



CHILD PROTECTION

POLICY TEMPLATE AND
SELF AUDIT TOOL

**FREEDOM
COLLABORATIVE**

TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING. TOGETHER.

FOREWORD

This Child Protection Policy Template and Self Audit Tool has been created to accompany the Freedom Collaborative webinar “Child Protection Policies: Its Role, Implementation and Challenges,” which was held in August 2017.

The webinar covered the importance of understanding and implementing Child Protection Policies within organizations, for all staff members and volunteers. Whether an organization works with street children or child trafficking survivors, the rights and safety of children must be the highest priority for all practitioners and service providers.

The Freedom Collaborative community is dedicated to ensuring the highest standards in all programs with the clear aim of doing more good than harm.

CONTRIBUTORS

This resource was developed in collaboration with Freedom Collaborative community members.

Malina Enlund

A21 Campaign, Thailand

Sabine Park

Hagar International, Cambodia

Joe Fonseca

FBI, Thailand

Emily Rosal

Mercy in Action, Philippines

Rebecca Nhep

ACC International, Australia

PURPOSE

This document is not a comprehensive resource on child protection policies, but rather provides a solid introduction on developing a policy for your organization. Organizations, staff, volunteers and visitors must be fully aware that child abuse can happen in any setting, and that we must all commit to keeping children safe from harm.

This resource aims to help organizations think through how to prioritize child protection and how to implement basic policies and standards that can keep children safe from unintentional abuse or further exploitation. In going forward, each organization will need to think about how to tailor and develop their policies to more closely align with their work and how they operate.

Following, you will find a Child Protection Policy template, which we welcome organizations to freely use as their own or integrate into their existing policies as well as a section of additional standards to implement. You will also find a Self-Audit Tool from Keep Children Safe Coalition.

The content in this document is offered only as a tool for the Freedom Collaborative community, and does not constitute solicitation or provision of legal advice. This document should not be used as a substitute for obtaining legal advice from an attorney licensed or authorized to practice in your jurisdiction.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (TEMPLATE)

Purpose

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to provide a framework for staff, interns, volunteers and visitors that aims to protect children and reduce the risk of child abuse or exploitation by:

1. educating organization personnel and stakeholders of the importance of child safety
2. protecting against further abuse and exploitation
3. ensuring appropriate interactions between relevant staff, interns, volunteers, and visitors with children

Code of Conduct

All staff, interns, volunteers, and visitors must:

- Treat children with respect and dignity regardless of race, color, gender, language, religion, political affiliation, national or ethnic origin, economic status, disability, birth or other status.
- Always put the welfare and safety of the child first.
- Always take into consideration the views and concerns of children, particularly with any decision that affect them.
- Never use language towards or around a child that is sexually or culturally inappropriate, harassing, or abusive.
- Never physically harass or assault a child.
- Never engage children in any form of sexual activity.
- Ensure that another adult is always present during any and all interactions with children in and outside of the organization's premises.
- Provide privacy to children when they are addressing their personal needs, such as going to the toilet, showering, or dressing up.
- Never invite children back home or to non-organization activities.
- Never exchange personal contact information with the children.
- Never sleep in the same bed as or in close proximity to unsupervised children. If children require supervision during sleep, leadership must know this and another adult must always be present.
- Never hold, kiss, hug, or touch a child unnecessarily or in a sexually or culturally inappropriate way, and to ask for permission or consult with other staff before any touching whatsoever.
- Never show favoritism to any one child in any way, particularly in the form of gifts, special attention, or additional services.
- Never inflict physical, mental or emotional punishment on children.
- Never hire or pay children for labor that is inappropriate and exploitive.
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse or any violations of the policy.
- Abide by the relevant laws of the country of operation and residence in regards to child protection and child labor.
- Never harass or exploit children with any inappropriate materials on the internet or by any other means.
- Never access or participate in child pornography through any source.
- Never use technological devices such as computers, mobile phones, cameras inappropriately around children, particularly in sharing any information about the children on social media without the consent of the parents/guardians of the children.
- Never take photos or video footage of children without prior approval from leadership and prior consent from children and their parents/guardians.

Media Guidelines

"It is a child's right to have privacy, and they should be protected from attacks against their life, family, good name, and homes."¹

The following guidelines help set clear procedures when photographing, filming, or publicly sharing information about a child². The organization and all staff, interns, volunteers and visitors must:

- Obtain informed consent from the child and parents/guardians before photographing or filming a child.
- Explain to children and parents/guardians of the purpose of collecting and distributing such media, and the final content being shared.
- Allow children or parents/guardians to change their mind and withdraw their consent at any time if they so choose.
- Ensure that any written content, photographs and video footage of the child is dignified and respectful in nature, and does not place the child in a vulnerable, submissive or embarrassing position.
- Ensure the children are fully clothed in images and/or video footage and are not in contexts that are sexually suggestive.
- Ensure images and/or video footage accurately represent the context and the facts of the story surrounding the child.
- Ensure that identifiable information (i.e. names, locations, etc.) about the child or their family is not shared in any written or visual content.
- Hide faces of children in photos or video, either by blurry faces or creatively angling footage so that faces are not directly shown.
- Work closely with any media outlets or newspaper to ensure that content about the organization and the child is accurate, not sensationalized, and respectful.

I, _____, have read and understood the above Child Protection Policy and agree to comply to it in its entirety.

Sign: _____

Date: _____

Position: Staff Volunteer/Intern Visitor

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS

¹ UNCRC (1991) – Article 16.

² For best practice and principles that can be used to guide through some checks and balances that need to be observed when making the decision whether to use a vulnerable person's image or not, please refer to our 'Guidance Note on Use of Victims' Images' that was published in 2016.

1. Implementation

- If the organization is working in a country where English is not widely spoken and understood, particularly by children, then the Child Protection Policy should be translated into the working language of the country and shared with children and their parents/guardians in that language.
- The organization has made an effort to refer to and consult relevant international and national laws related to child protection, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- The policy should be reviewed at a minimum of every three years and adapted if needed to better fit the needs of the organization, the children, or international standards and laws.
- The organization and staff have made an effort to share the policy with the children and to incorporate their opinions of the policy into any further developments.
- Basic background checks are conducted of everyone coming into contact with children, and they are also asked to disclose any previous crime or court convictions whenever possible.
- In situations where organizations are working with partner organizations, all staff, interns, and volunteers of both organizations must comply with both organizations' child protection policy.
- There is a designated staff member (i.e. a Child Protection Officer) who is responsible for answering any questions pertaining to child protection and documenting reports of abuse and violations.

2. Training and Awareness

- Everyone at the organization should be well aware of child protection procedures, with clearly defined guidelines in place for how to behave around children.
- Children are also made aware of their rights and the procedures in place to keep them safe.
- The organization clearly communicates expected and appropriate behavior towards children, as well as subsequent consequences for violating any policies and standards.
- It is clearly communicated throughout the organization that any suspicion of violations will be investigated.
- All members of the organization have received training on child protection and the organization's child protection policies and standards.
- Staff members working directly with children have regular opportunities to update their knowledge on child protection in order to maintain the necessary skills to keep children safe.

3. Reporting Mechanisms

- Reporting mechanisms for children must be easily accessible and confidential, and must enable victims/witnesses to safely report abuse or violations.
- All members of the organization are trained in how to recognize and report concerns, questions, or suspicions of violations.
- Reports of allegations will go to the Child Protection Officer and leadership of the organization.
- The process of reporting is clearly shared and understood throughout the organization, particularly by the children.
- Staff are made to feel comfortable about reporting suspicions or violations confidentially without fear of being punished.
- Reported information will be treated confidentially in accordance with relevant privacy protection laws of the country.
- Leadership of the organization will act immediately on reports of child abuse/exploitation and consider this the highest priority until the investigation is completed and the matter is closed.
- An internal investigation should be launched immediately.
- The accused party should be immediately restricted from further interactions with children until the matter is concluded.
- Any incident should also be reported to the local authorities and to the relevant government child services agency.
- An external organization may be brought in to conduct the investigation so as to ensure unbiased outcomes.

CHILD PROTECTION SELF-AUDIT TOOL

This self-audit tool can be used to measure if your organization is meeting key child protection standards. The tool will assist organizations in identifying improvements in six areas:

- (1) children and the organization,
- (2) policies and procedures,
- (3) preventing harm to children,
- (4) implementation and training,
- (5) information and communications, and
- (6) monitoring and review.

Each of the areas of improvements have six standards which need to be rated by 3 grades:

- A: in place
- B: partially done
- C: not in place

Check A, B, or C for each statement depending on your organization's progress in each area.

The following Child Protection Self-Audit Tool is taken directly from Keep Children Safe:

*A version of this tool can also be found online.²

² Keep Children Safe – Self Audit Tool, <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk/how-we-keep-children-safe/accountability/self-audit>

Children and the organization		A	B	C
1	<i>The agency is very clear about its responsibility to protect children and makes this known to all who come into contact with it.</i>			
2	<i>The way staff and other representatives behave towards children suggests that they are committed to protecting children from abuse.</i>			
3	<i>There is good awareness of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) or other children's rights instruments and this is seen as a basis for child protection in the organization.</i>			
4	<i>Managers and senior staff ensure that children are listened to and consulted and that their rights are met.</i>			
5	<i>The agency makes it clear that all children have equal rights to protection.</i>			
6	<i>The agency manages children's behavior in ways that are non-violent and do not degrade or humiliate children.</i>			

Policies and procedures that help keep children safe		A	B	C
1	<i>The agency has a written child protection policy or has some clear arrangements to make sure that children are kept safe from harm.</i>			
2	<i>The policy or arrangements are approved and endorsed by the relevant management body (e.g., senior management board, executive, committee).</i>			
3	<i>The policy or arrangements have to be followed by everyone.</i>			
4	<i>There are clear child protection procedures in place that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare.</i>			
5	<i>There is a named child protection person/s with clearly defined role and responsibilities.</i>			
6	<i>The child protection procedures also take account of local circumstances.</i>			

Preventing harm to children		A	B	C
1	<i>There are policies and procedures or agreed ways of recruiting staff and for assessing their suitability to work with children, including where possible police and reference checks.</i>			
2	<i>There are written guidelines for behavior or some way of describing to staff and other representatives what behavior is acceptable and unacceptable especially when it comes to contact with children.</i>			
3	<i>The consequences of breaking the guidelines on behavior are clear and linked to organizational disciplinary procedures.</i>			

4	<i>Guidance exists on appropriate use of information technology such as the internet, websites, digital cameras etc. to ensure that children are not put at risk.</i>			
5	<i>Where there is direct responsibility for running/providing activities, including residential care, children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.</i>			
6	<i>There are well-publicized ways in which staff/representatives can raise concerns, confidentially if necessary, about unacceptable behavior by other staff or representatives.</i>			

Implementation and training		A	B	C
1	<i>There is clear guidance to staff, local partners and other organizations (including funding organizations) on how children will be kept safe.</i>			
2	<i>Child protection must be applied in ways that are culturally sensitive but without condoning acts that are harmful to children.</i>			
3	<i>There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe.</i>			
4	<i>All members of staff and volunteers have training on child protection when they join the organization, which includes an introduction to the organization's child protection policy and procedures where these exist.</i>			
5	<i>All members of staff and other representatives are provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognize and respond to concerns about child abuse.</i>			
6	<i>Work has been undertaken with all partners to agree good practice expectations based on these standards.</i>			

Information and communication		A	B	C
1	<i>Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse.</i>			
2	<i>Everyone in the organization knows which named staff member has special responsibilities for keeping children safe and how to contact them.</i>			
3	<i>Contact details are readily available for local child protection resources, safe places, national authorities and emergency medical help.</i>			
4	<i>Children are provided with information on where to go to for help and advice in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying.</i>			
5	<i>Contacts are established at a national and/or local level with the relevant child protection/welfare agencies as appropriate.</i>			
6	<i>Staff members with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information.</i>			

Monitoring and review		A	B	C
1	<i>Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection measures put in place by the organization.</i>			
2	<i>Steps are taken to regularly ask children and parents/guardians their views on policies and practices aimed at keeping children safe the effectiveness of these.</i>			
3	<i>The organization uses the experience of operating child protection to influence policy and practice development.</i>			
4	<i>All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints are recorded and monitored.</i>			
5	<i>Policies and practices are reviewed at regular intervals, ideally at least every three years.</i>			
6	<i>Children and parents/guardians are consulted as part of a review of safeguarding policies and practices.</i>			

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is an online, community-based platform, which brings together anti-trafficking organisations and stakeholders from around the world. It provides the space to identify and meet partners, as well as share updates and resources for improving and facilitating collaboration in the fight to end exploitation.

We make use of web-based information-sharing approaches by providing a secure space that combines social networking and data-sharing services to improve communication between actors and stakeholders.

*Join us now at freedomcollaborative.org.
Contact us at support@freedomcollaborative.org.*