

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Rescue Mission for Street Life

Effective Date: January 2025

Policy Owner: Rescue Mission for Street Life

Focal Person: Nabatanzi Edith (Child Protection Officer)

Executive Director: Ssempewo Edward

1. Introduction and Rationale

Rescue Mission for Street Life (RMSL) is committed to safeguarding the rights and well-being of children rescued from the streets of Kampala and its metropolitan areas. Our work revolves around the development and implementation of programs that ensure the safety, health, and positive development of vulnerable children, free from harm, abuse, and exploitation.

In alignment with our mission, RMSL upholds the principles of child protection, and we adhere strictly to local and international standards, including the **1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**, **Uganda's Children Act (2006)**, and **UNICEF's Child Protection Standards**. We also draw upon frameworks like the **Global Fund for Child Protection Manual** and **The Child Protection Policy and Procedures Toolkit** published by the Consortium for Street Children. These documents guide our work and outline our commitment to child safety.

The goal of this policy is to ensure the safety, dignity, and rights of all children involved in RMSL's programs. It establishes a framework for the protection of children, prevents child abuse, and provides a clear process for reporting and responding to concerns or incidents of abuse. The policy applies to all staff, volunteers, partners, and any other individuals associated with RMSL.

2. Definitions and Terminology

- **Child:** A child is defined as any individual under the age of 18 years, as per the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- **Child Abuse:** Any action that results in harm or potential harm to a child, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and exploitation, or neglect.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Includes any form of sexual activity involving a child, whether consensual or coerced, including defilement, molestation, incest, and exploitation for pornography.

- **Physical Injury:** Infliction of any form of harm or injury to a child that leads to or risks physical harm.
- **Neglect:** Failing to provide necessary care and attention to a child, which endangers the child's physical and mental well-being.
- **Emotional Abuse:** The consistent or severe mistreatment of a child, leading to psychological damage or emotional harm.
- **Exploitation:** The use of a child for labor, sexual acts, or any other activity for the benefit of others at the expense of the child's well-being, education, and development.

3. Policy Statement

Rescue Mission for Street Life adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards child abuse, exploitation, and neglect. All children have the right to be protected from harm and to grow and develop in a safe, supportive environment. We commit to:

- **Preventing Child Abuse:** Implementing preventive measures through awareness-raising, staff training, and adherence to best practices in child protection.
- **Safeguarding Children:** Promoting a culture of safety where staff, volunteers, and partners are equipped to prevent harm and respond to child protection concerns.
- **Promoting the Well-being of Children:** Ensuring the active involvement of children in decisions affecting their lives and promoting their emotional, physical, and social development.

4. Guiding Principles

In the implementation of this policy, the following principles guide RMSL's commitment to child protection:

- **Best Interests of the Child:** The child's safety, well-being, and rights are the foremost concern in all decisions and actions.
- **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** We maintain a strict policy that child abuse in any form will not be tolerated.
- **Confidentiality:** Personal and sensitive information about children will be handled with the highest level of

confidentiality and shared only with those authorized and necessary to protect the child.

- **Participation:** Children will be encouraged to participate in the development and implementation of child protection policies, ensuring that their views are respected.
 - **Non-Discrimination:** All children will be treated equally, regardless of their background, ethnicity, gender, or disability.
 - **Training and Capacity Building:** All RMSL staff, volunteers, and partners will undergo regular child protection training to enhance their knowledge and understanding of child rights and child protection principles.
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5. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all staff, management, volunteers, interns, consultants, contractors, partners, and any other persons working with or for Rescue Mission for Street Life.

6. Code of Conduct

All individuals working with or for RMSL are expected to adhere to the following **Code of Conduct** to prevent and respond to any form of child abuse:

Do's

- **Respect Children's Rights:** Treat all children with dignity, respect, and fairness.
- **Ensure Safety:** Always ensure that the environment is safe for children, considering factors like physical safety, emotional well-being, and cultural sensitivities.
- **Report Concerns:** Immediately report any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of child abuse to the Child Protection Officer, Nabatanzi Edith, or the Executive Director, Ssempewo Edward.
- **Maintain Transparency:** Ensure openness about any actions involving children, such as interviews, photography, or counseling, and obtain explicit consent from the child and/or guardian beforehand.
- **Promote Child Participation:** Empower children to speak out about their rights and encourage their participation in activities related to their well-being.
- **Provide Age-Appropriate Care:** Offer age-appropriate guidance and support, ensuring that children's needs are met according to their developmental stage.

Don'ts

- **Do Not Harm Children:** Avoid any behavior that could harm, exploit, or intimidate children.
- **Do Not Engage in Abuse:** Refrain from physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological abuse or exploitation of children.
- **Do Not Ignore Concerns:** Do not ignore any form of child abuse, including neglect, exploitation, and any other inappropriate behavior.
- **Do Not Engage in Inappropriate Behavior:** Never engage in actions such as inappropriate physical contact, discriminatory behavior, or overly personal relationships with children.
- **Do Not Use Child Labor:** Do not involve children in any form of labor that could harm their health, education, or development.
- **Do Not Take Photos Without Consent:** Never take or use photos of children without their explicit consent and the consent of their parent or guardian, ensuring that their identity is protected.

7. Reporting Procedures

RMSL encourages a safe and open environment where all staff, volunteers, and children can report concerns about child protection without fear of retaliation. The following steps should be followed:

1. **Report the Concern:** Any suspicion or allegation of child abuse should be immediately reported to the designated Child Protection Officer, Nabatanzi Edith, or to the Executive Director, Ssempewo Edward.
 2. **Immediate Action:** In cases of immediate harm or danger to a child, appropriate measures should be taken to protect the child, including contacting authorities if necessary.
 3. **Document the Incident:** All concerns or allegations must be documented accurately and in a timely manner, detailing the nature of the incident, individuals involved, and the actions taken.
 4. **Confidentiality and Sensitivity:** All reports will be treated with confidentiality. Disclosure will only occur to the extent necessary to ensure the protection of the child and ensure due process.
 5. **Follow-Up and Monitoring:** The organization will monitor the situation to ensure appropriate action is taken and to assess whether further interventions are necessary.
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8. Training and Awareness

To ensure the effective implementation of this policy, all staff and relevant stakeholders will undergo mandatory child protection training, including:

- Understanding child rights and child protection principles.
- Recognizing the signs and symptoms of child abuse.
- How to report concerns and respond appropriately to child protection incidents.
- Ensuring a safe environment for children.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of this policy will be regularly monitored to assess its effectiveness. Regular audits will be conducted to evaluate compliance with child protection standards, and feedback will be gathered from staff, children, and the community.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if needed, to ensure that it remains aligned with best practices and evolving legal standards.

11. Declaration of Adherence

All staff, volunteers, and partners of Rescue Mission for Street Life must sign a declaration form confirming that they have received, understood, and agree to adhere to this Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct.

Signed,



Ssempewo Edward

Executive Director, Rescue Mission for Street Life



Nabatanzi Edith

Child Protection Officer, Rescue Mission for Street Life

This document serves as a guiding framework for ensuring that Rescue Mission for Street Life offers a safe and nurturing environment for every child we work with, in line with national and international standards.

**Declaration of Adherence to Child Protection Policy
Rescue Mission for Street Life
Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that I have received, read, and understood the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct of Rescue Mission for Street Life (RMSL). I commit to adhering to the principles, guidelines, and responsibilities outlined in the policy to ensure the safety, well-being, and protection of children under RMSL's care.

By signing this declaration, I agree to:

1. Uphold the **best interests of the child** in all decisions and actions relating to the children involved in RMSL's programs.
2. **Report any concerns or suspicions** of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm immediately to the designated Child Protection Officer, Nabatanzi Edith, or the Executive Director, Ssempewo Edward.
3. Maintain **confidentiality** about sensitive information related to children's personal details, and share such information only with authorized personnel.
4. Ensure a **safe and supportive environment** for children in all activities and services provided by RMSL.
5. Engage in **continuous learning** and training to enhance my understanding of child protection issues and improve my ability to safeguard children effectively.
6. Treat all children with **dignity, respect, and fairness**, ensuring their rights are upheld.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the policy and understand my role in maintaining the safety and welfare of the children served by RMSL. I also understand that failure to comply with the provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of my association with RMSL.

Full Name: _____
Position/Role: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

For Child Protection Officer's Use Only

Received by: _____
Date: _____
Signature: _____

This declaration form should be signed and kept on file for all staff, volunteers, partners, and any other individuals working with or for RMSL.