

**BeChild**  
**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**



**Table of Contents:**

<b>1. Purpose, Scope, Definition:</b> .....	<b>pp.2</b>
<b>2. Principles and Practices:</b> .....	<b>pp.3</b>
<b>3. Types and Indicators of Abuse:</b> .....	<b>pp.4</b>
<b>4. Risk Assessment and Monitoring Procedure:</b> .....	<b>pp.6</b>
<b>5. Reporting Procedure:</b> .....	<b>pp.7</b>
<b>6. Recruitment and Trainings:</b> .....	<b>pp.8</b>
<b>Annex 1: Child Protection Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers</b> .....	<b>pp.9</b>
<b>Annex 2: Safeguarding Report Form</b> .....	<b>pp.11</b>

## **1. Purpose, Scope, Definition of Child Protection**

### **1.1 Purpose:**

BeChild has a moral and legal responsibility and a duty to protect and safeguard children within our care from both intentional and unintentional harm. BeChild recognises the need to ensure that its staff, operations, non-formal education programmes and activities “do no harm” to children; to not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation staff, trainers and volunteers have about children’s safety within the communities in which BeChild works are reported to the appropriate authorities.

BeChild has a zero-tolerance policy regarding child abuse and exploitation. BeChild operators, visitors, sub-beneficiaries, suppliers/subcontractors, and implementing partners are prohibited from engaging in any form of child abuse or exploitation.

### **1.2 Scope:**

BeChild Child Protection Policy applies to:

All staff; Management, Board members; Interns and Volunteers;

All those acting on behalf of BeChild, such as members, consultants or trainers;

All those adults accompanying children to events and activities organised by BeChild;

All those who participate in BeChild events and meetings involving children, including journalists, sponsors, donors, policy makers, etc.;

All the individuals cited above will be expected to read BeChild Child Protection Policy and sign a commitment to adhere to its principles and procedures.

### **1.3 Definition:**

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, ‘Child Safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.’

## **2. Principles and Practices:**

All children and adolescents involved in BeChild activities, projects and programmes have the right to have their health, safety and well-being, and their best interests considered as top priority; To have their development promoted and safeguarded so that they can achieve their full potential; To be valued, respected and understood within the context of their own culture, religion and ethnicity; To be listened to and to have their views given careful consideration, and to be encouraged and helped to participate in decisions which affect them, including in child protection decisions. In order to better protect child from harm and ensure that the best interest of the child are paramount and primary considered in decision making, BeChild Child Protection Policy is based on the following principles and practices:

- Respect for children's rights, including the right to protection and the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.
- Equality of opportunity to ensure that all children have the opportunity to enjoy our activities safely regardless of their gender, ability, race, ethnicity, circumstances or age. Vulnerable children require particular attention in order to optimise their safety and protection and promote their access to opportunities.
- Consultation with children and their families regarding the implementation of the Policy and procedures developed to support its implementation.
- Cultural sensitivity and recognition of local context in decision making and in informing our procedures.
- Accountability and being responsible in order to meet our obligations regarding our duty of care towards children, and taking action where we believe that a child is at risk or is actually harmed.
- Providing training and support to those working with BeChild so that they are able to recognise, prevent and respond to child protection risks and incidents.
- Working in an honest and transparent way by informing those we work with, including children, about our Child Protection Policy, and how we work to safeguard children.
- Ensuring confidentiality to protect sensitive personal data. Information will only be shared and handled on a need to know basis - access to information must be necessary solely for the conduct of official duties.
- Working with others to protect children, engaging BeChild with other organisations. This includes law enforcement and specialist child welfare agencies where necessary.
- Monitoring the implementation of the Child Protection Policy on a regular basis. The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed every three years.
- Ensure that the photos taken of children, or videos, are accurate and respect their privacy and dignity.
- This is in accordance with BeChild Data Protection Policy, children must be appropriately dressed in the photographs. Sexually suggestive poses are prohibited.
- Obtain informed consent from the child and their caregivers before photographs are taken, except in exceptional circumstances when this is not feasible or not in the best interests of the child. This consent must be written, caregivers must be told how the images will be used.
- Ensure that any photograph, or recorded case history of the child, does not make them vulnerable to any form of abuse.
- Respect the principles of confidentiality, adhere to the Data Protection Policy, and share personal information of the child on a need-to-know basis only.

### **3. Types and Indicators of Abuse:**

BeChild believes that child protection is crucial to ensuring that children under the age of 18 have the rights, information and space in which they can express their views and communicate effectively with other children and adults. Children can only become empowered agents of change to improve their lives and that of their families and communities if they are safeguarded from abuse, discrimination and harm of any kind, be it physical, sexual, emotional or neglect. All staff, trainers, volunteers and interns involved in BeChild's activity must be aware of the following types and indicators of abuse in order to prevent and report abuses.

- Physical Abuse

This abuse occurs when a person intentionally injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. The injury may involve: slapping, kicking, punching, shaking, burning, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, strangling or any other form of behavior causing physical injury. Physical abuse can also involve a situation where a parent or caregiver is not adequately ensuring a child or young person's safety, leading to them being placed in situations of extreme physical danger.

Indicators:

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts, welts;
- Symptoms indicating poisoning;
- Fractured bones;
- Internal injuries;
- Shaking injuries;
- Evidence of strangulation;
- Refuses to talk about injuries or implausible reasons given for injuries;
- Wary or distrustful of adults;
- Expresses little or no emotion when hurt;
- Is scared of returning home or of their parents being contacted;
- Withdraws from physical contact;
- Is aggressive towards others or alternately can be very passive or complaint;
- Wears winter clothing that covers their arms and legs in warmer weather;
- Self destructive behaviour;
- Regular "running away" incidences;
- Is fearful when other children cry or shout.

- Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is when a person uses their power over a child or young person to involve them in sexual activity. Sexual abuse covers a wide range of sexual activities including both contact and non-contact situations. Contact situations can involve fondling of the child or young person's genitals, being forced to touch somebody else's genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object. Non-contact abuse can involve obscene calls or remarks made in any written form. It involves exposure to pornography or being photographed for pornography.

Indicators:

- Itchiness, soreness, discharge or unexplained bleeding;
- Injury to genital or rectal area;

- Discomfort in urinating or defecating;
- Frequent urinary tract infections;
- Sexually transmitted diseases;
- Pregnancy in adolescence where the identity of the father is vague or secret;
- Bruising and other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen and thighs;
- Torn, stained or bloodied underwear;
- Difficulty walking or sitting;
- Anxiety related illnesses like anorexia or bulimia;
- Shows persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity;
- Very attentive to adults of a particular sex or fearful of a particular sex;
- Display an unusual interest in the genitals of others;
- Acting out sexual behaviour with adults, dolls or other children;
- Open displays of sexuality eg. repeated public masturbation;
- Precocious knowledge of sexual matters;
- Complains of stomach or headaches;
- Regressive behaviour eg bedwetting, separation anxiety;
- Acting out behaviour such as aggression, lying, stealing, running away, drug or alcohol abuse, suicide attempts;
- Difficulty sleeping and nightmares;
- Excessive bathing.

- Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse involves a consistent attack on the child or young person's self-esteem to the extent that it is affecting the child or young person's physical, emotional, social and/or intellectual development. It can take the form of rejection, put-downs, intimidation, threats, frightening or isolating the child or young person.

Indicators:

- Delayed development in one or more areas;
- Speech disorders;
- High anxiety;
- Low self-esteem;
- Very aggressive or passive;
- Difficulties in relating to adults or peers;
- Inappropriate behaviour for their age eg. overly adult such as parenting other children to overly infantile eg. thumb-sucking;
- Fear in new situations;
- Excessive running away or drug/alcohol abuse;
- Compulsive stealing.

- Neglect

This is a situation where a child or young person's basic daily needs are not being met and this is risking their health and development. It can involve a lack of food, clothing, personal hygiene, shelter, medical treatment or appropriate supervision.

#### Indicators:

- Regularly tired and/ or hungry as a result may steal food or fall asleep in class;
- Poor hygiene;
- Low self-esteem;
- Left unsupervised for long lengths of time or abandoned by parents/caregivers;
- Regularly wears clothing that is not suitable for the weather;
- Medical needs that have not been attended to;
- Frequently away from school or arriving very late;
- Drug or alcohol abuse;
- Poor social relations or indiscriminate with affection;
- Hangs around at school or other programs outside their regular hours.

#### **4. Risk Assessment and Monitoring Procedure**

##### **4.1 Risk Assessment:**

BeChild is committed to designing and delivering programmes that are safe for children. Risk assessments are therefore conducted when designing our projects and activities and safety strategies developed accordingly.

Risk mitigation strategies will be developed, which minimize the risks to children and will be incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes, operations and activities which involve or impact upon children.

BeChild management personnel is in charge of approving non-formal education programs before their implementation, while Field staff and Coordinators are responsible for supervising trainers and activities operating methods.

##### **4.2 Monitoring Procedure:**

The policies and procedures outlined in this document are to be formally reviewed at least every 3 years in November. Feedback on the policy will be sought from: staff and volunteers; children and young people attending; and from anyone else involved with the program.

The review will assess:

- whether all parts of this policy and related procedures are being successfully adhered to and whether any alterations are necessary;
- which staff member will be in charge of reporting procedure;
- any training needs for the coming year;
- changes or updates in information and/or law related to Child Protection.

## **5. Reporting Procedure**

### **5.1 Reporting Procedure Overview:**

All staff, volunteers and interns should be alert to signs that may suggest a child is in need of help. Deciding whether to report concerns BeChild's reporting procedure that is made widely available to ensure that everyone is clear what steps to take regarding the safety of children and other witnesses.

All witnessed, suspected or alleged violations of BeChild's Child Protection Policy will be immediately reported to the Field Officer – using the safeguarding reporting form (annex 2) - who is responsible to immediately inform the Project Coordinator. The guiding principle here is that the safety of the child is always the most important consideration. These records will be stored securely with access limited to BeChild management staff.

At meetings and activities where children are directly involved, children and their family/caregivers will be informed about BeChild's safeguarding policy, code of conduct, the existence of the child protection focal person and complaints mechanism in a child-friendly manner.

### **5.2 Reporting Procedure Implementation:**

Regarding the behavior of staff, volunteers, interns, board members it is considered whether it is needed to report to the local/national authorities and decide on further response, record case and action taken.

The Field Officer and Project Coordinator will act on the concerns or allegations in a confidential manner in accordance with the standardized process developed by BeChild in the best interests of the child, irrespective of the nature of the referral, who the allegations are about or who the referrer is or where she/he is from. The Field Officer will take appropriate action to protect the child/children in question from further harm and during and following an incident or allegation. An assessment of the specific kind of support and assistance that is needed by the child(ren) affected by the incident will immediately be offered. This may also involve arranging a medical assessment. The Field Officer will be responsible to contact the child's family/caregivers and inform them of the incident and assistance provided. A safeguarding report (annex 2) must be compiled to document details of the incident. The "best interests of the child" must be considered throughout the process. An assessment of the specific kind of support and assistance that is needed by the children affected by the incident will be offered. BeChild will immediately suspend any employee, volunteer, intern, board member, consultant, adviser who is alleged to have violated the Child Protection Policy, pending the outcome of the investigation. BeChild reserves the right to take any disciplinary action against any of the above who have been proven guilty in an investigation, which may include reporting the incident to the police.

Acts of criminal nature will be referred to the police and may result in a criminal investigation and conviction. In cases where staff from BeChild members or accompanying adults with children are alleged to have violated BeChild's Child Protection Policy in meetings and activities organised by BeChild, this needs to be reported to the BeChild Field Officer. The Field Officer will investigate the complaint(s) or concerns confidentially and discreetly and report this to the Program Coordinator.

Where possible BeChild Field Officer with BeChild Program Coordinator will discuss the concerns with the responsible person and/or his/her organisation in order to change the behavior or acts of the concerned person/organisation. In case the person or organisation is not able or willing to change its behavior according to the standards of BeChild's Child Protection Policy, the

Program Coordinator will report this to the Project Manager, which may decide to suspend further cooperation with this person/organisation.

## **6. Recruitment and Trainings**

### **6.1 Recruitment:**

BeChild is committed to ensuring that its personnel are appropriate to work with children and are informed of their responsibility to support and adhere to the BeChild's Child Protection Policy.

As part of the recruitment process for each BeChild's position, including those involving direct contact with children, both internal staff and external candidates, they are all required to undergo at least two recruitment reference checks. References must not be family members or relatives, at least one of them must be a previous supervisor, and for internal staff, the current supervisor must also serve as a reference.

Whenever legally permitted and feasible, criminal record checks, including police records, criminal records, and/or other criminal record checks, are conducted prior to extending a job offer.

Interviews with candidates for non-formal education, monitoring, activity supervision or implementation and other positions that involve direct contact with children should include appropriate questions about child protection.

Employment lists, job descriptions, terms of reference, staff recruitment handbooks and policies, orientation materials, employment contracts and agreements for new and returning workers shall include the responsibility to comply with the Standards of Professional Conduct Guidelines which include BeChild's Child Protection Policy.

### **6.2 Trainings:**

BeChild is committed to ensuring that its employees have the necessary knowledge to support and adhere to its Child Protection Policy.

BeChild must include information about the Child Protection Policy in its guidance and training materials, providing specialized training as needed to its workers, including but not limited to: HR practitioners, supervisors, coordinators and managers, as well as monitoring personnel, technical specialists, persons designated to receive complaints of policy violations; emergency response teams; those engaged in communications, media, fundraising, data collection and information management activities.

BeChild field staff is moreover involved in providing one day training to new personnel, including other organisations' volunteers who are in direct contact with children and are collaborating with BeChild.



## Annex 1 – Child Protection Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

I \_\_\_\_\_, in undertaking to work/volunteer for BeChild, hereby agree to:

- ❖ Support beneficiaries' learning, wellbeing and participation in accordance with the aims/goals identified by BeChild;
- ❖ Notify the coordinator as early as possible if unable to attend;
- ❖ To work in a supervised or public area and to notify the Field Coordinator if there is a need to leave the area unattended;
- ❖ Attend ongoing training and meetings;
- ❖ Assist with documentation of beneficiaries progress, activity tracker and presence, as well as amount of working hours, as directed by Field Coordinator;
- ❖ Work cooperatively with Field staff and coordinators including seeking guidance and being receptive to support and advice;
- ❖ Develop positive relationships with beneficiaries and staff and behave as an appropriate role model by showing, respect for beneficiaries and their families, volunteers, staff and all other people, and by engaging in friendly, positive, polite and helpful interaction;
- ❖ Understand and value diversity amongst beneficiaries, staff and volunteers
- ❖ Respect the rights of the students and their families to confidentiality, unless there are concerns regarding a child's wellbeing;
- ❖ Report any concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing to the Field Coordinator and to ensure these concerns are acted upon;
- ❖ Read, understand and abide by the BeChild Child Protection Policy;
- ❖ Exercise a duty of care at all times, using common sense and exercising reasonable caution in working with beneficiaries and not placing them at risk of foreseeable harm;
- ❖ Not attend activities under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs;
- ❖ Inform the Program Coordinator:
  - If any difficulties are experienced during an activity;
  - Of any accident or injury that occurs during an activity (to tutor or children);
  - Of any information provided by the student that may relate to mandatory reporting issues (such as abuse, domestic violence, self-harm, suicidal thoughts or intentions, homelessness, etc);
  - Of any intention to leave an activity;
  - Discuss areas of concern with the Program Coordinator for resolution. If the matter remains unresolved, refer the matter to the Manager of BeChild.
- ❖ Avoid any inappropriate contact or conduct with students, including:
  - Touching beneficiaries inappropriately (such as stroking, hugging, kissing or caressing);
  - Grabbing, pushing, smacking, punching or otherwise hitting;
  - Being alone with a child (such as going to the toilet or being in a separate area alone with a child);
  - Showing favouritism or developing special relationships with beneficiaries (such as excluding children from a group, giving inappropriate gifts to beneficiaries or unreasonably and overtly favouring a child);
  - Using any internet, computer, mobile phone, or other audio-visual equipment with children to access inappropriate content (such as pornography, sexually explicit pictures or messages, violent or unsuitable video games or movies).

- ❖ Not devolve any program information/child personal information to third parties (including media).
- ❖ All queries should be passed on to the BeChild Field Coordinator or BeChild Manager;
- ❖ Be familiar with BeChild rules and policies and to work in accordance with its regulations, policies, legislative and administrative requirements.

**I understand that it is NOT my role to:**

- Discipline any child or manage their behaviour;
- Meet with or contact (including by phone, email, Facebook, etc) any beneficiary outside of program activities;
- Monitor the beneficiaries' home life or parents' responsibilities/duties to the child;
- Give personal advice, especially on matters of health, finance, relationships or legal situations;
- Be involved in investigating or following up complaints relating to a child;
- Displace family and extended family relationships;
- Have access to the child's care or personal records or become involved in the financial affairs of the student and his/her family.

If you have knowledge that a child might be at risk of harm, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge. Please note that child protection concerns must be reported (orally or in writing) directly to the BeChild Field Coordinator (preferably within the same working day) – depending on the urgency, you may wish to complete this form before contacting the Field Coordinator or you may wish to complete the report afterwards. Also use this form to report an accident or incident. An accident is an unplanned event that results in an injury or could have resulted in an injury or results in damage to equipment or property or harm to the environment. An incident is an unpleasant or unusual event. The report should be written and signed only by you to guarantee confidentiality. It should be sent only to the Field Coordinator, who will hold it in a safe and secure place and treat it with the strictest confidentiality.

### 1. About you

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation you work for: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of your contact with the child: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details: Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. About the child

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's age: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's address: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's parents/caregivers: \_\_\_\_\_

Has any treatment been given to the child?

Treatment given by \_\_\_\_\_

Taken to hospital YES \_\_\_\_\_ ; NO \_\_\_\_\_ ;

If yes, which hospital and how taken \_\_\_\_\_

### About your concern; Details of incident

Was the incident:

- Observed by you
- Suspected
- Disclosed by someone else

If the concern was shared by someone else, please state who and their relationship to the child:

\_\_\_\_\_

What happened? Give cause (how and why) if known - If you include personal observations please make a distinction between what is a fact and what is opinion or hearsay (e.g. child's emotional state, visible injuries, etc.):

---

---

---

---

---

Did the child/young person or another source say anything to you [if relevant] and how did you respond to him or her: [Do not lead the child. Record actual details]

---

---

---

---

---

Date of the alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of the alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of the alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the alleged perpetrator (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Were there any other children/people involved in the alleged incident?

Are any other children at risk of harm? \_\_\_\_\_

Action taken by you:

---

---

---

---

---

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

-----

For completion by the Child Protection Focal person:

Incident/Accident investigated:

- Yes
- No

Written investigation report necessary:

- Yes
- No

In order to determine the cause of the incident or accident, it may be appropriate to interview parties who were involved. Witness detail, statements, etc. can be added here

---

---

---

---

---