



Women Win Model Child Protection Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the Child Protection Policy for (*Insert name of organization here*), which will be followed by all members, staff and volunteers of the organization and by those involved in any activities of the organization, including board members, interns, parents /caregivers, researchers, visitors and business contractors.

Purpose of the policy:

To ensure that the actions of any adult in the context of the work carried out by the organization are transparent and safeguard as well as promote the well being of children.

Principles of the Policy:

1. The welfare of a child will always be first.
2. The rights, wishes and feelings of children and their families will be respected and listened to.
3. Members and staff in positions of responsibility will work in accordance with the interest of children, sign and follow the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, in accordance with local and international child protection laws.
4. Members and staff in positions of responsibility within the organization will ensure that the same opportunities are available to everyone and all difference between individuals will be treated with respect.
5. To provide a framework and process, involving senior management of the organization and external partners in the field of child protection, for addressing and dealing with issues of child abuse and violations of this policy and recommending measures against any person in violation, regardless of their relationship with this organization.

2. CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PROTECTION

A child has the right to protection during any programme or activity the organization runs and on the organization's premises as well as off sites. This includes protection from:

- Exploitation
- Inhumane treatment
- Neglect
- Gender discrimination
- Religious/cast discrimination
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Emotional and psychological abuse
- Corporal punishment



Definitions:

Physical Abuse: involves hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, scalding, suffocating, pinching or any other action that causes harm to the child in a physical way. This could also be in the form of excessive exercise such as running or sit ups against a child's will or physical ability.

Emotional Abuse: persistent emotional ill treatment of a child. It may involve conveying to a child that they are unworthy, unloved, inadequate, stupid or unwanted. It can also take the form of inappropriate and unhealthy expectations imposed on a child such as winning a certain tournament or trophy which can cause the child unhealthy amounts of stress and fear of not performing well. Also, using fear to emotionally control children and humiliating and embarrassing them in front of their peers is a form of abuse. Teasing them because of the way they express their gender, is also damaging and considered abuse. For example, calling girls who are very muscular or really like sports lesbians in a derogatory way, or calling boys sissies when they get hurt easily.

Sexual Abuse: A child may be abused in any of the following ways:

- Sexual intercourse through penile penetration i.e. rape, or use of objects or other parts of body
- Exposing children to pornography and using them for producing pornographic materials.
- Directly or indirectly touching any part of the body of a child with an object or with a part of body for sexual gratification.
- Exposing or flashing genital organs or other parts of the body with sexual intent.
- Deriving voyeuristic pleasure by showing sexual activity or forcing two or more children to have sex with each other.
- Passing sexually coloured remarks or verbally abusing a child using vulgar and obscene language or actions.

Child/Children: Anyone under 18 years of age.

Psychological abuse: when children are not provided with the necessary environment to develop mentally and/or emotionally.

Neglect: depriving a child of their basic needs. These include food, clothing, warmth and shelter, emotional and physical security and protection, medical and dental care, cleanliness, education, and supervision.

Gender discrimination: any unequal treatment based on gender. This could include any situation where a person shows a prejudice towards another that would not occur had they been the opposite sex. Gender discrimination has historically been enacted most often against females, but it can apply to males as well. Gender discrimination can also extend to transgender people.

Corporal punishment: physical punishment that involves the deliberate infliction of pain to punish an offence, to discipline someone, or to deter attitudes or behaviour deemed unacceptable.

Religious/Cast Discrimination: any form of unequal treatment based on religious affiliation or societal status or cast.



2. SECURING SAFETY AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Below are some guidelines on promising practices that promote safety and healthy development for children in the organization's sport programme. There are also practices that should be avoided and practices that should never be sanctioned. It is important to remember that same sex abuse can and does happen, so even mandating same sex supervision in changing rooms or on tournament trips may not necessarily stop abuse from happening.

Promising Practices for Creating Emotional and Physical Safe Space

Behavior

- Involve children in the discussion of appropriate and inappropriate ways to interact with participants and ensure that all participants know about and have read or been explained the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct so they themselves understand when their own rights are violated.
- Listen to children and what they consider safe and not safe.
- All coaches, facilitators, staff, visitors and volunteers must abide by the signed code of conduct. Treat all children with disabilities equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each child first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them during a field trip off site).
- Ensure that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the organization.
- Be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognize the developmental needs and capacity of children and children who are disabled - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Be aware of bullying. Demand individual respect from and for all girls.
- Set out a box for girls to give feedback and suggest conversation topics.
- Allow girls to speak about sensitive topics in the language that is most comfortable. However, be aware that girls who do not speak the majority language may feel marginalized.
- Discourage rumors and gossip.
- Teach girls communication skills to help them peacefully resolve conflicts among one another.

Environment

- Coaches and facilitators must secure the physical safety of the playing space, checking the grounds for any potential hazard or impediment to play and either informing children of the hazard, removing it or cancelling the session.
 - Dangerous hazards could include holes, glass, wood that splinters, rusty nails and metal, needles, toxic trash or anything else that could cause harm while playing



- Coaches must ensure that the space itself is free from or blocks out the entrance of strangers to the programme.
- Always work in an open environment, avoiding private situations alone with participants. A coach must never be alone in a room with a participant.
- All programme sites and offices must have at least one first aid kit and staff trained on first aid procedures and responses.
- Ensure that girls have adequate protective gear for sports that require it.
- Schedule sessions at times where girls do not have to walk to or from home in the dark.
- Establish the rules of the game girls are playing and enforce fair play.
- Adopt a no-fighting policy within the programme. This should apply to participants, coaches and volunteers and should include physical and verbal attacks.
- Train the coaches to ensure they are able to maintain safe spaces for the girls.
- Become acquainted with neighbors in the area.
- Consider holding sessions in spaces that can be physically enclosed, to keep outsiders out and to help girls feel secure. These do not need to be built from scratch. You can often work out agreements to use existing courts, gyms and public spaces.

Supervision

- If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensure that if mixed teams are taken off site, they must always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff.
- There must always be one female facilitator if a group of participants include girls.
- Ensure that at tournaments or residential events, adults must not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Request written parental consent if organization's staff are required to transport children in their cars or are taking participants off site.
- Senior and management staff are allowed to do surprise quality control visits to ensure coaches and staff are abiding by above policies.

Practices to Avoid

The practices below are to be avoided unless in emergency situations in which the child's safety and health is in danger.

- Avoid spending time alone with a child (unless, for example, the parents are late to pick up that child from a training session).
- Coaches' must not enter a child's room or invite a child into their rooms (unless there is an urgent medical or other emergency in which the child's life or health is at stake).
- Avoid taking pictures one on one with participants or pictures in which you are hugging or touching participants.



Practices that should never be sanctioned

The following actions must never be allowed and should be avoided at all costs by staff, volunteers and visitors.

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Sharing a room with a child
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching (for more information, see [Professional Touching](#) section of Women Win's International Guide to Addressing GBV Through Sports)
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control
- Failing to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- Inviting or allowing children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.
- Having a sexual or intimate relationship with a participant

Note: It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if the children are young or are the children have disabilities. These tasks must only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on a staff member or volunteer, that person must talk with the child about what they are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if that staff member or volunteer is involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Staff and volunteers should avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which they are not appropriately trained.

3. REPORTING PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES FOR VIOLATIONS OF POLICY AND INCIDENTS OF INJURY

Organizational note: *This section should be customized and adapted by each organization according to their cultural and practical environment. There are vast differences in ways to report and refer abuse cases within as well as outside the programme and it is up to each organization to understand what works best for their situation.*

All reports or incidents of injury, abuse or neglect reported by participants must be reported to coaches/facilitators, or directly to the Child Protection Officer (or designated position) who will then:

1. Ensure the immediate safety of the child or alleged abused person
2. Fill out necessary complaint form with the help of person who saw, suspected or heard about abuse as well as the allegedly abused person (if appropriate)
3. Accompany alleged abused child or person to get medical attention if necessary
4. Participate and support investigation into alleged abuse or violation of policy



If reports have reached volunteers or visitors, they must immediately report the violations of this policy to a staff member who then must approach and report incidents to the Child Protection Officer. If it is the Child Protection Officer who is accused, the report must be made to the Manager or Director of the organization.

Important: All reports of abuse and violations of this policy must be reported using proper channels. Failure to do so could cause more harm to the organization and most importantly, the child itself and put those who did not report the incident in legal harm. Anyone hearing reports from participants are obligated to report the incidents and therefore, cannot promise the child that they are able to keep the information confidential.

Organizational note: *The reporting and referral processes in this model Child Protection Policy outline what should happen if reports of abuse come from within the organization itself. However, these same processes and procedures can also be applied to reports of abuse or violation of children’s rights outside of the programme. We highly recommend that all coaches and facilitators be trained on how to handle cases of abuse, neglect or violation of rights that happen outside of the programme (home, school, community).*

Steps to take when physical injuries occur

If there are physical injuries or incidents that occur during a programme activity, the coach or facilitator must immediately assess the situation and take medical action if needed. As soon as the injured person is stable and being tended to so as out of immediate danger, the adult must report the incident to the manager or director of the programme. If there need to be further decisions made about medical care for the injured participant, the manager or director would then make a decision, after consulting the parents, about the course of action depending on the gravity of the situation.

- In case of any incident happening with a girl child, a female staff member should handle the situation or be present. There should also be another organization staff member, a community coordinator or a parent involved as well.
- As a rule, it is required that the First Aid to be administered to a child will be by a staff member of the same gender, unless it is not possible to do so due to any exceptional circumstances, in which case the First Aid should be administered in presence of at least two adult witnesses.

Steps to take when a child reports about abuse or neglect:

- Listen carefully to the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to account all the details; don’t stop a child as he/she freely describes the events (ask the child if you can write down what she/he is saying as a way to remember the account).
- Use the child’s own words when possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child that you are glad they have told you and that they have not done anything wrong.
- Explain to the child what you will do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.



- Do not ask the child to repeat his/her account of events to an audience who will not take any action or does not need to hear the account. This could cause the child more pain, fear, or could cause him/her to dramatize the event or change facts.

Reporting signs of abuse

If an adult is concerned about a participant in the programme who has not spoken up but, through change in attitude or physical marks on the body, shows signs of abuse or neglect, that adult must consult with the organization to discuss their concerns related to the child before any action takes place. If the complaint is against a senior staff member or a member of the management team, the complaint should be forwarded to the Board of the organization or to an outside partner organization, which handles cases of neglect and child abuse for further investigation in to the matter.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information will be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. This could include the following people:

- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police
- the Conduct Committee (if one exists), the Manager and the Managing Director
- Child Protection Officer

This organization will seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information will be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

For a flow chart outlining steps in the reporting and referral process, please see Appendix A.

4. INVESTIGATION OF ABUSE AND SUBSEQUENT MEASURES

Below are actions that will be taken if a complaint or incident that violates this policy is reported against a staff member of the organization. All investigations will include the Child Protection Officer, an external partner organization (social services) and police (if deemed necessary).

During investigation

- In a sensitive way as to not indicate guilt before the investigation is done, remove the staff member in question from all activities and restrict his/her contact with children for the duration of investigation.
- Inform and involve police (if necessary), external partner organizations (social services) and parents or legal guardians of the child who was abused.
- Ensure that the child or person who experienced the alleged abuse is safe, both emotionally and physically, throughout the entire investigation process.



- The Director of the Organization will handle all media inquiries.

After Investigation

Depending on the severity of the situation and proven charges (as concluded through the investigation by the senior administration, the Board or the external partner organization (social services) involved in the case) there are several avenues of action that the organization will take.

If no violation is found:

- Reinstate staff member in his/her positions. This is a sensitive issue, particularly with the prevalence of gossip and misinformation. Be careful to share findings of the investigation with appropriate parties and support the individual in coming back.
- Irrespective of the findings of social services or police inquiries, the organization will assess each individual case to decide whether a staff member or volunteer should be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly when there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police however there is still a strong probability of guilt. In such cases, the organization must reach a decision based on the available information. The welfare of the child must always be the most important when making decisions.

If a violation is found:

- Provide verbal or written warning to concerned staff member of inappropriate conduct (however, allow continued work with the organization).
- Suspend the concerned staff member without pay for appropriate period of time.
- Where gravity of the situation permits, after taking suitable legal advice if deemed necessary, dismiss the concerned staff member from the organization.
- In case the concerned staff member has already quit the job before the allegations are levelled against him or her, the organization, after giving the accused reasonable opportunity to defend him or herself, shall be at a liberty to recommend withholding of the final settlement of employment dues.
- In situations where deemed necessary, commence and pursue appropriate criminal proceedings against the concerned staff member.
- In cases when allegations are brought up and found true involving volunteers or visitors, the organization must immediately dismiss that person. The organization can seek legal advice or advice from partner organizations on what steps to take next if the severity of the situation calls for more action.

Support after Investigation

Child abuse and neglect or other violations of this policy could be traumatic for children, parents and other staff members involved. This organization tries to connect any party involved in the incident with any external services that could help them overcome and heal from the difficult situation. These could include counselling services, support groups, open meetings and honest discussion sessions.



- The organization maintains and allows open and honest discussion on child protection and organization's policies with participants and staff.

5. PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING OF PARTICIPANTS

The organization does not allow photographing or videotaping of participants without the consent of the organization, the participant and their guardians if they are under 18. This includes all coaches, staff, visitors, volunteers and contractors. In certain circumstances, people will take pictures of youth during sessions, games or tournaments and use them in inappropriate ways. As an organization, we are vigilant and work hard to ensure that this does not happen. Any concerns on inappropriate use of children's photographs or videos must be reported to the organization immediately.



Sample Codes of Conduct for Staff, Members, Volunteers and Visitors

Staff, members, volunteers and visitors at (*insert organization here*) who are involved in any official organizational activity must sign and adhere to the code of conduct below:

Safe and Inclusive Sport Setting

Harassment and Abuse

1. I will not hit or strike a child as a punishment for bad behaviour.
2. I will not physically, verbally or psychologically harass a child, including bullying.
3. I will not try to punish a child by mocking, teasing, or laughing at them or trying to embarrass them in front of others.
4. I will not use threats or rewards (such as uniforms, equipment, food etc.) to manipulate a child.
5. I will not behave sexually towards a child or touch them in a sexual way. This includes any inappropriate touching or sexually provocative games.

Safe Physical Space

1. I will do everything I can to make sure that the physical environment where the children in my care are playing is as safe and appropriate as possible, including free from harmful objects, litter and other obstacles that could pose physical danger.
2. I will make sure that I know where to get help to treat sports injuries safely, to minimise further harm or infection.

Behaviour and Basic Rights

1. My behaviour is calm and respectful toward other members, staff, volunteers and visitors.
2. If there is anger and disagreements between children, I will stop the activity and try to resolve the issues calmly.
3. I will not ignore a child or refuse to allow them access to basic necessities.
4. I will not allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
5. I will not invite a child to be in a room with me by him or herself nor will I enter a child's room for any reason (unless in emergency situations in which the child's health or safety is at risk).
6. I will not take any pictures of children without consent from the child and his/her parents and consent from the organization. Nor will I take pictures one on one with a child or hugging or holding a child.

Protection and Inclusion

1. I have been trained and briefed on the child protection policies, procedures and processes
2. I will follow processes and procedures outlined in the organization's child protection policy regarding confidentiality and reporting of violations, abuses and misconduct that I hear or encounter myself.
3. I will discuss and listen to children in the programme regarding their ideas of what they think proper behaviour should be in the programme and what they consider a safe space.



I have read and agreed to all the above guidelines and have also read, understood and will abide by the (insert organization's name) Child Protection Policy document.

Name and relationship with organization:

Date:

Signature: