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CURE International UK - Child Protection Policy – 2019

The guiding principle of this policy is that CURE International UK (CURE UK) believes it is always unacceptable for children or young people to experience any kind of abuse.

It is a requirement that all new and current staff and volunteers, both long-term and short-term, acknowledge that they have read the policy, procedures and Code of Conduct (below) and agree to abide by them. CURE UK will ensure that UK employees, trustees and volunteers having direct or indirect contact with children will have a standard or enhanced disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Recruitment

CURE UK will not employ (in a paid or voluntary position) anyone with a prior conviction for child abuse or related offences for any position working with or having contact with children or young people. For staff and volunteers visiting CURE overseas, CURE UK recognises the strong possibility that staff and volunteers will engage in interaction with children, even where it is not their specific role. CURE UK therefore commits to the following standards of recruitment for all UK-based staff and volunteers having contact with children and all UK staff and volunteers visiting CURE overseas.

When advertising for the roles outlined above, CURE UK commits to making clear the requirement of an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check.

In CURE UK staff and volunteer application forms, specific history of employment or volunteer work with children, and questions relating to inappropriate behaviour or abuse of children are to be included. A self-declaration form should be completed and signed by the applicant. Before employment, relevant qualifications and work history should be verified and references gained.

References will be asked questions regarding the applicant's previous work with children and if there is anything that might give rise to concern. Additional character enquiries should be undertaken if necessary.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks will be undertaken and any position offered should be contingent on the results.

Overseas procedures

When UK staff and volunteers visit projects where children will be present, CURE UK will work with the local leadership to ensure that there are appropriate, culturally-relevant safeguarding procedures for children in place. When necessary, the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) will be used as the basis for procedures. If situations arise in a context where the local authorities do not deal with a situation to the standards operating in the UK, it is the duty of CURE UK staff or volunteers to abide by the standards set by the UK. For example, if it is judged that the UK police would act, and local police will not or cannot act, CURE UK will arrange an external independent investigation.

**Chairman-Mr John O'Dowd FRCS Orth, Prof. Christopher Lavy OBE MD MCh FCS FRCS
Mrs Rosemary Livingstone and Mr Mervyn Thomas CMG and Mr Louis Reid**

CURE UK commits to ensuring all staff and volunteers who see, suspect, or is told of abuse or an allegation of abuse understands their responsibility to report the abuse. In the event of a child disclosing an incidence of abuse, CURE UK staff and volunteers will:

- Listen carefully to what is said, without asking questions
- Accept what they hear without passing judgement or investigating
- Not promise confidentiality or any other promises that they are not necessarily able to keep
- Tell the child what they are going to do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Make careful notes as soon as possible
- Contact the person who has responsibility for safeguarding children within the project that they are in or, in not appropriate, CURE senior management staff

Communication

In communications about children, CURE UK recognises that every child has the right to be accurately represented, as a human being with their own identity and dignity preserved. CURE UK will avoid language and images that could degrade or shame children and personal information that could put them at risk.

Sharing of information

CURE UK will ensure that all employees, trustees and volunteers who have access to information about children will understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable sharing of information regarding children

Complaints

CURE UK will ensure that any complaints, allegations or concerns receive appropriate attention and steps are taken to ensure the safety of all concerned.

The rights of children

CURE UK considers the rights of children as paramount in importance. CURE UK believes that the rights of all children are to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC):

A child or young person has the right:

- to have their health, safety, well-being and best interests considered paramount
- to have their welfare and development promoted and safeguarded so that they can achieve their full potential
- to be valued respected and understood within the context of their own culture, religion and ethnicity, and to have their needs identified and met within this context and within the context of their family wherever possible
- to be listened to and to have their views given careful consideration, and to be encouraged and helped to participate in decisions which affect them

In order that these rights are respected, when staff, volunteers and others are in contact with children, they should:

- at all times treat children with respect and recognise them as individuals in their own right
- regard them positively and value them as individuals who have specific needs and rights and a particular contribution to make
- work with them in a spirit of cooperation and partnership based on mutual trust and respect

- value their views and take them seriously
- work with them in ways that enhance their inherent capacities and capabilities, and develop their potential
- strive to understand them within the context in which they live

Code of Conduct

The following Code of Conduct seeks to ensure that children are kept safe from harm and protected from abuse. All employees, trustees and volunteers having contact with children will abide by this code and are expected to interact in a mature, safe, caring, responsible manner, with a high level of accountability and not abusing their position of trust. This Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following expectations of employees, trustees and volunteers:

- It is inappropriate to spend an excessive amount of time alone with children.
- At least two unrelated adults should be present in work with children. When this is not possible, reduce isolation by having a minimum of two children present.
- Activities with children should be planned so that they occur in areas where and at times when other adults are present.
- If confidentiality is required and a child must be seen on their own, it is essential that others know that the interview is taking place and that someone else is in close vicinity.
- Where children with disabilities are involved, adults must be particularly vigilant as research has shown that it is in this context that abuse can go unrecognised and unreported.
- Always be accountable to other adults regarding your interactions with young people or children.
- Parents and/or supervisors are to be notified beforehand of any activities with young people or children.
- Instant messaging, texting and other forms of social networking between mission personnel and children should not be used inappropriately.
- Healthy, caring touch is valuable to children but unhealthy touch is abusive. Touch needs to be used in a culturally appropriate way. Touch should be open rather than secretive and should be in response to the need of the child, and not the need of the adult.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult. It should be with the child's permission and any resistance from the child should be respected.
- Generally appropriate (context-specific) behaviours include: verbal praise, side hugs, pats on the shoulder, back, or head, [for smaller children] touching their hands, faces, shoulders and arms, arms around their shoulders, hugs, or holding them when others are present.
- Inappropriate that should not be engaged in include: touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs, showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child, sleeping in bed with a child, inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development, flirtatious or seductive looks or behaviour, any form of affection that is unwanted by the child, showing sexually-suggestive videos or playing sexually-suggestive games with any child, or any behaviour that could be interpreted as sexual in nature.
- Adults should avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they are able to do for themselves, including dressing, bathing, etc.
- Adults and other young people or children should not hit, slap, pinch, push, hold against their will, or otherwise assault children. It is not acceptable to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- It is not acceptable to discriminate against, show differential treatment, favour particular children to the exclusion of others, or be involved in discrimination, prejudice or oppressive behaviour or language in relation to race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.

- Team members should monitor each other in the area of physical and verbal contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.
- Situations where children are abusing other children (physically, verbally or sexually) should be taken as seriously as if an adult were involved, because the effects on the child victim can be as great. To avoid such incidences occurring, anyone under 16 is not to be left formally in charge of any children of any age (where national legislation requires, this to be 18 years of age)
- Any disclosure of abuse from a child about another child should be taken seriously and safeguarding procedures followed, as in the same way as for any other disclosure.
- In the event of child-to-child abuse, pastoral care and support should be provided to the perpetrator, victim and both families