

## **Safeguarding - Child Protection Policy Kenya Children Centres (KCC)**

**Safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone**

### ***Policy Statement***

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding is defined in 'Working together to safeguard children 2023' as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

KCC is committed to providing a safe environment for children, staff and visitors and promoting a climate where children and adults will feel confident about sharing any concerns that they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others.

KCC believes that the welfare of the child is paramount, no child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs, and all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

KCC will ensure that this is the case by rigorously enforcing this policy. All staff and volunteers will be checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service before working with KCC. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers at KCC.

KCC typically operates by funding other NGOs in Kenya, and also providing funding to individuals from time to time as deemed appropriate by the Trustees. Although KCC does not work directly with vulnerable groups in the UK, KCC aims to implement best practices around Safeguarding and Child Protection and implements due diligence and ongoing monitoring processes of all of its supported overseas activities.

**Agreement and adherence to this safeguarding policy are a prerequisite for receiving funding from KCC.**

## **Types of abuse**

**Child abuse is generally divided into the following four categories. The financial abuse of children is not considered relevant here.**

### **1. Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

### **2. Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

### **3. 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, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

Given the context of the organisations that we support in Kenya, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage are specifically included as sexual abuse.

### **4. Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Recruitment**

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from having any involvement with KCC and the organisations that it supports.

Employee/volunteer recruitment procedures will include a Disclosure and Barring Service check, at the appropriate level, for all personnel with access to children and may include self-declaration and the use of references. This will include all members of the Board of Trustees. All prospective employees/volunteers will be interviewed, for volunteers, this need not be a formal interview.

Should any concerns arise following a Disclosure and Barring Service check then this will be passed onto the Board of Trustees of KCC. Any Disclosure that causes concern will be assessed to establish the level of risk the subject poses to children, other service users, colleagues, the general public and/or our organisation.

All new employees/volunteers will go through an induction process, including relevant training in our policies and procedures.

## **Training and supervision of staff and volunteers**

All new staff and volunteers will read and understand this policy as part of their induction process. Staff and volunteers will be able to identify the signs of abuse and will be confident about the steps to take and who to report any concerns.

## **Creating a Safe and Caring Environment:**

Risk Assessment should be undertaken before any offsite visits or new types of activities.

Employees/volunteers working with children should be appropriately trained and qualified to ensure the safe provision of services, use of equipment, activities undertaken, etc.

Employees/volunteers working with children should carefully plan activity sessions with the care and safety of children as their main concern including the use of activities at an appropriate age/ability level.

Wherever possible we will encourage an 'open environment' e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and discouraging the keeping of secrets. This especially includes employees/volunteers should being alone with a child at any time. When this is unavoidable, it should be done with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of KCC and/or the children's parents/carers.

Employees/volunteers must treat all children/young people with respect.

Employees/volunteers must not make racist, sexist or any other remarks which upset or humiliate

Employees/volunteers must take care to avoid showing any favouritism.

It is the responsibility of employees/volunteers to prevent the abuse of younger or weaker children by older or stronger children through bullying, cruelty or any other forms of humiliation.

## **Behaviour guidelines for employees/volunteers**

The safety of participants and employees/volunteers is always of prime consideration. All accidents involving anyone should be recorded in KCC's accident book immediately or as soon as practicably possible.

Employees/volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves with building/facility safety issues, such as, fire procedures, location of emergency exits, location of emergency telephones and first aid equipment. Employees/volunteers are responsible for reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the appropriate individuals and/or agencies.

Employees/volunteers will be expected to keep an attendance register for all organised sessions.

Employees/volunteers should ensure that their activities start and end on time.

Employees/volunteers are expected to promote, demonstrate and incorporate the values of fair play, trust and ethics throughout their activities.

Employees/volunteers should ensure that they are adequately insured, to protect against claims of negligence, through their organisation or their insurance if acting as a self-employed agent.

## **Volunteer's code of behaviour: working with children and young people**

These guidelines aim to ensure the safety and well-being of all young people and to support the volunteers in providing a safe, caring environment.

Volunteers will work under the direct supervision of an established staff member

Volunteers should set examples of appropriate behaviour. As young people learn by example, volunteers should avoid using sarcasm or discrimination, direct criticism, labelling and unnecessary competition or comparison.

Good behaviour should be positively encouraged.

Volunteers should not physically punish any young person.

Volunteers should not deprive any young person of or force any child to consume food or drink.

Volunteers should not humiliate or frighten any young person.

Volunteers should avoid situations in which they risk putting themselves or the young person at risk. This includes being alone with a young person unnecessarily.

Volunteers should always offer respect to the young person and strive to be sensitive to their feelings.

Adult-to-young person ratios should reflect best practice (1:10 max for 10 years and over, 1:8 max under 10)

## **Designated Person**

There will be a named designated person and a deputy designated person for child protection. In the event of any concerns regarding a child then the designated person or deputy will be informed at the earliest available opportunity. The designated person will inform the Board of Trustees, and the necessary action will be taken including reports to any necessary authorities. The designated person will also ensure that the child protection procedures are kept up to date and reviewed

Designated Person – Dr Wilf Eaton – Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
Deputy Designated Person – Ian Faulkner - Trustee

## **Signs of Abuse**

The signs summarised below do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. If you are worried, report it to the designated person. It is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it by reporting.

### **Signs of Physical Abuse:**

- Unexplained injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries Untreated injuries
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Running away

### **Signs of Neglect:**

- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

### **Signs of Emotional abuse:**

- Physical, mental and/or emotional development slows down
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive

- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour e.g. thumb sucking, hair twisting, etc.
- Self-mutilation
- Fear of parents or relatives being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Substance misuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging

**Signs of Sexual Abuse:**

- Lack of trust in adults and/or fear of a particular individual[s]
- Over familiarity with adults or provocative behaviour
- Withdrawal and introversion/problems with peer relationships
- Running away / sudden behaviour changes e.g. falling standards, truancy, Stealing etc.
- Low self-esteem
- Substance misuse
- Displaying sexual knowledge beyond age group
- Involvement in prostitution
- Over-sexed behaviour
- Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark
- Bruises, scratches, bite marks
- Depression, suicide attempts
- Anorexia nervosa/eating disorder or a change in eating habits
- Pregnancy, particularly when reluctant to name the father
- Recurring urinary tract problems/vaginal infections

**Employees/volunteers should never:**

- Engage in rough physical activities, even when playing.
- Engage in sexually proactive activities.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.
- Let a child's allegation go either unchallenged and/or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child. If you do have to do things of a personal nature for a child, e.g. take to the toilet, support, lift, etc. particularly if they are very young or a child with additional needs, then you should obtain the full consent of their carers and permission from the person in charge. In an emergency, which requires this type of help, carers and the person in charge, should be fully informed as soon, as is practicable.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.

- Undertake any tasks involving children for which they feel inadequately trained or have concerns.

### **Photography, video, etc:**

Formal written permission from carers/managers should be obtained before taking photographs, videos, etc.

### **Responding to disclosures of abuse**

It is not the responsibility of employees/volunteers to deal with suspected abuse, but it is their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate person. All employees/volunteers must be aware of their responsibilities if child abuse is suspected.

If you notice any social changes in the behaviour of a child, worrying marks or bruises or hear a child or children talking about things which give cause for concern, then your first responsibility is to the child. It is not safe to assume that someone else will take action.

As an adult, you have to take appropriate action. Recognising and coping with child abuse is very stressful and the person reporting the concern will not have to cope alone.

#### ***If a child spontaneously talks of experiences which give cause for concern, staff and volunteers at KCC should:***

1. Explain to the child that if he/she discloses information which leads you to believe they are being abused, you will be unable to keep it confidential.
2. Listen to the child without questioning him/her. Be aware of your own reactions as showing disapproval may stop the child from continuing with their disclosure.
3. Do not try to stop the child from recalling events. Make a note of what is said, in what context, the setting, the timing and which people were present.
4. Reassure the child, tell them that they are right to tell you [do not promise to keep it a secret as it is your responsibility to inform others].
5. Stay calm – ensure the child is safe and feels safe.
6. Accept what you have been told. [This should not be seen as believing or disbelieving what you have been told]
7. Reassure the child and stress that they are not to blame.
8. Tell the child that you will offer support but you will have to pass the information on.
9. Do not question the child and/or rush into details that may be inappropriate.
10. Monitor the child/children concerned; encourage them to continue to take part in KCC's activities.
11. Do not make promises you cannot keep.
12. Do not approach or contact the alleged abuser[s].

## **Reporting Procedures**

Record the concern or incident by notifying the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person, including, dates and times of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made. Record the names of the people involved, what was said and done by whom and any action taken. This can be done verbally initially; however, it must be fully documented in writing as soon as is practicable

For volunteers overseas, inform an appropriate local senior member of staff or deputy immediately in addition to the KCC Designated Person. Remember that confidentiality is of the utmost importance.

Concerns would normally be shared with parents/carers as soon as possible. However, there could be circumstances when this could put the child at greater risk or there may be concerns that parents/carers will not respond appropriately.

Every effort will be made to respect the anonymity, if requested, of the person reporting the abuse, however, if allegations result in Court proceedings this may not be possible.

## **Review**

KCC will ensure that issues of child protection receive continuous attention and will regularly review the way that we operate to support this principle. The child protection policy should be reviewed annually and when there are any changes in legislation.