**CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA**

**Child Protection Policy**

1. **Purpose of Child Protection Policy**

The primary goal of Child Protection is to serve the needs and protect the well-being of children. Acting on behalf of the best interests of the children, and in agreement with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA shall strive to protect children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA does not tolerate child abuse in any form. All children have equal rights to protection. **Child Protection** is a unified approach to ensuring the protection of children from any maltreatment. This means that anyone who works for an organization that deals with issues of children or comes into contact with children have a duty to keep them safe and uphold their wellbeing.

This policy builds linkages between policy elements focused specifically on the abuse and exploitation of children and policy elements focused on staff relations and behaviour. It implicitly assumes that if an employer permits sexual harassment or discrimination among its staff, the staff will be more likely to engage in these forms of abuse in their relations with children or will be less likely to take appropriate steps to halt and prevent these forms of misconduct. Although the policy prescribes high standards of conduct and accountability, it also aims to stimulate on-going dialogue and reflection about what is most appropriate and effective in creating a protective environment for children. It invites CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA staff and partners who work with children to take a self-reflective stance, asking how one’s own behavior creates an environment supportive of children’s well-being or creates risks to children, even unintentionally

1. **Who is a child?**

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children a Child is a person below the age of eighteen years. CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA observes the UNCRC.

1. **What is Child Abuse and exploitation?**

**Child abuse and exploitation**: Sexual abuse or other physical, mental, or emotional harm caused to a child or children, or gross negligence.

1. ***Definition:* Child abuse** consists of children’s exposure to situations that cause children harm, usually as the result of the failure of the parent or caretaker to insure a reasonable standard of care and protection. Abuse may be physical, sexual, or emotional harm resulting from the actions of the parent or caretaker. Abuse also includes neglect, the failure to meet a child’s basic needs or to protect the child from hazards such as extreme cold or playing in dangerous places.

**Examples** include, but are not limited to:

* Sexual abuse of children through touching, fondling, or rape;
* Involvement of children in pornography or showing child pornography via the internet;
* Harsh emotional treatment of children through isolation, rejection, or teasing;
* Severe physical punishment of children;
* Allowing children to play in dangerous places such as building roof tops and mine fields.

1. ***Definition:*** Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, comments, jokes, or conduct of a sexual nature.

**Examples** of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

* Unwelcome sexual commentaries about a person, their manner, or appearance;
* Sexually suggestive or obscene letters, posters, or emails;
* Actual or threatened physical contact such as patting, pinching, or other offensive touching;
* Degrading jokes based on sexual orientation.

1. ***Definition****:* Exploitation is the abuse of power by coercing or leading people into activities that violates their individual's rights.

**Examples** of exploitation include, but are not limited to:

* Children’s involvement in heavy, dangerous, or forced labor;
* Selling or buying children for economic gain (child trafficking);
* Recruitment of children into armed groups;
* Sending children to work in dangerous situations;

1. **CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA Staff, Member and Associate communities shall;**

* Familiarize themselves with situations which may present risks;
* Contribute to an environment where children are able to recognize unacceptable behavior and feel able to discuss their rights and concerns;
* Wherever practical, ensure that they and others meet children openly;
* Raise concerns about any case of suspected abuse in accordance with applicable procedures.
* Any activities with children must take place in open, accessible places, as far as possible within the children’s community.
* All activities must begin and end during daylight hours.
* All activities with children’s groups must always be in the presence of at least two responsible adult facilitators .

**Dealing with Child Abuse:**

* Any CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA associate who knows or suspects that child abuse has occurred, or is intended to occur must report the matter to the National Coordinator, and
* Send a full written report at the same time by the fastest possible means.
* If the National Coordinator is unavailable then the matter must instead be referred at once to the Finance and Administration Officer or Programmes Manager.

**Confidentiality:**

* An allegation of child abuse is a serious issue. In following CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA's Policy on Child Protection and local procedures, it is essential that all parties maintain confidentiality.

1. Children:
   1. **Criteria for Acceptance:**

Children enrolling in CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA schools shall be of appropriate age when they first enrol. CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA programmes shall aim to give priority to OVC that have never been to school especially the girl child.

CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA shall accept children from all the communities even those whose circumstances may not allow them to continue in with education. This acceptance will be at the discretion of the registration committees. The committees shall take into consideration the child’s social economic background and any special conditions.

Due consideration shall be made towards children with disability and suitable consultation employed before any referral is made.

* 1. **Registration**

A registration committee shall be established at each of the CHILDHOPE supported center/community. These shall compose a number between 3 and 7 with representation from:

* The community
* Teachers and
* Caregivers

The committees shall be responsible for the registration of children according to the CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA laid down criteria.

* The optimum class size shall be between 35 and no more than 40 pupils.
* All children that require attending school shall be accompanied by the parent or guardian.
* All necessary information about the child shall be recorded on the CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA enrolment form.
  1. **Registration for ECCDE/Pre-school**

Registration shall be done in November of every year. The registration committee shall collect a list of names and details of children that will include:

* Age
* Gender
* Child’s condition (Orphan)
* Name of the parent/guardian etc.

In case of limited school places, the committees shall make suitable decision to accommodate those in dire need and qualify under the CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA conditions. All children enlisted shall be introduced to the school in company of their parents/ guardians before the term begins.

If the school places are still available, the committee shall give an extension of two weeks of the first term to enrol some more children. The CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA criteria shall still be upheld.

After this two week probation period no more enrolments shall be made for ECCDE/Pre-school the whole year.

1. **Transfers**

CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA shall have a standard transfer form that should be completed for;

* Any child requesting for a transfer from one CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA school to another.

A copy of this transfer request shall be kept in the child’s records and Log book

1. **Assessment of Pupil’s Achievement**

All children in the CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA programme/schools shall be assessed using the following standards:

* Children at pre-school level shall be given an end of year assessment test
* The teacher/caregiver shall be encouraged to provide weekly topic assessment tests where necessary.

All these tests shall be prepared by the teachers/caregivers and supervisors.

**Open Day**

The ECCDE centres/Pre-schools shall always find an Open Day in each term for parents/ guardians to visit the centres and interact with the teachers/caregivers and discuss the child’s progress.

1. **Discipline**

All child discipline measures shall conform to the Laws of Zambia. In a case of a child displaying unwanted behaviour at ECCDE center/Pre-school, the parents/ guardian shall be notified and shall be consulted over all decisions taken.

**Under no circumstances shall a child be beaten or hit**

1. **Drop-outs**

No child shall be allowed to drop out of ECCDE/Pre-school. All avenues to encourage the child to attend ECCDE/Pre-school shall be undertaken by the ECCDE Management Committees and teachers. An accurate record of child attendance shall be kept and reference made to them when dealing with pupils’ absenteeism. It shall be in a desperate situation that a child shall be dropped out of ECCDE/Pre-school. This shall be with the consent of the parent/ guardian of the child.

1. **Data**

A folder shall be opened for each child where records of the child’s progress and behavior shall be recorded. Child record forms shall be provided by CHILDHOPE-ZAMBI Office. Teachers’/caregivers’ records shall show details of the child and shall be kept and shared with the secretariat when need arises.

1. **Sickness**

If a child falls ill at the center, appropriate action to save the child’s life shall be taken by the center management and the parent/ guardian of the child shall be notified immediately. All such events shall be recorded in the school log book.

All children’s health record and history shall be kept in the child’s files.

1. **Funerals**

In case of a child’s death, the CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA office shall be notified. Supervisors, teachers, Caregiver, shall attend the funeral.

**Child in Need**

Appropriate measures shall be taken to assist children in need. However, CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA shall not be responsible in assisting all children in need**.**

### School Organisational Strategies

* Co-operative or team teaching- teachers share expertise and take responsibility for different aspects of the school's curriculum
* Special clustering - small groupings of children withdrawn from one or more classes to meet a specific need
* Cross-setting - ability grouping of children across year levels
* Heterogeneous groups - composite class groupings of children, e.g., years 4,5 arid 6; sometimes referred to as family groupings; may also involve non-graded progression and promotions
* Homogeneous groupings - ability' grouping of children of similar age
* Cross-age tutoring - older child working with a younger child with like interests to assist with the younger child's learning and development.
* Master teacher, itinerant teacher or specialist teacher- usually bringing specific expertise across the year levels supporting ECCDE/Pre-school teachers by providing individual or group instruction.
* Electives program - non-graded opportunity to pursue individual interests
* Acceleration - the introduction of concepts seen to be well outside general year level expectations to stimulate and better satisfy the needs of some children.
  1. **Provide a variety of communication methods:**
* Accommodate learning styles
* Accommodate skills (technology, hand-outs, bilingual materials)
* Share responsibilities
* Re-identify key community members & invite participation
* Reward members and key community members
* Publicity, plaques, tokens of appreciation
* Re-identify actions to be taken

1. **Policy on Classroom and school structure**

The school infrastructure shall be as follows:

1. Sufficient gender segregated toilets/ latrines
2. Classroom meeting the desired standards with adequate ventilation and lighting
3. Located in a safe distance from bars, markets, main roads and if able be fenced
4. Adequate storage facility for all teaching and learning materials. Records of all appropriate information kept.
5. Outsource for sufficient desks, tables, chairs, benches for children and teachers
6. Local communities shall help in the maintenance of the ECCDE/Pre-school buildings
7. Stock book, log book, and Registers shall be kept in all CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA ECCDE/Pre-school centres.
8. Ensure that sanitation and hygiene shall be strongly valued. It shall be taught in ECCDE /Pre-school centres and cleanliness adhered to.

### Appendix

### CODE OF CONDUCT

The following Code of Conduct, although it is not part of CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA Child Protection Policy, provides a summary that is useful in helping local staff and CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA affiliated entities understand the key points of the policy and to relate it to the behaviour expected of them.

CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA representatives (CHILDHOPE staff, board members, volunteers, interns, contractors and affiliated entity staff) shall conduct themselves in a manner where the needs of the children are always the primary consideration. Representatives’ interactions with children, their families and community members must always meet the highest levels of integrity.

The policy and standards must be interpreted and enforced in accordance with local law. There may be instances where the policy and standards are more stringent than local law.

**CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA acknowledges that its representatives will:**

* Maintain a safe environment where beneficiaries come to participate in CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA’s activities.
* Organize work to minimize risks.
* Hire/train representatives of the highest integrity who are accountable, responsible and create an environment of openness for all involved.
* Hire/train representatives who treat all involved with the highest standards of respect.
* Establish a culture that empowers beneficiaries to be knowledgeable of their rights, to know what is acceptable and unacceptable, to know what to do when there are problems.
* Ensure that all confidential information is handled appropriately.
* Encourage that breaches of the Code of Conduct are immediately reported to management, where prompt actions are expected. Anyone found in violation of the Code of Conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

**In addition, representatives:**

* Will not discriminate in its employment, program, or services on the grounds of religion, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, language, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, or political conviction.
* Will not discriminate against or show favour of particular children.
* Will respect the cultures, practices, and traditions of all people and display cultural sensitivity to host communities and countries where it works.
* Will promote gender equity in all its programs.
* Will not harass any employee, program participant, partner, vendor, or member of communities in which CHILDHOPE-ZAMBIA conducts programs.
* Will treat each other and those whom they serve with respect and dignity.
* Will hire and train representatives who treat all involved with the highest standards of respect.
* Will hire/train representatives of the highest integrity who are accountable, responsible, and create an environment of openness for all involved.
* Will maintain a safe environment where beneficiaries come to participate in CHILDHOPE -ZAMBIA activities.
* Will not use their relationship of authority inappropriately.
* Will not sexually harass any individuals, employee or program participant, regardless of their work relationship.
* Will not exploit any individuals, whether staff, children, or participants in affiliated sponsorship programs.
* Will uphold the child labour laws of the country and ensure these laws protect children by reporting any witnessed or suspected exploitation.
* Will not abuse children through either action or neglect.
* Will work in a proactive manner to protect children’s safety from harm.
* Will avoid being placed in compromising or vulnerable positions.
* Will realize that they are always the responsible parties, even if a child initiates an inappropriate relationship or behaves in an unacceptable manner.
* Will not condone or participate in behaviour of children, which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
* Will not provide shelter in their homes except in case of extreme emergency for a limited time.
* Will not put them in position where their actions (physical, verbal or otherwise) are offensive, inappropriate, abusive, neglectful or exploitative.
* Will ensure all confidential information is handled appropriately.

**Finally, CHILDHOPE –ZAMBIA representatives understand the following:**

* Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
* Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
* Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
* Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, s/he must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
* Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment, which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.