



Ensures Child and Youth Security'

## **CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 About VVCYF**

VVCYF strives for the protection of the child and youth from the threat of any kind of violence, abuse and exploitation. The organization believes that proper care delivered at the youngest age forms the strongest foundation for person's future.

#### **1.2 Vision**

One day, all children and youth will be safe having opportunity of realizing their good citizenship, patriotism and therefore becoming productive to their nation.

#### **1.3 Mission**

We are promoters of good behavior and committed to preventing any violence or harm to children and responding promptly and appropriately to any allegations of maltreatment.

#### **1.4 Applicability**

This policy applies to all staff members, agents, parents/legal guardian, volunteers and visitors who work on or visit VVCYF. It supersedes the previous policy related to protection and safeguarding of children.

### **2.0 DEFINITIONS**

#### **2.1 Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is the responsibility that an organization has to ensure that their staff members, volunteers, partners, operations and programs do no harm to children and young people.

#### **2.2 Child protection**

It is the process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering or at risk of significant harm as a result of abuse or program of work. It is a central part of safeguarding. There is effort made by VVCYF to ensure that no harm results from the contact of staff, volunteers, visitors, parents and other representatives have with the children.



### **2.3 Abuse**

Abuse is a violation of child rights by any other person or persons. It can take the form of physical, psychological, financial or sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a child or young person. Abuse can be a single act or repeated acts and can be unintentional or deliberate. Abuse often involves criminal acts.

### **2.4 Discriminatory abuse**

Discriminatory abuse motivated by a vulnerable person's age, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristic.

### **2.5 Financial or material abuse**

Financial or material abuse including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

### **2.6 Neglect**

Neglect the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of his/her health or development. Examples include failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failure to protect them from physical or psychological harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

### **2.7 Physical abuse**

Physical abuse includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

### **2.8 Psychological abuse**

Psychological abuse includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

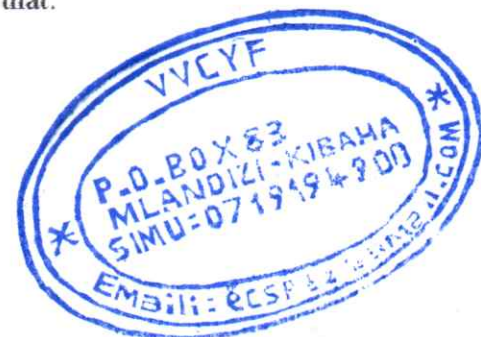
Examples include not giving a vulnerable children opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

### **2.9 Child**

VVCYF regards (according to UN conventions) a child as human being under the age of eighteen (18) years.

### **2.10 Child labor**

Child Labor is a work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It is the work that:





- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children
- interferes with their schooling
- depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
- obliging them to leave school prematurely
- requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work such as in mining.

If a young person, under the age of eighteen (18) is part of an apprenticeship scheme within the statutory law of the country and does not meet any of the above, this would not be considered by VVCYF as child labor. However, any partner, supplier, contractor or sub-contractor must inform VVCYF of the name of any apprentice who will be directly involved with our work.

### **2.11 Vulnerable child**

For the purposes of this policy this is an umbrella term which covers children and young people. It is widely recognized that children are generally more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to factors such as age, gender, social and economic status, development stage and dependence on others.

### **2.12 Youth or young people**

For the purposes of this policy an individuals aged 15 to 25. VVCYF recognizes that this group spans the categories of children but regards young people as having particular safeguarding needs and requiring distinct consideration aside from children.

### **2.13 Exploitation**

Child exploitation is an umbrella term used to describe the abuse of children who are forced, tricked, coerced or trafficked into exploitative activities. For VVCYF child exploitation includes modern slavery and trafficking of children and children forced or recruited into armed conflict.

### **2.14 Child sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity;

- in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur with the use of technology. Within VVCYF child sexual abuse and exploitation also includes child early and forced marriage.

## **3.0 PRINCIPLES**

In implementing this policy, the VVCYF shall ensure that it:

- respects the dignity of all children, especially child victims or survivors of violence



- does no harm to children
- avoids all forms of discrimination
- adopts an inclusive approach that is sensitive to the situation of more vulnerable or marginalized children
- acts in the best interests of children
- respects children's privacy and personal information
- respects the evolving capacity and agency of children
- respects children's right to be heard and their right to freedom of expression
- works in partnership with others to keep children safe.

#### **4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Everyone has an active role to play in creating a safe and empowering environment for all children.

**4.1** All VVCYF staff members, interns and volunteers shall:

- read and comply with this policy and the Code of Conduct of the VVCYF (see Annex 1)
- refer any child safeguarding concerns arising in the context of the work of the VVCYF to the management.

**4.2** The management of VVCYF shall:

- deliver periodic training to the team on this policy
- keep the Child Safeguarding Policy and procedures under review and look for amendments where necessary
- provide a copy of this Child Safeguarding Policy to all new staff, interns and volunteers, all of whom shall be requested to affirm in writing that they agree to abide by this policy and the Code of Conduct (see Annex 1).
- include child safeguarding in the induction training of all new team members. It will also provide annual training on child safeguarding to staff, consultants, interns and volunteers.
- Ensure duplication of Swahili version of this policy.
- Provide a copy of Swahili version of this Child Safeguarding policy to parents whose children have access to VVCYF activities and programs. The copy will be available also to the local government offices.

**4.3** All VVCYF staff members must;

- be responsible for ensuring parents, visitors and partner organizations are aware of the policy and are supported to implement and work in accordance with it, as well as creating working culture that encourages a focus on safeguarding.
- ensure that they are responsive, acting immediately if they become aware of any safeguarding concerns, and supportive towards any person who complain about breaches in this policy.





## 5.0 PREVENTING HARM AND MITIGATING RISK

### 5.1 Our approach to preventing harm to children

VVCYF is committed to preventing harm to children through the following means:

- **Awareness:** Ensuring that all staff, representatives and third parties connected to VVCYF are aware of the high standards of behavior and conduct expected of them to protect children from any form of abuse and exploitation in their private and working lives.
- **Prevention:** Ensuring, through awareness and good practice that staff and those who work with VVCYF minimize the risks of any form of child abuse and exploitation, including but by no means limited to conducting relevant vetting and background checks of staff as part of their recruitment process.
- **Reporting:** Ensuring that all staff and those who work with VVCYF are clear on what steps to take where suspicions or concerns arise regarding allegations of child abuse or exploitation
- **Responding:** Ensuring that immediate action is taken to identify and address reports of child abuse and to ensure the safety and well-being of the children involved.

### 5.2 Activities involving children

The VVCYF carries out diverse activities that may include the direct involvement of children and/or contact with them. This includes children's participation in meetings, consultations and campaigns – both online and offline – and children's contributions to the publications and communication materials produced by the VVCYF.

#### 5.2.1 In planning such activities, the VVCYF shall consider:

- the nature of the VVCYF contact with or access to children
- the nature of the information VVCYF accesses or gathers, including personal information, photos, videos, text and audio recordings
- whether participation in the activity may have harmful consequences or lead to intimidation, reprisals, or fear.
- whether some children may face additional vulnerabilities and require specific measures to ensure their safe participation in the activity.

#### 5.2.2 The VVCYF shall create a safe environment for children's involvement in activities it organizes by mitigating any specific risks identified by ensuring the following:

- Children's contributions, images and other personal information shall be presumed to be confidential unless the VVCYF has received written consent for the use of such material or information as part of its activities.
- The VVCYF shall refrain from sharing children's personally identifiable information, such as their full name, postal address, name of their school, email address, phone number and details for their social media accounts.



- The VVCYF shall not undertake any activities or produce any written, visual or audio content that exploits children, stigmatizes them or exposes them to harm.
- At public events where children are involved and in which other parties participate, the VVCYF will remind all participants of the need to respect children's privacy and protect them from harm, for example in relation to other parties taking photographs or sharing details of the event on social media.

**5.2.3** During online events that involve children, the VVCYF shall consider the use of technical tools and methods of interaction to keep children safe, including:

- using the event registration function to identify participants under the age of 18.
- sharing safeguarding information and the Code of Conduct before the event and reminding participants of the main points at the start of the event.
- inviting children to display their first names only on the online platform.
- reminding children not to share any personally identifiable information.
- disabling the chat function and/or video for participants under the age of 18
- filtering questions through a moderator

Where relevant, the VVCYF and/or partner organizations shall create a list of emergency contact numbers for each child taking part in the activity and make sure this is easily available to the staff, consultants, interns, volunteers or others who are responsible for the child.

**5.2.4** The VVCYF shall provide comprehensive information to children on their involvement in its activities (including through preparatory meetings, where appropriate). This information shall include:

- the purpose of the activity
- how the activity will work, particularly if the event is public, filmed, webcast, photographed or recorded for further dissemination
- how children's inputs will be used, and particularly the implications of sharing images, audio, text and other material online
- details of who will be in the audience or otherwise participating in the event
- how the VVCYF will follow up and provide feedback on the outputs and impact of the activity.

**5.2.5** Child safeguarding is also a key component of the information the VVCYF should provide about the activity. The VVCYF shall inform children, parents/legal guardians and/or the organization facilitating the participation of children in the activity about:

- the child's right to be protected from harm while participating in the activity
- how the VVCYF and its partners should interact with children, in line with VVCYF this Safeguarding Policy and its Code of Conduct
- how children can keep themselves and others safe during the activity





- where and how children can seek support if the content of the activity may be triggering or upsetting, including through local referral or support mechanisms (e.g. helplines)
- where and how children can report their child safeguarding concerns, including the name and contact details for the team member from the VVCYF or partner organization.
- This information will be conveyed in a child-friendly way and adapted as necessary for the age, communication needs and background of the children.
- The VVCYF sometimes engages partners to support or assist with activities that involve children directly, including in the context of country missions. Unless such partners already have equivalent procedures in place, the VVCYF shall require partners to abide by its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, and shall reflect this requirement in any related terms of reference, memoranda of understanding or other agreements, as appropriate.

### 5.3 Interacting with children

When communicating directly with a child in person or online, it should be taken into consideration that:

- their communication is respectful and professional
- their language is sensitive to the age, gender, communication needs and background of the child.
- a child is never humiliated or demeaned
- at least one other adult or staff member is present during the interaction (if in person) or included in the communication (if it is online).
- messaging services that require the use of personal phone numbers are avoided, if possible. If it is deemed necessary to contact a child by these means, at least one other adult or staff member should be included in the communication.

### 5.4 Recruitment and Screening

VVCYF ensures that during any interview process, applicants for positions involving interactions with children are asked about previous work with children and secure at least two (2) references for prior work experience with children. Where permissible by local law, applicants will be requested to give written permission for a criminal record or police background check for any conviction related to sexual or child abuse. VVCYF will not knowingly recruit anyone it learns has a prior history of sexual and/or child abuse and will terminate employment upon learning of any such history.

The management of VVCYF will ensure that all staff members will acknowledge receipt and understanding of VVCYF's Child protection and Safeguarding Policy upon recruitment.



### **5.5 Investigations and Monitoring**

The management of VVCYF is responsible for ensuring that allegations of child abuse are investigated in accordance with the Child Safeguarding Reporting and Investigative Guidelines. Throughout the investigation, VVCYF workers and visitors are required to participate in and cooperate with the investigation. Unless otherwise required, all information must be kept confidential regarding the suspected victim(s) and suspected perpetrator(s).

### **5.6 Enforcement**

Violations of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy are grounds for discipline including dismissal from employment or termination of contract. An alleged perpetrator of child maltreatment may be suspended from their position during an investigation of the allegation. A staff member who is proven to have committed child maltreatment will be dismissed from their working in VVCYF and ineligible for rehire. In the event an allegation is proven to be untrue or fabricated, appropriate steps will be taken for follow-up with the person who has been accused, the child, and the person who made the accusation. Any staff member who makes false and malicious accusations will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **6.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This policy shall be kept under continuous review.

The policy shall be updated no more than one year from the most recent update.

Original version: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022

First update: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023





## ANNEX 1

### Code of conduct

All staff member, volunteer, agents, visitors and partners working for or with VVCYF have a role to play in keeping children safe.

In agreeing to abide by this Code of Conduct, you are committing to the following.

I will:

- act in line with VVCYF child protection and safeguarding policy
- respect the rights, privacy and dignity of children
- respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children, without making any prejudicial assumptions about them
- be aware of and demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries
- respect the evolving capacity views and agency of children
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in the planning of activities wherever possible
- communicate with children in a way that is sensitive to their age, gender, communication needs and background
- ensure that when preparing an activity with children, they understand the goal of the activity, what to expect, how their input will be used and how VVCYF will follow up and provide feedback.
- ensure that VVCYF has obtained the full informed consent of children and their parents/caregivers for participation in VVCYF activities
- give my full attention to the children I am working with and respect their choices about how they wish to contribute
- challenge unacceptable behavior and respond to any child safeguarding concerns promptly in line with VVCYF child protection and safeguarding policy.

I will not:

- engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child
- engage in any activity that is likely to harm a child
- discriminate against any child or their family members
- establish and/or develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed inappropriate, exploitative or abusive
- be alone with a child unnecessarily
- do things for children of an intimate nature that they can do for themselves.
- arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children I am working with for any purpose that is not related to the activities of the VVCYF
- raise children's expectations inappropriately regarding the role and work of the VVCYF
- use inappropriate language or engage in inappropriate behavior in the presence of children, or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material



- disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of the child, unless the child and their parent/legal guardian consent or unless I am required to do so by the policy of the VVCYF on reporting
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.
- hire children for domestic or other labor that violates national labor laws.
- use language or behavior around or toward children that is inappropriate, abusive or sexually provocative.
- provide money to children as a gift or exchange personal contact information with a child.
- Developing relationships with children that could in any way be deemed inappropriate, exploitative or abusive.
- agree with a child to keep a secret which has implications for their safety or the safety of other young people.
- sexually harass, assault or abuse another person
- physically harass, assault or abuse another person
- emotionally abuse another person, such as engaging in behavior intended to shame, humiliate,
- condone, or participate in behavior which is abusive, discriminatory, illegal, or unsafe
- act in ways that may be violent, inappropriate or sexually provocative to another person.





## ANNEX 2

### Safeguarding checklist for the planning of the activity or event of VVCYF

- Conduct an assessment of specific safeguarding risks for the event/activity and identify any necessary mitigation measures.
- Provide a comprehensive briefing to children on the event/activity, including on how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Obtain agreement in writing from partners assisting the VVCYF with the event to abide by its Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, unless partners already have equivalent procedures in place.
- Where relevant, create a list of emergency contact numbers for each child taking part in the activity and a list of local support or reporting mechanisms to which children can be referred if necessary.
- Announce and implement safeguarding measures during the event (using appropriate and respectful language; only showing first names; not sharing identifying information; disabling/modifying chat function; etc.).
- Forward any child safeguarding concerns that arise during the event promptly to the management of VVCYF.
- Provide feedback on the outputs and impact of the activity to the children who participated.

