



Child Protection Policy 2019

Introduction

Xavier Project's vision is for a world in which refugees, marginalised and disadvantaged children can lead dignified and fulfilled lives. We believe that each child should be able to access quality education delivered in a safe environment. When well safeguarded from any form of abuse and empowered, children, can become the agents to improve their own futures and go on to positively impact their families and communities. Xavier Project's Child Protection Policy provides clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with Child Protection issues, and complies with United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)¹.

This policy makes explicit Xavier Project's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures, endorsed by the organisation's mission statement. This policy aims to prevent harm to children, protect children and support children and applies to all children and persons of concerns (PoC) in the organisation. It should be read by every new employee and volunteer as stated in the Safe Recruitment Policy, and upheld by all employees, volunteers and any other parties that may have any engagements with Xavier Project.

Our Child Protection Principles and Values

Xavier Project recognises that:

Important elements of any child protection policy should be prevention, protection and support. We trust that all these elements are covered by this policy in combination with the Safe Recruitment Policy.

Xavier Project therefore endeavours:

- a. To establish and maintain an ethos where beneficiaries feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- b. To ensure that our beneficiaries know that there are adults in the organisation whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- c. To ensure that wherever it is necessary every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and representatives from outside agencies.

¹ https://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30160.html

Definitions

Child

According to UNCRC, a child is anyone under the age of 18. At Xavier project, due to the unique nature our beneficiaries, we would also recognise “a child” as the youth over 18 years of age benefiting of participating in any of our programs.

Child protection

Preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage (UNICEF).

Child abuse

Child abuse is any deliberate behaviour or action that endangers a child’s health, survival, well-being and development. There are three types of child abuse: physical, emotional and sexual. Neglect is also considered a form of child abuse.

Child exploitation

Child exploitation is the use of children for someone else’s economic or sexual advantage, gratification or profit, often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child.

Child well-being

Child well-being can be understood as the quality of a child’s life. It is a dynamic state that is enhanced when a person can fulfil his or her personal and social goals. A wide variety of domains and measures are used to assess levels of childhood well-being. UNICEF uses six dimensions: material well-being, health and safety, education, peer and family relationships, behaviours and risks, and children’s own subjective sense of well-being.

Direct contact with children

Being in the physical presence of a child/children in the context of work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long-term e.g During selection interviews, students camps, school monitoring etc

Indirect contact with children

Having access to information on children in the context of work, such as children’s names, locations, photographs and case studies.

Other related terms: Female Genital Mutilation, Child Labour, Child trafficking, Discrimination, Gender norms, Foster care systems, child neglect.

Why do we have a Child Protection policy?

- It’s a conscious effort for Xavier Project to show commitment in ensuring all children and other PoCs are “safe”
- To ensure our staff are protected since they understand the expected code of conduct.
- To ensure children are protected since deliberate measures are put in place to keep them safe
- To protect the reputation of Xavier Project since an individual event such as an employee action can have adverse effects on the entire organisation.

Scope of the child protection policy

This child protection policy applies to all board members, employees, volunteers, interns, community-based organisation members and all other parties that may have any engagements with Xavier project such as donors, sponsors and journalists.

Roles and Responsibilities

In both the Kenya and Uganda operations or the equivalent shall be child protection focal persons. The current Kenya contact is Sharon Otieno (s.otieno@xavierproject.org) and the Uganda contact is Christine Awori (a.christine@xavierproject.org). They will work closely with the leadership team member charge of beneficiaries' safety Mercy (m.musembi@xavierproject.org) and the CEO Edmund whose contact is (e.page@xavierproject.org).

The Child Protection focal persons will be responsible for:

- a. Understanding the procedures and how they work in practice;
- b. Ensuring that the organisation has a system for recording Child Protection concerns at all stages, up to the point of referral to relevant authorities. At this point consultation with the leadership team.
- c. Encouraging staff to discuss issues of Child Protection at both personal and professional levels;
- d. Providing support and guidance to other staff
- e. Raising issues or situations which may work against the interests of the beneficiaries.

The Leadership Team member in collaboration with the CEO is responsible for:

- a. Appointing a child Protection focal person with the responsibilities specified above
- b. Ensuring that the organisation maintains a clear policy for Child Protection
- c. Liaising closely with the child Protection focal person and being especially attentive to any concerns raised by him or her.
- d. Assessing the Child Protection focal persons competence in the role and taking any facilitating action to ensure that the organisation fulfils its child protection responsibilities, and if any deficiencies or weaknesses are identified in Child Protection arrangements, he must see that these are remedied without delay.
- e. Ensuring that all staff have basic training in child protection issues

Policy Implementation strategies

Safe recruitment procedures

Any individuals that wish to engage with Xavier Project at any capacity including employees, interns and volunteers should:

- Provide a code of conduct clearance certificate from police
- Provide names and contacts of 2 character referee. This must be persons who have known them for at least 3 years and not family members.
- To show personal commitment to Xavier Project's child protection policy, each individual will sign a commitment to adhere to principle and procedures.
- All recruitment interviews should incorporate child protection matters
- New employee back ground check should cover child protection

Safe program designs

At Xavier Project, all staff will be expected to design programs that are safe for children. A risk assessment will be carried out to ensure that all protection issues are addressed and any activities that pose danger to children should be avoided.

Staff code of conduct

It is important that staff, by their behaviour or actions, do not place beneficiaries or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to beneficiaries (for example, one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a beneficiaries by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a beneficiaries, and so on.)

Staff should:

- a. Treat everyone with respect
- b. Maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct both personally and in others
- c. Be concerned about the way in which your language, actions, and relationships with children could be perceived
- d. Be exemplary in conduct with regards to child protection
- e. Respect a young person's right to privacy
- f. Provide access for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have
- g. Recognise, and allow for, the special needs of young people disabilities and learning difficulties
- h. Encourage young people and adults to point out attitudes or behaviour that they do not like
- i. Avoid inappropriate physical contact with PoCs
- j. At all times respect the confidentiality of children's personal information.
- k. Obtain written consent from the child and parent/carer when photographing, filming or requesting personal information for activities
- l. Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intended
- m. Recognise that special caution is required in sensitive moments of counselling when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse. Respect the cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds of those you work with.
- n. Ensure that there is a minimum of two staff members present in meetings with children

Xavier Project Staff should not:

- a. Engage in any form of sexual activity with children
- b. Permit abusive peer activities (e.g. bullying, racial harassment etc.)
- c. Do not discriminate, shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children
- d. Share inappropriately children photos or any other information
- e. Have any inappropriate physical contact with underage people
- f. Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts with favouritism to any individual
- g. Be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as crushes or tantrums
- h. Make suggestive remarks or gestures

- i. Rely on your good name to protect you
- j. Believe 'it could never happen to me'
- k. Interview vulnerable young people on their own

Sharing children's information

The principles to uphold here include:

Dignity: The child's dignity should never be compromised. The language or images used should not in any way demean a child.

Accuracy: Any information or image regarding a child should not be altered or tampered with in any way. Any generalisations or manipulations that do not depict the actual picture should be avoided.

Privacy: Any information that will put the child at risk should be avoided.

- Only use first names of children: be careful not to reveal details about the place where they live, their school and other information that would lead to their place of residence when necessary the names of children will be changed
- Information about a child/children's life and photographs of children (including information stored on the computer) will be kept in secure files. Access to these should be limited to those that need to use them during the course of their work. E.g we can't just share our beneficiaries details
- The recorded images should focus on an activity and, where possible, feature groups of children rather than individuals.

Informed consent: Informed consent must always be sought before taking any photos, videos, or requesting personal information about children's lives. The parents or guardians of the children must be involved and clear information provided as to how the information will be used. A consent form must be filled and duly signed by the child and the parent or guardian, oral agreements should be avoided.

Communication

Xavier Project will communicate its commitment to child protection to the public and all stakeholders specifically on their website, community learning centres, job advertisements and job reference checklist form.

Training

During orientation, all new employees shall be introduced to and trained on Xavier Project child protection policy. This initial training should be tailored in manner that matches the employees roles and responsibilities.

All Xavier Project staff shall receive child protection training at least once per year.

The leadership team and child protection focal person should review the child protection policy to address any emerging issues.

Reporting procedures

When reporting any child protection allegations one would consider whether:

- a) It's an internal concern: Involving a staff member, volunteer intern or other persons working with Xavier Project.
- b) An external concern: Involving other persons outside of Xavier Project.

When reporting an allegation of **internal concern** this is the procedure to follow:

- Allegations against staff, volunteers or the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding should be reported to the child protection focal person and the leadership team member in charge of beneficiaries safety immediately after the allegation is made, and certainly within 24 hours. If they are absent or the allegations concerns them, it should be reported to the CEO. If the allegation concerns the CEO, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the trustees of Xavier Project UK without notifying the CEO first. The contact person is h.reid@accenture.com .
- The child protection focal person will assess and interrogate the information provided and if convinced that further steps should be taken, he will discuss the matter with leadership team and the CEO.
- The member of staff to whom the allegation has been reported must make a written, signed and dated account of the allegations as soon as possible (and certainly within 24 hours). Recording any information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.
- Confidentiality is the norm in regard to child protection concerns in the organisation. The purpose of this confidentiality is to protect those involved in any specific case.
- Members of staff to whom beneficiaries disclose Child Protection matters must be sensitive in explaining that the information they receive might have to be passed on to others.
- On no account should any guarantee of confidentiality be given to the beneficiaries concerned.
- Beneficiaries making disclosures of alleged abuse in good faith will be protected.
- In case of serious harm, suggesting that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, or where it is possible that a criminal act has been committed the police should be informed from the outset.
- Where the allegation is against the CEO, urgent initial consideration should be given by the Trustees as appropriate, in consultation with the local authorities.

NB: If there is any doubt of these matters, then guidance/clarification must be sought from the Child Protection Officer.

When any allegations are made, there are **4 possible outcomes** which may arise from the initial discussion between the Child Protection Officer and the CEO:

1. Where the beneficiary has suffered, is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, there should be an immediate referral under local child protection procedures.
2. Where the child has alleged that a criminal offence has been committed, then again this will be referred under local child protection procedures and the police may carry out a criminal investigation and take the appropriate actions thereafter.

3. However, it may be that the matter can be dealt with at a lower level. The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by a member of staff (which does not fall within the above categories) that needs to be considered under local disciplinary procedures. The allegation is apparently without foundation or the incidence is irrelevant.
4. The Xavier Project staff involved if found guilty will bear the consequences and possibly be reported to authorities especially if it's proved that it was a deliberate action.

When the allegations involves Xavier Project beneficiary and persons outside of Xavier Project: The allegations should be reported to the child protection focal person who will on consultation with the leadership team and CEO take the appropriate action.

Talking boxes will be used in schools and hubs to encourage beneficiaries to report cases of abuse.

Supporting Beneficiaries at Risk

Xavier Project recognises that any beneficiaries who has been a victim of sexual, physical or emotional abuse, or the abuse of neglect, may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth, and exhibit behaviour that is challenging and defiant. The organisation also accepts that beneficiaries who have experienced abuse may be inclined to abusing others and that such abuse requires a sensitive approach by all those involved. Xavier Project endeavours to support beneficiaries through:

- a. The structure of pastoral care throughout the project, in particular the support of CEO, and coordinator.
- b. The close attention of the Senior Management of the organisation in serious cases
- c. The availability of a Counsellor or other professional help
- d. A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, if it is in the beneficiaries interest to do so.
- e. Well-kept records are essential to good Child Protection practice. Xavier Project is clear about the need to record any child protection concerns held about a beneficiary. The organisation is also aware that such records must be kept confidential and secure until such time, if judged necessary, they are passed over to appropriate outside authorities. These records will comprise concerns, in writing, passed to the Child Protection Officer by his or her colleagues. Each beneficiary about whom a note has been received will have an individual file, chronologically ordered, and locked with other Child Protection documentation, separate from other records. Each beneficiary about whom a protection file has been opened will be the subject of a discussion between the Child Protection Officer and the CEO. The likely outcome of the discussion will be to inform the beneficiaries parents or guardians, in order to ensure still more effective monitoring of the area of concern. It is the responsibility of all staff to pass on their concerns about any beneficiary to the Child Protection Officer, whether or not they have been informed that a specific beneficiary is being monitored. The Child Protection Officer is responsible for collating the concerns lodged in a Child Protection File and in consultation with the CEO decides whether the case warrants referral to the social welfare services.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Child Protection Policy

Lessons will be drawn from specific cases to inform the policy review to keep relevant. The policy procedure will be reviewed annually to find out which ones worked well and which ones did not work. Feedback through interviews, focus group discussions and questions from our beneficiaries will be drawn to inform the policy review.

This organisation fully recognises the contribution it can make to protecting and safeguarding children. If you have questions about this policy, its interpretation, or the information upon which it is based, please contact the CEO Edmund Page.

Signed and approved by:

Edmund Page



CEO

This policy was adopted on 12/12/2015

This policy is reviewed and updated on 21/09/2019

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Personal Statement of Commitment to Xavier Project's Protection Policy

I, _____, have read and understood the Standards and guidelines outlined in Xavier Projects child protection Policy. I agree with the principles

Contained therein and accept the importance of implementing and promoting the child protection policies, procedures and practices contained within this document while working or associated with Xavier Project.

Name _____

Designation _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix 2: Recognising child Abuse

<p>Possible signs of physical abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts • Improbable excuses given to explain injuries • Refusal to discuss injuries • Withdrawal from physical contact • Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather • Unwillingness to participate in physical activities that may involve undressing, e.g. sports • Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted • Showing wariness or distrust of adults • Self-destructive tendencies • Being aggressive towards others • Being very passive and compliant • Chronic running away 	<p>Possible signs of neglect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent hunger • Taking scraps of food from bins or plates, or stealing food • Poor personal hygiene • Constant tiredness • Inappropriate clothing, e.g. summer clothes in winter • Frequent lateness or nonattendance at school • Untreated medical problems • Low self-esteem • Poor social relationships • Compulsive stealing • Drug or alcohol abuse
<p>Possible signs of emotional abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, cognitive or emotional development is delayed • Highly anxious • Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder • Fear of new situations • Low self-esteem • Inappropriate emotional responses to situations • Extreme passivity or aggression • Drug or alcohol abuse • Chronic running away • Compulsive stealing 	<p>Possible signs of sexual abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age inappropriate sexualised behaviour or highly sexualised language • Bed wetting or soiling • Anal or genital soreness • Sleep problems • Fear of being with adults • Promiscuity • Extreme risk taking in adolescence