

links policy CHILD PROTECTION

Links International believes protecting children from risk of harm is a responsibility we must all undertake. We are committed to a pro-active role that will protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

This policy will help foster a safe and positive environment for children and provide guidance for all employees and volunteers regarding acceptable behaviours and appropriate boundaries when working with children.

Links International will ensure all employees and volunteers are aware of and understand this policy so that the risk of abuse of children is minimised. We will ensure our Links Trip Leaders clearly understand what steps to take when concerns arise regarding the safety of children on Links Trips. We will immediately respond to and investigate all concerns and allegations.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Links International Links Trip Application.

DEFINITION OF TERMINOLOGY

The terminology of child/children covers those under the age of 18 that we work with or encounter in communities on Links Trips regardless of nationality, sex or physical and mental capacity.

VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND BELIEFS

Our values, principles, and beliefs require that employees and volunteers

- > Treat every child with dignity and respect at all times
- > Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a positive role model for children
- > Immediately report or raise concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child to a Links Trip Leader
- > Listen to children and take any concerns raised seriously
- > Be visible when working with children, endeavouring to ensure other adults are present. Avoid being alone with them
- > Work in partnership with caregivers and/or other professionals to ensure child protection
- > Not personally criticise a fellow employee or volunteer for perceived actions towards a child but immediately report alleged incidents to a Links Trip Leader.

LINKS INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS WILL NOT

- > Engage in any behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children
- > Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- > Smack, hit, physically assault or apply extreme physical or emotional disciplinary measures
- > Develop sexual relationships with children nor any kind of relationship that is deemed exploitive or abusive
- > Spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- > Act in ways that may be abusive or place a child at risk of abuse
- > Behave in a manner that is physically or verbally inappropriate or sexually provocative
- > Sleep in the same bed as children.

PROCEDURES

If an allegation is made the Links Trip Leader, in conjunction with the Links International CEO, will put in place, as a matter of priority, an action plan to ensure the safety of the child. Disciplinary procedures will be applied to employees or volunteers who are found to have acted outside the Child Protection Policy guidelines. Confirmed cases will be reported to the legal authorities in conjunction with the laws of the relevant country.

CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS

While we recognise the right of a young adult to engage in relationships past the lawful age of consent, employees or volunteers **may not**, at any time, engage in consensual relationships due to the ethical nature of the relationship between employee/volunteer and care recipient.

Policy approved by Rich Hubbard June 2010

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