

Orphan Voice Child Protection Policy

1. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

1. ORPHAN VOICE is committed to the welfare of children and youth in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. ORPHAN VOICE staff and management are expected to engage in positive, supportive relationships with children in their professional roles that protect children from exploitation.
2. ORPHAN VOICE believes that all children are made in the image of God, who created them with infinite worth and value. Thus, ORPHAN VOICE believes that children should be treated with respect, honored for their intrinsic value and cared for in ways that bring honor to God.
3. ORPHAN VOICE believes that all children have a right to protection from abuse irrespective of race, social background, age, gender, skin color, disability, religion, nationality or beliefs.
4. ORPHAN VOICE believes that child abuse and exploitation is wrong. Keeping silent is also wrong if it is known beyond reasonable cause that a child is being abused or exploited.
5. ORPHAN VOICE believes in the importance of child protection and that preventative measures should be made to not only protect children from abuse by ORPHAN VOICE team members, staff, donors and visitors but also to protect ORPHAN VOICE staff and ORPHAN VOICE's own integrity.

The different forms of child abuse are:

1. Physical Abuse: Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury.
2. Mental/Emotional Abuse: Actual or likely severe adverse effects on the emotional and behavioral development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection.
3. Sexual Abuse: Actual or likely exploitation of a child or adolescent; involvement of dependent, developmentally, immature children and adolescents in sexual activities to which they are unable to give informed consent, such as touching a child's genitals, forcing child to watch or take part in pornography or coercing the child to have sex.

2. BEHAVIORAL PROTOCOLS:

1. ORPHAN VOICE expects all its staff, short-term volunteers, visitors and donors to give respect and dignity to all children associated with the work of ORPHAN VOICE.
2. ALL ORPHAN VOICE staff, short-term volunteers and donors visiting program sites must sign a statement to say that they have read the policy, will respect it and understand that action will be taken in cases of inappropriate misbehavior.
3. Visitors to ORPHAN VOICE project areas will not be left unsupervised. ORPHAN VOICE staff and short-term volunteers can be left unsupervised at the project areas if they have signed the ORPHAN VOICE Child Protection Policy.
4. Local children will not stay overnight with an ORPHAN VOICE staff, short-term volunteers, donors, or visitors unless accompanied by a parent or family member.
5. ORPHAN VOICE staff, short-term volunteers, visitors and donors will not touch a child in an inappropriate manner or expose them to inappropriate materials such as pornographic videos and literature.
6. ORPHAN VOICE short-term volunteers, visitors and donors will not discipline a child if they have contact with a child.
7. ORPHAN VOICE drivers will not take a beneficiary child home without at least one other person being present in the vehicle, unless the child is a family member.
8. ORPHAN VOICE staff, short-term volunteers, visitors and donors, preferably, will not visit a beneficiary child at his/her own home, while the child is home alone. If benefits need to be delivered to older children, i.e., school fees, the beneficiary can come to the Orphan Voice office.
9. Adults will always be responsible for their behavior and cannot blame the child, even if the child 'provokes' or acts in a 'seductive' way.
10. If protocols are broken, the person involved will be disciplined and may lose his/her job and may be subject to criminal proceedings.

3. RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

1. ORPHAN VOICE staff agree to inform the ORPHAN VOICE Director immediately if new information arise that casts doubt on the team members' trustworthiness with children.
2. Information on the child protection policies must be introduced before and on acceptance of employment.

3. ORPHAN VOICE projects will not employ or accept as volunteers any children under 12 unless accompanied by his/her parent or guardian.
 4. ORPHAN VOICE staff, short-term volunteers, visitors and donors will not employ personal domestic staff under the age of 16.
4. RESPONDES TO ALLEGATIONS:
1. ORPHAN VOICE staff, short –term volunteers, visitors and donors will be encouraged to be open in discussing the potential of abuse within the organization.
 2. ORPHAN VOICE prohibits any retaliation against an employee who, in good faith, has registered a complaint under this procedure.
 3. The Orphan Voice Director is the designated person responsible for dealing with child protection issues within the organization.
 4. ORPHAN VOICE staff, short-term volunteers, visitors and donors are required to report suspected abuse to either the Director or head teacher, in the case of New Beginning School for the Deaf who shall then contact the Director. All reports of alleged abuse will be investigated. The investigation process will be documented and a written report of findings will be completed within 30 days of the allegation. Outside expertise or legal authorities may be involved. The Director will be informed of all child abuse allegations within 3 days of the allegation. Any allegation of abuse involving a staff member will be reported to the ORPHAN VOICE Director within 10 days of the allegation.
5. COMMUNICATION:
1. ORPHAN VOICE’s communication about children will reflect images that preserve their dignity and are decent and respectful, not seeking to exploit their circumstances.
 2. ORPHAN VOICE will take special care to protect children’s identities and specific geographic location in public relations materials. Therefore, to protect their identity, ORPHAN VOICE will only post children’s first name and will not distribute their last name or address.
 3. Disclosure of information about past or present abuse of children and any of the persons involved should be limited to only the people who need to know.
6. DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT
- To be signed by all ORPHAN VOICE staff, board members, visitors and short-term volunteers. A copy will be kept on file at the appropriate ORPHAN VOICE Office or personnel file.

I declare that:

1. I have read and understand the ORPHAN VOICE Child Protection Policy.
2. I will work within the procedure as laid out in the ORPHAN VOICE Child Protection Policy.
3. I have not been convicted of any offense involving physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.

7. Visitor Relationships

All visitors to Orphan Voice projects come at the invitation of Orphan Voice. Orphan Voice is licensed by the Vietnamese government to provide humanitarian assistance in Vietnam.

Any short term relationships that arise between visitors and Orphan Voice staff, employees or partners are secondary to the visitors relationship with Orphan Voice.

Signature:

Date: