of children in the context of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ programmes, and to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

**5.5. Staff and volunteers and others to whom this policy is applicable that become aware of the abuse of children by anyone from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are:**

* obligated to immediately report the abuse of a child/children by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ staff, volunteers or others to whom this policy is applicable when it comes to their attention.
* required to report such incidents immediately, if they are perceived to be life threatening, to their supervisor telephonically and afterwards in writing (please see Appendix A for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ standard Child Incident Recording Form).
* required, if not a life-threatening incident, to provide full details of the incident in writing (please see Appendix A)as soon as possible, and not later than 48 hours after the incident being brought to their attention.
* obligated to act to secure the safety of children who they may observe in the process of being harmed by someone from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - if it is safe to do so.

# Investigating and Responding to Complaints

* All complaints and reports of abuse should be provided to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Managing Director/Coordinator/Manager/Leader/Supervisor as soon as possible, and not later than 3 working days after the receipt of the incident by the supervisor.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Managing Director/Coordinator/Manager/Leader/Supervisor is required to assess complaints received as soon as they are received and to instigate procedures for investigating and responding to these complaints immediately.
* Complaints received should be reviewed by a forum which may be constituted on an *ad hoc* basis for this purpose the makeup of which is at the discretion of the Managing Director/Coordinator/Manager/Leader/Supervisor.
* Complaints and reports received should be assessed in terms of this Child Safeguarding Policy and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ HR Policy Document which contains a Disciplinary Code & Procedure.
* The following kinds of decisions may be taken in relation to a report or complaint:
	+ A disciplinary enquiry may be instituted, in terms of the above policies and procedures,
	+ A decision may be taken not to act, if the complaint is deemed to be spurious or without foundation,
	+ A decision may be taken to gather further information before deciding to act,
	+ Where the report or complaint relates to personnel other than staff and volunteers and others to whom this policy is applicable, a decision may be taken to report the matter in writing to the relevant authorities.
* All complaints and reports must be kept on record, and all outcomes must be recorded.
* All reports or complaints referred to other authorities for resolution must be followed up, and records should be kept of all official communication in this regard.
* Investigations and disciplinary proceedings instituted as a result of complaints or reports will be treated in terms of the procedures established for this (see below).

**6.1 Recording information (Please see Appendix A for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ standard Child Incident Recording Form).**

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions. Information should include the following:

* the child’s name, age and date of birth
* the child’s home address and telephone number
* whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else’s
* the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
* a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
* details of witnesses to the incidents
* the child’s account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
* Have the parents been contacted?If so, what has been said?
* Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
* Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

# Declaration

I, the undersigned, have read and understood the entire contents of this Child Safeguarding Policy and will take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed:

Managing Director/Coordinator/Manager/Leader/Supervisor’s signature:

Name of staff, volunteer, independent contractor or others to whom this policy is applicable:

Position within \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

Date:

 **APPENDIX: A**

**Child Incident Recording Form**

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record must be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording, you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

1. The child’s name: age: date of birth:
2. The child’s home address and telephone number:

1. Are you reporting the incident as an expression of your concern or someone else’s?
2. Detail the nature of the allegation/incident, including dates, times and any other relevant information
3. Describe any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc and include any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
4. Details of witnesses to the incidents, including their full names and telephone contact details:

1. Write the child’s account, if it can be given:
2. Have the child’s parents/guardian/s been contacted?If so, what has been said?
3. Has anyone else been consulted?  If so, record details here:
4. Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser?  Record the detail here: