

# **Child Protection Policy**

**THE DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART**

**OVERSEAS AID INCORPORATED**

**Child Protection, Child Safe and Keeping  
Children Safe Policy**

## **Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Overseas Aid Incorporated**

### **Child Protection Policy, Child Safe Policy and Keeping Children Safe Policy**

#### **Introduction & Preamble**

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Overseas Aid Incorporated fund was granted a Certificate of Incorporation on the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1989 under the Associates Incorporation Act, 1984.

The objectives of the Association are to provide for the relief of people in countries which are for the time being, certified by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and including relief of people in the Philippines and Kiribati.

The DOLSH Aid Inc. was established by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is an international Congregation. The sisters work in over 27 different countries in the world. All the projects funded by the DOLSH Aid Inc. are at the service of developing countries and their peoples. In many instances our sisters, staff and volunteers are in either direct or indirect contact with children. In order to safeguard these children we have drawn up a policy to which all must adhere to.

#### **Vision Statement regarding our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Overseas Aid Inc. recognize the dignity and value of every human person, especially the most vulnerable. We are committed to respect the rights of all persons, especially children, youth and those whose rights and dignity are devalued or at risk.

#### **Child Protection, Child Safe Policy and Keeping Children Safe Policy Statement on commitment to child protection**

The DOLSH Overseas Aid Inc. is committed to the safety and well being of all children. We support the rights of children and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is maintained.

The DOLSH Overseas Aid Inc. is committed to the protection of children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Children have a right to survival, development, protection and participation as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The DOLSH Overseas Aid Inc. upholds these rights.

The DOLSH Overseas Aid Inc. takes its duty of care seriously and aims at all times to provide the safest possible programs and environments for children. This is achieved by identifying and managing risks that may lead to harm.

## **Purpose of the Policy**

- This Child Protection Policy has been developed to provide a practical guide to prevent child abuse in DOLSH Overseas Aid Inc.'s programs. It outlines a range of risk management strategies that will be implemented to reduce the risk of children being harmed.
- The Child Protection Policy demonstrates OLSH Overseas Aid Inc.'s commitment to protect children from harm and abuse.
- The Child Protection Policy aims to educate staff and others about child abuse and promotes a child safe and a child friendly culture where everyone is committed to keeping children safe.
- The Child Protection Policy aims to create an open and aware environment where concerns for the safety and well being of a child can be raised and managed in a fair and just manner, which protects the rights of all.
- Additionally, the Child Protection Policy provides guidance on how to respond to concerns and allegations of child abuse. It provides guidance to staff and others on how to work respectfully and effectively with children. This provides all stakeholders, including staff and others with a safe working environment.
- As a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, the OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. is obliged to have policies and procedures implemented which promote the safety and well-being of all children accessing its services and programs, in particular to minimize the risk of abuse to children (See Clause 2.6 of the ACFID Code of Conduct).
- The OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. adheres to local and international child protection criminal laws, which prohibit the abuse and exploitation of children. These include local laws where the OLSH Overseas Aid Inc.'s programs exist, and international laws and Conventions in relation to all forms of child abuse and child exploitation, including: child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, child labour and child pornography.

## **Guiding Principles**

- The OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. believes that any form of child abuse and exploitation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the universal foundation for child protection. The fundamental principle of the Convention is that children have their own indivisible rights.
- The OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. believes all children have a right to be safe at all times, and we have an obligation to provide safe and protective services and environments.
- The OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. recognizes its duty of care to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe from harm.

- The OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. takes proactive steps to create child safe and child friendly programs.
- Adherence to this Child Protection Policy is a mandatory requirement for all staff and others.
- The OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. ensures that all staff and relevant stakeholders are made aware of the CPP and their responsibilities.
- All decisions regarding the welfare and protection of children are made based on the Best Interests of the Child Principle. 'This principle refers to decisions considering that the child receives maximum benefit possible from services provided, and that the positive impacts of any course of action outweigh any negative impacts.
- Where possible, children were consulted in the development of the Child Protection Policy and the implementation of child safe practices. Children in our programs are given opportunities to express their views on matters affecting them.
- The OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. believes that all children should be equally protected and assisted regardless of their gender, nationality, religious or political beliefs, family background, economic status, physical or mental health or criminal background.

## **Context**

Child abuse is a global problem that affects both boys and girls. It has existed since the beginning of time and is deeply rooted in cultural, economic and social practices. Children are abused physically, sexually, emotionally and through neglect. Children are forced to endure the most hazardous forms of child labour including sweat shops and prostitution. In some countries boys are kidnapped and forced into armed conflict as soldiers. In many countries children experience severe corporal punishment in schools. Children living in poverty are more at risk of child abuse and exploitation.

- According to the World Health Organisation (2001) forty million children below the age of 15 suffer from abuse and neglect and require social and health care.
- An estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked every year. (Every Child Counts, New Estimates on Child Labour, International Labour Organisation April, 2002; UNICEF 2007)
- 1 million children enter the commercial child sex trade every year (1995 estimate). The numbers are likely to be higher now. (Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, United Nations A/50/456, Sept 1995)
- 250 million children are involved in child labour, more than 180 million are working in hazardous situation or conditions. (A Future without Child Labour, International Labour Organisation, 2002)
- 1 in 4 females and 1 in 7 girls will experience some form of sexual abuse in their childhood.

While most child abuse occurs within families and communities, children also experience abuse and exploitation in organisations which provide them with support and services. Experience has found that physical, emotional abuse and neglect in child focussed organisations and institutions are less systematic and usually un-planned. It is usually the result of poor



conditions, bad work practices and negligent management. However child sexual abuse in organisations is often planned and premeditated. Child sex offenders target organisations working with children in order to gain access to victims. They will seek work in organisations that provide opportunities to make contact with children and an environment where their abuse may go undetected. Child sex offenders will be attracted to organisations with inadequate recruitment practices and supervision. Over the last decade many Western countries have enacted tougher laws against child sex offending and many child-focussed organisations have implemented tighter screening practices for the staff and volunteers. These improved child protection measures have led to increasing numbers of child sex offenders moving overseas to seek work in developing countries and development programs. They will seek work in countries with inadequate child protection laws and law enforcement as well as countries where children and their families are vulnerable to exploitation. During recent responses to natural disasters and emergencies it was widely reported that people who pose a risk to children (eg convicted child sex offenders) applied for positions in programs that brought them into contact with vulnerable children.

While there are examples of children being sexually abused by foreign offenders there are also numerous examples of local staff and volunteers sexually abusing children in aid and development programs. In 2002 widespread sexual abuse and exploitation of children by aid workers were exposed by the media in West African refugee camps. It was alleged that 67 aid workers from more than 40 agencies were trading shelter, education, food and medicine for sexual favours. Most of the allegations involved male national staff who traded humanitarian commodities for sex with girls under 18. It is believed that this information had been known to the agencies for sometime.

## **Definitions**

### Duty of Care

Duty of Care is a common law concept that refers to the responsibility of the organisation to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is the duty of the organisation to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of injury.

### Child and young person

A child or young person is regarded to be any person under the age of 18 years, unless a nation's laws recognise adulthood earlier.

### Child Protection

Is the term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused or maltreated.

### Child Abuse

Abuse happens to male and female children of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and political persuasion. Child abuse includes physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, bullying, child labour and domestic violence.

Both boys and girls can be the victims of abuse, and abuse can be inflicted on a child by both men and women, as well as by young people themselves.

In some cases, professionals and other adults working with children in a position of trust also abuse children.

#### Physical abuse

This occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

#### Emotional abuse

This occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. This may involve name calling, being put down or continual coldness from parent or caregiver, to the extent that it affects the child's physical and emotional growth.

#### Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.

#### Sexual abuse

This occurs when a child or young person is used by an older or bigger child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification - regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. These can be contact or non-contact acts, including threats and exposure to pornography.

#### Child-Sex Tourism

ECPAT International defines child-sex tourism as:

*'...the commercial sexual exploitation of children by men or women who travel from one place to another, usually from a richer country to one that is less developed, and there engage in sexual acts with children, defined as anyone aged under 18 years of age.'*  
(ECPAT International, 2006)

## Bullying

Bullying is the inappropriate use of power by an individual or group, with the intent to injure either physically or emotionally. It is usually deliberate and repetitive. The bullying may be physical or psychological (verbal and non-verbal).

- Physically, bullying includes pushing, hitting, punching, kicking or any other action causing hurt or injury.
- Verbal bullying includes insults, taunts, threats and ridicules.
- Psychological bullying includes physical intimidation and ostracism.

## Exposure to Domestic Violence

Domestic violence occurs when children and young people witness or experience the chronic domination, coercion, intimidation and victimization of one person by another by physical, sexual or emotional means within intimate relationships.

(adapted from the Australian Medical Association definition)

## Particularly vulnerable children

Child abuse takes place not only within the family environment, but also outside the family, including: institutions, at work, on the streets, in war zones and emergencies.

## Children in emergencies

Children in emergencies are especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. In an emergency or crisis situation, children are extremely vulnerable when they become part of a displaced or traumatised population.

## **Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all staff and other key groups. 'Staff' refers to: full time, part time, international and national and also those engaged on short term contracts such as: consultancies, researchers, photographers etc. 'Others' refers to: visitors, volunteers, board members, trustees, staff in partnership agencies, and any other individuals or groups that have contact with the organization.

- The OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. recognizes that there a number of potential risks to children in the delivery of our programs to the vulnerable and disadvantaged. In recognizing these risks, OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. proactively assesses and manages these risks to children in our programs (and in the communities in which we work) to reduce the risk of harm. This is achieved by examining each program and its potential impact on children. Programs that involve direct work with children are considered a higher risk, and therefore require more

stringent child protection procedures. However, as children are part of every community in which we work, we are always mindful of potential risks.

- Risk management is an ongoing part of every activity, and OLSH Overseas Aid Inc conducts a child protection risk assessment on every new and emerging program and project, included in the project management cycle.
- Staff and others aim to be continually aware of risks, and to actively minimize opportunities and situations where children can be harmed.
- Staff members are aware of the child abuse incident reporting sheet.

### **Code of Conduct for working with children**

Staff members and others are responsible for maintaining a professional role with children, which means establishing and maintaining clear professional boundaries that serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings or a violation of the professional relationship.

All staff will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role as an OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. representative and a positive role model to children. OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. has developed a child safe code of conduct to protect children, staff and the organization by providing clear behavioural guidelines and expectations.

### **OLSH Overseas Aid Inc.'s child safe code of conduct includes:**

#### **I WILL:**

- Treat all children and young people in our program with respect.
- Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent the values of OLSH Overseas Aid Inc.
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Respect cultural differences.
- Encourage open communication between all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers and have children and young people participate in the decisions that affect them.
- Report any concerns of child abuse.
- At all times staff should be transparent in their actions and whereabouts.
- Take responsibility for ensuring they are accountable and do not place themselves in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made.
- Self-assess their behaviours, actions, language and relationships with children.
- Speak up when they observe concerning behaviours of colleagues.



## **I WILL NOT:**

- Engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children.
- Use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language when speaking with a child or young person.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes.
- Take children to their own home/hotel or sleep in the same room or bed as a child.
- Smack, hit or physically assault children.
- Develop sexual relationships with children or relationships with children that may be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Behave provocatively or inappropriately with a child.
- Condone or participate in, behaviour of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children.
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians.
- Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way.
- Seek to make contact and spend time with any child or young person outside the program times.
- Use OLSH Overseas Aid Inc.'s computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras inappropriately, nor use them for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children.
- Hire minors as domestic labour.

Additional guidelines are contained in the Inter Agency Task Force code.

## **The IASC Task Force on Prevention of Sexual exploitation and abuse outlines six core principles:**

1. Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment;
2. Sexual activity with children is prohibited regardless of the age of majority locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence;
3. Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due beneficiaries;
4. Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work;
5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, s/he must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms;

6. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse, and which promotes the implementation of their code of conduct;
7. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

## **Sponsorship guidelines**

The OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. recognises the need to implement specific guidelines to manage the child protection risks within its sponsorship programs. These guidelines include ensuring that:

- Letters which contain political or religious comments which could cause offence or be inappropriate are not permitted
- All sponsors receive clear child protection and behavioural guidelines upfront
- All visits are arranged in advance through our office and sponsors interviewed
- Sponsors inform agency at least 3 months in advance
- Police checks are required for visiting sponsors and any accompanying family members
- All visiting sponsors sign the child protection policy
- Partner agency staff are present at all times during the visit
- Children are not be invited to leave or taken away from their communities
- Invitations to the sponsor's country are not allowed
- Sponsors are interviewed before each visit
- All gifts and correspondence are screened by the agency
- Sponsors and sponsored families do not exchange mailing addresses during visits
- After every visit a report is sent to the head office
- All visits are monitored

Where sponsors go against policies the organisation can bring sponsorship to a close.

The OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. at all times portrays children in a respectful, appropriate and consensual way. Our guidelines on the use of children's images, in line with the ACFID Code of Conduct Clause 4.2, are:

- A child is always portrayed in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children are adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- A child and its family are always be asked for consent when using their images. When asking for consent to use the image, details are given as to how and where this image will be used.
- No identifying information of the child is used in the publication of images with their location.
- Children are portrayed as part of their community.

- Local cultural traditions are assessed regarding restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Images are an honest representation of the context and the facts.
- When sending images electronically, file labels don't reveal identifying information.
- All photographers are screened for their suitability, including police checks where appropriate.

## **Employment of staff and volunteers**

OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. is committed to child safe recruitment, selection and screening practices. These practices aim to recruit the safest and most suitable people to work in our programs. Our child safe practices include:

- Promoting our child safe commitment on our website, in other promotional materials and in all job advertisements.
- All applicants receive a copy of OLSH Overseas Aid Inc.'s Child Protection Policy and are informed of the screening requirements when they are sent the application form.
- Applicants are required to submit a detailed application form when applying for a position. This form asks for extensive information about the applicant's background such as dates and places of employment, education and other activities.
- All positions are assessed for the level for risk in relation to contact with children. Positions working directly with children require the highest level of screening and the applicant must possess relevant qualifications and experience in working with children.
- Job descriptions are required for all positions (staff, volunteers, consultants –short long term etc), which describe key selection criteria and outline tasks and accountabilities.
- Interviews are conducted for all positions, ideally face-to-face, but telephone interviews may be necessary in the international context.
- Behavioural-based questions are used to ask for examples of the candidate's past behaviour and experiences. In positions working directly working with children, the panel explores the candidate's motivations for working with children, which include value-based questions seeking information about the candidate's attitudes to children, professional boundaries, accountability, team work and how they have responded to ethical dilemmas.
- A minimum of three reference checks are required for all preferred candidates. This includes short and long terms positions, volunteers on placement and consultants. The candidate's most recent employer/supervisor must be one of these referees. OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. verifies the identity of the referee and makes direct contact with each of these referees. Written references are not accepted. OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. reserves the right to request additional references.
- All staff and all others involved with the organisation are required to have a police clearance or relevant criminal history checks depending on the country of origin.
- Where the candidate is working directly with children in Australia, they may require a Working with Children Check (depending on the jurisdiction).
- All staff are required to provide proof of identify including birth certificate, passport, drivers licence and relevant qualifications. Original documents are required.
- All positions are subject to a probationary period depending on the length of the contract.

- Issues relating to child protection are included in staff performance reviews.
- All staff and others are required to read and sign the OLSH Overseas Aid Inc's Child Protection Policy.
- OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. reserves the right to refuse employment to or terminate any person's employment that may pose a risk to children.

OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. considers the abuse and exploitation of children to be completely unacceptable. We take all concerns and reports of child abuse seriously and act on these reports immediately.

### **Child abuse reporting processes and how to respond to a child who has been abused**

It is mandatory for all OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. staff and others to report concerns or allegations of child abuse. These concerns may relate to a child or a staff member involved in the organization or a concern about a child or person/s outside of the organization's programs. If you do have a concern you should immediately follow OLSH Overseas Aid Inc.'s child abuse reporting procedures.

#### **Who should report?**

- All OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. staff and others including people in the community and partner organizations.

#### **What should be reported?**

- Any disclosure or allegation from a child/community member or staff regarding the safety/abuse exploitation of a child.
- Any observation or concerning behaviour exhibited by an OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. staff, volunteer or other relevant stakeholder that breaches the OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. code of conduct for working with children.
- Inappropriate use of the organisation's photographic equipment or computers including evidence of child pornography.
- Staff engaging in suspicious behaviour that could be associated with sexual exploitation or trafficking.

#### **Who to report to?**

- *Overseas:* Child abuse reports should be made to the line manager or Country Director. If this is not possible reports can be made directly to the Australian based Child Protection Officer (CPO)

- In Australia: Child abuse reports should be made to the CPO or the President of OLSH Overseas Aid Inc.

### **Reporting of child abuse in Australia**

Child abuse reports should be made directly to the CPO and/or the President of OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. in Australia.

- Reporting child abuse in Australia is a clearer process compared to responding to incidents that occur overseas. In all Australian states and territories, sexual and physical abuses of children are crimes. The age of consent in most Australian states and territories is 16. However it is important to check in each jurisdiction as the age limit may be different.
- Additionally, in some jurisdictions it is a criminal offence for persons who are in positions of power and trust (e.g. teacher, parent, carer) to engage in sexual activity with children under the age of 18. It is important to research the laws and child protection provisions in each Australian state and territory and ensure that these details are included in the child protection policy.
- Reporting child abuse can either be made to the local state police or the state child protection authorities. If there is an allegation or suspicion of child sexual abuse by a staff member or volunteer in the organization, these matters will be reported to the state police. In most Australian states there are specialised units dealing with child sexual crimes. If there are concerns that a child is being sexually abused by someone external to the organization, OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. will contact the state police and/or child protection authorities.
- Concerns about the welfare of the child in relation to neglect and/or emotional abuse will be reported to the child protection authorities in each state or territory. Contact details of these authorities are: OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. c/- OLSH Provincialate, 2 Kensington Road, Kensington. N.S.W. 2033.
- Concerns about people engaging in child sex tourism, child sex trafficking and child pornography should be reported to the Australian Federal Police (Transnational Sexual Crimes Squad). Contact details are: Ph. 02 61313000, GPO Box 401, Canberra. ACT 2601.

### **Reporting of child abuse allegations overseas**

- Child abuse reports should be made to the line manager or Country Director. If this is not possible reports can be made directly to the Australian based Child Protection Officer (CPO). An initial assessment will be made based on the quality and reliability of the information and a decision will be made (in consultation with the CEO) on what steps to take.
- A local reporting procedure will guide the process based on whether the allegation constitutes a criminal offence in the country, or whether it is a breach of the OLSH Overseas Aid Inc's code of conduct and will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.
- The first step will be to gather all the relevant information and address any health and protection needs of the child. The matter may be directly referred to the local police and or authorities if the allegations are considered to be criminal offences.

- If the incident has occurred outside of the program the matter will be referred to an external body or agency dealing with child protection matters in the country.

### **When to report?**

- Child abuse concerns should be raised immediately.

### **How should it be reported?**

- Verbally and by completing the OLSH Overseas Aid Inc.'s child abuse incident reporting sheet.

### **What will happen next?**

- The In-Country Manager in consultation with the Country Director and the CPO will discuss the allegations and then decide upon the next step. This will involve either:
  - Interviewing the person/persons who made the allegations or other witnesses to gather more information with which to make a decision;
  - Report to local police and or child protection authority;
  - Report made to the Australian Federal Police
  - Concern handled internally if it is not a criminal matter
  - No further action taken
- OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. treats all concerns raised seriously and ***ensures that all parties are treated fairly and the principles of natural justice are a prime consideration.*** All reports are handled professionally, confidentially and expediently.
- All reports made in good faith are viewed as being made in the best interests of the child regardless of the outcomes of any investigation. OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. ensures that the interests of anyone reporting child abuse in good faith are protected. Any employee who intentionally makes false and malicious allegations faces disciplinary action.
- The rights and welfare of the child is of prime importance. Every effort is made to protect the rights and safety of the child throughout the investigation.
- Children and community members with whom OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. are provided with information about how to report any child protection concerns about OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. staff members and others.

### **Responding to disclosure by a child.**

- When a child/young person reveals that he or she has been abused, they may be feeling scared, guilty, ashamed, angry and powerless. You, in turn, may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger and sometimes disbelief.
- If a child discloses abuse, whatever the outcome, the child must be taken seriously



- It is important for you to remain calm and in control and to reassure the child/young person that something will be done to keep him or her safe.
- When a child or young person's discloses they are being harmed you can show your care and concern for the child/young person by:
  - Listening carefully
  - Telling the child/young person you believe him or her
  - Telling the child/young person it is not their fault and he/she is not responsible for the abuse
  - Telling the child/young person you are pleased he/she told you.
- You will not be helping the child/young person if you:
  - Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone
  - Push the child/young person into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what the child/young person wants to tell you and not to conduct an investigation (beware of asking any leading questions as this may prejudice any subsequent investigation)
  - Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child/young person with others not directly involved.
- Try and obtain some details such as where the abuse is taking place, school, home, work etc; is it currently occurring or did occur in the past, name of perpetrator if possible but not necessary.
- It is possible that some children or young people will make a disclosure and then ask you not to tell anyone. It is important you seek guidance from your In-Country Manager or the Senior Staff member in the agency you are working in to discuss how the child or young person can be supported and the disclosure managed.

#### **Other actions to take:**

- *Protect the child* - Once an allegation is made there should be an immediate response that protects the child from further potential abuse or victimization. The child may require medical assistance or counseling support. Where possible the child should remain in the place of residence or relevant program. Exceptions may be made where the child is deemed to be at risk of victimization by peers as a result of the allegation or because the alleged abuse has occurred in home-based care. If the child is in immediate danger you should make arrangements for the child to go to a safe place.
- *Distance the alleged perpetrator* - The best interest of the child may warrant the standing down of a staff member or volunteer. The manager should recommend the appropriate action in writing to the CEO. Any staff member stood down in this manner continues to receive full pay - this measure recognizes that the member is entitled to a just process that does not pre-judge guilt or innocence. Any volunteers who are stood down should similarly receive any reasonable reimbursement of costs.

*Confidentiality* - All reports, the names of people involved and the details will remain confidential. Only the in-country Manager, Country Director, CPO and the CEO, and the people involved will be informed of the report. Details will be released on a "need to know" basis or

when required by relevant local or Australian law or a notification to police or child protection authorities is made.

## **Involving Children**

OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. is committed to child and youth participation. We do this by providing opportunities for children's views to be heard and incorporate their views into our policies and programs. Children are asked for their feedback about staff and services. They are consulted in the development and review of the CPP and are asked to contribute to the child safe code of conduct in regards to what they consider to be appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. Children are also informed about the OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. child abuse reporting process and who to contact if they are at risk, have been abused or are concerned about another child.

OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. is committed to educating staff and others in the CPP, in how to reduce risks and create child safe environments. We promote child safe practices which keep children safe in the organization and in their own community, and provide information about child protection to the children and communities in which we work. This information includes reporting child abuse if they have concerns about an OLSH Overseas Aid Inc. member of staff or other representative in the organization.

OLSH Overseas Aid Inc.'s Child Protection Policy is reviewed every two years. The Child Protection Officer manages the review of the Child Protection Policy, and staff are consulted in this process.

## Appendix 1:

## CERTIFICATION

Reading and understanding the

### **Child Protection, Child Safe and Keeping Children Safe Policy**

*of the*

### **Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Overseas Aid Incorporated**

I, the undersigned, .....(Print Full Name)

Licence number /Passport Number:.....

Date of Issue:.....

State/Country of Issue:.....

Certify that I have read the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy attached and fully understand the policy and all its implications and consequences and ramifications. I agree to abide by this Policy.

Signature:.....

Witness(1):.....

(Signature)

(Print full name)

Witness(2):.....

(Signature)

(Print Full name)

Signed at..... on.....

(Place)

(Date)

## **Appendix 2:**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THOSE VOLUNTEERING**

**OR SEEKING EMPLOYMENT with**

### **DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART Overseas Aid Incorporated**

- Have you ever been convicted of offences involving children?
- Are you being investigated for possible criminal offences involving children – or have you ever been investigated for such offences?
- Have you ever been dismissed from employment for reasons relating to abuse of children?
- Do you know of any other reason why you could be considered unsuitable for working with children?
- Do you consent to the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart checking the above statements against police records?

I understand that if I withhold any relevant information, I may render myself liable to disqualification from the recruitment process or – if appointed – to summary dismissal and contract termination.

Name..... (PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS)

Signature.....

Date: .....