



Family Alliance: Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Every child is potentially at risk of abuse and exploitation. Family Alliance recognizes that the children with whom and for whom we work are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to discrimination and marginalization relating to their disability, socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, caste or living situation. Abuse can be perpetrated on a child of any age, and can happen to and between children. Perpetrators can be women and men, boys and girls.

The Child Protection Policy sets out our common belief and principles and describes the steps that will be taken by Family Alliance to protect children involved in our activities.

In developing this policy we have drawn upon ECPAT's Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe Coalition Toolkit and referred to the work of other international organizations working within the child protection sector. Family Alliance recognizes the International Standards for Child Protection which provide a benchmark for agencies and organizations working with children.

Our Belief

Family Alliance believes that every child has a right to live free from abuse and exploitation.

We uphold the rights of children as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)¹ and believe that all children have a right to protection:

'...from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has the care of the child.'

Everybody has the responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse, abandonment, neglect, exploitation, violence and discrimination.

Our Approach

Family Alliance has adopted policies² and procedures to ensure that all of its staff and representatives are knowledgeable about child protection risks and aware of the specific measures that they must take in order to protect children in the work that they do on behalf of the organization.

Family Alliance in general does not provide direct services to children. We support and endorse our partner's organizational child protection policies which are appropriate to the

¹ UNCRC 1989

² Child Protection Policy; Visual Images Policy

specific country context in which they operate and the vulnerable groups of children which they serve.

Family Alliance's child protection policies and procedures are in line with the UNCRC definition of a child as being anyone under the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. The organization acts in accordance with the UNCRC; our decisions and actions in response to child protection concerns will be guided by the principles of the 'best interest of the child' and of do no harm.

It is not Family Alliance's role to determine whether a child has been abused. Our role is to refer concerns of abuse to the relevant authorities in the country where the incident has been reported.

All information relating to child protection concerns will be treated as confidential. No retaliation or punitive action will be taken against anyone who, in good faith, raises a child protection concern (please see Family Alliance Whistle Blowing Policy).

The child protection policies and procedures have been endorsed by the Board of Trustees and clarify the organization's stance on and commitment to protecting children.

The policies and procedures will be available on our website and shared with other organizations or individuals Family Alliance works with as well as with anyone requesting a copy. We aim to continuously improve our policies and procedures and ensure that staff have access to adequate training and resources in order to effectively uphold our Child Protection Policy.

Our Commitment

Family Alliance has a commitment to protect all children from abuse and exploitation and taking the necessary actions when children are in such situations. The abuse of children happens in all countries and in all societies across the world.

Our principles

- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- Child abuse is never acceptable
- We all have a commitment and responsibility to support the care and protection of children with whom and for whom we work
- We listen to and act on the views and opinions of children
- We address all reports of actual or alleged abuse based on our policies and procedures, irrespective of the nature of the referral, who the allegations are about or who the referrer is or where s/he is from.
- We treat as confidential all information relating to a child protection concern
- All of our actions and decisions will be guided by the 'best interests of the child' and the principle of do no harm
- All child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights.

Our Standards³

³ Keeping Children Safe 2012

- We will implement all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised
- We will ensure where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, appropriate actions are taken to address those concerns
- We will work to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies
- We will ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities to protect children and able to recognize risk factors
- We will ensure that child protection forms an integral part of all stages of the activities we undertake.

Scope

The Child Protection Policies and Procedures apply to all 'staff' deemed in its broadest sense as employees, volunteers, interns, board members and other representatives of the organization such as consultants, journalists and photographers commissioned on behalf of Family Alliance who may come into contact with children or data concerning children.

When referencing 'activities' this encompasses all activities undertaken on behalf of Family Alliance by both its partners and staff. Family Alliance does not provide direct services to children. All partners who receive funding from Family Alliance must have their own child protection policies and procedures in place.

The responsibility for managing and reviewing this policy in relation to the work of the organization lies with the CEO of Family Alliance and the designated Child Protection Officer. The responsibility for managing and reviewing this policy lies with the CEO.

The policies and procedures shall apply equally to all staff carrying out work on behalf of Family Alliance, irrespective of location or activity.

This policy deals with the protection of children as defined under the UNCRC. Family Alliance's actions will always be in the best interest of the child.

Our understanding of child abuse includes⁴:

Physical abuse of a child is the actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents (WHO, 1999).

Sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to, the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; the exploitative use of children in

⁴ These sub-categories of child maltreatment and their definitions were devised following an extensive review of different countries' definitions of child maltreatment and a 1999 WHO consultation on child abuse prevention.

pornographic performances, internet pictures and materials (WHO, 1999). The recent use of technology such as the internet by adults, to entice children to meet or participate in virtual sex, is also an abuse.

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can reach their full potential in the context of the society in which the child lives. There may also be acts toward the child that cause, or have a high probability of causing, harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Neglect and negligent treatment is the inattention or omission by the caregiver, to provide for the development of the child in: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers. In addition which causes, or has a high probability of causing, harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm, as much as is feasible (WHO, 1999).

Sexual and commercial exploitation- Sexual exploitation is the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the exploitation of another (for example child prostitution and trafficking of children for sexual abuse and exploitation). Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labor. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development (WHO, 1999).

Abuse of children in armed conflict- Children are affected by armed conflict in many different ways; the United Nations Security Council has identified six categories of violations: killing or maiming of children; recruitment or use of children as child soldiers; sexual violence against children; attacks against schools or hospitals; denial of humanitarian access for children; and abduction of children. Children associated with the armed groups and armed forces are defined as any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force of armed group in any capacity including, but not limited to, cooks, porters, messengers and those accompanying such groups, other than as purely family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. ⁵.

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family or in an institution or within their own community, by a person known to them or, more rarely, by someone they don't know.

⁵ Adopted at the Symposium on the Prevention of Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa, organized by UNICEF in cooperation with the NGO Sub-group of the NGO Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Cape Town, 30 April 1997

Prevention

Recruitment and Employment

- The job posting should make reference to Family Alliance's child protection policy and screening process.
- All job interviews will specifically contain questions relating to the candidate's previous history and suitability of working for a child rights organization.
- All appointments shall be subject to two satisfactory references from previous employers. Where a candidate has previously worked for a children's organization a reference will be specifically requested from this organization.
- Verification will be conducted to ensure references provided are genuine and referees will be explicitly requested to confirm there have not been any child protection concerns relating to the candidate in question.
- Verification will be conducted of unexplained gaps in employment history through checking and verifying additional references to eliminate possibility of previous dismissal and/or periods in custody as a result of suspicious activity.
- All staff will be required to provide a police clearance certificate, to undergo a police check for criminal convictions or, where this is not possible, to sign a declaration (Annex 1) that they have no criminal convictions relating to offences against children.⁶
- All staff must sign the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct before commencing work for Family Alliance.

Training and Awareness

- Child Protection Training, including awareness raising and reporting systems, will be provided to staff on an annual basis
- All new staff will be given an introduction to the child protection policies and procedures as part of their job induction. This should take place within 3 months of commencing employment
- All staff will be provided with a hard copy of the child protection policies and procedures

Visitors to grantee projects – donors, media and other NGOs, staff, board members, consultants, photographers

- Visitors must be briefed prior to or immediately on arrival and sign the Family Alliance and the relevant host's child protection policy, Code of Conduct and Visual Images Policy
- All visitors must be accompanied at all times by staff from the host.

Visual Images and written content

Family Alliance has a duty of care to the children who feature in all visual and written material and at all times must put their interests first. Any portrayal of children and their experiences must protect their identity, preserve their dignity and be accurate, balanced and

⁶ For consultants contracted by Family Alliance who will not have direct access to children or any sensitive data relating to children, signing a declaration would be sufficient.

fair. Any visual or written material will be gathered in accordance with Family Alliance's Visual Images Policy. A brief summary of the policy:

- Fully informed verbal consent (in their first language) must be obtained from parents/guardians or carers and the children before taking and using photographs, film footage, audio recordings or personal histories.
- The visual identity of any child will be obscured if dissemination of the image could make the child vulnerable to stigma, discrimination, abuse, violence or exploitation.
- Visual images or written material will not enable the specific location of a child to be identified - either from the imagery or accompanying captions/text.
- Portrayals of children should be accurate and balanced, with emphasis upon their dignity
- All content and data (names, photos, and case studies) will be stored securely, and password protected in a central place managed by staff.

Ramifications of Misconduct

- Any child protection concerns relating to inappropriate conduct of Family Alliance staff or volunteers will be dealt with under the Family Alliance HR policies and disciplinary procedures.
- Any child protection concerns relating to inappropriate conduct of a Family Alliance consultant will result in immediate suspension of the contract whilst an investigation into the claim is undertaken.
- Failure to act upon any child protection concern (reported or suspected) in relation to a third party will also be deemed to be professional misconduct that constitutes a failure on the part of Family Alliance to protect children from real, potential or suspected harm. Any staff member or consultant who is found to be concealing information brought to their attention in relation to child protection will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Reporting and Responding

Reporting Mechanism for Concerns and Referrals

The designated Child Protection Officer is the first point of contact for reporting and referring concerns about child protection issues and also a resource for staff and members to share concerns and discuss appropriate actions. The Officer reports to the CEO of Family Alliance, who is responsible for the implementation of the policies and procedures.

See Annex 2 Child Protection Referral Form

- Staff will be informed of and have access to a designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) who is the-Business Support Manager. This person will be accessible to discuss concerns and dilemmas related to child protection and to receive any child protection related referrals.
- Staff have a responsibility to notify, without any delay, the CPO of any concerns that they may have about the safety and well being of any child or the worrying behaviour of any adult, irrespective of how they know the adult.
- Staff have a responsibility to notify the CPO of any concerns regarding the behaviour of colleagues

- No retaliation or punitive action will be taken against anyone who, in good faith, raises a child protection concern.
- All information in relation to child protection concerns will be kept confidential. Any information shared will be done so on a 'need to know' basis and with the knowledge of those concerned.
- Any records related to child protection referrals and concerns will be kept in a central location, with access to this strictly limited. If action is taken against a member of staff then a note of this will be made on their confidential personnel file, and will be disclosed by the CEO if a reference is sought.
- Where judged necessary, in line with the reporting matrix, appropriate referrals will be made to the relevant organization in the country where the concern has been raised. The concern will then be investigated in line with the organization's child protection policy and a referral made to the most relevant protection and investigating agency if appropriate. A report will be shared with the Family Alliance within 1 month of the referral.
- Once a concern has been reported it will be the responsibility of the CPO and CEO to determine an appropriate response.

Disclosures from children

Family Alliance will ensure that it will handle disclosures from children with sensitivity and will take alleged abuse seriously. If a child or young person informs you that they are being or have been abused, you are advised to:

- Listen to the information being shared, but don't press for further information
- Ask open questions, and only enough questions to give you an idea of the facts? E.g. "Can you tell me what happened?", "Is there anything else you want to tell me"
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Let them know that you will need to pass on the information to another person, what you will do next and that you will let them know what happens
- Do not conduct any investigations or question the alleged abuser
- Assess whether there is an immediate risk to the child or young person over the next day or two. Take steps to mitigate these risks, seek advice from the CPO
- Complete a Referral Form and pass this onto the CPO immediately.

Monitoring and Review

Implementation of the policy will be monitored in accordance with the organization's monitoring and evaluation framework.

Child protection policies and procedures will be reviewed every 2 years by the Board.

Complaints

The Child Protection policies have been put in place to ensure that Family Alliance is not supporting activities or employing staff who put children at risk of abuse.

Family Alliance Code of Conduct

As child rights' organizations Family Alliance has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that the children with whom we work or have an impact upon are safe. We are committed to upholding the highest standards of behaviours in and outside of the work environment.

The Code of Conduct serves to protect the reputation of Family Alliance and the people who work within, or on behalf of, the organization.

All staff of Family Alliance who are in contact with children **MUST NEVER**:

- discriminate, prejudice or display oppressive behaviour or language in relation to: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views;
- spend time alone with children away from others;
- develop physical/sexual/exploitative relationships with children under 18 years of age, regardless of local laws;
- develop relationships with children under 18 years of age, which could in any way be deemed abusive or exploitative, regardless of local laws;
- hold, kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate, sexually provocative or culturally insensitive manner;
- do things of a personal nature which the child can do themselves such as toileting, bathing and dressing;
- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade;
- condone or participate in behaviour which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- behave in a manner which is abusive, exploitative, inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- or seek to deliberately or intentionally support or develop any initiatives which contravene the rights of children as laid out in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Non-compliance with the code above will be taken seriously. In accordance with the Child Protection Policy immediate reporting and investigation of all concerns and suspicions is mandatory and will include referral of cases to the police and/or social services if child rights laws have been violated.

Family Alliance Self Disclosure Form

All staff and representatives connected with Family Alliance, and who will come into contact with children or their personal details, must complete and sign this declaration. This information will be held confidentially and stored in a secure location.

1. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offence? Please include cautions and bind-overs as well as convictions.

Yes No Don't know

2. Have you ever been the subject of a disciplinary hearing by any professional body?

Yes No Don't know

3. Have you ever been the subject of any allegation, concern or disciplinary process in relation to your contact or care of children by any official body?

Yes No Don't know

4. Have you ever been dismissed or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to allegations of inappropriate behaviour towards a child?

Yes No Don't know

5. Have you ever been disqualified from working with children or young people?

Yes No Don't know

If you have answered 'yes' or "don't know" to any of these questions please include a statement setting out the details and context of the situation in a separate envelope addressed to the relevant member of staff undertaking your recruitment.

This declaration must be signed and returned to the designated Manager prior to commencing any direct work with children and young people.

I confirm that the above information given by me is correct and that I consent to my personal data being processed and kept for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Name

Role

Organization

Signature

Date (incl. year)

Child Protection Referral Form- Internal

For use by staff and representative of Family Alliance.

All information will be treated as confidential and stored in a secure location. Please complete this form providing as much information as possible and return it to the CPO

About You

Your name, position, organization and email address:

If You Are Reporting a Disclosure from a Child

Name of the Child:

Sex and age:

Who does the child live with?

Address /place of residence (and telephone if available):

Are you reporting your own concern or passing on those of others, give details:

Brief description of what has prompted those concerns (date, location, time of specific incidences):

Observations made by you (physical, behavioural or indirect):

Have you spoken to the child? If so what was said (if possible, use the direct language of the child)?

Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If so give details:

Have you consulted a government department or any other agency, or reported this to anyone else? (Give details, name, organization, date, time):

Does the Child require any medical attention?

If You Are Reporting a Concern Regarding a Representative of Family Alliance

Name of the individual, position, and organization:

Are you reporting your own concern or passing on those of others, give details:

Brief description of what has prompted those concerns (date, location, time of specific incidences):

Observations made by you (physical, behavioural or indirect):

Name

Signature

Date

Annex 3

Reporting Matrix

The matrix outlines who the first point of contact is for reporting and decision making for any child protection concerns, and the subsequent steps to be taken and the timeframe with which actions should take place. Partners/grantees must comply with their organizational child protection policies and reporting procedures when concerns are raised about any of its staff, representatives, partners or communities with which it works whilst simultaneous also reporting the concern to the Family Alliance CPO or CEO if the concern relates to a project or activities supported by Family Alliance

Nature of concern/referral	First point of reporting and decision making	Subsequent Action Required	Information shared	Timeframe
Tier 1 General Enquiry	First Contacted Staff	Letter/email in response to general enquiry If general response not appropriate consult Child Protection Officer (CPO)		5 days
Tier 2 Non specific/vague allegations	First Contacted Staff receiving info through website or mail to complete referral form and contact CPO Staff, consultants and partners to complete referral form and contact CPO	Letter/email in response to allegation in line with standards responses and if required consult with CPO CPO to undertake actions as deemed necessary and coordination with member where appropriate	CPO	72 hours
Tier 3 Specific names and locations mentioned	Staff, partner, consultant to complete referral form and contact CPO	CPO to undertake actions as deemed necessary and coordination with partner where appropriate	CEO of Family Alliance	Initial decision on action within 48 hours

<p>Tier 4 Sensitive- involving Family Alliance staff, board members, consultants, partners/grantees</p>	<p>Staff, partner, consultant to complete referral form and contact Child Protection Officer and contact CEO of Family Alliance in collaboration with Child Protection Officer, in absence of CEO contact CPO</p>	<p>Actions as deemed necessary and coordination with partners where appropriate (minimum action as deemed necessary until CEO available)</p>	<p>Chair of Board of Family Alliance and Chair of Board of partner where necessary</p>	<p>Initial decision on action within 48 hours</p>
---	---	--	--	---