

Evie Grace Inc.
Also known as Evie Grace Foundation.

Child Protection Policy

INTRODUCTION.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) declares that every child has the right to enjoy childhood. Although most countries (including Kenya) have ratified the UNCRC, few enforce it, and many of the world's children end up being exploited, abused, and unable to enjoy childhood. All stakeholders of Evie Grace Inc. have a common commitment to the prevention of abuse and the provision of shelter and education for the development and protection of children and young people (CYP).

This policy sets out our common values, principles, and beliefs, and describes the steps that Evie Grace Inc. will ensure in meeting our commitments to protect children and young people.

What the CPP Child protection Policy contains: Our commitment to protecting children:

Values, principles, and beliefs of Evie Grace Inc.:

- All CYP in distress and abandonment are having their rights violated.
- All CYP have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- The situation of CYP must be improved through the promotion of their rights, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- CYP abuse and exploitation is unacceptable.
- The Girl Child should never be placed in the position of having to exchange sexual intercourse or acts in order to purchase menstrual pads.
- We commit to protect the children with/for whom we work.
- When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet our standards of protection for children in their programs.

What we will do:

Evie Grace Inc. will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse and exploitation through the following means:

ORIENTATION

We will ensure that staff, children, committee members, and stakeholders are oriented to the problems of abuse and risks to CYP. Necessary training and resource materials will be provided for this purpose.

PREVENTION

We will ensure through awareness and best practice that staff, children, committee members and stakeholders are able to lower the risk to CYP.

REPORTING

We will ensure that staff, children, committee members and stakeholders possess a clear understanding of the steps to take when concerns arise regarding the safety of children.

RESPONDING

We will ensure that action taken seeks to support and protect CYP and that it is in the “best interest of the child”.

In order to meet the above standards of reporting and responding, members of Evie Grace Inc. will also ensure that they:

- Take seriously any concerns raised
- Take positive steps to ensure the protection of CYP who are the subjects of any concerns
- Support children, staff, or other adults who raise concerns, or who are the subjects of concerns
- Act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent process of investigation
- Are guided through the child protection and participation process according to the principle of the “child’s best interest”
- Listen to and take the views and wishes of CYP seriously
- Work in partnership with parents/caregivers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of CYP

How Evie Grace Inc. will ensure our commitments above are met:

- All Evie Grace Inc. staff (local and international), volunteers, and committee members will sign and abide by the Code of Conduct.
- All partners will sign and abide by the code of conduct.
- All staff, visitors, and volunteers will be given a copy of and abide by this Child Protection Policy.
- The Child Protection Policy will be translated into the local language.
- No staff, volunteers, trustees, and stakeholders associated with Evie Grace Inc. will have any kind of criminal record.
- Recruitment procedures will include checks and suitability for working with young people.
- Inductions will include a briefing on child protection issues.
- Once reported, allegations will be dealt with using the established system.
- If a staff member, trustee, volunteer, or visitor is found to be an abuser, they will be removed from the projects immediately, and criminal proceedings will be sought, if the abuse constitutes a criminal offence.
- Training, learning opportunities and support will be provided by Evie Grace Inc. as appropriate to ensure commitments are met.

Recognising signs of abuse.

Recognising indications of potential abuse is complex, and there is no simple checklist to allow easy recognition. There are potential warning signs that can alert you, but they should be observed and assessed with care.

Possible signs of neglect:

- Frequent hunger
- Failure to grow
- Stealing or gorging food
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Inappropriate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug or alcohol abuse

Possible signs of emotional abuse:

- Delayed physical, mental and emotional development
- High anxiety
- Self-injury or Self-harm
- Signs of delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
- Fear of new situations
- Low self-esteem
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Lying

Possible signs of sexual abuse:

- Age inappropriate sexualized behaviour
- Physical indicators (general and in genital and anal areas)
- Behavioural indicators (general and sexual), which must be interpreted with regard to the individual child's level of functioning and development stage

Possible signs of physical abuse:

- Bruises, bumps, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts
- Improbable excuses are given to explain injuries
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Bodily injuries are occurring in places, which are not normally exposed: falls, rough games, etc.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs kept covered
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Overly passive and/or compliant behaviour
- Chronic running away
- Self-injury or harming oneself

Possible signs of concern regarding adult behaviour:

- A person in whose presence a child or children becomes unusually distressed or agitated can be a cause for concern
- A member of staff, volunteer, or parent asking a child to lie can be a cause for concern
- Any member of staff, volunteer, or parent who asks you to lie about a situation involving a child - particularly if that child looks distressed - is a cause for concern
- Any person who persistently fails to follow the organisation's Code of Conduct / behavioural protocols (detailed in the child protection policy) is a cause for concern, particularly if their given reasons are evasive

Allegations from a child - listening to a child's disclosure of abuse.

A Child Protection Officer shall be appointed.

All complaints of abuse of a child should be given to the Child Protection Officer of the organisation. The child who is the victim can submit complaints themselves, or the staff can facilitate the process. The Child Protection Officer (CPO) should regularly visit and be in contact with the projects which concern children. If an emergency situation emerges, the children or the staff can call and ask the CPO to be present in the project immediately.

Important points:

- Accept what the child says
- Keep calm
- Don't panic
- Don't seek help while the child is talking to you
- Be honest
- Look at the child directly
- Do not appear shocked

- Let them know that you need to tell someone else
- Assure them that they are not to blame for the abuse
- Never ask leading questions
- Try not to repeat questions to the child
- Never push for information
- Do not fill in words, finish their sentences, or make assumptions
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened
- • Take proper steps to ensure the physical safety and psychological wellbeing of the child. This may include referring them for medical treatment or to a psychologist.
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made.

Accuracy is paramount in this stage of the procedure:

- Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation to the designated child protection officer.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next, and that you will let them know what happens.

Things to say:

- Repeat the last few words in a questioning manner
- 'I believe you.'
- 'I am going to try to help you.'
- 'I will help you.'
- 'I am glad that you told me.'
- 'You are not to blame.'

Things not to say:

- 'You should have told someone before.'
- 'I can't believe it! I'm shocked!'
- 'Oh, that explains a lot.'
- 'No, not X. He/She's a friend of mine.'
- 'I won't tell anyone else.'
- 'Why? How? When? Where? Who?'

At the end of the disclosure:

- Reassure the child that it was right to tell you
- Let them know what you are going to do next
- Immediately seek help, in the first place from the designated child protection officer
- Write down accurately what the young person has told you. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure place for an indefinite period. These are essential in helping your organization/ the police decide what is best for the child, and as evidence, if necessary
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support

CODE OF CONDUCT

All Evie Grace Inc. members and staff must sign up to and abide by this code of conduct

Staff, volunteers, visitors, and others must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault, exploit or indulge in any kind of abuse to CYP
- Develop physical and sexual relationships with CYP
- Exploit the ignorance or innocence of CYP
- Develop relationships with children, which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child / young person at risk of abuse
- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice, which is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Participate in behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe, or abusive
- Act in ways intended to scare, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate or show differential/preferential treatment, particularly based on caste, religion, or class.
- When Children and Young People (CYP) are taken on excursions or tours, the safety and security of CYP lies with the staff and coordinator who accompanies them. They will be responsible, and all safety precautions shall be taken for the trip. Each staff member that accompanies CYP shall be assigned specific duties to care and act swiftly in situations.

This is not an exhaustive and exclusive list. The principles are that staff members and others should avoid actions or behaviour, which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

It is important for all members, staff, and others in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks, and manage them accordingly
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimize risks
- Be visible (as far as possible) in working with children
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between the staff, so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns
- Empower children – discuss with them their rights, explain what is acceptable and unacceptable, and advise what they can do if there is a problem.

Minimizing Risk Situations

NEVER:

- Condone or participate in behaviour that is illegal or unsafe
- Be alone with a single child, including in the following situations: overnight, in your home, or the home of a child
- Show favouritism or spend excessive amounts of time with one child

TRY TO:

- Avoid placing yourself in a compromising or vulnerable position
- Be accompanied by a second adult whenever possible
- Meet with a child in a central, public location whenever possible
- Immediately note the circumstances of any situation which occurs, which may be subject to misinterpretation by a third party
- Avoid doing something that could be misinterpreted by a third party

Sexual Behaviour

NEVER:

- Develop physical/sexual relationships with a child
- Behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Engage in or allow sexually provocative games with children to take place
- Do things of a personal nature that a child could do for him/herself, including dressing, bathing, and grooming

Physical Behaviour

NEVER:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse a child

DO:

- Wait for appropriate physical contact, such as holding hands, to be initiated by the child
- Ask permission from children before taking photographs of them, except under exceptional circumstances based on their best interest, where this might not be possible or desirable

Psychosocial Behaviour

DO:

- Be aware of the power balance between an adult and a child, and avoid taking any advantage this may provide

DO NOT:

- Use language that will mentally or emotionally harm a child
- Suggest inappropriate behaviour or relations of any kind
- Act in any way that intends to embarrass, humiliate or degrade a child
- Encourage any inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour, such as tantrums by a child

- Show discrimination based on race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, or political persuasion

Peer Abuse

DO:

- Be aware of the potential for peer abuse
- Encourage CRK partners to develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable children
- Avoid placing children in high-risk peer situations (e.g., Unsupervised mixing of older and younger children)

DO NOT:

- Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other
- Encourage peer pressure or bullying
- Turn a blind eye to possible situations of peer pressure or bullying

Physical Environment

DO:

- Encourage partners to develop clear rules to address specific physical safety issues relative to the local physical environment of a project (e.g., For projects based near water, heavy road traffic, railway lines)

Communications Guidelines

Within its fundraising and publicity materials, Evie Grace Inc. will sometimes be required to use text and imagery from its projects around the world. In so doing, it recognises that it has a responsibility to the children that are portrayed. To this end, Evie Grace Inc. looks at all children as human beings who are the subject and receivers of human rights and will respect these rights at all times.

In communications about children, the following, therefore, applies:

- Every child has a right to be accurately represented through both words and imagery. The organization's portrayal of each child must not be manipulated or sensationalized in any way but provide a balanced depiction of their life and circumstances. Children must be presented as human beings with their own identity and dignity preserved.

Evie Grace Inc. will avoid the following:

- Language and images that could possibly degrade or victimize or shame children
- Making generalizations which do not accurately reflect the nature of the situation
- Discrimination of any kind
- Taking pictures out of context (e.g., pictures should be accompanied by an explanatory caption where possible and should be relevant to any accompanying text).
- Where children are indeed victims, the preservation of the child's dignity must, nevertheless, be preserved at all times. The organization should attempt to depict a

balance between victimisation and empowerment by using necessary tools, such as 'before' and 'after' shots.

- In images, children should not be depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually provocative.
- Personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child within a country and cause them to be put at risk will not be used on the organization's website or in any other form of communication for general or public purposes. Where it is necessary to use case studies to highlight the work of Evie Grace Inc., the names of children will be changed.
- Permission will always be sought from the child/children themselves before taking photographs, except under exceptional circumstances, based on the child/children's best interests, where this may not be possible or desirable.
- To the greatest extent possible, the organization will acquire informed consent/the permission of the child, child's guardian and/or NGO responsible for the child before using any image for publicity, fundraising, awareness-raising or other purposes. The purpose should be made clear to the consent giver.
- As far as possible, people (including children) should be able to give their own accounts, rather than have people speak on their behalf. People's (including children's) ability to take responsibility and action for themselves should be highlighted.
- Information about a child/children's life and photographs of children (including information stored on the PC) 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.
- Individuals or organizations that request the use of Evie Grace Inc. resources, such as photographs, will be required to sign an agreement with the organization as to the proper use of such materials.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

In case of violation of the code of conduct or failure to abide by the child protection policy, the staff and others will amount to disciplinary action.

All complaints of abuse of a child should be given to the CPO of the organisation. The child who is a victim can give by itself, or the staff can facilitate the process. The Child Protection Officer (CPO) should regularly visit the projects, which concern children. If an emergency situation emerges, the children or the staff can call and ask the CPO to be present in the project immediately.

- If an allegation of a violation of the policies, guidelines, principles, or practice of child protection is made concerning a named individual from a verifiable source against any employee, contractor, trustee, officer, intern, or volunteer, they may be suspended from all activity/association with the organization, pending the outcome of an independent investigation.

Depending on the outcome of the independent investigation:

'If it comes to light that anyone associated with Evie Grace Inc. commits acts in relation to children -whether within or outside the context of Evie Grace Inc. work - which are criminal, grossly infringe children's rights, or contravene the principles and standards contained in this document, the organisation will take immediate disciplinary action and any other action which may be appropriate to the circumstances'.

This may mean, for example, for:

- Employees – warning /disciplinary action/dismissal
- Volunteers, trustees, officers, and interns - ending the relationship with the organisation
- Partners - withdrawal of funding/support
- Contractors - termination of the contract
- ‘Depending on the nature, circumstances, and location of the case, Evie Grace Inc. will also consider involving authorities such as the police to ensure the protection of children and criminal prosecution where this is appropriate.
- The decision to suspend is not subject to challenge. When investigating and determining the concerns or complaints, the process should always be fair, and any adverse determination should be open to challenge through an appeals process.

STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following procedures will be followed in this process:

- A complaint in writing will be required of the CYP, who is affected by the act. The complaint should not be on instigation.
- No complaint will be accepted from the co-staff or the field worker.
- The complaint can be given to the coordinator or to the Child Protection Officer (CPO).
- An oral enquiry will be undertaken by the co-coordinator or superior of the particular staff within three days of the written complaint.
- Based on the enquiry, a report should be sent to the administration office by the coordinator / superior within a week of enquiry.
- With the allegation quoted, the CPO should ask for an explanation from the staff concerned (to attach a copy of the coordinator's report), which should be given within three days. The letter seeking an explanation should be attached to an acknowledgement. In receipt of the letter, the staff member should sign the acknowledgement. No other person shall receive the letter.
- A written explanation should be submitted to the administration office within ten days on receipt of the allegation letter.
- If the CPO is satisfied by the explanation, necessary action will be taken. If the explanation is unsatisfactory, a personal enquiry will be undertaken with the complainant and the staff. The panel will consist of the Director, Child Protection Officer (CPO), and the Committee Members. Based on the personal enquiry necessary, the panel will take action.
- The decision made by the panel will be final.
- In emergency situations, the panel will meet, enquire, and decide on the complaint within three days.

VOLUNTEERS (both local and International) and VISITORS

The following procedures will be followed in this process:

- Complaints in writing will be required of the CYP, who is affected by the act. The complaint should not be on instigation.
- The complaint can be given to the coordinator or to the CPO.
- An oral enquiry will be undertaken by the co-coordinator or CPO to the particular person within three days of a written complaint.
- If the CPO is satisfied by the enquiry, necessary action will be taken. If the enquiry is unsatisfactory, a personal enquiry will be undertaken, with the complainant and the concerned person. If the CPO is satisfied by the explanation, necessary action will be taken. If the explanation is unsatisfactory, a personal enquiry will be undertaken with the complainant and the staff member. The panel will consist of the Director, Child Protection Officer (CPO), and the Committee members. Based on the personal enquiry necessary, the panel will take action.
- The decision made by the panel will be final.
- In emergency situations, the panel will meet, enquire, and decide on the complaint within three days.

EMERGENCY SITUATION

- If your concerns involve immediate harm to a child, act without delay, as inaction may place the child in further danger.
- If you know any information about the maltreatment of a child, it is your responsibility to tell someone.
- In certain instances, there will be an obligation for the organisation and its staff, children, trustees and stakeholders to report concerns to the appropriate external bodies. This will usually occur as a consequence of the reporting procedure. However, if urgent action is required in order to protect children, then it may be prior to the reporting procedure.
- The responsibility for investigating allegations of child abuse in many countries rests with the Police Department. The organisation's designated child protection officer may seek legal advice; the advice of the police in deciding whether a formal referral to the authorities is necessary. If it is decided that external reporting should not take place, then there must be a clear rationale for that decision which should be recorded. The decision not to report in such circumstances should be unanimously approved by the relevant management personnel - e.g., Director or Child Protection Officer.
- Reports that are made maliciously, or not in good faith, shall warrant strict disciplinary action in line with the Child Protection Policy. The process leading to decision-making should be well documented, and all facts or written allegations and responses kept on file. When a case is immediately dropped, the reasons for doing so shall be communicated to the person who reported the matter.

Statement:

I have read and fully understand this Child Protection Policy and agree to adhere strictly to all the provisions therein.

.....
Name

.....
Signature

.....
Job Title

.....
Date

.....
Witness Name

.....
Witness Signature