



Keeping  
Children  
Safe



AFRICANIMPACT



AFRICAN IMPACT  
FOUNDATION

The African Impact and its Foundation  
**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone.  
(06/11/2023)



## Safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone

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“Any society which does not care for its children is no nation at all.”

Nelson Mandela

## Safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone

### **INTRODUCTION**

The African Impact Foundation recognizes its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We have based our policy on the UN Standards for Child Protection.

We are aware that many children are the victims of different kinds of abuse and exploitation. They can be subjected to social factors that have an adverse impact on their lives including domestic violence, substance misuse, bullying, child prostitution and ritualistic abuse. This abuse could also be extended to the misuse of authority as it relates to our industry, tourism, especially as it relates to capturing images of the vulnerable communities we work with.

We aim to create a safe environment within which children can thrive and adults can work with the security of clear guidance.

The African Impact Foundation's Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice through:

- Providing children with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of African Impact and our Foundation.
- Allowing all staff, interns, volunteers and visitors to the projects, to make informed and confident responses to child protection issues.
- Deterring people from working with us who do not have the right intentions.

We strive to integrate this policy into our operations, relationships with partners and communities and with volunteers who travel with us to create a safer environment for children.

The Child Protection Committee for The African Impact Foundation



Stacey Isham  
African Impact South African Country Director



Ross Pownall  
Chairman HSE Committee Impact Travel Group



Albertus Koorts  
HSE Lead Impact Travel Group

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### **OUR POLICY**

Who is our policy for?

This policy is aimed at African Impact and The African Impact Foundation staff, service providers, volunteers, interns, visitors and any other associates.

The roles we have in place to support our policy

#### **Child Protection Officer** – *Stacey Isham*

This person has the knowledge and training to support the policy and give guidance when issues arise. All incidents must be reported to the Child Protection Officer. They can be contacted at [cpo@africanimpact.com](mailto:cpo@africanimpact.com)

#### **Child Protection Team** – *Stacey Isham, Ross Pownall, Albertus Koorts*

Design of the Child Protection Policy, communication and tools for the Project Teams and the Administration Office

#### **Child Protection Committee** – *Stacey Isham, Ross Pownall, Albertus Koorts*

This group will continuously sign off changes to the policy and it's supporting tools and give guidance when issues need to be escalated from the Child Protection Officer. This will happen if an allegation involves a staff member, an intern, a volunteer or an associate visitor, or the impact to the project or business is high.

#### **Base Manager at each Project location**

Responsibility for ensuring steps are taken to induct and train project team members and volunteers on our Child Protection Policy. They will also be involved when issues arise and work with the Child Protection Officer to resolve these

#### **How often will we monitor and review our policy and procedures?**

The implementation of procedures will be regularly monitored using the guidance provided by the UNICEF provisions on Child Protection. The Child Protection Officer will do a quarterly report on progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the Child Protection Team so amendments can be made to the policy or supporting procedures.

The policy will be fully reviewed every 2 years or whenever there is a major change in the organization or in relevant legislation.

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### **PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE**

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child.

### **What is good practice?**

All staff and associates should adhere to the following principles and actions:

#### **DAY TO DAY**

- DO work in an open environment. Avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage open communication.
- DO make the experience fun and enjoyable for all: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying.
- DO treat all children equally and with respect and dignity.
- DO put the welfare of the child first, before winning e.g. in sports.
- DO maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children, thinking how others may perceive closeness to a child.
- DO avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Where any form of manual or physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the child.
- DO ensure that adults do not enter a child's room or invite children into their rooms.
- DO behave as a positive role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children or playing explicit or inappropriate music in accommodation or in vehicles. Be aware of rude or inappropriate language.
- DO give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- DO respect the communication procedures with children on our Sponsor a Child pro- gram as these are in place to protect children on the program.

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### **DAY TRIPS OR STAYS AWAY FROM BASE**

- DO request written parental consent if staff are required to transport children in their cars.
- DO gain written parental consent for any travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays, day trips.
- DO ensure if groups of children are taken away on a visit or trip, they are accompanied by a mix of male and female staff and carers where possible

### **IN EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY OR INCIDENT**

- DO secure written parental consent for the staff or volunteers to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

### **What is bad practice?**

The following are regarded as bad practice and should be avoided by staff, service providers, interns, volunteers and visitors in association to African Impact or our Foundation: **DAY TO DAY**

- DO NOT have any time alone with children away from others.
- DO NOT take a child alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- DO NOT take any children to your home where they will be alone with you.
- DO NOT engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay or wrestling games.
- DO NOT allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- DO NOT allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- DO NOT make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- DO NOT reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- DO NOT allow allegations made by a child to go unrecorded or not acted upon.
- DO NOT do things of a personal nature that the child can do for themselves.
- DO NOT take or use inappropriate photos or videos of children.

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- DO NOT contact children who are part of our Sponsor a Child program other than through our Sponsor a Child team.
- DO NOT share personal information (e.g. phone numbers) to minors.
- DO NOT befriend minors on social media.
- DO NOT engage with minors outside of the project.
- DO NOT allow an adult to share a room with a person under 17 years old (under 18 volunteers will have written permission from their parents to share rooms with over 18's).

When a case arises where it is impractical to avoid a certain situation e.g. transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent or carer (legal guardian) and the young person involved

### **If during your care;**

- You accidentally hurt a young person.
- A young person seems distressed in any manner.
- A young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- A young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- DO ...report any such incidents as soon as possible to a Project Team member and make a written note of it. Parents and / or the headteacher should also be informed of the incident.
- 

### **RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF ABUSE**

It can often be difficult to recognize abuse. The signs listed in these guidelines are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their families experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what could indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further.

Someone can abuse a child by actively inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place within a family, in an institution or community setting, by telephone or on the Internet. Abuse can be carried out by someone known to a child or by a complete stranger.

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If you are worried about a child it is important to report it to the designated individual on African Impact or African Impact Foundation staff, ie: Base Manager. Keep a written record of any physical or behavioral signs and symptoms. In this way you can monitor whether or not a pattern emerges and provide evidence to any investigation if required.

### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention.

### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse happens when a child's need for love, security, praise and recognition is not met. It usually coexists with other forms of abuse. Emotionally abusive behavior occurs if a parent, carer or authority figure is consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining. It can also result when children are prevented from social contact with others, or if developmentally inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill- treatment of someone else.

### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical contact, both penetrative and non-penetrative, or involve no contact, such as watching sexual activities or looking at pornographic material. Encouraging children to act in sexually inappropriate ways is also abusive.

### Neglect

Neglect is defined as the failure to provide for the child's basic physical, intellectual, emotional or social needs. Neglect can also include:

- The failure to provide a child with adequate care, food, clothing, shelter or health care, when resources are available.
- Lack of adequate supervision and protection.
- Lack of adequate clothing.
- Lack of proper hygiene.
- Deprivation of sleep.
- Lack of adequate medical/ dental care.
- Failure to provide nurturance and emotional support. Driving with your child in the car while you are under the influence of alcohol/ drugs.

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### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN**

In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or another child, if you are a volunteer it is important you involve a member of the project team as soon as possible and follow the process below.

Sometimes as a volunteer or team member you may just feel concerned about a child but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concern with your Base Manager who will listen and decide on the best course of action.

If you receive allegations or concerns via an anonymous letter or SMS, please discuss the next steps with the Child Protection Officer.

If the allegation is from a child resident to the country of the project;

### **STAFF, INTERNS OR VOLUNTEERS. THE STEPS TO TAKE IF YOU SUSPECT NEGLECT OR ABUSE**

EMAIL OR CALL THE CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER TO BEST ADVISE ON THE NEXT STEPS, BASED ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE AT HAND

STAFF, INTERNS, VOLUNTEERS- IF YOU ARE TOLD ABOUT ALLEGATIONS BY A CHILD

- Listen to the child and or closely observe their presentation and behavior.
- Take note either during or after the child disclosed.
- Let them know that you take what they are saying seriously.
- Do NOT attempt to question or interview the child yourself.
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them. DO NOT PROMISE to keep what they say a secret.
- Inform your Base Manager as soon as possible.
- Make a written record of the incident or events- ask for the template called '**Child Protection- Statement**'.

**Please do NOT take any further action unless you are asked by your Base Manager. Keep any information confidential from other staff, interns, volunteers and visitors in association- if information gets into the wrong hands it can be harmful to the child, who remains our highest priority.**

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### **BASE MANAGER- STEPS TO TAKE ONCE YOU HEAR ANY ALLEGATIONS**

- Listen to the allegations of the child, staff, interns, volunteers and visitors. Urgently inform the Child Protection Officer of any allegations.
- Complete a Child Protection Incident Report.
- If the case needs further investigation, or is advised by the Child Protection Officer, call the Child Protection Partner relevant to your country (e.g. Childline, Social Welfare, etc).
- Let the person who reported the allegation to you know the steps you have taken and what will happen next.
- Remind any other people involved that you will inform them of progress but the case is now in the hand of the authorities

Ensure all staff and volunteers are informed to treat all information with the strictest confidentiality

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from the disclosure of a child or the concerns of an adult, lies with our Child Protection Partners and government authorities and we must respect how this is dealt with locally.

A full report should be made out by the Base Manager and given to the Child Protection Partner in confidence.

The Child Protection partner will advise the Base Manager when or whether to inform the child's parents or carers about any concerns.

If the Child protection Partner decide to pursue a child protection investigation, the Base Manager should:

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, in order to keep the child safe
- Attend a child protection conference if you are invited. You will be asked to provide information about your involvement with the child, which is why it is important to keep records of your concerns
- Attend any subsequent child protection review conferences

If a staff or an associate passes on information from a child about alleged abuse, it is important for the Base Manager to understand what the expected involvement of the associate is (e.g. as a witness).

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All allegations should be brought to the notice of the Base Manager immediately and the Manager must report any allegations to the Child Protection Officer. In cases where the allegation is made against this Manager, the complainant should be directed to the Foundation or closest African Impact Manager at the project or in the region;

- The Volunteer Manager must contact the Child Protection Officer and Base Manager to inform them of what has happened and the steps they have taken and plan to take.
- Ensure, where possible, the child in question is safe and away from the alleged abuser.
- If after discussion and there is enough evidence to suggest further steps required to be taken, upon the advice of the Child Protection Officer, contact the Child Protection Partner in the country the abuse took place.
- Decide with the Child Protection Officer and Child Protection Partner if the parents or carers of the child should be contacted and by who.
- Irrespective of any investigation by the Child Protection Partner or the Police, you should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedure against any members of staff, interns, volunteers and visitors – common practice is for the alleged offender to be suspended from work or duty until the outcome of any investigation is clear. It is important to deal with the situation in a fair and professional way for the staff member, intern, volunteer or visitor until all the facts are available.
- Consider whether the person has access to children anywhere else and whether those organizations or groups need to be informed.
- Contact the Child Protection Officer or member of the Child Protection Committee to inform them of the allegations and act upon the decisions made in the discussion.

All incidents should be investigated internally after any external investigation has finished, to review organizational practice and put in place any additional measures to prevent a similar thing happening again.

### **SAFE RECRUITMENT**

#### **Employees working on our projects Employee – recruitment process**

- The application of specific procedures for the recruitment staff who come into contact with children, both directly and indirectly, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made. As a minimum, the following standards should be followed as part of the recruitment process:

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- All prospective team members (paid and unpaid) who get to a final interview stage must be asked to complete an application form which asks for details of their previous employment, previous convictions and for the names of two referees. These references MUST be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact, for all staff. Specifically asking about any previous experience working with children where appropriate – [see our template called 'Reference and Declaration of Convictions'](#).
- All prospective team members (paid and unpaid) should have a Police Check completed before they start employment with us – anyone who refuses to do so should not be employed.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving license with photo) and a copy kept on file or online.
- All roles that work with children should be subject to an agreed probationary period.
- New members of staff should be clear about their responsibilities and where possible, work to an agreed job description.
- Our Child Protection guidelines should be available to everyone and fully discussed as part of the induction process and a person's training needs identified dependent on their role.
- Service provider contracts, for academic offerings and the like, need to adhere to our Child Protection Policy and the contract would require an acknowledgment of our policy principles.

### **Employee - Induction**

- All employees should receive a formal induction during which:
- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures.
- Responsibilities and expectations to be explained.
- The employee signs up to the organization's Child Protection Policy as part of their contract [see our template called 'Child Protection in Employee Contracts'](#).
- Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs are identified e.g. basic child protection awareness.

### **Employee - Training**

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help employees understand the Child Protection Policy. The training will include;

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- Describe what is good practice and how to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognize their responsibilities and how to report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse.
- How to respond to concerns expressed by a child.
- How to work safely and effectively with children.

### **Interns and Volunteers working on our projects**

#### **Before they arrive**

Checks and procedures for the arrival of all interns and volunteers, who may come onto our programs, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made. As a minimum, the following standards are followed before a volunteer or intern starts working on our projects;

- All volunteers must have a Police Check before they start volunteering – anyone who re- fuses to do so will not be booked onto any of our volunteer projects.

#### **On arrival**

- Our Child Protection Policy will be available to everyone and discussed as part of the volunteer induction. An associates' training needs will be identified dependent on their involvement with children i.e. teaching projects will provide more information than a conservation project.
- Evidence of identity (a copy of passport) is brought to the project by the volunteer and handed to the Manager during the induction – if a copy is not brought by the volunteer, the Project Manager must ask for a copy to be taken at the expense of the volunteer.
- The volunteer code of conduct will be discussed as part of their induction and as part of this it is pointed out the sections on child protection.

#### **Taking photos and videos on our projects**

Under the children's act permission for all photography and filming must be obtained from the legal guardian. Please follow the guidelines provided for Project Team and for the photographers.

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### **For the Project Team:**

- Project staff needs to be confident that parental or custodial permission were given in writing by project partner, to allow any volunteers, interns, staff or associates take pictures or videos on the project site. Also engage children to ask them for permission to take a picture and respect a child's response. Also respect a partner's policy on Photography.
- Acquire written expectations agreed between a professional photographer as well as the organization they were introduced to through our projects. This way we can keep all providers and visitors to our projects accountable to our policy and prevent their consequential overstepping.
- DO NOT allow photographers- professional/volunteers/interns/staff/visitors – unsupervised access to the children in our projects. Any pictures taken not authorized cannot be used to proclaim our works, especially if it is not in line with our policy.
- DO NOT approve photography sessions outside a said supervised event, or supervised location or at a child's home.

### **For the photographer:**

- Pictures will not be allowed to be taken on an individual basis unless, very clearly and explicitly, the Project Leaders have given you permission to do so. The photography release form should be signed as a sign of permission granted.
- Any pictures allowed, should avoid using the names or any personal details of the children in the captions. Personal details include last names, age, school, location and likes. These details could be used by an individual to learn more about a child prior to grooming them for abuse.
- Only use pictures and videos of children in suitable dress to reduce risk of inappropriate use. Avoid children in swimwear, who are topless or pant-less. Some activities like swimming, gymnastics and some athletic sports may present a much greater risk.
- Only take pictures when it doesn't distract children from learning or playing.
- Only cameras/phones allowed that don't make a noise when a picture is taken.
- NO SELFIES/LAP PHOTOS/CLOSE-UPS/ONE-ON-ONE PICTURES NOR PICTURES THAT
- REINFORCE STEREOTYPES ON AFRICAN CHILDREN, will be allowed on our projects or in the communities we engage.

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### **What to do if someone violates the photography policy, the Base Manager should;**

- Approach them either in person or over email to ask them to remove the picture or completely get rid of it
- If the person in question resists, elevate the case to a child protection officer who will manage the situation with the possibility of elevating the matter to the relevant authorities.
- Any pictures or copies thereof, that do not fall in line with our policy **WILL BE CONFISCATED AND DAMAGED** with immediate effect

Steps are taken at each project activity to put in place agreements for photography (so volunteers can take photographs without having to ask permission from every child). Where this is not agreed for whatever reason, this decision must be respected by all volunteers and employees. [See our example template 'Photography Release Form for Children', the 'Electronic Media' forms.](#)

### **Use of premises by other organizations**

In the event that a room or rooms on the premises are used by other organizations that are associated with or a partner with African Impact Foundation, the letting agreement should ensure that the hiring organization works to approve child protection procedures and that they read and agree to abide by these guidelines.

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### **Templates and Tools:**

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Who is it for?</b>
<b>Child Protection Guidelines Poster</b>	<b>A poster to put up at project locations to help people understand good and poor practice around children</b>	<b>Everyone</b>
<b>Child Protection – Statement</b>	<b>A statement to be completed by anyone involved in an incident or allegation</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>Child Protection – Incident Report</b>	<b>A report to be completed by the Base Manager</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>Reference and Declaration of Convictions</b>	<b>As part of the recruitment of staff, a form to be completed by potential employees at final interview stage and before confirmation of employment</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>Code of Ethics Child Protection in employee contracts – to include in new staff contracts or an addendum to existing contracts</b>	<b>A paragraph to add to new contracts or an addendum to existing contracts to include understanding of our Child Protection Policy</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>Child Protection Awareness Posters</b>	<b>These posters are meant to include the responsibility for every associate to safe-guard our children.</b>	<b>Everyone</b>
<b>Volunteer &amp; Staff Induction – introduction to our Child Protection Policy</b>	<b>A section to add to your existing staff induction to introduce the Child Protection Policy</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>Electronic Media consent form for children</b>	<b>A form to be signed by parents to give consent for photos of their child to be taken and used by African Impact and volunteers</b>	<b>Media</b>
<b>Electronic Media Agreement forms for associates – using images and videoclips</b>	<b>A guide for associates to use their camera and photos at our projects in a responsible way</b>	<b>Media</b>
<b>Personal Commitment Form</b>	<b>This form is to be completed by every volunteer/intern/short-term/contracted staff, working on our projects.</b>	<b>Interns, Volunteers, visitors, service providers</b>
<b>Visitors Commitment Slip</b>	<b>This form is particularly for day visitors to our projects. Make sure the part they sign is kept on file, the other part the need to keep as reference for their behavior.</b>	<b>Visitors</b>
<b>Photography Release Form</b>	<b>This form is to give access to photographers (professional, or outside individuals) to our projects for a said event, or period of time, for our collective use.</b>	<b>Photographers</b>
<b>On-site consent Form</b>	<b>This document is used to gain permission to take pictures of the children at a particular project, a school, an organization and the like. This permission should be granted by all our partners unless they house extremely vulnerable populations.</b>	<b>Staff</b>