

INTRODUCTION

This document is the Child Protection Policy for FAME Foundation for Women and Girls Empowerment, which will be promoted by those in the position of leadership and applied to all staff, project team members, guests that will be in contact with project beneficiaries, every member of the board of trustees, volunteers, interns or anyone working within the organization wither full-time or part-time.

PURPOSE

This organization does not undertake activities with children in the absence or without the approval of parents/guardians especially underaged, but has the opportunity to observe the children's welfare within the family setting. Parents/guardians remain responsible for their children's welfare throughout the projects carried out by the organization.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Protect children who receive FAME foundation's services.
2. Provide staff, volunteers and everyone that will come in contact with beneficiaries, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and protection of children.
3. Promote communication between Parents/Guardian, children, staff and volunteers.
4. Support the development of children in a way that will make them feel secure, confident and independent.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This document is written in accordance with the;

1. Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
2. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1999
3. Nigerian Child's Rights Act, 2003
4. Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act

FAME foundation recognizes that:

1. The rights, welfare and safety of the child is paramount as enshrined in the Child's Rights Acts, 2003 and should always be promoted.

2. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, religious beliefs, ethnicity, disability or socio-economic background have a right to equal protection from all forms of abuse, including suspected abuse or neglect.
3. Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, dependency, communication needs or other issues.
4. Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, careers and other relevant agencies is essential in promoting children's welfare.
5. Those working in positions of responsibility within the organization will work in accordance with the interests of children, follow the policy outlined, and ensure same opportunities are available to everyone and that all differences will be treated with respect.

DEFINITIONS

- **Child** – any person under 18 years as provided by the Child's Rights Acts 2003 of Nigeria.
- **Child protection** – Child protection is the process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. It involves measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse and neglect.
- **Child Protection Unit, Ministry of Youth & Social Development**– the department responsible for safeguarding the development of the child through the prevention of all forms of abuse against children, coordinating response and investigation of suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found to be in need.
- **Designated person for child protection** – the manager/supervisor or designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about child protection policy.
- **Disclosure** – information given to a staff member by a child, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.

- **Physical abuse** includes acts of violence such as punching (hitting with a fist), kicking, whipping, beating with an object, choking, smothering, trying to drown, burning intentionally, or using or threatening to use a gun, knife or other weapon, regardless of whether or not it resulted in obvious physical or mental injury. It is not focused on acts of discipline, although many of those perpetrating the violence may be doing so in the name of “discipline”.
- **Safeguarding**– Safeguarding is a term which is broader than ‘child protection’ and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s health and development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- **Significant Harm** – Some children are in need of help and intervention because they are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests and promotion of the welfare of a child. Significant harm can be considered as the severity of maltreatment, the degree, extent, duration and frequency of abuse and neglect; the extent of premeditation, presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism and bizarre or unusual elements.
- **Social Worker**- Social care qualified professionals with case responsibility including receiving and responding to child concerns/referrals.
- **Sexual abuse/Assault** includes any act that involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. It is not necessary for the child to be aware that the activity is sexual and the apparent consent of the child is irrelevant. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:
- **Contact abuse/Physical Assault:** touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.

- **Non-contact abuse:** exhibitionism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviors or comments.
- **Emotional abuse** – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include:
 1. Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others.
 2. Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorizing a child can also be emotional abuse.
 3. Exposure to family or intimate partner violence.
- **Neglect** –Neglect is the most common form of abuse and it has the potential of seriously impairing the child's health or development. Forms of Neglect include;
 1. **Physical**– Looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight, not providing the necessities of life like a warm place, food and clothing.
 2. **Emotional**– Not providing comfort, attention and love.
 3. **Neglectful supervision**– Leaving children without someone safe looking after them, no safe home to return to.
 4. **Medical Neglect**– Failure to present child for timely immunization, persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or not taking care of health needs.
 5. **Educational or Vocational Neglect**– Allowing chronic truancy, failure to enroll in school or vocational training centers or inattention to education needs).

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY:

FAME FOUNDATION WILL SEEK TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE BY:-

1. Protecting and valuing them, listening to and protecting them.
2. Creating an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image.

3. Encouraging children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development.
4. Providing a safe and secure environment for all children.
5. Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
6. Sharing concerns with relevant agencies and involving parents and children appropriately.
7. Promote and prioritize the safety and well being of children.
8. Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding children and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognize, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people.
9. Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
10. Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
11. Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals.
12. Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.
13. Appoint well trained Child Protection Officers who will ensure the implementation of this policy, during any activity involving children.

Response to abuse

We have highlighted four main steps to responding to any case of abuse.

They are:

1. Identify Problem
2. Report – Report any and every case of abuse to the Lead Child Protection Officer of FAME Foundation, who will in turn report to responsible agencies such as the NAPTIP or the police.
3. Record – Any and every case of abuse would be recorded appropriately. Any conversation with the child, child protection officer,

lead child protection officer, agencies, or the policy must be duly recorded in order to resolve issues and monitor progress.

Disclosure

Staff and volunteers observe children's behavior from time to time. In any situation that a child discloses any incident of abuse to a member of staff or volunteer, they will listen carefully to the child's disclosure and will ask the following questions:

- How did it happen?
- Did anything else happen at that time?
- Have you spoken to someone about this?

No staff will forcefully demand answers from the child, especially when they are not willing to share. All answers will be documented and reported to the appropriate body. The incident will be documented together with the plan of action and/or outcomes with dealing with relevant bodies such as the Local Authorities or Police.

DISSEMINATION

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted, and are mandatory for everyone involved in FAME foundation. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organization.

FAME foundation acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, transparency, government guidance, best practices and requirements.

If any parent/guardian or child has any concerns about the conduct of any member of the organization, this should be raised in the first instance with the Lead Protection Officer.

MONITORING

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

1. a) Changes in legislation and/or government guidance.
2. b) As a result of any other significant change or event.

CONTACT

Lead Protection Officer

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Agency

National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)

Phone Number: 07030000203, 080CALLNAPTIP (08002255627847)

Nigerian Police Force

Phone Number: 112 or 199

FCT Police Phone Lines: 07057337653, 08061581938, 08032003913

This policy was written by: Anna Mambula (Programme Manager, FAME Foundation)

Date: 3/2/2020

Signed: **Anna Mambula**

This policy was reviewed by: Aderonke Bello (Executive Director, FAME Foundation)

Date: 7/6/2023

Signed: **Aderonke**