

Molly & Paul Child Care Foundation Child Protection Policy

General

We Believe that children are a gift from God, a heritage from the Lord. We are therefore accountable to God for moulding, shaping and preparing them for a life of service to God and society in which they are expected to live. To that end this policy is made with reference to the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC- signed and accepted by Uganda 17 Aug 1990) and all existing legislation that enshrines the rights of each child in Uganda.

- The safety and protection of children is of paramount importance to all those involved in the Molly & Paul Child Care Foundation.
- The protection of children is the proper concern of everyone in a position to help. Primary responsibility for the care and protection of children rests with their parents or guardians, but a limited range of services is available to help them with this task.
- MPCCF are committed to working in partnership to provide services to protect children & to provide support for any victims of abuse.
- Children can develop a special and close relationship with school staff, and view them as significant and trustworthy adults. It is not surprising therefore that children, if they have been abused, may confide or disclose to a teacher or other member of staff (See Policy on Professional Conduct)
- School staff are also in a unique position to notice any change in demeanour or circumstances. During daily contact there is often the opportunity to notice injuries, marks or bruises which might indicate a child has been abused (see Whistle Blowing Policy).
- Our Child Protection partners are: PoACC & African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN). The Ugandan Chapter is part of the continental family of ANPPCAN chapters and has been protecting children in Uganda from all forms of maltreatment for the last 20 years. ANPPCAN Uganda Chapter is a national membership, nongovernmental and not for profit organization, launched in 1992 and registered in 1995 as a local and national child rights organization.

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- The Child Protection Officer (CPO) and MPCCF School's Inspector have lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the Foundation. It is their duty to liaise with our safeguarding partners, ANPPCAN & PoACC. The Local Council (LC1) Chairman, District Probation & Social Welfare officer, District Education Officer or other local statutory or voluntary children's agencies as appropriate.
- MPCCF takes account of the government guidance in Child Protection policies and other relevant guidance – Such As Vulnerable and Orphaned children (OVC) Guidance.
- MPCCF operates safer recruiting procedures.
- This policy is available to parents/guardians in person at all times when MPCCF is open, at each school or unit. It is also available on the MPCFF website.

Aims

MPCCF aims to safeguard all pupils from all forms of abuse. Therefore, this policy aims:

- To set out procedures for ensuring that MPCCF meets its responsibility for safeguarding pupils, or other children in its care, from abuse.
- To protect staff against spurious allegations of abuse. In this respect, MPCCF has adopted a formal policy entitled "Staff facing an allegation of abuse or inappropriate behaviour".

What is Child Abuse?

Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm in the following four categories (see Appendix 1):

Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

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Emotional abuse: is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. 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 on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is fully aware of what is happening and whether or not such an act was consensual or otherwise. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. defilement, aggravated defilement, or rape) or non-penetrative acts.

This may include non-contact activities such as involving children in the looking at or in the production of pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect: is the deliberate & persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Who are the abusers? Abusers can be parents, carers, siblings, members of the extended family, neighbours, teachers, strangers, other pupils; in short, anyone. Very sensitive steps will be taken in the case of abuse of one child by another. In such cases appropriate advice should be taken immediately (e.g. from Social Services or by contacting our child protection partners; ANPCCAN & PoACC).

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Procedures

Given that many pupils at MPCCF are orphans or otherwise residential, the following procedures should be applied by all staff, including those in support and any adults working in MPCCF, as well as older pupils. The term 'staff' therefore applies to any adult or senior pupil who has concerns of a Child Protection nature.

i) Reporting to the designated CPO (Child Protection Officer)

Any concerns about pupils whether raised by staff or senior pupils must be discussed with the designated CPO (or their named deputy in their absence) as soon as possible.

ii) Immediate response to the child

Where a staff receives a disclosure then they will immediately report it to the designated CPO. It is vital that any staff actions do not abuse the child further or prejudice further enquiries, for example:

- Listen to the pupil, if you are shocked by what is being said try not to show it;
- It is acceptable to observe any evidence (injuries or bruising) but not to ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them;
- If a disclosure is made, the pace of the conversation should be dictated by the pupil without their being pressed for detail by being asked questions such as "What did they do next?" or "Where did they touch you?" The staff role is to listen, record and report; not to investigate. Staff must use open questions such as "is there anything else you want to tell me?" or encourage them further with a "yes?" or "and?"
- Accept what the pupil says. Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking questions such as "why didn't you tell me before?"
- Do acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you this;
- Do not criticise the perpetrator, this may be someone they love;
- Do not promise not to tell anyone – confidentiality can not be guaranteed.
- Reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing, explain whom you will have to tell (the designated CPO) and why. It is important that

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you do not make promises that you cannot keep such as “I’ll stay with you all the time” or “it will be alright now”.

Recording Information

Staff or senior pupils should:

- Make some brief notes at the time or immediately afterwards; record the date, time, place and context of the disclosure or concern, recording what has been said to you and not your assumption and interpretation. Notes must be signed and dated;
- Record observed injuries and bruises on a Body Map;
- Note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the pupil (do not translate into “proper terms”);
- Keep these original notes and pass them to the designated CPO.
- The designated CPO will forward all referrals to our child protection partners; ANPCCAN & PoACC
- The designated CPO will forward all referrals to The Local Council (LC1) Chairman & District Education Officer (or other local statutory children’s agencies) as appropriate.

Support

1) Pupils and families

MPCCF recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk.

Therefore MPCCF will endeavour to support pupils through:

- The curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation;
- Our ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued;
- The implementation of MPCCF’s Code of Conduct;
- A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of the behaviour from that behaviour which the pupil displays;

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- Regular liaison with other professionals; NGO's and Government agencies who support pupils and their families;
- Working with our child protection partners; ANPPCAN & PoACC.
- Referral of all cases of abuse to child protection partners; ANPPCAN & PoACC.
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, and the development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group – Such as Developing the School Family Initiative across all MPCCF schools

Staff

Receiving a disclosure or observing signs of abuse can be very distressing. All staff should discuss their feelings with the designated CPO or other senior member of staff. Incidents of a child protection nature can affect staff not directly involved.

Any member of staff who is concerned about involvement in child protection issues can discuss the matter with the CPO or Headmaster any MPCCF Governor or Pearl of Africa Child Care Ltd designated Safeguarding officer, or ANPPCAN staff.

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff or a volunteer, then support is offered by MPCCF and dealt with in line with the document Staff facing an allegation of abuse or inappropriate behaviour. A separate policy on Whistle blowing is in place to protect all staff in making disclosures.

Confidentiality

Staff have the professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigating agencies and or child protection partners; ANPPCAN & PoACC. If a pupil confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child sensitively that he/she has a responsibility to refer the matter to the designated CPO for the child's own sake. At the same time, the child should be reassured that the matter will initially be disclosed to the designated CPO who will inform child protection partners; ANPPCAN & PoACC, who will then decide on appropriate action.

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Child protection records should be kept securely locked. Personal information about all pupils and their families is regarded by those who work in this school as confidential. All staff will aim to maintain this confidentiality. All records relating to child protection incidents will be maintained by the designated CPO and only shared as is consistent with the protection of children.

Parents

Parents play an important role in protecting their children from abuse. MPCCF is required to consider the safety of the pupil and should a concern arise professional advice will be sought prior to contacting parents, and the following applies:

- MPCCF will work with parents to support the needs of their child.
- MPCCF aims to help parents understand that MPCCF, like all others, has a responsibility for the welfare of all pupils and has a duty to refer cases in the interests of the child.
- This policy is available to all parents as indicated in the general introduction.

When a pupil transfers to another school

- If there are concerns raised or in the process of being investigated, the relevant Local Council (LC1) Chairman, District Education Officer (or other local statutory children's agencies) will be contacted by the designated CPO and informed of the transfer.
- We will inform our child protection partners; ANPPCAN & PoACC.
- When a child changes school all relevant information and records will be passed on to the designated CPO at the receiving school, in the absence of any such officer the most relevant placed person within that organisation along with the relevant Local Council (LC1) Chairman, District Education Officer (or other local statutory children's agencies)

Training

- MPCCF has a commitment to training and will arrange for sensitization training or inputs where ever possible.

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- The designated CPO and schools inspector will be expected to cascade learning to the wider staff group via meetings etc.
- Child Protection is to be a standing item on all agenda's within MCPFF.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body

- The governing body will appoint a Named Governor to liaise with MPCCF's designated CPO & our child protection partners; ANPPCAN & PoACC's.
- The Governors will also appoint a Designated Teacher for Safeguarding Pupils at each school or facility. They will ensure that he/she is trained and receives further regular updating.
- The governing body will receive and consider annually a verbal report from each Headmaster on safeguarding pupils in MPCCF.
- The Named Governor will determine appropriate training (in liaison with the designated CPO and PoACC) for the governing body.
- The governing body will determine any changes to MPCCF's policies and procedures as appropriate.
- The governing body is responsible for annually reviewing and amending the policy as appropriate.

The Headmaster

- Is responsible for the implementation of the policy in their school and ensuring that the outcomes are monitored.
- Will report annually to the governors on the working of the policy.
- Will be aware of Safer Recruitment and will ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.
- Will take a lead role in reporting of incidents where adults have left MPCCF because they are considered unsuitable to work with children.

The Designated Child Protection Officer

- MPCCF will appoint a designated Child Protection Officer who is the champion for all Child protection and Safeguarding Issues

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- They should nominate a deputy or the person to contact in their absence.
- The designated CPO is responsible for ensuring that all cases of suspected or actual problems associated with child protection are investigated and dealt with.
- They will report all cases or suspected or actual problems associated with child protection to our child protection partners; ANPPCAN & PoACC.
- The designated CPO will ensure that he/she is aware of the latest national and local guidance and requirements and will keep the Staff and Governors of MPCCF informed of any relevant changes
- The designated CPO and their deputies will receive appropriate training in child protection matters.
- The designated CPO will ensure that appropriate awareness is given to all new staff, including part-time and voluntary workers. Update child protection training must be organised at least every at regular intervals.
- The designated CPO will ensure that Senior Pupils/School Prefects receive sensitization in child protection as soon as is practically possible after their appointment.
- The designated CPO will liaise with the governing body's Nominated Governor for Child Protection (Safeguarding).

Staff

- All staff, including other visiting staff or volunteers will be informed of the designated CPO's name and MPCCF's policy for the protection of children:
 - During their first induction to MPCCF
 - Through the staff handbook
 - Whole staff training or briefing meetings
- All staff needs to be alert to the signs of harm and abuse (see Appendix 1). They should report any concerns if not immediately, as soon as possible, that day to the designated CPO or named deputy. If in any doubt they should consult with the designated CPO.

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- If the CPO or deputy cannot be contacted then they should make a referral to child protection partners; ANPPCAN & PoACC.
- If the abuse or suspected abuse involves a senior member of MPCCF staff and/or the CPO/deputy they should make a referral to child protection partners; ANPPCAN & PoACC.
- All relevant national and local procedures will be made available for staff reference and is located in a nominated file held at each site.
- When utilising employees of another organisation on a site other than MPCCF, and they are taking responsibility for MPCCF's pupils (e.g. Choir Tours.) assurance must be received that they have appropriate safeguarding checks (right and proper person test, CRB checks or equivalent)

Senior Pupils/ Prefects

It is often the case that pupils with problems talk to senior pupils and this is particularly the case in a residential school environment. All School Prefects/Senior Pupils will be given Child Protection Awareness instruction by the designated CPO (and/or the Headmaster) in matters of child protection and, in particular, how to deal with information which might suggest abuse.

Monitoring and Review

- The designated CPO will monitor the working of the policy and will report as required to: the Headmaster, Governors and our child protection partners; ANPPCAN & PoACC.
- This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body and amendments made as necessary due to changes in legislation and/or guidance issued by regulatory bodies.
- The review will take into consideration both the detail of the policy and how the related duties have been discharged, along with the verbal reports from each Headmaster.
- This policy will be shared with our child protection partners; ANPPCAN & PoACC.