

Child Protection Policy

Ho, 2020/05/12



Introduction

As an community development organisation with a strong focus on children welfare and rights, the Grow Your Dream Foundation (GYDF) is fully committed to ensuring the fulfilment of children's rights including their rights to protection. GYDF is committed to protecting children from harm and ensuring children's right to protection under Article 19 of the UNCRC is fully realised. We take seriously our responsibility to promote child safe practices and protect children from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form. In addition, we will take positive action to prevent those who abuse children from becoming involved with GYDF and take stringent measures against any GYDF Members or Associates who abuse a child. Our decisions and actions in response to Child protection concerns and breaches of this policy will be guided by the principle of 'the best interests of the child'.

A. Definitions under the Child Protection Policy

1. In line with the UNCRC, for the purposes of this policy, a Child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years (UNCRC Article 1).
2. Child abuse is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child. Child abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages their well being, dignity and prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.
3. Child protection is defined in this policy as the responsibilities and preventative and responsive measures and activities that GYDF undertakes to protect children ensuring that no Child is subject to Child abuse as a result of their association with us, their contact with GYDF Members and Associates, and/or their participation in any GYDF activity, including our projects and initiatives. In addition, it incorporates our responsibility to ensure that where there are concerns over a Child's welfare or where a Child has been subject to Child abuse, actions are taken to address this; concerns are reported and responded to appropriately and in line with the relevant global and local procedures; and incidents are analysed so as to ensure continued learning and growth in the field of organisational child protection.
4. GYDF Members refers to individuals who are members of the Board of GYDF.
5. GYDF Associates refers to other individuals who have committed to work with or support GYDF. It includes, among others, volunteers; interns; sponsors; researchers; donors, consultants and contractors; staff and/or representatives of partner organisations (when operating in partnership agreement with GYDF).

B. Scope of the Child Protection Policy

The Child Protection Policy applies to all GYDF Members and Associates who must comply with its requirements and understand the sanctions that may be applied for breaches of the policy.

C. Principles

This policy is informed by a set of principles that are derived from the UNCRC and include:

1. All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
2. Each child has a fundamental right to life, survival and development. GYDF's activities seek to contribute to ensuring the realisation of children's rights to be protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation.
3. All children should be encouraged to fulfil their potential, and inequality and discrimination should be challenged.
4. Children will be assured the right to express their views freely and this will be given 'due weight' in accordance with their age and level of maturity. We will not discriminate against the child. The child will be treated with respect irrespective of gender, nationality or ethnic origin, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual preference and gender identity, family, socio-economic and cultural background, or any history of conflict with the law.
5. Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.
6. GYDF has particular responsibilities to children who come into contact with us. No child must come to harm as a result of their engagement with GYDF as a participant in an Adolescent Club or as part of any GYDF fundraising or advocacy campaign.
7. These particular responsibilities extend to those individuals or organisations who are associated with GYDF. Therefore, everyone working for or associated with GYDF's work must be aware of and adhere to the provisions of this policy.

D. GYDF's vision for Child Protection

GYDF creates safe environments for children in all aspects of its work, where children are respected, protected and empowered as their capacities evolve to contribute actively to the development of Child protection measures within GYDF. This policy aims to ensure that GYDF Members and Associates, as appropriate to their engagement with GYDF, are skilled, confident, understand, accept and are well supported in meeting their Child protection responsibilities and engage positively with children and communities in ways that enhance the achievement of GYDF's overall program goals and commitments.

E. Responsibilities for those covered by the scope of the Child Protection Policy

Everyone who works with and engages with GYDF has a responsibility to ensure that children are protected. The responsibilities detailed below are mandatory for those who fall within the scope of the policy. GYDF Members and Associates must:

1. Never abuse and/or exploit a Child or act/behave in any way that places a child at risk of harm.
2. Report any Child abuse and Child protection concerns they have in accordance with applicable local office procedures and this policy.
3. Respond to a Child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with applicable local office procedures and this policy.
4. Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations of Child abuse.
5. Contribute to building an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights.
6. Always treat children in a manner which is respectful of their rights, integrity and dignity, considers their best interests and does not expose them to, or place them at risk of, harm.

F. Personal Conduct Outside Work or Association With GYDF

GYDF does not dictate the belief and value systems by which GYDF Members and Associates conduct their personal lives. However, actions taken by them out of working hours that are seen to contradict this policy will be considered a violation of this policy. GYDF Members and Associate are required to bear in mind the principles of the Child Protection Policy and heighten their awareness of how their behaviour may be perceived both at work and outside work.

G. Implementation, Monitoring and Sanctions

The Board of GYDF is ultimately accountable for this policy and responsible for its implementation. The monitoring of adherence to this policy is made through the mandatory tracking of the Child Protection Policy Implementation Standards during any activity or initiative by GYDF. Breaches of this policy and failure to comply with these responsibilities may incur the following sanctions:

- For GYDF Members: disciplinary action leading to possible dismissal
- For GYDF Associates: up to and including termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements with GYDF.
- Where relevant - appropriate legal or other such actions.

Where concerns exist about the conduct of GYDF Members and Associates in relation to Child protection and/or where there has been a breach of the Child Protection Policy, this will be investigated under this policy by consideration of referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under Ghanaian law; and/or by GYDF in accordance with disciplinary procedures. This may result in disciplinary action for GYDF Members. Be aware that if a legitimate concern about suspected Child abuse is raised, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate sanctions will be applied in cases of false and malicious accusations of Child abuse.
