



IRIS GLOBAL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to provide a framework for staff, volunteers, and visitors that aims to protect children and reduce the risk of child abuse or exploitation by:

1. Establishing strong preventative measures that discourage any potential abuser from participating in our organization.
2. Protecting against child abuse and exploitation of any kind.
3. Providing immediate orientation and on-going training to all staff, volunteers, and visitors.
4. Following a strict reporting procedure in accordance with US standards and laws of each associated ministry's jurisdiction.

Iris Global is committed to creating and maintaining a caring and protective environment which promotes the Iris core values and prevents and addresses child abuse and exploitation. We take a zero-tolerance stance and strongly condemn all forms of child abuse and exploitation. This policy aims to ensure mechanisms are in place to aid prevention, protect children, encourage reporting, and facilitate a swift response.

Iris Global works in accordance with the UNCRC standard: The best interest of the child is our primary consideration. Every child has the right to develop to his or her full potential, to quality education, participation and non-discrimination. Everybody has the responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse, abandonment, exploitation, violence and discrimination.

In order to prevent and respond to child abuse, it is crucial that we as an organization reach a common understanding as to what child abuse is and in which circumstances our policies and procedures apply. According to the UNCRC, a child is "every human being below the age of 18 years unless national law recognizes the age of majority earlier." Iris Global applies a broader definition for this child protection policy to include young adults who participate in any of our programs. Additionally, we recognize that child abuse takes place in all countries and societies around the world. Iris Global respects all cultures and religions and seeks to use a broad intercultural and interdisciplinary approach to create a definition that recognizes the vast cultural, religious, social, political, legal and economic differences that children experience.

This policy document is binding for Iris Global and all member associations. Each member association shall define clear reporting and responding structures in accordance with local child protection regulations. This policy is subject to consistent review and improvement; any modifications will be disseminated and implemented in a timely manner.



GOALS OF THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy aims at:

- preventing cases of child abuse;
- reducing the number of child-to-child incidents in facilities and programs in each member association;
- informing children, personnel, board members, family and community members, visitors, volunteers, and partners (sponsors, donors, journalists, governmental authorities, etc.) about the child protection policy and related procedures (awareness, prevention, reporting, responding);
- encouraging personnel directly involved with children to apply the skills needed to contribute to each child's development and protection;
- ensuring that all personnel have the working conditions needed to contribute to each child's development and protection;
- fostering open and honest discussions on child abuse at Family Gatherings and workshops in all programs and facilities amongst all stakeholders (children, young adults and their families, child and youth care personnel, management staff, board members, teachers, maintenance and security staff, etc.);
- putting in place fair, secure, and transparent reporting channels in all types of programs that guarantee the right of stakeholders to be heard;
- forming an active network of protection so all children and adults in our organization are safe and protected.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

1. **Physical abuse** is the actual or potential physical harm caused by an action or lack of action, which is reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust.
2. **Sexual abuse** is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult; the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person in predatory and reenacting behavior. Child sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways including kissing, touching, or pushing boundaries in any manner.
3. **Neglect and negligent treatment** is the inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the development of the child in all aspects of the child's safety, health, and development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.



4. **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that adversely affects his or her self-perception and development. Acts include restricting movement, threatening, scaring, discriminating, scapegoating, corrupting, ridiculing, degrading, bullying, humiliating (e.g. asking potentially embarrassing questions, demanding potentially embarrassing action), or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

PREVENTION

To prevent child abuse and exploitation, we need to create and maintain an environment which from the outset is not attractive to any potential abuser.

1. “Zero Tolerance” standard is stated explicitly on the website.
2. The highest standards of selection, recruitment, and verification procedures are applied to all potential staff, volunteers, and visitors.
3. Applicants for any position, whether staff or volunteer, will disclose any previous criminal record. This is accomplished through providing a police check [i.e. finger prints and background checks] and any other appropriate check, and cross-checking of references. All information gathered during the application process will be preserved in a secure personnel file.
4. Staff, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to regularly share experiences within and between associated ministries and programs regarding how they approach child protection.

PROTECTION

1. In all cases of suspected or proven child abuse or exploitation, the focus is placed on safeguarding and protecting the child. At the same time, healing measures are provided and the protection of all persons involved is critically important. The affected persons receive the necessary counseling and support.
2. All staff, volunteers, and visitors will conduct themselves in a way that safeguards children from all forms of abuse and exploitation;
3. Iris Global is responsible for the review of the child protection policy and related procedures. All updates and changes will be distributed immediately to all associated ministry centers for their immediate implementation.

TRAINING

1. All personnel will receive an orientation and on-going training to affirm their understanding of, and commitment to, our child protection policy.
2. Mandatory on-going training will be provided at regular intervals during service tenure.
3. Child protection policy and procedures are addressed at each visitor orientation.



REPORTING

1. We take all allegations seriously and take appropriate action in accordance with California child protection laws, those in the jurisdiction of the associated ministry, and in the jurisdiction of residence for the alleged abuser.
2. Each associated ministry must thoroughly know and apply the child protection laws in their locale.
3. All personnel are obliged to immediately provide any information he or she has regarding a possible case of child abuse or exploitation to a member of the associated ministry leadership team. Any adult who withholds information or covers up any kind of abuse or exploitation is considered an accomplice.
4. For all abuse or exploitation allegations, an internal investigation must be carried out. Utmost priority to conduct a thorough investigation must be given in time-sensitive circumstances, for example if medical interventions or if the accused person is scheduled to leave.
5. Upon confirmation of an allegation of child abuse or exploitation, associated ministry must file a timely report to the appropriate local agency.
6. If abuse or exploitation is confirmed whether through internal investigation or by local child welfare authorities, legal steps will be taken in accordance with the national reporting for the local jurisdiction and in the jurisdiction of residence for the perpetrator. Iris Global must be notified if allegations are confirmed.
7. Adherence to a Whistle Blower Policy is critical to maintaining a safe environment to voice concerns of abuse or exploitation.
8. The response to child-to-child abuse focuses on what is best for all children involved and in coordination with local child welfare authorities.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in loss of ability to receive funds through Iris Global, revocation of license agreement, and disassociation in promotional materials.