ELOHIM FOUNDATION

CHILD SAFE GUARDING POLICY

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Introduction

Elohim Foundation considers the welfare of child as paramount, particularly her constituency of children being those vulnerability, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity and as well believe they the children have the right to protection from abuse.

Hence, it's her expectation that all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately by all staff (paid/unpaid) working in any field of her programmes and projects. It is the responsibility of all staff to report concerns to the appropriate officer. To this extent Staff/volunteers are trained to decide if abuse has occurred deal with such situations appropriately and timely.

Policy statement/aims

Elohim Foundation has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in her programmes and activities from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Elohim Foundation will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in her activities through adherence to the Child Protection laws of her country of operation.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Policy aims

The aim of Elohim Foundation Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection while in the care of Elohim Foundation and to allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting good practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A programme officer/caregiver, instructor, teacher, official or

volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child is registered for any of Elohim Foundation's programme or activity having been subjected to child abuse before registration, our clubbing and mentorship activity can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the club activity organiser must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

Good practice guidelines:

All personnel are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce any likelihood of child abuse. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

i. Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets) among child and adults.
ii. Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
iii. Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before programme goals.
iv. Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
v. Making every child focused activity fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
vi. Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the OVC Programme coordinator. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
vii. Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications in handling OVC programming.
viii. Involving parents/caregivers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children during activities. Ensuring that if mixed

teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.

ix. Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.

x. Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.

xi. Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

xii. Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoid not pushing them against their will.

xiii. Securing parental consent in writing for any form of publish or drug/vaccine administration on any child if and when the need arises.

xiv. Keeping a written record of any administered medical provisions on every child along with the details of any treatment given.

xv. Requesting written parental consent if programme personnel are required to transport young people in their cars.

Practices to be avoided:

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a programme: Avoid spending time alone with children away from others. Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

Practices Never to Be Sanctioned: The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

i. Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
ii. Share a room with a child allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
iii. Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
iv. Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
v. Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
vi. Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child

vii. Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves

viii. Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the child involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers: Elohim Foundation recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following:

i. All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.

ii. Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.

iii. Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.

iv. Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

Interview and induction: All employees and volunteers will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations in line with Elohim Foundation employment policy. All employees and volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

i. A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).

ii. Their qualifications should be substantiated.

iii. The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
iv. Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
v. They should sign up to the organisation's Code of Ethics and Conduct and Child Protection policy.

Training: In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

i. Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.
ii. Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
iii. Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
iv. Work safely effectively with children.

Elohim Foundation requires:

i. OVC Programme Officers to attend a recognised 3-hour good practice and child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
ii. Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
iii. Relevant personnel to gain a national first aid training (where necessary).
iv. Attend update training when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from HR.

Responding to allegations or suspicions:

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Elohim Foundation, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

Elohim Foundation will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

i. A criminal investigation,
ii. A child protection investigation,
iii. A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

Reporting concerns about poor practice:

i. If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice the designated Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
ii. If the allegation is about poor practice by the organisation/Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant management officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Reporting concerns about suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff/a volunteer or any individuals should be reported to the Elohim Foundation Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

The Organisation/Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.

The parents or caregivers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

If the Organisation/Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence the Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to Social Services of the state.

Confidentiality:

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. This includes the following people:

i. The Programme/Child Protection Officer
ii. The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
iii. The person making the allegation
iv. Social services/police
v. The Executive Secretary Development Manager, President Board of Trustee and Child Protection Officer
vi. Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).
vii. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Enquiries and further action:

i. Internal enquiries and possible suspension
ii. The (Organisation/Club) Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
iii. Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Organisation Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.
iv. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Organisation Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of previous abuse:

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, the organisation would follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children.

Bullying:

Every child has the right to experience project programmes in a safe environment free from abuse and bullying.

Elohim Foundation play an important role in creating a positive programme ethos that challenges bullying by empowering young people to understand the impact of bullying, how best to deal with it and agree standards of behaviour.

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. It should include the following:

i. The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
ii. The child's home address and telephone number.
iii. Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
iv. The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
v. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

vi. A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
vii. Details of witnesses to the incidents.
viii. The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
ix. Have the parents been contacted?
x. If so what has been said?
xi. Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
xii. If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
xiii. Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
xiv. Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

Commitment to Safeguard Children

Values and principles

The abuse and exploitation of children happens in all countries and societies across the world. All child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights. The situation of all children must be improved through the promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation. Child abuse is never acceptable and a commitment to children's rights in general also means a commitment to safeguard the children with whom Elohim Foundation (E F) is in contact.

E F will meet its commitment to safeguard through the following means:

i. **Awareness:** Ensuring that all staff and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.
ii. **Prevention:** Ensuring, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimize the risks to children.
iii. **Reporting:** Ensuring that staff and others are clear on what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.
iv. **Responding:** Ensuring that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

In order that the above standards of reporting and responding are met, E F will also ensure that it:

i. Takes seriously any concerns raised
ii. Takes positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns
iii. Supports children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns
iv. Acts appropriately and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation
v. Is guided through the child protection process by the principle of 'best interests of the child'
vi. Listens to and takes seriously the views and wishes of children
vii. Works in partnership with parents/caregivers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.
viii. All personnel needing to work with children on E F platform will be required to sign an undertaking in this regard.

I _____ hereby agree to the child protection policy of E F and I promise to abide by it. I shall also agree to any decision made by the organization if I violate any of the following in the course of carrying out my official assignment with the children.

I undertake to:

i. Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
ii. Plan and organize the work and the workplace so as to minimize risks
iii. As far as possible, be visible in working with children
iv. Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised or discussed
v. Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
vi. Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns
vii. Empower children – discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

I understand that it is inappropriate to:

i. Spend excessive time alone with children away from others
ii. Take children to my home, especially where they will be alone with me.

I undertake never to:

i. Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
ii. Develop physical/sexual relationships with children
iii. Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
iv. Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
v. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
vi. Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
vii. Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
viii. Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
ix. Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
x. Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
xi. Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
xii. Discriminate against, show differential treatment towards, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

SIGNATURE of STAFF ……. DATE: ……

WITNESS: ……

NAME SIGNATURE DATE

APPROVED BY:

18/07/2021 18/07/2021

Mrs. Ngozi Obilor
President Board of Trustees.

Dr. Ibecheole, Julius PMD.
Chief Executive Officer/Founder