



## Child Protection Policy

### Our Policy is based on:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- DFAT Child Protection Policy (Australian Government)
- Lukautim Pikinini Act (GoPNG)

### Purpose of Policy:

This policy is in place to protect the children of the communities that Links of Hope (LOH) works in, along with:

- Maintain an organisational culture of child safety
- Set a precedence that child protection is paramount to all engaged with LOH
- Promote positive interactions and mitigate negative impacts when working with children
- Prevent any child abuse from occurring within LOH programming and facilities
- Commit that all parties included in the policy are aware of their responsibilities towards children
- Establish reporting procedures and protocols for preventing child abuse and detecting misconduct
- Provide guidance to LOH staff and representatives as to procedures that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation, including by those in stakeholder organisations LOH works with
- Outline a clear response protocol should misconduct occur
- Provide clear guidelines for LOH management of misconduct and assure that all cases will be heard in a fair and confidential manner

### Who is included in the policy:

- All LOH staff and volunteers must adhere to all aspects outlined by the policy
- All LOH Board members must adhere to and provide jury over the policy
- Visitors to LOH programming and facilities must adhere to all aspects outlined by the policy
- Parents and caregivers participating in LOH programming must adhere to all aspects outlined by the policy
- All families enrolled on the LOH Sponsorship program must adhere to all aspects outlined by the policy
- Stakeholders and partners who are reporting with or on behalf of LOH must adhere to all aspects outlined by the policy
- All children enrolled in LOH programming are protected by the policy
- All children in communities where LOH is present are protected by the policy

### Key Policy Components:

Those who are included in the policy, or are undertaking business on behalf of LOH, that involves working or contact with children are expected to adhere to the following behaviours\*:

- Treat all children with respect
- Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- Not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working near children
- Not invite unaccompanied children into private residences, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger



- Not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case the supervisor's permission must be obtained, and ensuring that another adult is present if possible (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children)
- Never use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material through any medium
- Not use physical punishment on children
- Not hire children for domestic or other labour: which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage; which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities; or which places them at significant risk of injury
- Comply with all relevant legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate LOH procedures
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or occurs during association with LOH
- Be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviours that could be perceived by others as child exploitation and abuse
- Ensure wilful participation in LOH programming on behalf of the child

\*These behaviours are not intended to interfere with normal family interactions.

#### **Children's Privacy:**

The protection of a child's privacy refers to private data of the child as well as pictures, texts, films, etc. about children which are produced for publicity purposes. Any information about a child's history, medical condition and family background has to be stored carefully within LOH administration. These data are to be handled confidentially and with discretion. Children and even their parents or caregivers might not always be aware of a specific form of emotional abuse which might occur in fundraising, public relations or communication. A child's privacy is, for instance, violated by the production of unauthorised publicity material (pictures, films, texts, etc.) featuring the boy or girl; or by presenting sensitive information within a context that reveals the child's identity. Links of Hope, "respects the children's right to privacy."

When photographing or filming a child or using children's images for Links of Hope purposes:

- Take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child
- Obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children 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
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts
- Ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form
- We do not actively ask children to do or say anything that might make them feel displayed as 'objects of pity'
- We handle children's names carefully, especially in connection with sensitive information
- No label of a child's health or socioeconomic status may be assigned to media

Following these guidelines ensures the respect of the children's privacy. Based on these guidelines, those included in this policy who are directly involved with children have the right and obligation to protect the children from any attempted violations of their privacy – be they intentional or not.



### Response Protocol:

If you witness misconduct against the policy:

- All people have a duty to report misconduct
- Any adult who withholds information or covers up any kind of abuse is considered an accomplice
- Reporting chain of command:
  - LOH program participants or community members report to the immediate acting person on duty
  - LOH staff and volunteers report any observed or previously reported misconduct to their immediate supervisor, which should then be reported to the Operations Manager or a Board representative
  - If a participant, staff member, or volunteer is a witness to misconduct on the part of an LOH employee or volunteer, this should be reported to the Operations Manager or a Board representative
- All parties included in the policy are obliged to immediately provide any information he or she has regarding a possible case of child abuse to a member of the child protection team

If there is report of misconduct against the Child Protection Policy:

- The Board takes all reports seriously; children, co-workers, or other adults who make reports are supported and protected; a person accused of child abuse is given a fair hearing
- In each case, an anonymous member of the Board will be responsible for hearing the case
- In the event of a conflict of interest, a third party will be elected to oversee the case
- In the case that the accused, staff, volunteer, or board member, is found guilty of misconduct, he or she will undergo graduated disciplinary action in accordance with the extent of the misconduct and may risk being excused from their duties with Links of Hope
- In the case that the accused, participant of LOH programming, is found guilty of misconduct, he or she will undergo graduated disciplinary action in accordance with the extent of the misconduct and may risk being excused from future LOH programming
- In the case that a stakeholder or partner is found guilty of misconduct, that partnership may be ended
- In the case that the accused has committed a felony as per the Lukautim Pikinini Act, he or she will be reported to the relevant authorities

Confidentiality is of utmost importance when dealing with cases of abuse; information is to be handled with sensitivity. The child or any other person who gives information regarding child abuse must be made aware that if he or she reports the case, information about the alleged misconduct will be shared only with those authorised to have access to this information.

### Policy Induction:

- LOH will conduct a Child Protection Policy orientation with all of its staff members and volunteers on an annual basis, where all participants will sign contracts agreeing to the Child Protection Policy; failure to sign said contract may result in dismissal
- LOH will conduct a Child Protection Policy sensitization workshop with all parents and caregivers participating in LOH programming, on an annual basis
- With the induction of any new staff, volunteers, or board members, he or she will receive a Child Protection Policy orientation, commiserate with the workshop
- By signing on to be a sponsor, all LOH sponsors agree to the Children's Privacy clause as per the Child Protection Policy
- All Board members will sign contracts agreeing to the Child Protection Policy



Acknowledgement of understanding and acceptance of Links of Hope's Child Protection Policy:

Signature: .....

Print Name: .....

Date: ...../...../2019