

# **Orphan Voice Child Protection Policy**

## **STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT:**

ORPHAN VOICE is committed to the welfare of children and youth. All employees shall engage in positive relationships with children in their professional roles. ORPHAN VOICE opposes all forms of child exploitation and child abuse, including child sexual abuse.

ORPHAN VOICE is committed to upholding the law on child rights and welfare.

ORPHAN VOICE believes that all children are made in the image of God, who created them to have 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 brings honor to God.

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.

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.

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.

ORPHAN VOICE believes that children have the right to speak and be heard.

The different forms of child abuse are described:

- . 1.1.1. Physical Abuse: Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury, or suffering, to a child.
- . 1.1.2. Mental/Emotional Abuse: Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioral development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection.

- 1.1.3. Sexual Abuse: Actual or likely exploitation of a child or adolescent 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.

## BEHAVIORAL PROTOCOLS:

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.

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.

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.

ORPHAN VOICE staff, short term volunteers, donors and visitors must never be alone with beneficiary children in a private place that cannot be readily seen by other adults.

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.

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.

ORPHAN VOICE short term volunteers, visitors and donors will not discipline a child if they have contact with a child.

ORPHAN VOICE staff, short term volunteers, visitors and donors will not exploit a child.

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.

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.

Adults will always be responsible for their behavior and cannot blame the child, even if the child ‘ provokes ’ or acts in a ‘ seductive’ way.

If protocols are broken, the person involved will be disciplined and may lose his/her job and may be subject to criminal proceedings.

ORPHAN VOICE staff agree to inform the ORPHAN VOICE Director immediately if new information arises that casts doubt on the team member ’ s trustworthiness with children. Such information would be treated as confidential and disclosed to the individual team member for appropriate action.

All ORPHAN VOICE team members and staff will be carefully and properly screened during their recruitment period.

ORPHAN VOICE has the right to contact any reference provided by candidates if any questionable information projects is found on the ORPHAN VOICE application form.

Information on the child protection policies must be introduced before and on acceptance of employment.

ORPHAN VOICE projects will not employ or accept as volunteers any children under 12 unless accompanied by his/her parent or guardian.

ORPHAN VOICE projects will not employ or accept as volunteers any children aged between 13 and 15 years for more than 3 hours/day, 18 hours/week or no more than 8 hours/day, 40 hours/week during school closures.

ORPHAN VOICE projects will not employ or accept as volunteers any children aged between 16 and 18 years for more than 40 hours per week.

ORPHAN VOICE staff, shortterm volunteers, visitors and donors will not employ personal domestic staff under the age of 16.

#### RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS:

ORPHAN VOICE staff, shortterm volunteers, visitors and donors will be encouraged to be open in discussing the potential of abuse within the organization.

ORPHAN VOICE prohibits any retaliation against an employee who, in good faith, has registered a complaint under this procedure.

There will be a designated person to be responsible for dealing with child protection issues within the organization.

ORPHAN VOICE staff, short term volunteers, donors or visitors are required to report suspected abuse to either the program manager, Director or head teacher, in the case of New Beginnings School for the Deaf. 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.

1.1.1. Conclusion of investigation: If an investigation leads to the conclusion that abuse has occurred,

then the appropriate legal authorities will be notified if they have not previously been involved in the investigation. If an ORPHAN VOICE staff or short term volunteer is involved in a finding of abuse, then they will be terminated immediately and subject to criminal prosecution. Where no evidence of abuse has been found, the informant, alleged victim and alleged perpetrator will be notified.

- . 1.1.2. The allegation will be kept confidential, with only those directly involved having the appropriate information.
- . 1.1.3. ORPHAN VOICE staff or short term volunteers who are found violating confidentiality of allegations will receive a written warning.
- . 1.1.4. ORPHAN VOICE will work in cooperation with child welfare and legal organizations during the course of an investigation as appropriate.
- . 1.1.5. Both victim and perpetrator will be treated with respect from the start of the process to the end.
- . 1.1.6. ORPHAN VOICE will not dismiss a child 's accusation of abuse without appropriate investigation, no matter who the alleged perpetrator is.

- . 1.1.7. The alleged perpetrator will be treated without prejudice.
- . 1.1.8. ORPHAN VOICE will work in cooperation with other organizations in a case where the child involved requires extra protection.
- . 1.1.9. Records will be made of all facts related to the investigation and allegation, and these will be carefully and confidentially filed by the ORPHAN VOICE Director.

#### COMMUNICATION:

- . 1.1. ORPHAN VOICE's communication about children will reflect images that preserve their dignity and are decent and respectful, not seeking to exploit their circumstances.
- . 1.2. 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 names and will not distribute their last name or address.
- . 1.3. Those speaking on the behalf of ORPHAN VOICE will make all possible efforts to ensure that the message communicated is that in all circumstances, child abuse is wrong.
- . 1.4. 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.

To be signed by **all** ORPHAN VOICE staff, visitors and shortterm 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 procedures as laid out in the ORPHAN VOICE Child Protection Policy.

## DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

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3. I have not been accused or convicted of any offence involving physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.
4. I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse of children while engaged in ORPHAN VOICE activities, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_