



Child Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

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ChildAid's Mission and Vision

1. Our mission is to transform the limited circumstances of today's vulnerable, abandoned and disabled children in Eastern Europe into ones of opportunity and hope.
2. Our vision is that, in the longer term, local and national authorities will be persuaded to adopt this approach themselves, thereby rendering our further support unnecessary.

ChildAid's Values

1. Our faith is at the core of all our work.
2. We take a compassionate and non-judgemental approach to all in need of our help.
3. We are proactively involved with all our projects, promoting improvements where we think they are indicated.
4. We are committed to positive social change in favour of the disadvantaged.
5. We always work with local project Partners.
6. We believe that Partners, UK staff and volunteers and our supporters are equally key to the success of our mission.
7. We remain strictly non-political.
8. Our dealings with Partners and supporters are always open, honest and transparent.

ChildAid's Child Safeguarding Policy

ChildAid will actively promote and enhance the protection, safety and welfare of children and young people from abuse and make respond appropriately to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.

ChildAid seeks to ensure that those benefiting from the charity are not harmed in any way through contact with our representatives.

We will accordingly take all reasonable steps within our power to ensure that this does not happen.

We uphold the rights of children as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and believe that all children have a right to protection:

'...from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has the care of the child.'

Everybody has the responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse, abandonment, neglect, exploitation, violence and discrimination.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14), and as it is written in Psalm 82: "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed" so will ChildAid and our Partners where at all possible.

ChildAid's Approach

ChildAid seeks to ensure that all of its staff, representatives and project Partners are knowledgeable about child protection risks and aware of the specific measures that they must take in order to protect children deemed to be in the care of each partner.

ChildAid does not provide direct services to children. We guide, support and endorse the programme of child safeguarding used by each Partner. These are appropriate to the context within the specific country in which they operate, but will also adhere to the general principles of safeguarding to be found and expected in the United Kingdom.

The decisions and actions in response to child protection concerns will be guided by placing the 'best interest of the child' at the forefront and the principle of do no harm. It is not the role of ChildAid or our Partners to determine whether a child has been abused but to refer concerns of abuse to the relevant authorities in the country where the incident has been reported.

All information relating to child safeguarding concerns will be treated as confidential. No retaliation or punitive action will be taken against anyone who, in good faith, raises a child safeguarding concern.

The child safeguarding policies and procedures have been approved by ChildAid's Board of Trustees and follow the principles outlined in the following section.

The Child Safeguarding policy will be reviewed to meet needs and insights as developed over time.

ChildAid's Principles

- This policy applies to all our work with children and young people under the age of 18 years and vulnerable people of all ages.
- All children without exception regardless of special needs, age, gender, language, ethnic or racial origin, colour, sexual identity, religious beliefs, political or other opinions, cultural or socio-economical factors, birth or other status have at all times and in all situations the right to be completely secure from the fear or reality of abuse.
- The welfare of children is paramount. As stated by the UNCRC in all actions concerning children the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
- There is a system in place to promote the safety and welfare of children and to ensure that children are protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.
- All suspicions/allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to expeditiously and appropriately.
- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff at ChildAid and our Partners may need.
- ChildAid will assure all representatives that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern.
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.
- ChildAid will ensure we have a UK-based child safeguarding officer for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.

- This policy applies to charity trustees, staff, volunteers and any other person working with ChildAid. The child safeguarding officer ensures that all representatives have read the policy, understand and are knowledgeable about its central messages and any duties or responsibilities it places on them.
- It is not the responsibility of anyone working for ChildAid in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, everyone has a responsibility to be alert to the signs of abuse and responsible for referring any concerns and disclosing abuse through contact with the appropriate authorities.
- We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, our Partners are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. ChildAid will therefore encourage them to adapt and develop this policy and procedures to best suit their environment. Future Partnership agreements will depend on maintaining of such policy.
- The responsibility for managing this policy lies with child safeguarding officer, Director and Trustees.
- The policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Trustees and will be reviewed whenever appropriate but not less than every three years to ensure that all safeguards are in place and that the policy is being properly implemented.
- All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations.
- Necessary action should be taken to make children aware of this policy; their rights to be protected from abuse and to help them to develop the skills they need to recognise abuse and stay safe.
- ChildAid will provide ongoing training to Partners and updates on the principles and practices of child safeguarding.

Child Safeguarding Procedures

There are clear procedures in line with the policy, which are known, understood and followed by all staff, visitors, trustees and partners.

Safe Recruitment:

We will ensure we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers for working with children.

As a part of our recruitment process the following will be requested:

- DBS check or similar.
- Self-disclosure about any previous criminal convictions. A written declaration should be prepared and signed, and this declaration should be taken into account when deciding if the applicant is to be employed (see Addendum 1).
- Interviews will include a specific question relating to child safeguarding issues and the candidate's suitability to be working for a children's charity
- At least two confidential references. Specifically ask the question "Do you know of any reason why this person should not be allowed to work with children?"
- Evidence of identity.
- Authenticity of qualifications.
- Any unexplained gaps in employment history will be fully checked

The safeguarding process includes child protection awareness training after recruitment. In addition, the Code of Conduct (Addendum 2) is to be followed at all times.

Child Sponsorship Scheme:

- It is ChildAid's duty to protect children who have been allowed to take part in our child sponsorship programmes from any sponsor who may want to misuse the sponsorship system.
- We release only limited information about the children. All correspondence with a child must go through our office.
- Child sponsors shall be advised to maintain rights of privacy and confidentiality in terms of the child(ren) being sponsored.

Visitors to projects:

- DBS (or the equivalent) will be completed when visitors want to see our projects or are contracted to work there.
- All visitors (whether staff, trustees, consultants, photographers, donors, media, interpreters, other NGOs) will be briefed before or immediately on arrival, be given a copy of this Child Safeguarding Policy and sign the Child Safeguarding Self-Disclosure Form.
- All visitors must be accompanied at all times by staff from the Partner.

Visual Images:

ChildAid has a duty of care to the children who feature in all visual and written material and at all times must put their interests first. Any portrayal of children and their experiences must protect their identity, preserve their dignity and be accurate, balanced and fair. All information concerning children is managed in accordance with ChildAid's Privacy Policy

Where practical, fully informed verbal consent (in their first language) will be obtained from parents/guardians or carers before taking and using photographs, film footage, audio recordings or personal histories. Where consent is not practical all reasonable steps will be taken by the Partner to ensure that due care and consideration to these Visual Image guidelines are taken.

We are aware of the complications that such consent will create and consequently legitimate interest for taking photos or videos is an adopted practice and principle. However, it will be explained to the subjects of the photos (or their parents/guardians) :

why the images are being taken
how they may be used
who they can be used by
what they can be used for
how to opt-out if you they don't want their photo taken

The following approaches will be adhered to when taking and using images:

Collation of Images

- We gather and use images which reflect the dignity, self-worth and resourcefulness of the subject.
- The visual identity of any child will be obscured if dissemination of the image could make the child vulnerable to stigma, discrimination, abuse, violence or exploitation.

- Where appropriate, we give the name of the photographed subject in a caption, although will change names and locations if necessary to protect privacy. Names will be changed and full names of the children will not be used in general publications or on social media.
- Where there is sensitivity involved visual images or written material will not enable the specific location of a child to be identified.
- We do not exploit the subject.
- We do not manipulate the subject in a way which distorts the reality of the situation (eg we do not ask them to cry for the camera).
- We aim to provide a balanced portrayal of reality.
- We avoid stereotypes.
- We do not portray the subjects as victims.

Use of Images:

- Where possible, we use a balance of images (eg positive and negative, hope as well as suffering) to reflect the reality of a situation.
- We do not use an image of one person or thing and describe it as, or imply that it is, an image of another.
- If we use an image in a general way, we make this clear in the caption (eg illustrating a project similar to the one being described).
- We do not use an image in a way which deliberately misrepresents the true situation.

- If an image represents an exceptional situation, we do not use it in a way which suggests it is generally true.
- We aim to be confident that, to the best of our knowledge, the subject would regard the image and its use as truthful if he or she saw it.
- All content and data (names, photos, case studies) will be stored securely, and access will be restricted only to individuals who need it.

We maintain standards of taste and decency consistent with our values

- We do not use images which are erotic, pornographic or obscene.
- We do not as a rule use images of dead or naked bodies.
- We do not make gratuitous use of images of extreme suffering.

Suspicion/allegation of Abuse:

Anyone who suspects or discovers that a child is at risk of being abused should take the following action:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused should be immediately reported to the child safeguarding officer , who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child. Suspicions of child abuse should not be discussed with anyone other than this designated person. There should be no delay in bringing attention to any suspicions. Early notification can prevent serious harm.
- Avoid asking leading questions or giving inappropriate guarantees of confidentiality as the information may need to be passed on.
- If it is considered that urgent action is needed to protect the child, make views known clearly and give reasons.
- Where emergency medical attention is necessary it should be sought immediately.
- If the child safeguarding officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Director or in his/her absence the Trustees. If the suspicions/allegation relates particularly to the Director or the Trustee, then the police should be contacted.
- The Director will make an immediate decision about whether any UK based individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further inquiries: a criminal investigation, a child protection investigation, and a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.
- The parents/guardian of the child involved will also need to be notified as soon as possible if this contact is appropriate.
- There should be recorded by the child safeguarding officer precise descriptions of injuries and/or allegations, all facts, events and

conversations on the same day as they occur. Such information maybe required for legal purposes. Furthermore, any material evidence will need to be collected for any forensic and medical investigations that might be needed.

- Detailed and accurate recording is essential. To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should include the following:
 - The child's name, age, gender, date of birth, home address and telephone number.
 - Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
 - The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors, circumstances and other relevant information. Note both how they appear to have been caused and how they are said to have been caused.
 - Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
 - A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. 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 or other injuries occurred.
 - Have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
 - Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
 - If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
 - Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

- Send a written report of the concerns and findings to the child safeguarding officer dealing with the incident as soon as possible and no later than 12 hours after the original concern being registered.

- In other countries, referrals will depend on existing legislation. Each Partner needs to investigate the situation in their country. All

information must be copied to the ChildAid office. The contact goes via the designated person in the Partner to the ChildAid child safeguarding officer. The child safeguarding officer must notify the Director and trustees of the allegations/incidents.

- Where possible, referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact that took the referral should be recorded.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to the child safeguarding officer, in line with data protection laws. Confidentiality will only be breached if and when it is in the best interests of a child.
- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the child safeguarding officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

Any serious concerns about a child's welfare where no specific allegation is made should follow the same procedures.

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, we should follow the procedures as detailed above, in order to protect other children, either within or outside the charity's sphere of influence.

Addendum 1: Child Safeguarding Self Disclosure Form

All individuals connected with ChildAid, and who will come into contact with children or their personal details, must complete and sign this declaration. This information will be held confidentially.

1. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offence? Please include cautions and bind-overs as well as convictions.

Yes No Don't know

2. Have you ever been the subject of a disciplinary hearing by any professional body?

Yes No Don't know

3. Have you ever been the subject of any allegation, concern or disciplinary process in relation to your contact or care of children by any official body?

Yes No Don't know

4. Have you ever been dismissed or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to allegations of inappropriate behaviour towards a child?

Yes No Don't know

5. Have you ever been disqualified from working with young people under 18?

Yes No Don't know

If you have answered 'yes' or "don't know" to any of these questions please include a statement setting out the details and context of the situation separately.

This declaration must be signed and returned before starting any direct work with children.

I confirm that the above information given by me is correct and that I consent to my personal data being processed and kept for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 2018.

Name

Signature

Date

Addendum 2: Code of Conduct

ChildAid and its Partners have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that the children with whom we work or have an impact upon are safe. We are committed to upholding the highest standards of behaviours in and outside of the work environment.

The Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct serves to protect the reputation of ChildAid, its Partners and the people who work within, or on behalf of, us.

All individuals connected to ChildAid who are in contact with children **MUST NEVER** :

- discriminate, prejudice or display oppressive behaviour or language in relation to: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views;
- spend time alone with children away from others;
- develop physical/sexual/exploitative relationships with children under 18 years of age, regardless of local laws;
- develop relationships with children under 18 years of age, which could in any way be deemed abusive or exploitative, regardless of local laws;
- hold, kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate, sexually provocative or culturally insensitive manner;
- do things of a personal nature which the child can do themselves such as toileting, bathing and dressing;
- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade;
- condone or participate in behaviour which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- behave in a manner which is abusive, exploitative, inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- or seek to deliberately or intentionally support or develop any initiatives which contravene the rights of children as laid out in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Non-compliance with this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously. In accordance with the Child Safeguarding Policy immediate reporting and investigation of all concerns and suspicions is mandatory and will include referral of cases to the police and/or social services if child rights laws have been violated.