



HiKidz

BUILDING FUTURES

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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HiKidz International wishes to express its grateful thanks to Global Care – for their kind permission to use their Child Protection Policy as a basis for producing this policy document.

1. INTRODUCTION

“A child is recognised as a person under 18”.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 1

HiKidz International is committed to the full recognition of the unique value and worth of a child and the need to protect them *“from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.”*

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 19

“Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.”

Report of the UK National Commission of Inquiry into the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (1996)

2. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Child abuse is a general term used about situations where the child may experience harm. It may include both actions and failure to act and in HiKidz International we are particularly concerned for four main categories – **sexual, physical, emotional and spiritual**.

a) Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. Sexual abuse includes rape, incest, and all forms of sexual activity involving children, including pornography.

Sexual abuse may involve: -

- 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.
- The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts.
- They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

b) Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the actual or likely physical injury caused to a child, or a failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

Physical abuse may involve: -

- Repeated hitting or shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- A parent or carer causing ill health and injury to a child whom they are looking after.

c) Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse refers to the actual or likely adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection.

Emotional abuse may involve: -

- Conveying to the child, verbally or through the way they are treated, that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on the child.
- Causing the child to feel frightened or in danger.

d) *Spiritual abuse*

Child abuse usually entails an abuse of power by someone with greater power than the child. This can also be the case for spiritual abuse. In our desire to see a child become a Christian and develop in their faith we can use our position as a leader to pressurise a child – which is an abuse of their freedom. Jesus always gave his hearers freedom of choice in how they responded to his message.

Spiritual abuse may involve: -

- Causing feelings of extreme and traumatising fear of the consequences of not responding positively to the Gospel.
- The use of our position to make a child feel he/she must say/do something to be acceptable to us.
- Invoking a sense of failure or shame if they do not go along with our spiritual programme.
- Giving the child a presentation of Christian teaching which is over emotional.
- Not respecting a child's freedom to express their faith, or respecting their questions or their need for rational explanations. (This is required under Articles 12-14 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

3. DIFFERENT CONTEXTS OF ABUSE

It is never acceptable for a child to be abused and HiKidz International must take steps to prevent abuse wherever it can, and respond to the needs of all children it comes into contact with whenever it suspects they are being abused, both within HiKidz International activities and outside.

a) *Domestic abuse*

There can be alleged abuse of a child or children HiKidz International is in contact with by others, such as parents, family members or other adults.

A child may disclose domestic abuse or gives reason to suspect that they, or another child or children, are being abused – in their family, for example.

Action:

These should be listened to and dealt with according to the procedure below and the local procedures of the country. This is likely to involve authorities outside HiKidz International.

b) Abuse involving HiKidz International personnel

The abuse or suspected abuse may be by someone connected with HiKidz International – on their Board, staff or volunteers.

It is crucial that staff, volunteers and others in HiKidz International maintain the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct, and act with integrity at all times when working with children, in order to minimise the risk of abuse. If, after researching the situation, it comes to light that anyone associated with HiKidz International is suspected of or is shown to have committed any form of child abuse - whether within or outside the context of HiKidz International work – the national Director will take immediate disciplinary action and any other action which may be appropriate to the circumstances.

Action:

- (i) During any investigation, internal or external, the person would be withdrawn from any contact with children until the matter is settled either way.
- (ii) If after investigation the person is shown to have committed an act of physical or sexual child abuse there would be the following disciplinary action: -
 - Board members - dismissal from the Board
 - Staff - disciplinary action/ dismissal
 - Volunteers - ending the volunteering relationship
- (iii) Depending on the nature, circumstances and location of the case, HiKidz International will also consider involving authorities such as the police to ensure the protection of children and this may lead to criminal prosecution where appropriate. Action must be taken according to the local legal requirements of the country.
- (iv) Issues of spiritual abuse are to be dealt with within HiKidz International through teaching a person appropriate behaviour for HiKidz International work or dismissal if they are unable to change their approach.

c) Abuse from someone within a partner organisation

HiKidz International needs to be assured that the practice and management arrangements of its partners reflect a common commitment to protect children and respond to issues of abuse. If they do not have their own Child Protection Policy they should be required to sign acceptance of the HiKidz International policy. It should be made clear that poor practice or abuse within an agency or church may mean that HiKidz International is unable to continue a working relationship.

Action:

If there is doubt about the integrity or abuse by any individual or individuals within the organisation or church, contravening the provisions of this policy, then it should be raised and reported to the leaders of the organisation or church. If that person is not disciplined and the issue is not fully dealt with then relations with that organisation or church should be terminated formally or informally, as appropriate, whether the alleged abuse has been proved or not.

d) The abuse of a child by another child

This could take the form of bullying, physical or sexual abuse.

Action:

- (i) Bullying should be dealt with within HiKidz International and involve parents.

- (ii) Allegations or concerns regarding the sexual or physical abuse of a child by another child need to be responded to with particular sensitivity, although they must nevertheless be dealt with through the child protection process described in this document and the associated local procedures of the country. Many young abusers have been abused themselves, and so any subsequent process – including any police investigation where this applies – must consider the needs and circumstances of the 'abuser' and the 'abused', as well as taking account of the protection needs of both.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF NATIONAL DIRECTORS

- a) To produce their own national Child Protection Policy. An appendix to this official document should be added which relates the policy to the specific requirements of the country and local situation. The completed policy is to be checked by the CEO.
- b) To have in place a disciplinary procedure for HiKidz International workers, paid and volunteer.
- c) To have in place a process for checking the recruitment and suitability of volunteers with their own Volunteer Application Form incorporating references from 2 people who have seen them work with children. (See Annex A) Police checks should be done on volunteers in countries where this is a requirement. Ideally, all volunteers at camps and clubs should be trained, including making them aware of child protection issues, before working with children.
- d) To undertake appropriate and regular training themselves so that they can deal with any issues of alleged child abuse in an appropriate manner within the requirements of their country.

5. ELEMENTS OF CHILD PROTECTION

HiKidz International will meet its commitment to safeguard children through the following means:

Awareness: Ensuring that all staff, volunteers and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.

Prevention: Ensuring, through awareness and good practice, that staff, volunteers and others minimise the risks to children.

Reporting: Ensuring that staff, volunteers and others are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.

Responding: Ensuring that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

In order that the above standards are met, HiKidz International will also ensure that it:

- takes seriously any concerns raised
- takes positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns
- supports children, staff, volunteers or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns
- acts appropriately and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation
- is guided through the child protection process by the principle of 'best interests of the child'
- listens to and takes seriously the views and wishes of children
- works in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

a) Awareness

The Director will make sure that anyone involved with the work of HiKidz International is made aware of what constitutes child abuse and how to look out for signs of abuse – such as signs of physical harm or signs of isolation and withdrawal, which might indicate bullying or abuse. Everyone involved with HiKidz International activities – employed and volunteer – must have read and understood the terms of the national HiKidz International Child Protection Policy and filled in and signed the form stating that they will adhere to the policy. (See Annex B)

b) Prevention

To prevent abuse of children in our care we need to:

- a) Make sure that the site where children's activities are taking place is safe.
- b) Keep a check that all children are present at group times and that they are safe.
- c) Avoid forming an exclusive, close relationship with one child or praying with a child of the opposite sex in isolation from others.
- d) Provide guidelines about the touch of children by leaders and volunteers.
 - Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors
 - Touch should be related to the needs of the child and not the adult.
 - Touch should be culturally appropriate. This is important for activities involving children from different countries and cultures together.
 - Touch should be age-related.
 - Touch should generally be initiated by the child. Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others.
 - Avoid any physical activity that might be thought to be sexually stimulating to the adult or child.

c) Reporting concerns about child abuse

Child abuse is distressing for all concerned and it is often difficult to accept that it may have occurred, to the point that there is denial or that warning signs are dismissed. The danger is that under-reaction resulting from this lack of acceptance may mean children remain unprotected and exposed to further abuse. If we are committed to prevent abuse and protect children, it is essential that staff, volunteers and others understand their responsibility to raise and report any concerns they may have regarding the safety of children.

There are many reasons why staff and others may be reluctant to voice concerns. This reluctance usually stems from anxieties associated with some of the following factors: -

- The person is worried they are mistaken.
- The person is worried they will not be believed.
- Even if believed, they may feel there is no specific 'evidence' of abuse.
- Raising a concern will have serious consequences which will affect the work in general/other colleagues/HiKidz International.
- The impact on the child/children may be a negative or damaging one. The suspected abuser is the child's parent/carer or member of the community for whom there may be serious consequences if abuse is alleged/confirmed.
- The suspected abuser is a person more senior to them in HiKidz International.
- A process may be triggered which the person cannot predict or control.
- The person may fear reprisals or possible victimisation.

- Reluctance to be involved in the matter beyond raising the concern e.g. where a prosecution may ensue.
- A sense of loyalty to a colleague/ friend who may be suspected of abuse.

Concern about 'getting it wrong' is possibly the factor which most inhibits reporting of suspected abuse. However, it is essential where concerns or suspicions do exist, to focus on the welfare of the child or children involved and to ask 'what if I am right?' It is essential that anyone connected to HiKidz International who suspects or knows of abuse, in any of the contexts listed above in section 3, raises their concerns in line with the process described in this document. All such concerns must be recorded and the record held in a secure, locked place. (See section 6 below – CONFIDENTIALITY.)

d) Responding to disclosure of abuse

Disclosure by a child

If a child discloses that they are being abused it is important to respond in a calm, caring and supportive manner. The child is never to blame in situations of abuse and should be reassured they have done nothing wrong, either in relation to the abuse itself or in reporting it. The child needs to know that you are listening and taking seriously the information that is being divulged, and that you will respond positively to ensure their protection. Let the child tell you the information in their own way. It is important to **record** what is said - at the time if appropriate, or as soon as possible following the disclosure. It may though not be appropriate to inquire into the details of the abuse at this stage if it is particularly sensitive. It is important to ensure that the child continues to be informed of what is happening and has opportunities to discuss and influence the process.

Disclosure by allegation

Concerns regarding abuse may also arise from allegations made to us about individuals or institutions. These should not be dismissed or ignored and we must assure the person who has brought this to our attention that their allegations will be looked into properly according to the Child Protection Policy. It is important to seek further information on which to base a decision regarding further action.

Disclosure by observation

Disclosure may come through observing the way an individual conducts him/herself with children. Poor practice in work with children may be a sign that there is a risk to children – for example, where a person frequently insists on working alone with a particular child or is seen to be inappropriately touching them. This practice should always be challenged and reported.

Immediately following disclosure, it is crucial that staff or volunteers report the alleged abuse to the appropriate person in authority, in order to discuss subsequent action and to consider how the support and protection needs of the child may best be met.

In some countries it is not the responsibility of HiKidz International to carry out an investigation. In the UK, for example, when a child discloses possible sexual abuse, the statutory social services must be contacted so that they can formally interview the child. In some countries there is no local statutory body charged with this responsibility and so HiKidz International will have to

investigate. However, even where there is no established or functioning legal and social welfare infrastructure designed to deal with issues of abuse, there may well be local institutions – clinics, hospitals, schools, child rescue centres etc. Or there may be individuals, such as doctors, health workers or lawyers, who may work on issues of abuse or be part of networks sympathetic to the issue of abused children, to whom referrals can be made, or whose assistance can be sought. It may also be possible to use informal community networks, or to approach community leaders to help deal with specific incidents.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

In all matters dealt with as part of this policy, it is essential to respect the need for confidentiality. In certain circumstances, any lack of confidentiality may have devastating effects for the lives of children and may also result in serious consequences for adults involved in the process. In responding to issues and concerns regarding possible abuse there must be extreme vigilance in protecting information and information must only be passed on to those people who need to be aware of it.

However, if a child is disclosing abuse it is important to tell the child – before he/she even starts talking – that depending on what the child shares, you may not be able to keep it confidential. Never promise a child that what they tell you will not be told to anyone else. On occasion, it may be that information has to be passed on, against their express wishes, in the interests of protecting that child or other children. Explain that the child will be told what steps are being taken and who will be given the information and what the likely sequence of events will be.

Confidential record-keeping

Any concerns, allegations or disclosures must be written down at the time or as soon as possible after the concern is raised, and no longer than 24 hours afterwards. Records should be signed and dated. Records should be as detailed and precise as possible, giving an exact account of what was said especially where it is a child who is disclosing abuse or making an allegation. A child's story should be recorded as early as possible, so the child does not need to keep repeating his/herself. The report should include:

- The date and time and place
- who was present including the name and contact details of the person alleging abuse
- a record of the conversation with the details as disclosed or alleged
- the name and contact details of the alleged abuser
- the nature of concerns
- the risk to the child
- the action and steps that are to be taken
- any further sequence of events

Records must be kept securely in a locked place to which access is restricted. Directors have a responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of these records and must ensure that the information they contain, is made available only to relevant parties. The transfer of information – verbally, through the mail, electronically, etc – should be done in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.

7. PROCEDURE FOR IN HOUSE CASES OF ALLEGED ABUSE

Directors should check what kind of local procedure and legal requirements are in place for issues of child abuse and wherever possible contacts should be established with authorities locally in advance of any case arising.

If any HiKidz International member of staff or volunteer is concerned about the possible abuse of a child in a camp or an activity run by HiKidz International, the following procedure must be followed.

Each country should write the names of the people that should be contacted first.*

- 1- The concerns must immediately be reported first orally, then written, to the ministry or activity director first (the same day).

Name : *

- 2- The ministry or activity director must immediately send a written report to the country/regional Director (the same day or within 2 days).

| | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|-----------------|
| Name : * | Title | Location | Contact details |
|----------|-------|----------|-----------------|

- 3- The country/regional Director must send a written report to his Local Board (during that week). There may be a member of the Board particularly appointed to deal with these issues.
- 4- The Director should have a conference call or special meeting with the Board to talk over the issue and decide the appropriate way to proceed, including whether the local legal authorities should be informed, according to the requirements of the country. The ultimate responsibility and decision lies with the Local Board.
- 5- The Director must also inform the CEO of the issue within a month and the action that has been taken, even if the CEO has only the role of a consultant.

Written reports are to be made as described in section 6 on Confidential record-keeping.

It may be that in some circumstances, no action can or will be taken. The principle of “best interests of the child” and the desire to secure the best outcomes for the child should always govern decisions regarding what action to take in response to concerns.

It is essential to avoid delay as inaction may place the child at further risk.

ANNEX A HiKidz International Volunteer Application Form for a Camp

(Address within the country)

Personal information

Family name _____ Maiden name _____

Christian name _____ F ☐ M ☐

Address and street _____ picture (optional)

Postal Code _____ City _____

Telephone _____ Cell phone _____

Email _____@_____

Date and place of birth _____

Nationality _____

Single ☐ Married ☐ Separated ☐ Divorced ☐

Children (age) _____ () _____ () _____ ()

Insurance

Medical Insurance number _____

Liability Insurance _____

Other (depending on legal obligations in your country)

Person to contact in case of emergency: Name _____

Relationship _____ Home phone _____ Business _____

Professional Information

Degrees/Diplomas received _____

Professional Experience _____

Training

First Aid Certificate Yes ☐, obtained (date) _____ No ☐

Lifeguard Certificate Yes ☐, obtained (date) _____ No ☐

Drivers' licence Yes ☐, obtained (date) _____ No ☐

Other _____

Other Skills

Musical instrument _____

Sports (what sport, what level) _____

Favourite sport _____, manual _____, artistic activity _____

Experience working with children: residential camp ☐ day camp ☐

When and with what organisation? _____

Sunday School ☐ Club ☐ Youth group ☐ Catechism ☐

When and with what organisation? _____

Testimony and Motivation

Briefly explain the circumstances of your conversion and Christian growth:

Personal Motivation

Church _____

Name and address of two reference people (preferably who have seen you working with children)

In what capacity would you like to serve?

Director ☐ Co-director ☐ Leader/Counsellor ☐ Bible teacher ☐
 Medical ☐ Cook ☐ Kitchen help ☐ Cleaning ☐

Availability

I am available to participate in camp # _____ from _____ to _____ (dates)

I certify that all the information on this form is correct.

Date and signature _____

ANNEX B

Engagement form for any person who works with HiKidz International covering any activity or responsibility inside or outside the ministry

Name

Surname

Address

Email

Telephone number

Title/ responsibility

Staff/ Volunteer

I..... have never been accused of any inappropriate behaviour with a child and I do not have a criminal record.

I.....have read the Child Protection Policy from HiKidz International and agree to comply with its guidelines and its procedures.

I.....promise to comply with the local child protection procedures of my country as well as with those of HiKidz International.

I.....am fully aware of the importance of not retaining any information on any type of abuse that a child under my responsibility has endured or is enduring.

I.....agree that it is my responsibility to keep confidential all the information about a child suspected of being abused, apart from informing the strict minimum of people that I have to inform according to the required procedures.

Place.....Date.....Signature.....

Print name.....