

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION FOR
PROTECTION AND EDUCATION - VELA



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INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, management and anyone working with VELA. The purpose of this policy is:

- To demonstrate the commitment of VELA to keeping children safe, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.
- To demonstrate VELA's duty to act appropriately when there are any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse and to work in partnership with statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.
- To provide anyone working for or on behalf of VELA or other actors operating in the same fields with clear guidance and procedures for reporting and recording concerns.
- To ensure that any allegations and suspicions are fully investigated internally, and the findings are communicated through appropriate inter-agency channels.

This policy is part of VELA's Internal Operating Procedures which responds to misconduct within and outside of the workplace in a comprehensive approach.

VELA ensures that anyone working for or on behalf of VELA as well as third parties are informed about the policy and procedures, about how to report abuse and will monitor they understand and agree to abide by the policies and procedures in induction, team meetings and supervision. For the purpose of this policy, a child is a person aged below 18.

The policy is based on the following principles:

- The rights of the child to safeguarding from harm, abuse and exploitation as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- The welfare of the child should be safeguarded and promoted.
- Zero tolerance policy toward any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm to children, and any violation of this policy will result in immediate internal reporting procedures to be activated. VELA will always abide by national laws and regulations by reporting incidents to appropriate authorities if deemed appropriate, suspension, or termination of involvement, or legal action as necessary, with a commitment to prioritizing the safety and well-being of all children in our care.
- Confidentiality should be maintained.
- When there is a conflict of interest the needs of the child are always paramount.
- Recognition of the importance of parents, families and staff in children's lives.
- Recognition of the obligation to report to the competent authorities cases of safeguarding violations.
- Recognition of the importance of working in partnership with other partner agencies in the safeguarding of children.
- Recognition of the rights of staff and volunteers to learning events and support.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

It is difficult to define "harm" to children because children can be abused in so many ways depending on the context. They may be abused in a family, an institution, community or faith setting, or via social media/internet.



They may be harmed by an adult or adults or another child or children¹. For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Physical abuse: actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. Physical harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Sexual abuse: forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities that he or she does not fully understand and has little choice in consenting to. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. It may also include involving children in looking at, or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation: a form of sexual abuse that involves children being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family need. It usually involves a child being manipulated or coerced, which may involve befriending children, gaining their trust, and subjecting them to drugs and alcohol. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power where the victim's options are limited. It is a form of abuse that can be misunderstood by children and adults as consensual.

Child sexual exploitation: manifests in different ways. It can involve an older perpetrator exercising financial, emotional or physical control over a young person. It can involve peers manipulating or forcing victims into sexual activity, sometimes within gangs and in gang-affected neighbourhoods. It may also involve opportunistic or organized networks of perpetrators who profit financially from trafficking young victims between different locations to engage in sexual activity with multiple men.

Neglect and negligent treatment: allowing for context, resources and circumstances, neglect and negligent treatment refers to a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral and mental development. It includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm and provide for nutrition, shelter and safe living/working conditions. It also involves maternal neglect during pregnancy and after birth as a result of drug or alcohol misuse and the neglect and ill treatment of a disabled child.

Emotional abuse: persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on a child's emotional development. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them from participating in normal social interaction.

¹ The definitions of abuse were based on the "Child Safeguarding Standards and how to implement them" by Keeping Children Safe, https://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource-uploads/KCS_STANDARDS_2014.pdf



Commercial exploitation: exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour.

Bullying: Bullying is often considered to be a fifth type of abuse but when it does occur it usually has elements of one or more of the four categories identified. The bully can be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or manager with a 'win at all costs' attitude or another intimidating child. It should also be recognised that bullying can take place in the virtual world of social networking sites, emails or text messages.

Bullying should not be ignored, and the victim should be supported through what can be a traumatic experience. Bullying will not just go away. Bullies can be very cunning and develop strategies to avoid it being seen by anyone but the victim. Bullying takes many forms but ultimately it is the perception of the victim that determines whether or not they are being bullied rather than the intention of the bully.

Poor Practice: Incidents of poor practice arise when the needs of children are not afforded the necessary priority, compromising their wellbeing. Poor practice can easily turn into abuse if it is not dealt with as soon as concerns are raised or reported. Examples of poor practice may be shouting, creation of intra-classroom 'elites', ridicule of other's errors, ignoring health and safety guidelines and failing to adhere to the code of conduct.

Lastly, awareness or suspicion by caregivers and legal guardians of any sort of abuse by others as defined herein.

COMPLAINTS POLICY

POLICY

VELA maintains a child grievance procedure to ensure that children's complaints are dealt with promptly and in an unbiased manner.

Children are provided with description of the grievance procedure and the Complaints Form (see Annexes) at the start of their collaboration with the organization. Staff are responsible for advising children of their rights and of the grievance procedure, including that a staff member will assist them to complete the form and file the grievance.

PROCEDURE

If a child expresses a concern or makes a complaint, they can take the following steps:

- The child will discuss the matter with the person who is the recipient of the complaint (i.e. social worker, educator). A decision on any corrective action required will be made in coordination with the Field Team Coordinator.
- If the child is still unsatisfied with the outcome, the child may submit a request for intervention to the field/location highest ranking official, who will acknowledge receipt within 5 days. He/she in turn will take any required corrective action within 7 days and inform the child, in writing, of the resolution.
- Children have the right to ask assistance of another person to speak on their behalf or help fill out the Complaints Form.



- Child grievances are reported to the location highest ranking official. He/she submits the reports to the VELA management which in turn reviews all grievances quarterly and annually, providing a level of review that does not involve the child or person about whom the complaint was made or the person who reached the decision.
- Copies of all documents are placed in the child's file.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF AND MANAGEMENT

CHILD SAFEGUARDING LEAD

The designated Child Safeguarding Lead (CSL) is a Senior Child Protection Officer – Field Coordinator of VELA. The CSL is the central reference point for child safeguarding and protection operations at each location where VELA operates. The purpose of the role of the Child Safeguarding Lead is to take the lead role in ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made for VELA to keep children safe. The duties and responsibilities of the CSL are to:

- Ensure all safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and implemented correctly.
- Ensure all staff, volunteers and other parties are aware of the policies and procedures and what to do if they have any concerns.
- Receive and record confidentially information about safeguarding concerns or wishes to report incidents.
- Plan prevention activities to be implemented by the field teams.
- Implement first level investigation of reported, suspected or witnessed harm.
- Participate in dealing with any allegation against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Consult with, pass on to and receive information from statutory agencies and other actors, including making a formal referral where necessary following the existing referral pathways in the country.
- Be familiar with and keeping up to date with safeguarding issues relating to beneficiaries.
- Attend training from time to time in issues relevant to safeguarding and share knowledge with workers and management.
- Address staff concerns around child safeguarding.
- Provides advice on safeguarding to colleagues.
- Carry out risk assessments for an activity /event involving children.
- Overall coordination of safeguarding developments
- Implements child safeguarding policy on the ground
- Ensures all staff are on board and following child safeguarding procedures.
- Manages aspects of reporting and responding to incidents.
- Ensures all new staff have submitted police/background checks.
- Monitors IT systems to ensure usage does not breach the child safeguarding policy.
- Checks that images and any media material of children do not breach the child safeguarding policy.
- Implements first level investigation of reported, suspected or witnessed harm.
- Participates in dealing with any allegation against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Provides necessary information on child safeguarding concerns and incidents to VELA management.
- Builds assessment of child safeguarding risks into project development.
- Assesses prospective partners to determine whether or not they have contact with, or impact upon, children.



- Coordinates and liaises with other agencies and actors to facilitate access to education, recreation, health and other required services, and liaises with field staff in relation to the activities provided per location.
- Is the Contact Person for emergencies.

FIELD STAFF

All field personnel are responsible to:

- Become familiar with the child safeguarding policy.
- Be aware of abuse and risks to children.
- Abide by the code of conduct.
- Prevent abuse and protect children.
- Report concerns as per the designated procedures.
- Promote good practice & challenge poor practice.
- Inform beneficiaries of complaints procedures and how to report any concerns/misconduct.
- Be able to give reassurance to children.
- Create a friendly and inviting atmosphere by providing consistent attention, care and support to children.
- Be ready and able to respond to children's needs of varying ages.
- Have some knowledge of basic child health and development.
- Be trained on child safeguarding and have signed the code of conduct.

ALL STAFF

There is a collective responsibility by all staff to promote and adhere to the child safeguarding policy in order minimize any risk of harm to children in and out of the places where VELA operates. The staff are the primary contact points with children and should be vigilant on any suspected, witnessed, or reported cases. Their obligations therefore cover a broad spectrum of responsibilities.

MESSAGES TO PASS ACROSS TO CHILDREN

The following messages should be shared with children, taking into consideration their developmental stage:

- Their views and expectations on what they have seen and lived are important as well as their perception of harm.
- It is possible to give space to telling and sharing of emotions on any traumatic or harmful event they have gone through.
- Each child brings with him/her a heritage of rights, values, culture, skills, ideals and desires that must be protected and enhanced.

INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED TO CHILDREN



Children cooperating with VELA should be provided the following information, taking into consideration their developmental stage:

- Geographical information about where they are, when considered necessary.
- Rules and regulations of each field of operation.
- Information about the roles of different field staff, the Field Team Coordinator and CSL.
- Explanation of harm, harmful incidents and risks.
- Delivery of any materials and guides.
- Who to refer to if they experience or witness harm in or outside the areas where VELA operates.
- Access to psychosocial support.
- Access to education.
- Access to health.
- Access to legal support.
- Complaint procedure.

OBSERVATION OF CHILDREN

Observation of children takes place in all field areas. Staff, depending on their area of expertise and the “need to know” principle, should be aware of the following:

A. Behaviour profile

- A1. Participation /adaptation to the daily schedule.
- A2. Level of personal and social autonomy.

B. Affective/relational profile

- B1. Relationship with peers.
- B2. Relationship with adults, including family and staff.

C. Basic literacy

D. Pre-existing vulnerability

E. Cultural dimension

DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

All staff have the responsibility to share any suspicions and report allegations and incidents to the Field Team Coordinator and the CSL, immediately after they take notice.

For incidents that take place in their presence, they isolate the perpetrator, either that would be another adult or another child, and remind them of the rules that apply. Then they forward them to the Field Team Coordinator.

They ensure that the child is not in physical danger and then forward them to the Field Team Coordinator. If the child needs medical care, then immediate arrangements are made to escort them to medical services, i.e. the hospital. If the child is unescorted, the parent/ legal guardian is notified.



If the incident is deemed serious and unmanageable according to the project's procedures, the Police and Fire Department, depending on the nature of the incident, should be immediately called.

COOPERATION WITH THIRD PARTIES

COLLABORATION WITH THIRD PARTIES

Collaboration with third party organisations including NGOs, public agencies and independent organisations, will prequalify their information on the child safeguarding policy and their staff to abide by the child safeguarding policy.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES ON CHILD PROTECTION

Many persons and actors are involved in addressing the needs of children i.e. asylum authorities, carers, medical staff etc. In such collaborations the following should be met:

- Cooperation will be based on formal procedures of cooperation.
- Collecting all information and keeping it safe.

VELA will not share any information or personal data of any child with any third party that is not authorized by the child's parents, guardian or parties responsible for them, with due regard for confidentiality of certain information and data protection.

COLLABORATION WITH VOLUNTEER ORGANISATIONS OPERATING AT THE FACILITIES

Collaboration with volunteers takes multiple forms as VELA works together with organizations recruiting volunteers as well as with individual volunteers. Vetting procedures are in place both for organizations and individual volunteers.

VELA often maintains long term cooperations with volunteer organizations. In such cases the partners sign a memorandum of understanding for roles, obligations and liabilities of each party, once they have passed the vetting process and a decision is made for cooperation with the organization.

In cases where organizations have their own vetting procedures, partners are informed whether these meet the relevant standards and approve the vetting process of partner organizations to select individual volunteers.

COLLABORATION WITH INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

For individual volunteers and interns, the code of conduct and the confidentiality agreement are signed once an agreement is made. Additionally, the accident Waiver and Release of Liability Form are signed upon recruitment which in effect is a waiver of any liability due to operations and therefore releases any child cooperating with VELA of any liability.



The Volunteer Recruitment Policy and Procedures requires that previous humanitarian experience and/ or relevant degree in the field of operation is necessary. The policy includes also a vetting procedure including a letter of recommendation and the provision of criminal record or certificate of criminal clearance. The procedure also includes an interview.

For interns, a letter from the university or academic institution is necessary stating the internship's requirements and obligations of the parties.

All volunteers and interns undergo an induction process prior to engaging with the daily operations, beneficiaries and staff. This includes their introduction to the team and dynamics of the project as well as the introduction to their supervisor and provision of training and information on the code of conduct and policies.

During the first week of their deployment, volunteers and interns shadow experienced staff and are supervised and supported by daily debriefs. This enables the knowledge transfer for child safety and security, identification of incidents or suspected cases etc.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING REPORTING PROCEDURE

All staff members, volunteers or interns of VELA are informed on how to report safeguarding concerns or violations, using the relevant tools. Children cooperating with the organization are also informed about the Child Safeguarding Policy, the complaints mechanism and the reporting procedures. Therefore, all staff members and volunteers have the responsibility to share suspicions, doubts, and report claims, and incidents with the Field Team Coordinator and the CSL.

If a child or young person discloses abuse, or there is reason to believe they have been abused or are at risk, the following steps must be followed:

- Immediately after the child's disclosure about a certain incident, the statement or suspicion should be recorded in detail by the recipient, using the Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form (see Annexes). The form should be submitted encrypted to the CSL via email.
- If the information comes from a party outside the organization (i.e. guardian or professor), the recipient informs them that they need to fill in the Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form and submit it accordingly.
- The CSL will conduct an internal investigation and determine what actions need to be taken, including whether the incident in question falls within VELA's internal procedures or whether it should be referred to external authorities and bodies (i.e. the police or the public prosecutor for minors).
- If the whistleblower is a minor, the internal investigation must adhere to the principles of do no harm, the best interest of the child and confidentiality, ensuring that the complaint is disclosed only to those authorized and with the aim of protecting the child and ensuring their safety.
- In case of suspicion of abuse, the CSL advises the staff member or volunteer who has been the recipient of the information on steps to be followed.
- If the CSL is not available, the staff member, volunteer or intern should inform the Directors.

If there are claims or suspicions of abuse committed by a staff member, volunteer, intern or any other party cooperating or involved with VELA, the following actions must be taken:

- All claims and suspicions that concern a misconduct of a staff member, volunteer, intern or any other party cooperating with VELA, must be reported immediately to the CSL via email.



- The CSL will conduct an investigation internally and will decide on the steps to be followed and on whether a referral to the relevant authorities has to be made. The organization reserves the right to act against anyone found guilty in an internal investigation, which may lead to reporting the incident to the police and the relevant child protection authorities.
- If the whistleblower has a contract with VELA, confidentiality must be ensured. The whistleblower is informed that their report will only be disclosed to the individuals necessary for the investigation, who are bound by their role to maintain confidentiality. No action will be taken against the whistleblower unless the complaint is found to be baseless, except in cases where the investigation proves that the complaint was made with malicious intent.
- VELA will immediately terminate the contract of any staff member, volunteer, intern or any other party cooperating or involved with VELA, for whom there is suspicion of violating the present Policy. The person(s) involved will be informed in writing about the outcomes of the investigation conducted internally by the organization.
- In cases of minor misconducts, VELA will intervene and give a written warning to the person(s) involved. After receiving 3 written warnings, VELA holds the right to terminate the cooperation with the other party.

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

A whistleblower is an employee who reports an activity that he/she considers to be illegal or dishonest. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; Vela's management is charged with these responsibilities. Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas— confidentiality and retaliation. It is Vela's policy that these protections apply to employees located anywhere in the world. If an employee has knowledge of or a concern of dishonest, illegal or fraudulent activity, the employee is expected to contact the Field Team Coordinator and the CSL. The employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Insofar as reasonably practical, Vela may attempt to protect the confidentiality of the whistleblower in an effort to protect the employee from retaliation. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, poor work assignments and threats of physical harm. In some instances, it may not be possible to maintain the confidentiality of the whistleblower and the identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with affirmative disclosure requirements, applicable law and/or to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defence.

PROCEDURE

Any whistleblower who believes they are being retaliated against must contact the CSL immediately. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

INFORMING STAKEHOLDERS

Vela shall inform relevant stakeholders about the initiation of the investigation in accordance with the principle of confidentiality. Donors may be informed of the investigation as appropriate and as per contractual arrangements. This shall be done according to the principle of confidentiality, in a manner that assures the safety of all persons involved.



COMPLAINANT

Vela will provide the complainant with formal confirmation that their complaint has been received and is being reviewed within 48 hours of receiving the complaint. Where it is practical and safe to do so, this confirmation will be provided in writing in a manner that is clear and discreet.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERN REPORTING FORM

VELA has put in place a Child Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form (see Annexes), which enables any party to report incidents or concerns of abuse to the organisation. The child safeguarding Concern Form is completed and submitted to the CSL. The CSL then conducts the first-level investigation as a first step to the resolution process. If the CSL is suspected, then the form and communication takes place through the Directors who are not in direct contact with children-for investigation.

SELF-AUDIT TOOL

This Self-Audit Tool (see Annexes) is an ideal way to measure how far VELA is from meeting the standards on making children safe, and where we need to improve. The self – audit is sourced from the Keeping Children Safe Standards ².

² The self – audit tool was copied from “Developing Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures – a facilitator’s guide”² of Keeping Children Safe, www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk



ANNEXES

COMPLAINTS FORM

DATE | TIME [date | time] | PROJECT | LOCATION [Name]

NAME (NON COMPULSORY)

A. ABUSE/ VIOLATION OF RULES

By beneficiary / By Staff

Rule that has been violated:

By whom:

Date and Time:

Other people present:

Comments:

B. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Between beneficiaries/ Between beneficiaries and staff:

Description:

Date of complaint submission:

Received by:



SELF-AUDIT TOOL

The self-audit tool should be completed as follows: Tick the A, B or C box as appropriate where: A. in place, B. working towards, C. not in place.

Standard 1: Policy A B C

The organisation has a written child safeguarding policy, approved by the relevant management body, to which all staff and associates (including partners) are required to adhere.

☐ ☐ ☐

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other Conventions and Guidelines pertaining to children informs the policy of the organisation.

☐ ☐ ☐

The policy is written in a way that is clear and easily understandable and is publicised, promoted and distributed widely to all relevant stakeholders, including children.

☐ ☐ ☐

The policy is clear that all children have equal rights to protection and that some children face particular risks and difficulties in getting help, because of their ethnicity, gender, age, religion or disability, sexual orientation.

☐ ☐ ☐

The policy addresses safeguarding children from harm through misconduct by staff, associates and others, from poor practice, and from its operational activities where these may harm children or put them at risk due to poor design and/or delivery, for example.

☐ ☐ ☐

The organisation makes clear that ultimate responsibility for ensuring the safety of children rests with senior executives (CEO and Directors) and managers.

☐ ☐ ☐

Standard 2: People A B C



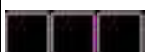
There are written guidelines for behavior (Code of Conduct) that provide guidance on appropriate/expected standards of behavior towards children and of children towards other children.



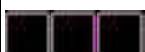
All members of staff, volunteers and associates have training on child safeguarding which includes an introduction to the organisation's child safeguarding policy and procedures and learning on how to recognise and respond to concerns about child abuse.



The organisation is open and aware when it comes to child safeguarding matters so that issues can be easily identified, raised and discussed. Staff, partners and associates need to have access to advice and support where concerns or incidents arise. These staff will also need to be able to identify sources of support for children and their families.



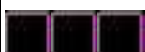
Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and provided with advice and support on keeping themselves safe including information for children, parents/carers about where to go for help.



The organisation designates key people at different levels (including Director level) as "focal points" with clear defined responsibilities, to champion, support and communicate on child safeguarding and for effective operation of the child safeguarding policy.



Partner organisations are required and supported to develop minimum child safeguarding measures appropriate to their organization.



Standard 3: Procedures A B C

The organisation requires local mapping exercises to be carried out that analyse the legal, social welfare and child protection arrangements in the context in which it works.



There is an appropriate process for reporting and responding to child protection incidents and concerns that fits with the local systems for dealing with incidents of child abuse (as identified in the mapping exercise).



The identification and mitigation of child safeguarding risk is incorporated into risk assessment processes at all levels, i.e. from identification of corporate risks through to planning an activity involving or impacting on children.



Adequate human and financial resources are made available to support development and implementation of child safeguarding measures.



There are clear procedures in place that provide step-by-step guidance on how to report safely which are linked to the organisations disciplinary policy and procedures.



Child safeguards are integrated with and actively managed into existing business processes and systems (strategic planning, budgeting, recruitment, programme cycle management, performance management, procurement, etc.) to ensure safeguarding children is a feature of all key aspects of operations.



Standard 4: Accountability A B C

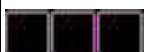
Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with and implementation of child safeguarding policies and procedures through specific measures and/or integration into existing systems for quality assurance, risk management, audit, monitoring and review.



There is a system of regular reporting to key management forums, including Director level, to track progress and performance on child safeguarding, including information on safeguarding issues and child protection cases.



External or independent bodies such as Board of Trustees, oversight committees are used to monitor performance in this area and hold senior executives to account in relation to child safeguarding.



Opportunities exist for learning from practical case experience to be fed back into organisational development.



Policies and practices are reviewed at regular intervals and formally evaluated every three years.



Progress, performance and lessons learnt are reported to key stakeholders (management forums and external or independent bodies where relevant) and included in organisations' annual reports.



CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERN REPORTING FORM

This form should be completed when there is cause for concern and given to the Child Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. One form should be completed for one child.

ADVICE SHEET

This advice sheet is brief guidance for safeguarding procedures.

All staff, volunteers and interns operating at VELA's field projects have a responsibility to create and maintain a safe environment for all children. We have a responsibility to identify where there are child welfare concerns and take action to address them in partnership with other organisations when necessary. Once you have completed this form, please send it to the CSL by email.

- As a member of staff/ volunteers/interns you have a legal responsibility to report any concerns you have regarding safeguarding, or any disclosures made by a child or young person.
- You are also responsible for ensuring that action has been taken as a result of your concerns.
- Recording of all concerns/incidents must be followed up in writing.
- All confidential files are held by the CSL.
- Staff may have access to the confidential files on request to the CSL.

Protocol for Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

- Complete the safeguarding incident form (written recording is essential) and hand over to the designated staff with a brief explanation – do not leave form lying around as it is confidential.
- The CSL will then decide on a course of action and file the safeguarding incident form in the child's file, on VELA management's central record file and will keep you informed.
- If no follow up is given or concerns grow, then it is your responsibility to reiterate your concerns and check progress.

Protocol for Reporting Disclosures or Serious Concerns of Abuse

- Report any concerns to the CSL immediately and then follow this up in writing within 24 hours.
- Disclosures from a young person are confidential but if any of the content has a safeguarding concern you should inform the child that you will need to tell someone else.
- Reassure them that you will only tell who needs to be told.

Disclosure- What to do:

- Stay calm, tell the child they have done the right thing.
- Be honest, do not make promises you cannot keep – YOU HAVE A DUTY TO REFER.
- Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk to.
- Acknowledge how hard it must have been for the child to tell you what happened.

Disclosure- What not to do:



- Do not ask leading questions.
- Do not promise not to tell anyone.
- Do not put words into a child's mouth or assume how the child feels.

Record Keeping

- All incidents should be recorded in writing and dated and signed.
- Remember why you are making this record and state any intended action.

Records Should:

- Be filled in and shared within 24 hours.
- Be accurate and descriptive. Do NOT make any assumptions.
- Be clear and concise.

REMEMBER:

ALL STAFF MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS HAVE A DUTY TO REFER AND SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN IN OUR CARE.

ALL STAFF MUST ENSURE THEY HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS SAFEGUARDING POLICY.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERN REPORTING FORM

1. **Date of Report**
2. **Details of child – victim**

Full Name:

Estimated Age:

Policy Registration Number:

3. **Details of the person reporting concerns**

Full Name

Job position (if VELA Staff)

Organization (if staff of partner organization or volunteer partner organization)

Mobile Phone number:

Email address:

4. **Details of other persons where a joint report is being made**



Full Name

Job position (if VELA Staff)

Organization (if staff of partner organization or volunteer partner organization)

Mobile Phone number:

Email address:

Full Name

Job position (if VELA Staff)

Organization (if staff of partner organization or volunteer partner organization)

Mobile Phone number:

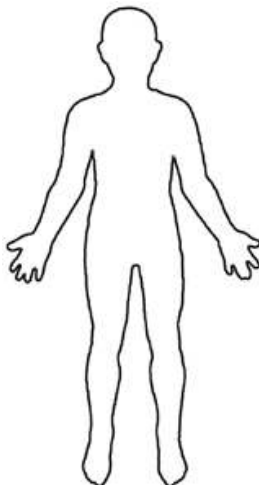
Email address:

5. Details of Concern(s)

Please complete the following section with as much detail about the specific child protection or welfare concern or allegation as possible. Include dates, times, incident details and names of anyone who observed any incident. Please include the parent's and child's views if known. Please attach additional documentation if available, i.e. photo. Please provide a description of any injuries (use body diagram to indicate area of injury).

Front 

Back 



If the injury or harm was witnessed to be self-made and by accident please describe how it happened and the severity of the harm to the child/ children.



6. Type of concern

Child Welfare Concern ☐

Emotional Abuse ☐

Physical Abuse ☐

Sexual Abuse ☐

Neglect ☐

7. Do these concerns relate to a specific incident/disclosure? If YES complete Section A; If NO, omit section A and move straight to Section B

7.1. Section A:

Date and time of incident/disclosure:

Location of incident/disclosure:

Date this form was completed:

Other persons present:

7.2. Section B:

Details of Concern/ disclosure/ incident:

(what was said, observed, reported)

8. Action taken:

(what did you do following the incident/ disclosure/ concern?)

9. Parents aware of report

Are the child's parents/ guardians aware that this concern is being reported?

Yes / No

If the parent/ guardian does not know, please indicate reasons:

10. Relationships



10.1. Details of Mother

Full Name

Mobile No/ other contact details

Police Registration Number

10.2. Details of Father

Full Name

Mobile No/ other contact details

Police Registration Number

11. Details of person(s) allegedly Causing Harm

Full Name

Male/ Female

Estimated Age

Police Registration Number

Occupation

Position Held

Organization

Relationship to child

Address/ location at time of alleged incident

If name unknown please indicate reason

Full Name

Male/ Female

Estimated Age

Police Registration Number

Occupation

Position Held



Organization

Relationship to child

Address/ location at time of alleged incident

If name unknown please indicate reason

12. Name and address of other organizations, personnel or agencies known to be involved currently or previously with the child and/ or family

<u>Profession</u>	<u>Full Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Contact details</u>	<u>Recent Contact (i.e. 3/6/9 months ago)</u>
<u>Social Worker</u>					
<u>Public Health Nurse</u>					
<u>GP/ other doctor (please indicate specialization)</u>					
<u>Psychologist</u>					
<u>Police Officer</u>					
<u>Guardian</u>					
<u>Public Prosecutor</u>					

13. Any other relevant information, including any previous contact with the child or family

Signature

Date

Full Name



14. For completion by the Child Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

CSL Response

Action taken by CSL

Rationale for decision making/ actions taken:

Outcome of action taken by CSL:

Follow up action by CSL:

Feedback given to person reporting concerns:

Signature of CSL

Date

Full name of CSL

15. Checklist for CSL:

- ✓Concern described in sufficient detail?
- ✓Distinguished between fact, opinion and hearsay?
- ✓Child's own words used? (Swear words, insults or intimate vocabulary should be written down verbatim)
- ✓Jargon free?
- ✓Free from discrimination/stereotyping or assumptions?
- ✓Concern recorded and passed to DSL in a timely manner?

