



CHILD PROTECTION

Policy and Procedure

INTRODUCTION

Our Rainbow House is committed to our school being a place where all children feel safe and appreciated, regardless of their gender, tribal background, health problems, or family situation. We recognise that the children we work with at the school are vulnerable and require a high degree of protection.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect the children who come into contact with Our Rainbow House, from all forms of child abuse. Our Rainbow House believes that any form of abuse is unacceptable and should not be tolerated.

DEFINITIONS

CHILD – The United Nations definition of “child” is any person under the age of 18 years. Here “child” means any child who has contact with Our Rainbow House.

CHILD ABUSE -

Abuse happens to male and female children of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and political persuasion.

Child abuse includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, neglect, bullying, child labour and domestic violence.

Both boys and girls can be the victims of abuse, and abuse can be inflicted on a child by both men and women, as well as by young people themselves.

In some cases, professionals and other adults working with children in a position of trust also abuse children.

Physical abuse

This occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or pinching or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

Emotional abuse

This occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. This may involve name calling, being put down or continual coldness from parent, guardian or any adult, to the extent that it affects the child's physical and emotional growth.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, where possible, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.

Sexual abuse

This occurs when a child or young person is used by an older or bigger child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification - regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. These can be contact or non-contact acts, including threats and exposure to pornography.

ADULT OF INFLUENCE - Any adult associated with the Our Rainbow House community. This includes staff members, volunteers, visitors, sponsors and donors.

POLICY

1. The recruiting process for staff and volunteers will prevent the appointment of any person suspected or proven to have offended against children.
2. All staff members will have an induction by the Project Co-ordinator so that they know exactly what Our Rainbow House expects of them regarding child protection.
3. All volunteers must have orientation before leaving. The Project Co-ordinator will conduct a cultural orientation on arrival at the school.
4. Visitors to the school, including sponsors of students, will not have unsupervised access to the children.
5. Communication between adults of influence and students/former students of Our Rainbow House School may only occur through the Board and the Project Supervisor. The exchange of contact information between students/former students and adults of influence is strictly forbidden.
6. Regarding fundraising and promotion of the charity:
 - a. Any publication of children's images will be done only with written consent from a guardian/parent, and as per the *Our Rainbow House Publication Policy and Permission to Photograph Agreement*.
 - b. Children participating in fundraising events for Our Rainbow House must always have written permission from a parent or guardian and be supervised.
7. Our Rainbow House will consider all risks posed to children in any new projects and partnerships and will strive to minimize any potential risks.
8. Our Rainbow House will seek to work with students, as the primary stakeholders, to include their voices in shaping the projects that affect them, and to develop child-

safe and child-friendly ways for their voices to be heard in order to monitor our Project.

9. Our Rainbow House will establish clear reporting procedures on child protection to report suspected or known instances of abuse to relevant authorities.
10. Our Rainbow House is responsible for communicating this *Child Protection Policy* to all stakeholders, partners and members of the public and is to be held accountable for upholding this policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The protection of children is the responsibility of all adults – firstly the adults in the students’ families, but also, in this case, the volunteers, employees and supporters of Our Rainbow House.

The students involved with Our Rainbow House also have a responsibility to report anything that concerns them or anything they feel is unsafe.

The Board is responsible for implementing this policy.

PROCEDURES

Recruitment and Education of Staff and Volunteers:

1. Our Rainbow House will publicly state a commitment to child protection on our website and in all job advertisements.
2. All applicants for staff or volunteer positions at the School in Zambia must provide:
 - a. Suitable forms of identification (passport, driving licence or National Identity Card).
 - b. A minimum of two referees (for positions working directly with children, reference checks should include questions about the applicant’s suitability to work with children).
 - c. A current police clearance check from the country of origin.
 - d. In addition, Australian Volunteers working at the School need a current Working with Children Check – QLD Blue Card or equivalent. (Refer to the Volunteer Application Package).
3. Applicants to positions working directly with children should possess relevant qualifications and experience.
4. All new staff (both in Zambia & Australia); volunteers who come into contact with the children at the school; and volunteers in Australia who hold a responsible position on the Our Rainbow House team - are required to:
 - Read this Child Protection Policy
 - Discuss it with their Project Co-ordinator (Zambia) or Volunteer Co-ordinator (Australia) using *Notes on Child Protection – a Training Guide*.
 - Sign the Our Rainbow House Child Protection Code of Conduct.

5. Members of school staff are required to review the *Child Protection Policy* and *Child Protection Code of Conduct* in the week before school starts, each January, giving detailed feedback on how each aspect of the policy has been implemented in the previous 12 months. Any problem areas should receive special attention. Each member of staff is then required to re-sign the *Child Protection Code of Conduct*.

Visitors to the School:

6. All visitors who come through the gate (other than staff or volunteers) will be given a copy of *Information for Visitors*, outlining child safety procedures whilst visiting the School. Group leaders will also be provided with this *Child Protection Policy* and *Child Protection Code of Conduct* and will be required to sign that they have received these. They will also be required to sign the *MOU for Organizations that Bring Visitors to the School*.
7. Visitors will have no unsupervised access with the children and must be accompanied by a member of staff, Board member or caregiver at all times.
8. Volunteers and visitors may be invited into the homes of students and their families. A member of staff, Board member or Caregiver must be present at all times during these visits.
9. Tradesmen or Trades people

Contact information exchange between students/ former students and adults of influence:

10. Correspondence between sponsors and students:
 - a. All correspondence from sponsors to students must be addressed to the Director, a copy sent to the Sponsorship Co-ordinator and then passed on to the Project Co-ordinator with a request for it to be delivered to the student. (A mailing address is available upon request to the Student Sponsorship Co-ordinator). Sponsors will be informed of this policy and educated not to share their address or other contact details when writing to their sponsored child. The Project Co-ordinator is to open all mail addressed to students and censor where necessary, then report to the Sponsorship Co-ordinator regarding all items received, who will give feedback to the sponsor.
 - b. All correspondence from students to sponsors must go to the Student Sponsorship Co-ordinator, or another Board Member, who will deliver it to the sponsor.
11. Adults associated with Our Rainbow House must not exchange phone, email or address details with any student or former student of Our Rainbow House.

12. Adults associated with Our Rainbow House must not accept or extend social media invitations to befriend any student or former student of Our Rainbow House. This includes Facebook, Skype, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, blogs, Flickr, LinkedIn, and other similar forums.
13. Any instances of unauthorised contact between adults and students of Our Rainbow House (either from the students, or from an adult to a student) should be reported immediately to the Project Co-ordinator and the Board.
14. Sponsors and Volunteers are requested to consult the *Our Rainbow House Gift Giving Policy* and the Student Sponsorship Co-Ordinator before buying any gifts for the students.

Fundraising and Promotion (including the use of personal information and photographs):

15. Personal information (including contact details, health status, family situation), of any students will be held securely in the Zambian and Australian offices, and disclosed only to Board members, teachers at Our Rainbow House School or the Project Co-ordinator in Zambia.
16. Consent will be sought from the Guardians of students for the use of photographs of students in promotional material, using the *Permission to Photograph Agreement*. This form is translated and explained at a meeting of the Parents, Guardians and Friends Association annually and signed by the Guardians giving, or withholding, their consent. It is noted that Guardians may withhold their permission if special circumstances warrant it. Photographers are to enquire if any Guardians have not given permission for their children to be photographed.
17. Consent should also be obtained from the children themselves when taking photographs. While this may not be appropriate for very young children, most children should have the right to provide informed consent.
18. Any images of students, or children involved in fundraising activities, will only be used with written parental consent and as per the *Publications Policy and Procedure*.
19. Any children involved in fundraising activities in Australia:
 - Must have written permission from a parent or guardian allowing them to participate.
 - Should be advised, along with their parents or guardians, on how to conduct their fundraising activity safely.
 - Should always be supervised by a parent, teacher or other known, responsible adult.

Programme Planning, Implementation and Monitoring:

20. Our Rainbow House will conduct a risk assessment of any new projects, programmes and partnerships to ensure child safety is prioritized. We will do this by:

- a. Recognising that partner organizations will most likely have direct contact with children in their work, and therefore may have their own child protection policies.
 - b. Recognising that the notion of child protection is understood in different ways in the Zambian culture, and by undertaking extensive collaboration with partners and stakeholders to support their understanding of this *Child Protection Policy*.
 - c. Providing a copy of this *Child Protection Policy* and the *Child Protection Code of Conduct* to all partners.
 - d. Drawing up MOUs with all partners outlining their specific responsibilities, such as providing police checks and signing the *Child Protection Code of Conduct*. Reference should be made to the risks associated with child protection in all partnership agreements.
21. Our Rainbow House will continuously monitor current projects to ensure they comply with this *Child Protection Policy*. We will do this by:
- a. Regularly communicating with all students, staff and volunteers.
 - b. Regularly reviewing all publications, fundraising materials and training guidelines, to ensure this *Child Protection Policy* is available to all stakeholders.
22. Our Rainbow House will provide opportunities for children to share their views and ideas on the running of the Project, how it affects their lives and future plans. We will do this by:
- a. Conducting regular interviews with students, in small groups, to allow them to air their views on the School and report any concerns. These interviews should be conducted by a visiting Australian volunteer, where possible, or a local Zambian volunteer, (not a member of staff) and have a witness present. These interviews can take place in an area of the school grounds not being used for lessons, such as the office. It is noted that the students speak English as a second (or third) language so a local volunteer who speaks both English and Nyanja may need to be present.
 - b. Providing a child friendly complaints handling procedure that is fully explained to all students regularly, using simple, clear and understandable language. (See *Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure*). Where necessary, visual materials or images may be used, so that younger children understand. If necessary the *Complaints Form* should be translated into Nyanja.
 - c. Teaching students about their rights to a safe environment using various resources, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. (See *Notes on Child Protection – A Training Guide*). Students should also be taught about their responsibility to report anything unsafe or any problems to a trusted adult, including problems with other children (e.g. bullying, stealing or any behaviour that has a direct impact on Our Rainbow House school).
 - d. Ensuring all people working with the children, (staff and volunteers), have suitable skills including patience, tolerance and understanding, being happy and positive and showing kindness to the children and a willingness to help, treating children

with respect, understanding and calm, and allowing them to freely share their feedback and concerns.

- e. Allowing adequate time for children to communicate or make a point.

Reporting Procedures:

- 23. All suspected or known instances of child abuse, or violations of children's rights, should be reported immediately either to the Project Co-ordinator in Zambia, the Director, or another member of the Board.
- 24. When a report is received, immediate action should be taken to investigate any allegations as per the *Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure*. Investigations could include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Involving an independent third party to conduct interviews with those involved and further investigate the matter
 - b. Contacting the police or relevant authorities if necessary
- 25. Proven cases of child abuse will result in immediate dismissal from Our Rainbow House and legal action taken.
- 26. Where Our Rainbow House policies have been breached, but there is no illegal activity, the Board will make a decision as to appropriate consequences for those involved, as per the *Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure*.
- 27. It is the decision of those involved in reporting claims of child abuse, whether to report first to Our Rainbow House or directly to the appropriate authorities. In Australia this would be the Department of Child Safety Services. In Zambia this would be the Zambian Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health, or local police authorities.

AUSTRALIA

Child Safety Services

During business hours:

Contact local Regional Intake Service

Local service contact details can be found at

<https://www.aifs.gov/cfca/publications/australian-child-protection-legislation>

Outside of business hours:

Contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on

1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999.

This service also operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

ZAMBIA

Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health

Department of Social Welfare

+260211225327

OR

Zambia Police Emergency Numbers

991 LUSAKA,

TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR PROVINCES

LUSAKA

-0979-810007, -0950-180007, -0969-180008

OR VISIT LOCAL POLICE STATION.

Communication of Policy to all Stakeholders:

28. This policy and the Child Protection Code of Conduct will be made available on the Our Rainbow House website and on request from australianoffice@ourrainbowhouse.org.au.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- *Child Protection Code Of Conduct*
- *Notes on Child Protection – A Training Guide*
- *Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure*
- *Complaints Form and Poster*
- *Privacy Policy and Procedure*
- *Publications Policy and Procedure*
- *Permission to Photograph Agreement*
- *Gift Giving Policy*
- *Volunteer Application Package*

AUTHORISATION



Signature of Director:

Date: 19.09.18

(Mrs Alison Ray)