

FreeSchools World Literacy Child Protection Policy 2011

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<p>Introduction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Since July 1997, FreeSchools World Literacy (FSWL) has grown from its humble beginnings as a single classroom in Motihari, India, into an international charitable organization empowering women and children with free education in developing countries. We work cooperatively using a model that invests mainly in teachers and learning materials, borrows existing space, and makes literacy possible for thousands of children, especially girls, who would otherwise be deprived of education. Teachers, teacher’s aides, volunteers, parents, and students that work within the FreeSchools framework must be committed to the safety and well being of all children, and aware at all times that this Child Protection Policy is there to minimise the risk of any child attending a FreeSchool coming into harm or abuse.
<p>Commitment to child protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FreeSchools World Literacy is committed to the safety and well being of all children. We support the rights of all children and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is maintained. ● FSWL is committed to the protection of children from harm, abuse and exploitation. FSWL will at all times uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), giving children the right to survival, development, protection and participation. ● FSWL will attempt to identify and manage risks to a child’s safety by providing the safest possible programs and environments in which to learn.
<p>Purpose of the CPP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This CPP has been developed to provide a guide to prevent child abuse in FSWL’s programs by outlining risk management strategies to reduce the risk of children being harmed. ● The CPP aims to educate staff and other key groups about child abuse and promote a culture where everyone is committed to keeping children safe.” Staff” refers to part time, full time and those engaged such as contractors, consultants, researchers, photographers, film makers etc. “Others” refers to volunteers, visitors, board members, partnership agencies and NGOs etc. ● The CPP hopes to promote an open environment where concerns for the safety of children can be raised in a fair and just manner to protect the rights of all. To this end guidance will be provided on how to respond to allegations of child abuse. ● As a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, FreeSchools World Literacy is obliged to have policies and procedures implemented which promote the safety of children accessing its programs. ● FSWL is obliged to adhere to local and international child protection criminal laws which prohibit the abuse and exploitation of children, including child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, child labour and child pornography.

<p>Principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSWL believes that any form of child abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in accordance with UNCRC. • FSWL believes that all children have a right to be safe at all times and we have the obligation to provide safe and protective services and environments. • FSWL recognises its duty of care to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children in their care by taking proactive steps to ensure children are safe from harm and provided with child friendly programs. • Adherence to this CPP is mandatory for all staff and others, therefore all stakeholders must be made aware of the CPP and their responsibilities. • All decisions regarding the welfare and protection of children are based on the Best Interest of the Child Principle and wherever possible children will be consulted and allowed to express their views on matters affecting them. • FSWL believes that all children should be equally protected and assisted regardless of their gender, nationality, religious or political beliefs, family background, economic status, physical or mental health or criminal background.
<p>Context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child abuse is a global problem that affects both boys and girls and is often rooted in cultural, economic and social practises. Children may be abused physically, sexually, emotionally and through neglect. Children living in poverty are more at risk of exploitation and child abuse. • While most abuse occurs within the family or community, children may also experience abuse and exploitation in organisations which provide them with support and services. It may be as a result of poor planning, poor conditions, negligent management, bad work practices and FSWL must always be aware that organisations that work with children may attract child sex offenders in order to gain access to children.
<p>Definitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Duty of Care</u> Duty of Care is a common law concept that refers to the responsibility of the organisation to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm or foreseeable risk of injury. • <u>Child and Young Person</u> A child is regarded as a person under the age of 18 unless their nation recognises adulthood earlier. • <u>Child Protection</u> Is the term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent children being maltreated. • <u>Child Abuse</u> Child abuse includes physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, bullying, child labour and domestic violence, affecting children of all ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation and social background. It is recognised that sometimes professionals and other adults of trust may abuse children while working with them. Abuse can be afflicted both by men, women and other children.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Physical Abuse</u> When a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child. Forms of abuse include hitting, slapping, punching, shaking, burning, shoving, grabbing kicking or pushing and results in bruises, cuts, burns, fractures or other physical injuries. • <u>Emotional Abuse</u> May occur when a child is repeatedly threatened or frightened. It may involve “put downs”, coldness from parent or caregiver or isolation that affects the child’s emotional growth. • <u>Neglect</u> The persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with their basic needs of food, clean water, sanitation, supervision or shelter that places the child’s health or physical and emotional growth in jeopardy. • <u>Sexual Abuse</u> When a child is used by an older child, adolescent, or adult for his or her sexual gratification or stimulation – regardless of the age of consent. Thus can include non-contact or contact acts, including threats and exposure to pornography. • <u>Bullying</u> Bullying is the inappropriate use of power by an individual or a group with an intention to injure either physically or emotionally. It is usually deliberate and repetitive. It may be verbal or non-verbal. <u>Physical:</u> punching, hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, kicking, slapping etc causing hurt or injury. <u>Verbal:</u> Insulting, taunting, threatening , ridiculing etc <u>Psychological:</u> Physical intimidation, ostracism, isolation etc • <u>Exposure to Domestic Violence</u> When children witness or experience the chronic domination, coercion, intimidation or victimisation of one person by another by physical, sexual or emotional means, within an intimate relationship.
<p style="text-align: center;">Child Protection Risk Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSWL recognises that there are many potential risks to children in the delivery of our programs to the vulnerable and the disadvantaged. In recognising these risks FSWL proactively assesses and manages these risks to children to reduce the risk of harm. This is achieved by examining each program before and during implementation to ensure stringent child protection practices are upheld. Risk management is an ongoing consideration of every activity undertaken by FSWL. Staff should be continually aware of risks, to minimise opportunities where children could be exposed to harm.
<p style="text-align: center;">Code of Conduct for Working with Children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff members and others are responsible for maintaining a professional role with children, which means establishing and maintaining clear professional boundaries that serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings or a violation of the professional relationship. • All staff and others should conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role as a FSWL representative as set out below.

	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>FreeSchools World Literacy Child Safe Code of Conduct.</u></p> <p>I WILL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat all children and young people in our program with respect. • Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent the values of FSWL. • Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers. • Respect cultural differences. • Encourage open communication between all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers. • Have children and young people participate in the decisions that affect them. • Report any concerns of child abuse. • At all times be transparent in my actions and whereabouts. • Speak up when they observe concerning behaviours of colleagues. <p>I WILL NOT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children. • Use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language when speaking with a child or young person. • Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes. • Take children to their own home/hotel or sleep in the same room or bed as a child. • Smack, hit or physically assault children. • Develop sexual relationships with children or relationships with children that may be deemed exploitative or abusive. • Behave provocatively or inappropriately with a child. • Condone or participate in, behaviour of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive. • Act in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children. • Photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians. • Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way. • Seek to make contact and spend time with children outside program times unless in the company of the family. • Use FSWL computers, mobile phones, video or digital cameras inappropriately to exploit a child. • Hire minors for domestic labour.
<p>Scholarship Guidelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSWL recognises the need to implement specific guidelines to manage child protection risks within its scholarship or sponsor program. • <u>These guidelines will ensure that:</u> • All sponsors will receive clear child protection and behavioural guidelines upfront. • All visits should be arranged in advance through our office and sponsors interviewed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All visiting sponsors will sign the child protection policy. • Partner agency staff will be present at all times during the visit. • Children should not be invited to leave or taken away from their communities. • All gifts and correspondence may be screened by FSWL. • Where sponsors go against the guidelines of FSWL their sponsorship can be terminated.
Use of Children’s Images	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSWL will at all times portray children in a respectful. Appropriate and consensual manner. • Guidelines for children’s images will be in line with ACFID Code of Conduct Clause: • A child should always be portrayed in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. • Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive. • A child and its family must always be asked for consent when using their image and details should be given for use of the image. • There should be no identifying information of the child used in the publication of images with their location. • Children should be portrayed as part of their community. • Local cultural traditions should be assessed regarding restrictions for reproducing personal images. • Images should be an honest representation of the context and the facts. • When sending images electronically, file labels should not reveal identifying information. • All photographers will be screened for their suitability, including police checks where appropriate.
Employment of Staff and Volunteers	<p>FSWL is committed to child safe recruitment, selection and screening practices. These practices aim to recruit the safest and most suitable people to work in our programs.</p> <p><u>Our child safe practices include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting our child safe commitment on our website, in other promotional materials and in all job advertisements. • All applicants will receive a copy of FSWL’s CPP and be informed of the screening requirements when sent the application form. • Applicants will be required to submit a detailed application form when applying for a position. This form will ask for extensive information about the applicant’s background such as dates and places of employment, education etc. • All positions will be assessed for the level for risk in relation to contact with children. Positions working directly with children will require the highest level of screening and the applicant must possess relevant qualifications and experience’ • Job descriptions are required for all positions which describe key selection criteria and outline tasks and accountabilities. • Interviews will be conducted for all positions – face to face, telephone or video link. • Behavioural-based questions will be used to ask for examples of the candidate’s past behaviour and experiences in positions working directly working with children. • The panel will explore the candidate’s motivations for working with children, which will include value-based questions seeking information about the candidate’s attitudes to children, professional boundaries, accountability, team work and how they have responded to ethical dilemmas. • A minimum of three reference checks will be required for all preferred candidates. This would include short and long terms positions, volunteers on placement and consultants. The candidate’s most recent employer/supervisor must be one of these referees. • FSWL will verify the identity of the referee and make direct contact with each of these. • All staff and all others involved with the organisation will be required to have a police clearance or relevant criminal history checks

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> depending on the country of origin. All staff will be required to provide proof of identify including birth certificate, passport, drivers licence and relevant qualifications. Original documents are required. All positions will be subject to a probationary period. Issues of child protection will be included in staff performance reviews. FSWL reserves the right to refuse or terminate a person's employment if they pose a child protection risk.
<p>Child Abuse Reporting Processes and How to Respond to a Child Who is Being Abused</p>	<p>FSWL considers the abuse and exploitation of children to be completely unacceptable. We will take all concerns and reports of child abuse seriously and act on these reports immediately.</p> <p>It is mandatory for all FSWL staff and others to report concerns or allegations of child abuse. These concerns may relate to a child or a staff member involved in the organisation or a concern about a child or person/s outside of the organisation's programs.</p> <p>If you do have a concern you should immediately follow FSWL's child abuse reporting procedures.</p> <p>Who should report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All FSWL staff and others including people in the community and partner organizations. <p>What should be reported?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any disclosure or allegation from a child/community member or staff regarding the safety/abuse exploitation of a child. Any observation or concerning behaviour exhibited by a FSWL staff, volunteer or other relevant stakeholder that breaches the FSWL Code of Conduct for working with children. Inappropriate use of the organisation's photographic equipment or computers including evidence of child pornography. Staff engaging in suspicious behaviour that could be associated with sexual exploitation or trafficking. <p>Who to report to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child abuse reports should be made directly to the Australian based Child Protection Officer (CPO) or the FSWL President. Concerns about people engaged in sex tourism, child sex trafficking and child pornography should be reported to the Australian Federal Police. <p>When to report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child abuse concerns should be reported immediately. <p>How should you report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbally and by completing FSWL child abuse reporting sheet. <p>What will happen next?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The president of FSWL or the Child Protection Officer will discuss the allegations and then decide on any of the following steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Interview the person making the allegation and other witnesses to gather more information. Report to local police. Report to Australian Federal Police Concern handled internally if it is not a criminal matter No further action <p>FSWL will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties are treated fairly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and expediently. All reports made in good faith will be viewed as being made in the best interests of the child regardless of the outcomes of any investigation. FSWL will ensure that the interests of anyone reporting child abuse in good faith are protected.

- Any employee who intentionally makes false and malicious allegations, will face disciplinary action.
- The rights and welfare of the child is of prime importance. Every effort must be made to protect the rights and safety of the child.
- Children and community members with whom FSWL works will be provided with information about how to report any child protection concerns about FSWL staff members and others.

Responding to a disclosure by a child.

When a child tells you that he or she has been abused, they may be feeling scared, guilty, ashamed, angry and powerless. You, in turn, may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger and sometimes disbelief.

- If a child discloses abuse, whatever the outcome, the child must be taken seriously
- It is important for you to remain calm and in control and to reassure the child/young person that something will be done to keep him or her safe.
- When a child or young person's discloses they are being harmed you can show your care and concern for the child/young person by:
 - Listening carefully
 - Telling the child/young person you believe him or her
 - Telling the child/young person it is not their fault and he/she is not responsible for the abuse
 - Telling the child/young person you are pleased he/she told you.
 - You will not be helping the child/young person if you:
 - Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone
 - Push the child/young person into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what the child/young person wants to tell you and not to conduct an investigation (beware of asking any leading questions as this may prejudice any subsequent investigation)
 - Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child/young person with others not directly involved.
 - Try and obtain some details such as where the abuse is taking place, school, home, work etc; is it currently occurring or did occur in the past, name of perpetrator if possible but not necessary.
 - It is possible that some children or young people will make a disclosure and then ask you not to tell anyone. It is important you seek guidance from your Senior Staff member to discuss how the child or young person can be supported and the disclosure managed.

Other actions to take:

- Protect the child - Once an allegation is made there should be an immediate response that protects the child from further potential abuse or victimization. The child may require medical assistance or counselling support. Where possible the child should remain in the place of residence or relevant program. Exceptions may be made where the child is deemed to be at risk of victimization by peers as a result of the allegation or because the alleged abuse has occurred in home-based care. If the child is in immediate danger you should make arrangements for the child to go to a safe place.
- Distance the alleged perpetrator - The best interest of the child may warrant the standing down of a staff member or volunteer. The manager should recommend the appropriate action in writing to the CEO. Any staff member stood down in this manner continues to receive full pay - this measure recognizes that that the member is entitled to a just process that does not pre-judge guilt or innocence. Any volunteers who are stood down should similarly receive any reasonable reimbursement of costs.
- Confidentiality - All reports, the names of people involved and the details will remain confidential. Only the in-country Manager, CPO and the President of FSWL and the people involved will be informed of the report. Details will be released on a "need to know" basis or when required by relevant local or Australian law or a notification to police or child protection authorities is made.

Involving Children	FSLW is committed to child and youth participation. We will do this by providing opportunities for children's views to be heard and incorporated into our policies and programs. Children will be asked for their feedback about staff and services. They will be consulted in the development and review of the CPP and will be asked to contribute to the child safe code of conduct in regards to what they consider to be appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. Children will also be informed about the FSLW child abuse reporting process and who to contact if they are at risk, have been abused or are concerned about another child.
Educating FSLW on Child Abuse and the Child Protection Policy	FSLW is committed to educating staff and others in Child Protection, in how to reduce risks and how to create child safe environments. We will promote child safe practices which keep children safe in the organisation and in their own community, and provide information about child protection to the children and communities in which we work. This information will include reporting child abuse if they have concerns about an FSLW member of staff or other representative in the organisation.
Reviewing the Child Protection Policy	FSLW Child protection Policy will be reviewed every two years. The Child Protection Officer will manage the review and it will be presented to the board for full consideration.