

Child Protection Policy Manuals



Document History

Date & Approval Ref	Version	Issues Addressed	Description of Change *

*Any changes in text/expression/entitlements/limits/policy or procedures through amendment or revision or review after due approvals are the examples of Description of Change and must be recorded in chronological order.

Table of Contents

Document History.....	2
Summary / Purpose.....	4
A. MDF’s vision for child protection	4
Statement	4
B. Definitions under the Child Protection Policy	4
C. Scope of Child Protection Policy.....	4
D. Responsibilities under the Child Protection Policy	5
<i>MDF Staff, Associates and Visitors must:</i>	5
MDF Staff must not:.....	5
MDF Associates and Visitors must not:	6
All Districts, Regional and Program Managers must:	6
E. Personal Conduct Outside Work: -	6

Summary / Purpose

- As a national Child-centered community development organization whose work is reinforced by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), MDF is committed to promoting the rights of children including their right to be protected from harmful influence, abuse, and exploitation. MDF takes active measures to ensure children's rights to protection are fully realized.
- MDF acknowledges its expectation that its employees and others who work with MDF have children's
- best interests at the heart of their involvement with MDF.
- This Child Protection Policy is MDF's statement of intent that demonstrates our commitment to safeguarding children from harm and makes clear to all in the organization and who come into contact with us what is required in relation to the protection of children, and that child abuse in any form is unacceptable to MDF.

A. *MDF's vision for child protection*

Vision

- We aim to create 'child safe' environments, both internally and externally, where children are respected, protected, empowered and active in their own protection, and where Staff are skilled, confident, competent, and well supported in meeting their protection responsibilities.

Statement

- MDF is committed to actively safeguarding children from harm and ensuring children's rights to protection are fully realized. We take seriously our responsibility to promote child safe practices and protect children from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation in any form. In addition, we will take positive action to prevent child abusers from becoming involved with MDF in any way and take stringent measures against any MDF Staff and/or Associate who abuses a child. Our decisions and actions in response to child protection concerns will be guided by the principle of 'the best interests of child'.

B. *Definitions under the Child Protection Policy*

1. **A Child** is defined as any person under the age of 18 years.
2. **Child abuse** is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect, or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child abuse may be a deliberate act, or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which harms a child or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.

3. **Child Protection**, within the scope of this policy, is defined as the responsibilities, measures, and activities that MDF undertakes to safeguard children from both intentional and unintentional harm.

C. *Scope of Child Protection Policy*

The Child Protection Policy applies to everyone working for or associated with MDF. It encompasses the

whole of MDF and includes without limitation.

1. **Staff at all levels** – the field, district, regional and head office level.
2. **MDF Associates** – these include board members, volunteers, community volunteers, sponsors, consultants and contractors. Also, the staff and /or representatives of partner organizations and local governments who have been brought into contact with children or are party to MDF child sensitive data while working for or with MDF.
3. **MDF Visitors** – (e.g. donors, journalists, media, researchers, celebrities etc.) who may come into contact with children through MDF are also bound by this policy.

D. Responsibilities under the Child Protection Policy

MDF Staff, Associates and Visitors must:

1. Never abuse and /or exploit a child or act/behave in any way that places a child at risk of harm.
2. Report any child abuse and protection concerns they have in accordance with applicable local office procedures. **This is a mandatory requirement for staff. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.**
3. Respond to a child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with applicable local office procedures.
4. Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns and allegations.
5. Contribute to an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights.
6. Always ask permission from children (or, in the case of young children, their parent or guardian) before taking images (e.g. photographs, videos) of them. Respect their decision to say no to an image being taken. Ensure that any images taken of children are respectful (e.g. children should have adequate clothing that covers the sexual organs. Images of children in sexually suggestive poses or that in any way impact negatively on their dignity or privacy are not acceptable). Stories and images of children should be based on the child's best interest.
7. Be aware that where concerns exist about the conduct of Staff or Associates in relation to child protection and /or where there has been a breach of the Child Protection Policy, this will be investigated under this policy either by consideration of referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country and /or by MDF in accordance with disciplinary procedures. This may result in disciplinary sanctions and /or dismissal for Staff. Be aware that MDF will sever all relations with any MDF Associate or Visitor who is proven to have committed child abuse.
8. Be aware that, if a legitimate concern about suspected child abuse is raised, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, any employee who makes false and malicious accusations will face disciplinary action.
9. Be aware that MDF will take appropriate legal or other action against MDF Associates and Visitors who make false and malicious accusations of child abuse.

MDF Staff must not:

10. Disclose information that identifies sponsored families or children or make it available to the public unless that disclosure is in accordance with standard MDF policies and procedures.

MDF Associates and Visitors must not:

11. Disclose information that identifies sponsored families or children or make it available to the public without explicit consent from MDF.

All Districts, Regional and Program Managers must:

12. Ensure that each MDF region has in place local procedures that are consistent with the global Child Protection Policy and with the document Reporting and Responding to Child Protection Issues in MDF to respond to incidents of child abuse. Local procedures should be developed with assistance of local advisers in accordance with the local law. Any deviation from the global policy must have prior formal approval from the relevant Regional or General Manager.

Ensure that local procedures are made available in local languages.

E. *Personal Conduct Outside Work:* -

We are committed to ensuring that our Staff and representatives apply high standards of behavior towards children within both their professional and their private lives.

MDF does not intend to dictate the belief and value systems by which MDF employees conduct their personal lives. MDF's position throughout the country is dependent, however, on maintaining good relations and upholding its reputation as a child-focused community development organization with numerous organizations. Unlawful or other conduct by MDF employees which jeopardizes MDF reputation or position whether during or after business hours will not be permitted. Such conduct includes but is not limited to: any unlawful activity related to sexual abuse; any other unlawful activity; sexual harassment; physically/verbally abusive behavior; and public disorderly conduct.

Staff and Associates are required to bear in mind the principles of the Child Protection Policy and heighten their awareness of how their behavior may be perceived both at work and outside work.