



**YOUTH SAFETY**

**AWARENESS INITIATIVE**

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## **Preamble**

The Youth Safety Awareness Initiative is a non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to mobilize citizen responsibility and participation in making Kenya safer by focusing on, and discouraging vulnerable youth and the public from engaging in criminal activities, positively empowering youth and the public on their legal rights and obligations and using social enterprise to support youth development and penal reforms so as to reduce recidivism.

The Youth Safety Awareness Initiative values young people and children as being a vital part of the organisation and desires to see them grow, mature and be challenged in a healthy, safe and welcoming environment. Through its focussed youth programme, the organisation works with groups of young people aged between 6 and 19 years who want to address community safety issues in their areas. The programme focuses on training young people with leadership skills while engaging and empowering them as partners in community safety issues through active citizenship and social enterprise.

## **Purposes**

The Youth Safety Awareness Initiative recognises that all staff and volunteers have a full and active part to play in protecting children and young people from harm. The purpose of this policy is, therefore, to provide staff guidelines by which to relate and work with children, and to understand their role in the safety and wellbeing of children under their care.

## **Scope**

This policy covers all staff who have direct or indirect contact with children. This includes those staff, paid or voluntary, employed directly by the Youth Safety Awareness Initiative, as well as those professionals contracted or invited to provide services to children in the care of the Youth Safety Awareness Initiative.

## **Definitions**

For the purpose of this Policy;

*Child abuse* includes physical, sexual, psychological and mental abuse.

*Child* means any human being under the age of eighteen years.

*Child Protection Management Committee* means the committee set up by the board and authorised to handle any child safety concerns within the organisation.

*Child protection* means the response to the different ways in which a young person's or child's physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health are damaged by the actions of another person

*Child Protection Representative* means a person appointed by the board and authorised to handle any child safety concerns within the organisation.

*Children Officer* means an authorized person from the Department of Children Services in the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development.

*Guardian* means any person who in the opinion of the court has charge or control of the child.

## **Policy Implementation**

Overall responsibility, implementation and review of this policy rests with the Management Committee. This Policy will be reviewed annually, and updated regularly in the light of operational experience and in line with changes in legislation and associated policies.

The Youth Safety Awareness Initiative is committed to creating a child friendly environment by:

- i. **Awareness:** We will ensure that all staff, volunteers and partners are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children. Staff and volunteers will also be made aware and enrolled to relevant child safety trainings on a regular basis to keep them abreast with emerging issues concerning child care and safety.
- ii. **Registration:** We will ensure that each child and young person is formally registered within the group. The information, which includes vital information about health and emergency contacts, will be captured in an information/consent form which their parent/guardian must complete. These forms will be kept securely and brought to each session. An attendance register will further be kept for each session (see Appendix B).
- iii. **Prevention:** We will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that all our staff, volunteers and partners minimize the risks to children. In particular, we will ensure that the children in our care are protected from the risk of online predators and exposure to indecent material by blocking the access of such sites from our server and monitoring the use of internet while in our care.
- iv. **Reporting:** By setting up appropriate child complaint mechanisms, we will ensure that all staff, volunteers and partners are clear on what steps to take if concerns arise regarding the safety of children.
- v. **Responding:** We will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children when concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

In order to meet the above standards, staff and volunteers will also ensure that they:

- Take seriously any concerns raised;
- Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns;
- Support children or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns;

- Act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent process of investigation;
- Are guided throughout the child-protection process by the principle of **'best interests of the child'**
- Listen to and take seriously the views and wishes of children;
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

### **Child Protection Representative**

The Youth Safety Awareness Initiative has further appointed a child protection representative, whose name is displayed on the notice board in the office, to respond to any child safety concerns. Therefore, if any worker has any child safety concerns, they should discuss them with him/her. He/she will take on the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring that both staff and volunteers are well versed with the provisions of the policy;
- Ensuring that the policy is being put into practice;
- Being the first point of contact for child protection issues;
- Keeping a record of any concerns expressed about child protection issues;
- Bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the Child Protection Management Committee who will then contact the Local Children Officer if appropriate;
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers are given appropriate supervision;
- Ensuring that everyone involved with the organisation is aware of the identity of the Child Protection Representative.

### **Recruitment of Staff**

Workers and assistants are by far the most valuable resource the group has for working with young people. When recruiting and selecting paid workers and volunteers the following steps will be taken:

- The provision of a clear job description and person specifications;
- Completion of an application form;
- Verification of identification will be undertaken;
- Verification of qualifications (and registration where appropriate) will be undertaken;
- Ensuring the undertaking of safety checks which include police check and personal reference checks;

- A structured interview or personal assessment process by three people from the Management Committee, and a person knowledgeable and experienced in the field of child protection, who will take the final decision. Attitudes towards children and safety around them will also be assessed during this process;
- Allowing no unaccompanied access to children until all of the above have been completed;
- A probationary period of 3 months;
- On-going supervision of paid workers and volunteers;
- Ensuring good practice is followed in working with children and young people by providing appropriate training and guidance;
- Full records will be kept, and attention to HR practices maintained.

### **Rules of Behaviour/ Engagement**

In keeping to our commitment to the best interest and safety of the child, all staff, volunteers and partners agree to abide to the following rules of engagement.

#### **The Youth Safety Awareness Initiative staff, volunteers and partners shall:**

- a) Have a duty to familiarize themselves with situations which may present risks to children and as such learn how to deal with those situations;
- b) Never leave a group of children or young people under the age of sixteen unattended at any time;
- c) Contribute to an environment where children are able to recognize unacceptable behavior and feel free to discuss their rights and concerns;
- d) Wherever practical, ensure that they and others meet children openly. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation. Doors should never be locked when children are inside a room with adults;
- e) Ensure that no children go home without an adult unless the parent has specifically said they may do so. Never let a child go with another adult unless the parent has informed them that this will happen.
- f) When organising a trip/outing make sure a trip/outing slip which includes details about the trip and a section for parents to give their consent, is completed and returned before the event takes place and must be brought on the trip with the completed group information/consent forms.
- g) Ensure that there is adequate insurance for the work and activities.
- h) Ensure that if private cars are used for an outing, the drivers must be approved by the committee, be properly insured, have rested before driving, and should have clean

licenses. There should always be at least one other responsible person (16 or over) in each vehicle. All vehicles should be fitted with full seatbelts, not just lap belts. Full seatbelts should always be used.

- i) Under normal circumstances, only give a lift home to a young person from group activities if the parents of the young person have specifically asked for them to do so.
- j) Raise concerns about any case of suspected abuse in accordance with this policy;
- k) Take notes of any disclosure made to them by children and report the same to the designated Child Protection Representative for follow up; and
- l) Ensure that in their engagements with children, the tenets of confidentiality, respect and decorum are upheld.

**The Youth Safety Awareness Initiative staff, volunteers and partners shall not:**

- a) Disclose information that identifies children to unauthorized persons or make it available to the general public without the informed consent of the family and when appropriate, the child and/or guardians;
- b) Begin investigating concerns brought to their attention by themselves;
- c) Discuss matters brought to their attention by a child with anyone except the correct people in authority; and
- d) Form their own opinions and decide to do nothing with regard to a matter/ complaint brought to their attention.

**Additional References**

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990

Sexual Offences Act 2006

The Children's Act, 2001

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

**Appendix A**

List of Staff Telephone numbers and Email Addresses

No.	Name	Title	Phone Number	Email	Sign
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					

**Appendix B**

Child Registration Form (Encls)

This policy was adopted by the **Youth Safety Awareness Initiative** on .....

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee by:

Signature.....

Name in Capitals.....

The policy has been reviewed by the Management Committee on:

Date.....