

**CHILD PROTECTION &
SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

RDIS

Rural Development Inter-Diocesan Service
A Holy Soul in a Healthy Body

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1. Introduction

RDIS's commitment to safeguarding children is rooted in the Church's beliefs that all people should protect children from harm and create a safe environment for them. This safeguarding policy is an expression of commitment to the protection of children.

RDIS's Integral Mission for sustainable holistic development refers to present and future generations alike. Therefore, protecting children is a mandatory duty for all RDIS representatives, employees and volunteers

Through church leaders' mobilization of Integral Mission and implementation of child protection in Jesus' name, RDIS will achieve a safeguarded environment for children by:

- Speaking out about children's rights
- Decreasing the number of child abuse cases

Any breach of this policy will be treated as a serious infraction and may result in immediate termination of employment, contract or any other available legal remedy and reporting to the police or other relevant regulatory authority.

a. Principles

RDIS applies the following principles in this child Safeguarding policy, drawn from International Standard for keeping Children Safe and the UN Convention on the rights of a Child:

- All children have equal rights to protection from harm
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children
- RDIS has a duty of care to children with whom we work, are in contact with, or who are affected by our work and operations
- RDIS has a responsibility to help partners meet the minimum requirements on protection.

- All actions on child protection are taken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount

b. Definitions

- ***Child***: anyone under the age of 18 (in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).
- ***Adult***: anyone aged 18+.
- ***Exploitation***: the actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power or wealth for the benefit of the individual leveraging their position, power and wealth to engage child in labor, domestic servitude, forced criminality or organ harvesting.

The exploitation of a child may include but not limited to:

- Domestic servitude (cleaning, child care, cooking,..)
- Forced labor (commonly in agriculture,..)
- Forced criminalities (begging, transporting drugs,...)
- Used for benefit fraud
- ***Child abuse***: is anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. Abuse can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Even in situations where it may be felt that the child accepted or somehow invited the abuse, it is still abuse.

Abusers can be adults (male or female) and other children, and are usually known to and trusted by the child and family. The abuser may be a family member, or they may be someone the child encounters in a residential setting or in the community, including during sports and leisure activities. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming that child or neglecting the needs of the child.

- **Child Protection:** It refers to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children.
- **Child Safeguarding:** The policies and practices that RDIS set to ensure that employees, volunteers, operations and programmes do not harm to children. It involves individual responsibility and preventive actions to ensure that all children are protected from any act that lead to the risk or abuse.

c. Types of abuse

There are four main types of child abuse: physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Children can suffer from one or a combination of these forms of abuse.

- **Physical:** Involves any action that brings intentional physical harm or injury to a child such as Slapping, kicking, giving children alcohol or drugs, biting hitting or burning, often there are external injuries(wounds or bruises) but abuse is not always visible or detectable.
- **Emotional/psychological:** The emotional mistreatment of a child which may involve telling the words that demean, shame, threaten, blame, intimidate or frighten them to the extent that it affects the child's emotional, intellectual, mental or psychological growth.
- **Sexual:** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. Activities may or may not include physical contact with the child (e.g. any sexual activity, intimate touching, sexually suggestive remarks).
- **Neglect:** when adults fail to meet the child's basic needs to an extent that is likely to result in serious impact on the child's health or development (e.g. failing to provide adequate food, shelter, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment).

d. The scope of the policy

This Child Safeguard Policy is Valid for RDIS's stakeholders at all levels and all persons contracted by RDIS, as well as for those board members, volunteers, etc. that come in contact with RDIS's partners and other people where RDIS works and provides support.

Its purpose is:

- To understand the importance of child protection issues
- To understand the policies and procedures relating to child protection and child abuse
- To ensure a safe environment for children within the context of a church setting and RDIS' wider ministry
- To provide guidance and training to those working with children through RDIS
- To gain the respect and trust of the local community

2. Prevention of abuse

a. Introduction:

This section of the policy comprises of a selection of procedures and actions that should be implemented in order to protect children and prevent abuse occurring. These directions act as a reminder to both church leaders and workers to take responsibility for childcare and to be actively accountable to one another with regard to child protection. The relevance of this policy can be demonstrated through campaigns and training sessions for all people working with and connected to RDIS. It will also assist the communication and network between RDIS, government institutions and other Christian organizations.

b. Recruitment

The purpose of this section is to set forth RDIS recruitment procedures to ensure the protection of children.

Employing someone is very important choice for the organization. It is also important that RDIS takes all steps necessary to ensure that all staffs members who are employed are appropriately screened for any potential risks that might pose. Not least for children

This may include:

- Special behavioural-based questions

- Checking references from Previous employment
- Previous experience (if any) of working with children

All employees and volunteers including those from overseas will be required to sign an 'RDIS self-declaration form'. This form demonstrates a commitment as agreed by the employee/volunteer to adhere to RDIS's Child Safeguarding Policy. These forms will be kept on file for the duration of the workers' employment.

c. Code of conduct

This code of conduct exists to protect children from abuse as well as safeguarding RDIS staff from false accusations.

An RDIS employee or volunteer should:

- Be committed to creating an open environment between all employees, volunteers and children to ensure that child protection and abuse issues can be raised, discussed and addressed if necessary.
- Try to teach children correct moral behavior when relating to each other, where possible.
- Encourage children to speak out concerning their safety.
- Use positive reinforcement when disciplining children.
- Set an example to the children they are working with.
- Report any incidences of abuse using the appropriate procedures.

An RDIS employee or volunteer should not:

- Engage in any type of physical or sexual relationship with any child.
- Act in a sexually provocative or physically inappropriate manner.
- Spend a disproportionate amount of time alone with a child, away from others.
- Visit a child's home or invite a child to their home if it means they will be alone with the child.
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child.

- Permit a child to stay overnight at their home without supervision.
- Help a child with personal tasks that they could easily carry out themselves.
- Be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst being responsible for a child.
- Hit, assault or physically abuse a child.
- Use inappropriate or suggestive language that may cause offence to a child or result in abuse.
- Take part or excuse illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviour towards children.
- Cause any emotional harm to a child by shaming, humiliating, belittling or degrading them.
- Favour certain children over others resulting in the exclusion of some children. E.g. offering gifts to children as enticements.
- Exploit a child for their labour.
- Take a child alone in a vehicle unless prior consent has been sought from parents or guardians and only if absolutely necessary.

d. Intervention and response to cases

This section covers the actions you should take if a child discloses to you that they have been abused and explains possible indicators of abuse taking place. (See Appendix) It also covers what the steps are for managing the disclosure.

e. Disclosure of abuse

RDIS is dedicated to responding to and investigating disclosures of abuse and suspicions of abuse.

f. Protocol for managing the disclosure from a child

RDIS staff must:

- Listen to the child allowing them to speak openly

- Ask open questions only to grasp the key facts
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in disclosing the information
- Not promise total confidentiality (any information given by child will be passed to the assigned Child Protection Officer)
- Not gossip or make assumptions
- Not confront the alleged perpetrator even if known to the member of staff

g. Reporting mechanism

If the accusation or disclosure comes from the child themselves or the parent/guardian of the child then the police must be informed immediately.

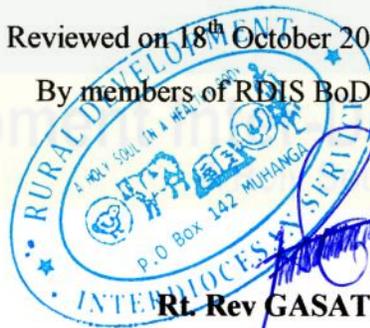
If someone else reports suspicion of abuse then the Child Protection Officer is responsible for meeting with the child and discussing the accusations made.



Mr. Viateur NTARINDWA
Secretary of the BoD

Reviewed on 18th October 2020

By members of RDIS BoD



Rt. Rev GASATURA KAMUSIIME NATHAN
The Chair and President of BoD

Appendix 1: Indicators of Abuse

Type	Physical observations	Behavioral observations
Physical Abuse	Bruising, burns and scalds, bite marks, fractures, swelling, serious injuries with no explanation or conflicting explanations, untreated injuries.	Unusually fearful of adults, unnaturally compliant to parents, refusal to discuss injuries, fear of medical help, aggression towards others, covers-up with clothing.
Sexual	Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth, sexually transmitted disease, unexpected pregnancy especially in young girls, soreness of genital area, anus or mouth, unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain.	Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age, sexualized behavior in young children, sexually provocative behavior/promiscuity, hinting at sexual activity, inexplicable failing of school performance, sudden apparent changes in personality, lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness, socially withdrawn, overly compliant behavior, acting out, aggressive behavior, poor trust in significant adults, regressive behavior, loss of bladder control during day or night, insecure and clinging behavior, arriving early at school or leaving late, running away from home, suicide attempts, self-mutilations, self-disgust, eating disorders, hysteria attacks in adolescents.
Neglect	Poor personal hygiene, poor state of clothing, dressed inappropriately for the season or the weather, inadequately supervised or left in the care of an inappropriate care-giver, untreated medical problems, malnourishment, drug or alcohol abuse.	Constant hunger, constant tiredness, frequent lateness or non-attendance at school, destructive tendencies, low self-esteem, neurotic behavior, no social relationships, running away, compulsive stealing or scavenging.

Emotional	Highly anxious, showing delayed speech, low self-esteem, self-harming behavior, drug or alcohol abuse.	Physical, emotional and mental development lags, acceptance of punishment which appears excessive, over-reaction to mistakes, self-deprecation, sudden speech disorders, fear of new situations, inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations, neurotic behavior, self-harming or mutilation, fear of parents being contacted, extreme of passivity or aggression, drug solvent abuse, running away, compulsive stealing or scavenging.
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