

# YOUTH WITH A MISSION CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Working Document #4                      15 September 2008

Ratified by GLT August 2007, Jeju, Korea

Preamble and reference page amendments added and agreed in August 2008 Kona, Hawaii

Preamble - This child protection guideline is for children under the protection of the organization Youth with a Mission and is to assist YWAM in developing a local child protection guideline. There are numerous organizations that inform us of our godly responsibilities toward children in our care as well as the laws of the nations in which we live. The domain of our authority is organizational for children under the protection of YWAM and YWAM does not have authority nor assume authority for the function of parenting for the domain of family for YWAM staff, students or volunteers. YWAM legal entities are responsible to adapt and apply these guidelines with their Boards, leadership teams and councils within their specific context.

## 1.1 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT:

1.1. YWAM is committed to the welfare of children and youth worldwide. YWAM students, staff and leaders are expected to engage in positive supportive relationships with children, young and older adults in all aspects of our mission. YWAM opposes all forms of child exploitation and child abuse, including child sexual abuse.

1.2. YWAM believes that all children have value, worth and dignity as they are made in the image of God. Thus we believe that all children should be treated with respect and cared for in ways that honor God.

1.3. YWAM believes that all children have a right to protection from abuse irrespective of race, social background, age, gender, skin color, disability, religion, nationality or beliefs.

1.4. YWAM believes that child abuse and exploitation is wrong. Keeping silent is also wrong if it is known beyond reasonable doubt that a child is being abused or exploited.

1.5. YWAM believes in the importance of child protection and that preventative measures should be made to not only protect children from abuse by any YWAM staff, students, friends and/or visitors but also to protect any involved with YWAM and the organization's integrity.

1.6. YWAM believes that children have the right to speak and be heard. Therefore, where appropriate, children will also be included as stakeholders and in baseline surveys.

1.7. This child protection guideline was ratified by the Global Leadership Team (GLT) in August 2007 and amended in August 2008, it will then be distributed and communicated to all operating locations, leadership teams, schools, and YWAM ministries. All locations will review this policy for adherence to local laws. It will be reviewed internationally every 3 years.

1.8. The different forms of child abuse are described:

1.8.1. Physical Abuse: Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury, or suffering, to a child, including deliberate hitting, beating, shaking, throwing, burning, drowning, suffocating or poisoning.

1.8.2. Mental/Emotional Abuse: Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioral development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection.

May involve conveying to the child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate and cause children to feel frightened, in danger and corrupted.

1.8.3. Sexual Abuse: Actual or likely exploitation of a child or adolescent, representing the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate social taboos or family rules, such as touching a child's genitals, forcing child to watch or take part in pornography or coercing the child to have sex.

## 2. BEHAVIORAL PROTOCOLS:

2.1. YWAM expects all its staff, students, short-term volunteers, friends and visitors to give respect and dignity to all children associated with the work of YWAM.

2.2. All YWAM staff, students, short-term volunteers and friends visiting program sites must sign a statement to say that they have read the policy, will respect it and understand that action will be taken in cases of inappropriate behavior.

2.3. Visitors to YWAM project and program areas will not be left unsupervised. YWAM staff, students and short term volunteers can be left unsupervised at the project areas if they have signed the YWAM Child Protection Policy.

2.4. YWAM staff, students, short-term volunteers, supporters and visitors will never be alone with beneficiary children who are not their own offspring in a private place that cannot be readily seen by other responsible adults.

2.5. Beneficiary children (under the care of YWAM, ie. Children's home, orphanage, etc.) will not stay overnight with a YWAM staff, students, short term volunteer, supporter, unless consented to by custodial parent in writing or placed in custody of YWAM staff by the local social services and/or by a court of law.

2.6. YWAM staff, student, short-term volunteers, visitors and supporter will not touch a child in an inappropriate way or expose them to inappropriate materials such as pornographic videos and literature (A general guideline for touching inappropriately is not to touch children in areas that would normally be covered by shorts and t-shirt, but also includes kissing and tickling in an inappropriate way.)

2.7. YWAM staff, students, short-term volunteers, supporters and visitors will not discipline a beneficiary child in a humiliating way. (ie. hitting, slapping, beating, and no verbal abuse such as shouting, swearing or use of demeaning language).

2.8. YWAM staff, short-term volunteers, visitors and donors will not violate the rights of a child.

2.9. YWAM drivers will not take a beneficiary child home without at least one other person being present in the vehicle, unless the child is a family member or custodial parent consents in writing.

2.10. YWAM staff, students, short-term volunteers, friends and visitors will not have a beneficiary child alone at his/her own home.

2.11. Adults will always be responsible for their behavior and cannot blame the child, even if the child 'provokes' or acts in a 'seductive' way.

2.12. If protocols are broken, the person involved will be disciplined and may lose his/her job and may be subject to criminal proceedings.

## 3. RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING:

3.1. All YWAM staff, students and short-term volunteers will be screened according to local standards, with a minimum of 2 reference checks during their recruitment period, including a police check where possible.

3.2. Location, team and or school leadership agree to inform next leadership level immediately if new information arises that casts doubt on the team member's trustworthiness with children. Such information would be treated as confidential and disclosed to the individual team member for appropriate action.

3.3. All YWAM students, team members and staff will be carefully and properly screened during their recruitment period using an updated application form, which includes a page to be signed agreeing to the Child Protection Policy and stating that there have been no previous convictions for abuse against children, violent behavior or other convictions that would raise concern about behavior towards children.

3.4. YWAM projects will ensure that all the references of all staff for work are checked, preferably by telephone, and recorded in the staff files, before the new staff member is invited to take the position.

3.5. Information on the child protection policies must be introduced before and on acceptance of employment.

3.6. YWAM projects will not employ or accept as volunteers any children under 13.(Need to take a look at Kings Kid policies in regard to their program)

3.7. YWAM projects will not employ or accept as volunteers any children aged between 13 and 15 years for more than no more than 3 hours/day, 18 hours/week or no more than 8 hours/day, 40 hours/week during school closures.

3.8. YWAM projects will not employ or accept as volunteers any children aged between 16 and 18 years for more than 40 hours per week.

3.9. YWAM staff, students, short-term volunteers, friends and visitors will not employ personal domestic staff under the age of 16.

#### 4. RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS:

4.1. YWAM staff, students, short-term volunteers, friends and donors will be encouraged to be open in discussing the potential of abuse within the organization.

4.2. YWAM prohibits any retaliation against any staff or one employed in a YWAM related program who, in good faith, has registered a complaint under this procedure.

4.3. There will be a designated regional people to be responsible for dealing with child protection issues within the organization.

4.4. Where an allegation has been made that a YWAM staff, student, short-term volunteer or visitor has abused a child, YWAM will take the appropriate action to deal with the situation, as outlined in the procedural plan of action for crisis situations. If the laws of the local jurisdiction require to do so, an immediate report of the alleged abuse will be made to the police or government social services agency.

4.4.1. YWAM staff, students, short term volunteers, donors or visitors are required to report suspected abuse to either the project or location leader. In situations where that would be inappropriate the alleged abuse should be reported to the national leader. All reports of alleged abuse will be investigated. The investigation process will be documented and a written report of findings will be completed within 30 days of the allegation. Outside expertise or legal authorities may be involved. The National Director will be informed of all child abuse allegations within 3 days of the allegation. Any

allegation of abuse involving a staff member will be reported to the Regional Director within 10 days of the allegation.

4.4.2. Conclusion of investigation: If an investigation leads to the conclusion that abuse has occurred, then the appropriate legal authorities will be notified if they have not previously been involved in the investigation. If a YWAM staff, student or short term volunteer is involved in a finding of abuse, then they will be terminated immediately and subject to criminal prosecution. Where no evidence of abuse has been found, the informant, alleged victim and alleged perpetrator will be notified.

4.4.3. The allegation will be kept confidential, with only those directly involved having the appropriate information.

4.4.4. YWAM staff, students or short-term volunteers who are found violating confidentiality of allegations will receive a written warning.

4.4.5. YWAM will work in cooperation with child welfare and legal organizations during the course of an investigation as appropriate.

4.4.6. Both victim and perpetrator will be treated with respect from the start of the process to the end.

4.4.7. YWAM will not dismiss a child's accusation of abuse without appropriate investigation, no matter who the alleged perpetrator is.

4.4.8. The alleged perpetrator will be treated without prejudice.

4.4.9. YWAM will work in cooperation with other organizations in a case where the child involved requires extra protection.

4.4.10. Records will be made of all facts related to the investigation and allegation, and these will be carefully and confidentially filed by the YWAM National and/or Regional Director.

4.4.11. YWAM will designate a point person to deal with the media and the police. Consideration will be made before an investigation is started by the national leadership team about how the police and media will be informed/involved.

## 5. COMMUNICATION:

5.1 YWAM's communication about children will reflect images that preserve their value, dignity and self-worth and are decent and respectful, not seeking to exploit their situation.

5.2 YWAM will take special care to protect children's identities and specific geographic location in public relations materials. Therefore, to protect their identity YWAM will only post children's first names and will not distribute their last name or address.

5.3 Those speaking on the behalf of YWAM will make all possible efforts to ensure that the message communicated is that in all circumstances, children are made in the image of God, valuable, to be loved and honored that all child abuse is wrong.

5.4 Disclosure of information about past or present abuse of children and any of the persons involved should be limited to only the people who need to know.



## 6. DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN

To be signed by all YWAM staff, visitors and short-term volunteers who are working with children's homes, orphanages, children at risk, etc. A copy will be kept on file at the appropriate YWAM operating location or school Office or personnel file.

I declare that:

1. I have read and understand the YWAM Child Protection Policy.
2. I will work within the procedure as laid out in the YWAM Child Protection Policy.
3. I have not been accused or convicted of any offence involving physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.
4. I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse of children while engaged in YWAM activities, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities.

Name and Signature (over name): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

YWAM Ministry Location \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry Involvement: \_\_\_\_\_