



Child Protection Policy

i. Introduction

Child abuse is a global phenomenon and occurs in all countries and in all societies. It involves the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children. It is nearly always preventable.

At Kids Alive International, the child's best interests are our primary concern and consideration. We believe that:

- Children¹ have the right to a happy, healthy and secure childhood;
- The abuse of children is an abuse of their rights;
- Child abuse is *never* acceptable.

Abuse of minors, which includes child molestation, is a serious moral fault and is subject to criminal charges in most societies. Child abuse takes advantage of the vulnerability of children. It violates Biblical standards of holiness and the mandate to genuinely love and seek the good of others, and can cause deep spiritual and psychological wounds.

Kids Alive International will ensure that ALL staff, missionaries, volunteers, and Board members in each program country:

- are aware of the problem of child abuse;
- safeguard children from abuse through good practice;
- report all concerns about possible abuse;
- respond appropriately and quickly when abuse is discovered or suspected.

This Child Protection Policy is based upon Kids Alive International's Mission, Vision and Core Values; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the guidance provided by other organizations and coalitions, including the 'Keeping Children Safe Coalition' and the 'Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service' in the UK.

This Policy is binding for all Kids Alive International fields. Based upon this Policy, each field shall define clear reporting and responding structures and crisis management plans. Kids Alive International must approve any additional regulations and guidelines adopted by fields in their Child Protection policies. However, the following minimum guidelines must be maintained.

ii. Types of Abuse

Kids Alive International defines different forms of abuse as follows:

Physical Abuse and Neglect: Physical abuse includes inflicting physical injury upon a child. This may include burning, hitting, punching, shaking, kicking, beating, or otherwise harming a child. It may be the result of over-discipline or physical punishment which is not appropriate to the child's age. Physical neglect may include failing to provide adequate food or appropriate clothing, medical care, supervision, or proper protection from harm.

Emotional Abuse (also known as verbal or mental abuse or psychological maltreatment): This can include caregivers threatening or terrorizing a child, using extreme and/or bizarre forms of punishment, such as confinement in a closet or a dark room, or tying a child to a chair. Other forms of emotional abuse may include ignoring, belittling, rejecting, using derogatory terms, excessive blaming or excessive isolating. Emotional neglect may include a lack of love, emotional support or attention, or excessive inconsistency.

Sexual abuse ranges from inappropriate contacts to rape, and non-contact abuse such as forcing children to observe sexual acts and pornography.

¹ A child is defined as being a person under the age of eighteen years.

Spiritual Abuse: All children who enter a Kids Alive program are expected to participate in all spiritual activities provided for them. This expectation is made clear to the children and their families. While children's participation is essential, Kids Alive will seek to safeguard children from any form of spiritual abuse. Spiritual abuse, as with all forms of abuse, is about the misuse of authority to promote the interests of the abuser rather than the best interests of the child. Spiritual abuse can take the form of:

- Authoritarianism which demands unconditional submission to spiritual leadership;
- Refusal by a caregiver to accept a child's opinions or views on spiritual issues;
- Valuing an individual for their performance rather than their worth to God;
- An unbalanced and excessive focus on particular points of theology.

iii. The Orientation and Screening of Field Staff:

The Field Director and Ministry Director of each Kids Alive program, along with the relevant Member Country office where appropriate, will ensure that thorough background checks are conducted on all paid and volunteer staff, missionaries, interns and guests who work at the ministry.

The agreed Kids Alive International application process will be followed by all employees. References will be taken, and follow up with contacts will be made before hiring staff. If possible, police background checks for criminal records will be undertaken. Refusal to agree to a background check during the interview process will result in a candidate being disqualified from employment or as a volunteer with Kids Alive.

All new employees should sign an agreement to say that they are aware of and support Kids Alive International's Child Protection Policy and that they will abide by its contents.

All workers in a Kids Alive International field should be appropriately managed, supervised and supported. The Director of a Kids Alive program will conduct orientations and periodic evaluations of volunteers and staff that work in the program and will respond immediately to any concerns regarding Child Protection issues.

Kids Alive International ministries will never knowingly permit child abuse offenders, pedophiles, or those with related offences to work with our children or have access to children's records.

iv. Action Taken to Prevent Abuse:

a) Staff Training

Kids Alive International considers it essential that all its staff, missionaries and volunteers are aware of the dangers of child abuse. The Field Director and leadership staff should encourage this matter to be discussed in an honest and open manner by staff. In addition, there should be regular Staff Training Sessions on Child Protection. These should include:

- What child abuse is;
- How abuse can be prevented, and the role of staff in prevention;
- Symptoms of child abuse;
- The procedure for responding to alleged abuse;
- Roles and responsibilities regarding child protection matters;
- Use of resources that might be used with the children to teach them about abuse;
- How to communicate with and respond to children that have been abused, or that make allegations of abuse.
- Training provided to staff members responsible for dealing with complaints and disciplinary procedures in relation to child abuse and inappropriate behavior towards children.

b) Education Program for Children

In addition, all children should be aware of what child abuse is, how to protect themselves, and how to respond in the event of abuse occurring. There should be regular teaching sessions with all of the children. These teaching sessions should cover:

- The concept of 'Good Touch' and 'Bad Touch';
- How to say 'No' to abuse;
- A clear procedure teaching the children who they should go to if they are afraid of abuse or if they know of abuse occurring;
- How children can express themselves appropriately;
- An age-appropriate sex education program.

A series of resources (worksheets, games, videos, stories, etc.) about child abuse, preferably in the children's first language, should be used to aid these teaching sessions.

c) Guidelines to Prevent Abuse:

Each ministry should draw up a list of specific regulations and guidelines in order to prevent abuse. Regular risk assessments should be carried out.

It is important that staff, missionaries and volunteers protect themselves from allegations of abuse by demonstrating good practice. This means that they will avoid putting themselves into a position where they could be accused of abuse or of attempting to abuse a child. Examples of this include:

- A male caregiver in a girl's area or a female caregiver in a boy's area should be very careful when entering children's bedrooms;
- Caregivers who are alone with a child should keep the door of the room open;
- Children should not be permitted to enter any staff member's private rooms;
- Counseling or disciplining children should be done in an appropriate place, preferably a location where there are see-through doors. Other staff members should be made aware of the counseling or disciplinary meeting that is taking place.
- It is preferable that a lone staff member should not travel alone in a vehicle with a single child.
- There should be clear procedures for dealing with medical and first aid issues.

There should be adequate rules and regulations that prevent child-on-child abuse. Examples of these include:

- No more than one child is allowed into the same toilet cubicle at any one time;
- Two or more boys or girls should not be allowed to lie in or on the same bed together;
- There are to be no closed or locked bedroom doors;
- There should be adequate supervision of play areas and children's living quarters;

Kids Alive recognizes that appropriate physical touch by caregivers is important in a child's development. It is important, however, that staff avoid any appearance of inappropriate behavior. Staff, missionaries and volunteers may not hold, kiss, cuddle or touch children in a culturally-insensitive way. Staff members should use good judgment, wisdom and caution in becoming personally involved with children who have emotional and/or psychological problems.

Inappropriate physical contact includes the following:

- Demanding hugs and kisses;
- Touching chest, genital area, upper legs, buttocks, waist and stomach;
- Sitting child in the center of the caregivers' lap;

- Seductiveness or suggestive contact;
- Physical contact of any kind which is done for the pleasure or satisfaction of caregivers;
- Any touching used to express power or control over a child, except holds/restraints that are used to prevent a child from hurting himself/herself or others.

Each Kids Alive International field should carry out periodic Risk Assessments that identify the potential risks for abuse occurring, and action to be taken to reduce these risks.

Information about Kids Alive's commitment to keeping children safe should be openly displayed and available to everyone.

iv. Procedure for Dealing with Suspected or Alleged Child Abuse:

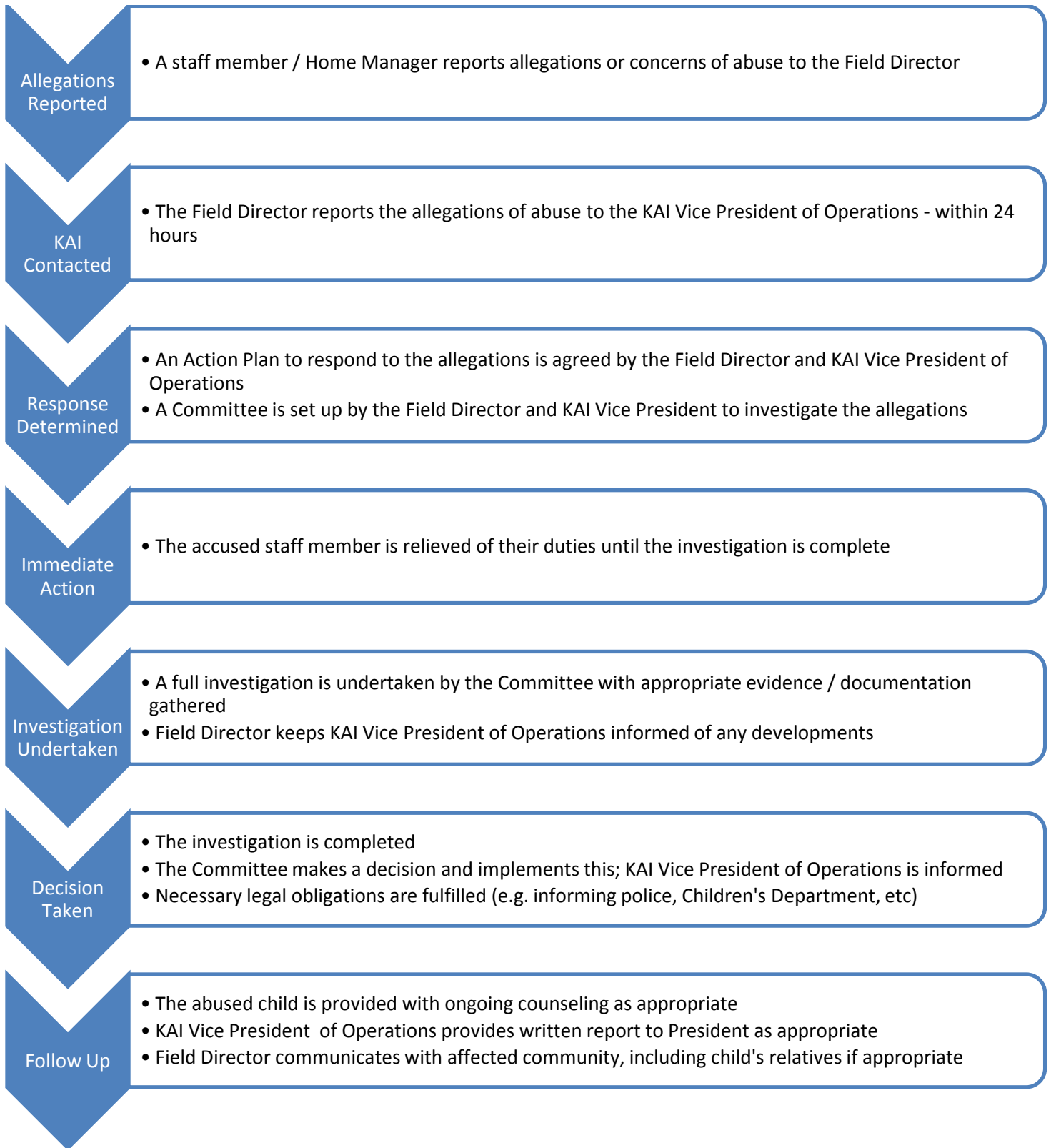
The focus is always placed on safeguarding and protecting the child. All who work at a Kids Alive International site must treat any suspected abuse seriously. No one will ignore it in hopes that it will go away. **All suspected abuse must be reported immediately to the Field Director or Ministry Director who will inform the Vice President of Operations.** Any adult who withholds information or covers up any kind of abuse may be considered an accomplice.

a) When the occurrence of child abuse by a member of staff is suspected, the following procedures will be followed:

- Anyone who suspects child abuse is taking place will discuss with the Field Director or Ministry Director the situation he or she has observed.
- The Field Director will contact the Vice President of Operations within 24 hours. An action plan to respond to the matter will be developed by the Field Director and Vice President of Operations and implemented immediately. This plan will include setting up a small committee of three or more persons to investigate the alleged abuse.
- Should an allegation be made against the Field Director, the Vice President of Operations will, in consultation with the local Board Chairperson, appoint someone to oversee the investigation.
- The Field Director (or the designated person investigating the incident) will, as soon as practical, convene a special meeting of the committee appointed to review the suspected behavior.
- The accused must be relieved of all duties or contact with children until the investigation is completed.
- All procedures followed in handling the allegation will be documented. Factual elements of an investigation may include interview notes, witness statements, hard-copies of emails, medical reports, and in some cases audio or video tapes. These need to be gathered in a timely and methodical manner. All documentation should be kept securely locked away.
- During the investigation, all details will be held in confidence by the committee and the Vice President of Operations. This is to protect both the staff member and child from potentially damaging information being circulated prior to verification of the facts.
- The Vice President of Operations will be kept informed of all developments in the investigation. If the committee considers the member of staff, missionary or volunteer to be guilty of the abuse, appropriate action, up to and including dismissal and legal action, will be determined and implemented.
- After the investigation is completed, a plan for communication to the wider affected community will be developed and implemented by the committee. A plan to provide the abused child with any necessary support, including counseling as appropriate, will also be developed and implemented.
- The Field Director or another designated person may, as appropriate, notify the parents/guardians of the children who are involved in the alleged abuse, and inform them of the steps that Kids Alive International has taken.

This procedure is shown in the flowchart below, and a template for reporting abuse is given in Appendix A.

Responding to Alleged Child Abuse by a Staff Member



b) When the occurrence of child abuse by a child towards another child is suspected, the following procedures will be followed:

- Anyone who suspects child abuse will discuss with the Field Director or Ministry Director the situation he or she has observed.
- The Field Director will contact the Vice President of Operations within 24 hours. An action plan to respond to the matter will be developed by the Field Director and Vice President of Operations and implemented immediately.
- All procedures followed in handling the allegation will be documented and the Vice President of Operations will be provided with copies of all such documentation.
- A plan to provide the abused child with any necessary support, including counseling as appropriate, should be developed and implemented.
- If the child is found to be guilty of abuse, immediate and appropriate action will be taken. This course of action will depend on the following factors:
 - The nature of the offence;
 - The age of the child;
 - The child's behavioral history in the ministry;
 - The likelihood of the offence being repeated.
- The Field Director or his/her designate may, as appropriate, notify the parents/guardians of the children who are involved in the alleged abuse, and inform them of the steps that Kids Alive has taken.
- Kids Alive International will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.
- Strict confidentiality about both victim and the alleged perpetrator will be maintained at all times.

v. Historical Allegations of Abuse

- This refers to abuse which an adult reports as having suffered as a child or young person while in contact with a Kids Alive International ministry. It is often the case that an individual does not report abuse until many years after the event.
- The child protection procedures are followed in such cases. Allegations will be handled transparently and responsibly.
- Kids Alive takes allegations of historical abuse seriously. We will seek to promote the welfare of any adult that alleges historical abuse, and will protect any child currently in our care from the person alleged to be an abuser.

v. Donor Field Visits

- Often sponsors or donors want to visit Kids Alive International fields and/or their sponsored child. Sponsors are requested to coordinate their visit through the relevant Member Country office. This enables the Member Country Office to work with the field in setting up these visits.
- If a donor arrives at a field unannounced, the Field or Ministry Director will handle the visit according to its approved policies and procedures. The Member Country office will be informed within 24 hours.
- All interaction between donors and children must be accompanied by a Kids Alive employee or missionary at all times. The employee or missionary will be responsible for ensuring that the children are protected from any inappropriate activity.
- Should accommodation be provided to the donors, it should be ensured that no unauthorized contact between the donor and children is possible.

- Any inappropriate behavior on the part of a donor must be dealt with immediately. Any concerns should be reported to the Field Director, who will inform the Vice President of Operations within 24 hours. Appropriate action will be determined by the Field Director in consultation with the Vice President of Operations and implemented. This may include criminal investigation and potential severance of the relationship with Kids Alive International.

vi. Child Photographs and Histories

- Kids Alive International respects each child's right to privacy.
- Kids Alive International will seek to limit the distribution of children's pictures and case histories, realizing that these can fall into the hands of people who do not share Kids Alive's regard for protecting children.
- Sponsorships promoted on the website will only contain the child's first name.
- Kids Alive will perform random searches of potential child sponsors to insure that they are not listed in a US sex offender state website.
- Care will be taken at all times to ensure that no confidential details about a child's life, medical concerns, or confidential personal history are released to sponsors or donors. Examples of information that we do not share include details of abuse that children have received or done to others; personal struggles or family information that might embarrass children (e.g. alcohol or drug usage, psychological problems); communicable diseases, physical handicaps, or mental retardation; and addresses or other information that could identify members of their family. Training will be provided to field staff to assist them in understanding what information is appropriate to release to child sponsors or donors. Field Directors are responsible to ensuring that all information that passes through their offices meets these requirements.
- When the story of one of the children is shared with the purpose of informing and educating churches or other institutions, the names of the children in the story should be changed along with any other information that might identify him/her. If the story of an older child (16 years or older) is shared, the full name may be used if the child gives his/her permission to do so.
- If necessary and appropriate, we will ask the child's legal guardian for permission to use the child in publicity materials.
- We do not actively ask children to do or say anything that might make them feel displayed as 'objects of pity' (for example, talking about their past or ask for donations).
- Kids Alive International reserves the right to refuse to process sponsorship applications should it have reasonable concerns about the motives of an applicant to sponsor a child.
- A statement outlining Kids Alive's commitment to Child Protection will be posted in a prominent position on the website.
- Missionaries and service team members that post pictures or stories on personal websites, blogs, or social networking sites are expected to ensure that child confidentiality and the terms of this policy are maintained.
- Internal procedures will be reviewed and modified as appropriate to provide increased security of child photographs and case histories and to limit easy access to these pictures. Procedures will also be extended to events where mass quantities of child photographs and case histories are available to the public.

vii. Policy Monitoring and Review

- Kids Alive International will monitor implementation of Child Protection policies on its fields, and will ensure that adequate procedures are in place. This will form part of the regular Field Evaluations.
- Kids Alive International will review this policy annually and update as necessary.

Appendix A: Form for Reporting Abuse Incidents to Kids Alive International

Field Name:		Site:	
Date Reported:			
Outline of Incident:			
Immediate Response:			
Further Action to be Taken:	○		
Reported By:		Date:	