

## Policy for Keeping Children Safe

### **What is child safeguarding?**

Child safeguarding refers to an organization's responsibility to ensure employees, volunteers and donors do not harm children or expose them to undue risk or abuse.

### **Introduction**

Children Believe values and upholds the rights and dignity of every child. We're committed to safeguarding children from intended and unintended harm.

This document is intended to emphasize the importance of safeguarding children and minimizing the chance of employees, volunteers and donors being incorrectly accused of inappropriate behaviour or abuse.

### **Scope**

A Vulnerable Sector Check is mandatory for Children Believe Board members, full- and part-time staff, volunteers, interns, donors and other affiliated persons who may have direct contact with children or access to child information within the context of our community-development and sponsorship programs.

### **Partner organizations**

Our partners will develop, implement and adhere to their own child-safeguarding policies, as per the signed memorandum of agreement with Children Believe, and these policies will be consistent with the scope of our Child Safeguarding Policy.

### **Recruitment**

Our recruitment procedures ensure the best possible people work with Children Believe. Applicants are screened, and all recruits agree to abide by our Child Safeguarding Policy.

### **Training**

We're committed to increasing awareness about child-protection. All personnel are trained on reporting child-protection allegations and procedures.

### **Reporting and response**

A clear reporting procedure has been developed and documented to make it quick and easy to handle allegations or concerns. All policy adherents, partner personnel, children and community members have an obligation to report witnessed or suspected child abuse.

### **Sponsor visits**

All visits must be coordinated through Children Believe's Markham, Ont., office. Visitors must follow our Child Safeguarding Policy and will:

- submit a cleared Vulnerable Sector Check and all other required documentation
- be familiar with Children Believe's Policy for Keeping Children Safe

All visits will be supervised by a Children Believe staff member or appointed representative and will take place in a public area, such as a community centre or restaurant.

Children Believe reserves the right to cancel a visit or end the sponsorship relationship at any time, if there is negative impact on or concern for the child.

*\*Please note: This is not Children Believe's comprehensive Child Safeguarding Policy.*

## **Safeguarding and sponsorship**

### **Do**

- treat children with dignity and respect
- use non-violent tactics for managing children
- acknowledge children have rights as individuals
- strive to understand the context in which children live
- be visible when with children
- be aware of situations, which may present risks to children
- respect a child's privacy
- obtain consent of the child or guardian before taking a photo, and ensure it maintains the child's self-respect
- safeguard information that could be used to identify a child or their location (eg. GPS, full name or child's community)
- ensure children know how to raise concerns and report abuse
- raise your concerns about child-protection
- inform children and make them aware of their rights
- empower children to tell their stories, paying attention to their right to privacy and confidentiality
- ensure children are appropriately clothed in photos that do not portray them as victims

### **Don't**

- spend time alone with children
- show favouritism to one child
- exchange your address, phone number or email with your sponsored child or their family
- communicate directly with your sponsored child via social media, email, skype or phone
- offer to take children from the community or suggest they visit you
- arrange an overnight stay in the child's community
- have physical contact with a child without their permission
- degrade, insult or disrespect a child, their family or their culture
- condone or participate in illegal or unsafe behaviour

### **Never**

- physically or sexually abuse a child
- enter into a physical or sexual relationship with a minor (under 18)