



**BAREFOOT
INITIATIVE**

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy number: 001	Version: 1.1
Drafted by: Kyra Marwaha	Board approval date: 24 April 2019
Responsible person: Co-Managing Directors	Scheduled review date: February 2022
Nature of changes for this version:	Policy reviewed on: 03/06/20

OUTLINE

1. Purpose
2. Scope
3. Definitions of child abuse and other relevant terms
4. Policy statement
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1. PURPOSE

Barefoot Initiative Limited is committed to protecting the rights and wellbeing of children. This Child Protection Policy (CPP) was created for the following reasons.

- To protect children engaged in Barefoot Initiative Limited programs from all forms of abuse and exploitation;
- To protect employees and representatives from false or malicious allegations of misconduct;
- To protect Barefoot Initiative Limited personnel from being held liable for the failure to take “reasonable steps” to prevent or protect children from abuse.
- To comply with International Child Safeguarding minimum standards.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Board members, staff, volunteers and implementing partners engaged either part time or full time by Barefoot Initiative.

3. DEFINITIONS

Child means every person below the age of 18.¹

Child abuse is the physical, sexual, emotional mistreatment or neglect of a child resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Child protection is an activity or initiative designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly harm arising from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Physical abuse of a child is when a person purposefully injures or attempts to injure a child from an interaction or lack of interaction which is reasonably within the control of a person in a position of responsibility, power or trust over the child. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving, grabbing or choosing not to assist a child when a situation is causing them physical pain. There may be a single incident or repeated incidents.

Emotional abuse of a child is any action that is not physical but that has a negative effect on the social, intellectual or emotional development of a child. Emotional abuse is categorised loosely as the chronic behavioural pattern directed at a child whereby a child's self-esteem and social competence is undermined or eroded over time. It can take the form of name-calling, threatening, belittling, ridiculing, intimidating, isolating, ignoring or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment towards the child.

Neglect of a child is the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, education, supervision emotional development and/or protection from foreseeable harm in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers of the child and to the extent that the child's health and/or development are at risk.

Sexual abuse of a child is when a person who is in a position of responsibility, trust or power over a child involves the child in sexual activity which is intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person and which the child does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent. This can include contact acts (such as rape or sexualized touching) or non-contact acts (such as exposure to pornography or taking sexualized photographs of the child).

Domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and/or coercive behaviours conducted within the family environment or domestic (home) environment, which can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and/or economic coercion.

Child Exploitation is when a child is used in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, the **commercial sexual exploitation of children** whereby a child is sexually abused in return for cash or for kind and **child labour** whereby a child is forced to work or perform other acts to an extent detrimental to the child's physical, social or mental development.

¹ As defined by the [Convention](#) on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, Article 1).

4. POLICY STATEMENT

We at Barefoot Initiative Limited uphold the rights and obligations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and are dedicated to protecting children from harm, exploitation and abuse. Through the identification and management of risks that may lead to harm of children, Barefoot Initiative Limited *aims* to provide the safest possible environments for any children with whom it works. We encourage child-safe practices within our organisation with the aim of children experiencing zero harm because of our programs.

Barefoot Initiative Limited understands that it has a fundamental duty of care towards protecting children engaged within its programs and activities and is committed to the safety and protection of children from all forms of abuse and exploitation. This Child Protection Policy recognises that children can be extremely vulnerable, especially in situations of poverty and/or humanitarian crisis or conflict and need to be protected.

Barefoot Initiative Limited will use a risk management approach to minimise the likelihood of child abuse and provide clear and practical guidelines for staff and representatives responding to child abuse and managing complaints.

This Policy has been developed to adhere to international standards such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Policy should be seen as a component of the broader ethical framework of Barefoot Initiative Limited and should not be seen in isolation from the overall goals of the organisation.

This Child Protection Policy aims to achieve the following:

- To protect children from harm, exploitation and abuse, by adopting a goal of children experiencing 'zero harm' as a result of our programs. This will be achieved by identifying and managing the risks associated with working with children, and ensuring that internal procedures are in place and known by staff for handling complaints related to child protection;
- To protect Barefoot Initiative Limited staff and representatives from undue suspicion or incorrect allegations by having a clear and transparent reporting system; and
- To protect Barefoot Initiative Limited integrity and reputation, as well as that of its partners, by deterring child sex offenders with a sound Child Protection Policy and related procedures.

5. POLICY IN PRACTICE

6.1 Barefoot Initiative Limited Commitments

Barefoot Initiative Limited is committed to implementing and maintaining child protection measures to the highest standard. These include:

- In all contracts involving Barefoot Initiative Limited, all parties agree to abide by the requirements of this Policy;
- Child protection risks are included in all project and activity risk assessments;
- Culturally specific issues relevant to child protection will be incorporated into project specific risk management strategies, training and response procedures;
- Preventative child protection measures are implemented to the highest standard;
- Comprehensive child-safe recruitment and screening processes are employed;
- A child protection Code of Conduct exists and is understood and signed, wherever applicable, by all Barefoot Initiative Limited Board members, staff and volunteers
- Clear and current reporting procedures exist and are known by Barefoot Initiative Limited board members, staff, and representatives;

- National laws and processes and local resources are taken into account within reporting and response mechanisms;
- No person is permitted to work with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or wellbeing;
- All employment contracts involving Barefoot Initiative Limited outline that Barefoot Initiative Limited has the right to dismiss, suspend or transfer to other duties personnel who breach the child protection code of conduct; and
- The highest levels of confidentiality and sensitivity are employed pending an official investigation of an incident.

6.2 The Child Protection Code of Conduct

a. Acceptable Behaviours

Barefoot Initiative Limited personnel and Partners *shall*:

- Treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status;
- 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 or acts;
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children
- Not invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk or injury or in physical danger;
- Not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible;
- Use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media appropriately, and never 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 International and local 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 procedures;
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during my association with Barefoot Initiative that relate to child exploitation and abuse;
- Conduct themselves in a manner appropriate with their position representing Barefoot Initiative in all their dealings with children;
- Immediately raise concerns regarding a child's safety or wellbeing in accordance with Barefoot Initiative Reporting Procedures and observe procedural fairness when engaged in decision-making;
- Be visible when working with children and, wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children;
- Listen to children and allow them to be engaged in decisions that may affect them;
- Follow organisational policy and guidelines regarding the safety of children.

b. Unacceptable Behaviours

Barefoot Initiative Limited personnel and Partners *shall not*:

- Use language or demonstrate behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, demeaning, sexually provocative, or culturally insensitive;
- Engage children in any form of activity that is demeaning, offensive, sexually provocative, abusive or culturally inappropriate or insensitive;
- Engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts;

- Invite unaccompanied children into their home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger;
- Access child pornography through any medium;
- Sleep in close proximity to unsupervised children;
- 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;
- Exclude or favour a particular child;
- Touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive manner.

6.3 The Photograph Policy for Using Children's Images

When photographing, or filming a child for work related purposes, Barefoot Initiative personnel and Partners *must*:

- Assess and comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images;
- Obtain legitimate consent from the child or a parent or guardian of the child. As part of this an explanation as to how the photograph or images will be used must be given;
- 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 do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically; and/or
- Ensure images of children available for public use do not reveal any identifying information.

6.4 Reporting and Incident Response

a. Reporting Child Abuse

Any suspicion or disclosure of child abuse must be immediately reported to the Co-Managing Directors or Board of Directors. All incidents will be reported and managed in accordance with Barefoot Initiative Limited Child Protection Incident Reporting Process (Refer to **Annex 2**).

b. Guidelines to responding to Child Abuse Allegations

Barefoot Initiative Limited takes all allegations of child abuse by Barefoot Initiative personnel or Partner staff seriously. All allegations will be thoroughly investigated, and where an incident has been reported, the following procedures will be followed:

For non-critical incident allegations

A **non-critical allegation** of child abuse is one, which does not pose immediate risk to a child supposing the allegation was true. These incidents may well be critical in nature but the time frame for responding is not as immediate; an example is accessing child pornography.

- The incident will be documented and investigated in accordance with Barefoot Initiative Limited Incident Reporting and Response Procedure; (Refer to **Annex 2**.)
- The incident will be investigated with full respect for the privacy of the accused and the alleged victim and information will be dispersed on a “need to know” basis with the primary concern being the rights and welfare of the people involved;
- The accused person will be given an opportunity to express their views/opinions/version of facts;
- The views of the alleged child victim will be considered in light of the documented evidence that children rarely lie about abuse; and
- Where the incident is reasonably proven to have occurred, appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken, including, but not limited to:
 - Warning; and/or
 - Suspension; and/or
 - Dismissal.

The disciplinary measure will depend on the legal laws in the place the offence occurred and based on the nature and severity of the offence and will be at the discretion of the Co-Managing Directors and will be fully documented.

For critical allegations

A **critical allegation** is an allegation whereby there may be an immediate risk to the welfare of a child should the allegation be found true – an example is inappropriate sexual activity.

- Where the allegation involves a violation of either the laws of the country in which the incident occurs, or the laws of Ethiopia, the incident will immediately be reported to appropriate authorities and the person will be suspended from employment/engagement with Barefoot Initiative pending an investigation;
- All efforts will be taken to ensure the confidentiality and rights of the accused person and information related to the incident will only be shared on a “need to know basis”;
- If the incident involves a breach of the Code of Conduct (but is not a violation of national laws), the accused person may be suspended pending an investigation;
- Where a breach of the Code of Conduct is found to have occurred, all circumstances will be considered and the appropriate action will be taken;
- Where an allegation is found to be false or unfounded, all efforts will be taken to ensure the rights of the accused person is upheld;
- Where allegations amount to a violation of laws of Ethiopia privacy will no longer be applicable unless deemed necessary to uphold the rights of the victim.
- Where appropriate in investigations, Barefoot Initiative will consider and take into account legal advice as well as advice from any responsible authorities.

6.5 Recruitment and Reference Checking

Barefoot Initiative will not knowingly permit any person to be employed or engaged as a volunteer if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.

All job advertisements for Barefoot Initiative will include the following message:

“Barefoot Initiative Limited is a child safe organisation and will ask all applicants to undergo our child safe recruitment procedures and sign our Child Protection Policy/Safeguarding Children Policy. All staff and volunteers must sign and agree to conform to the Safeguarding Children Policy and Code of Conduct as a condition of employment/engagement with the organisation.”

In addition:

- a. All new Barefoot Initiative personnel are required to provide an appropriate current police check (criminal record check). They must include police checks for overseas countries if they have worked or lived overseas for any period longer than one year in the last ten years.
- b. At least two verbal reference checks with former employers / referees will be conducted. Verbal referees cannot include partners, spouse and/or other relatives. Referees will be asked about the applicant’s suitability for the role to work with children and/or to have regular unsupervised contact with children. Referees will be asked whether they hold any concerns about the applicant, or if complaints were made about the applicant, in connection with working or having contact with children.
- c. New personnel will be required to provide written disclosure regarding whether they have been charged with child exploitation offences in the past.
- d. Applicants are required to provide documentation to prove their true identity.
- e. The interview process for candidates at Barefoot Initiative include behaviour-based interview questions that relate directly to working with children to probe the applicant’s attitude, experience and approach to working with children relevant to the post applied for. Where appropriate, questions may be taken from the list below:

- Have you worked/volunteered with children before? What did you like about it? What did you find difficult?
- How have you handled children who did not want to participate in an activity?
- Do you mind being supervised?
- What motivates you/why do you want to work with children in this program?

6.6 Child Protection Training and Development

Staff, volunteers and partners will be trained as appropriate and depending on their area of responsibility, for awareness of issues related to the protection of children from abuse and violation.

All staff, Board members,volunteers and Partners will receive information relating to Barefoot Initiative CPP during their induction process.

All new Barefoot Initiative personnel and Partners will receive:

- A Child Protection Policy induction by the Co-Managing Directors. The induction will include a discussion regarding the responsibility of Barefoot Initiative and the individual, to build and maintain a child-safe organization, and appropriate behaviour when interacting with children or child-sensitive material.
- A copy of Barefoot Initiative Child Protection Policy and associated procedures.

6. MONITORING & REVIEW OF POLICY

The Co-Managing Directors are responsible to ensure this policy is implemented and updated every two years. All updated versions of this policy will be validated by the Board of Directors.

7. RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- Complaints and Response Mechanism Policy and associated Annex's
- Gender and Diversity Policy (Annex 1. Code of Conduct)
- Risk Management Policy



ANNEX 1: STATUTORY DECLARATION OF CRIMINAL RECORD

Applicant's Name:		Role applying for:	
Have you ever been charged or convicted of any offence?		1	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide details:			
<p>Please note: if you are applying for a position where you will have regular contact with children, (this may be frequent or infrequent), you are required to give details of <u>all</u> convictions or criminal offences and cautions, or pending prosecutions.</p>			
Have you ever been dismissed from employment or had any disciplinary action taken against you, which may be related, to work with a child/children under 18 years of age?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide details:			
Have you received any formal reprimands, final warnings, or cautions from the police?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide details:			
Is there any other information which may be relevant to your application e.g. pending prosecutions		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide details:			
Signature:			Date:



BAREFOOT INITIATIVE

ANNEX 2: CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORTING SHEET

Please fill out as many sections as possible with as much detail as you can. This form is confidential.

Location:	
Your name:	
Your position:	
Child's name:	
Age/date of birth:	
Child's address (if known):	
Name of Parents/guardians/carers and addresses (if known):	
Date and time of incident:	
Member of staff/volunteer involved in incident (if any):	
Place where incident occurred:	
Your observations:	
Details of Concern/ Suspicion/ Incident: Describe what happened: time, dates, names of person(s) involved, behaviour or physical signs observed, any other details:	
Details of any conversation with the child:	
Action taken so far (if any):	
External agencies contacted (date and time)	
Police Yes/no	If yes – which station: Name and contact number:

	Details of advice received:
Social services Yes/no	If yes – which one: Name and contact number: Details of advice received:
Local Partners Executive Director	Name and contact number: Details of advice received:
Local authority:	If yes – which authority: Name and contact number: Details of advice received:
Other:	Which organisation: Name and contact number: Details of advice received:
Signature: Print name: Date:	



ANNEX 3: CHILD PROTECTION RISK REGISTER

Identify and manage the risks and dangers to children in your programs and activities

Risk Register Owner	Co-Managing Directors
Approved By	Board of Directors
Issue Date	
Review Date	June 2022

Child protection risk management is child abuse prevention. You need to identify potential risks and ways children can be harmed in your organisation. Only by identifying risks can you develop strategies to minimise and prevent child abuse.

Risk means the potential for something to go wrong. Risk management means identifying the potential for an accident or incident to occur and taking steps to reduce the possibility of it occurring.

Activity Type	Risks to Children	Protocols/procedures to reduce risk to children and the community
Bringing volunteers and visitors into the community who are not vaccinated	transfer if illnesses to already immunocompromised children and community members	Strongly advise all volunteers and visitors accompanying BF to the field to be vaccinated as per recommendations by the travel Doctor
Overnight stay during field visits	Children left alone with an adult and may come to harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than one adult should accompany children, particularly when all sleeping in the same room • No one adult should be left responsible to sleep in same room as children • Adequate recruitment and screening and selection processes of paid

		<p>employees,volunteers and implementing partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due diligence check for all new partners• Orientation on CPP to all staff, volunteers and partners• Provide correct instruction to all those who sleep in villages on field trip
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