



MINAH ACADEMY MISSION SIERRA LEONE (THE MISSION)



Child Protection Policy & Code of Conduct



Minah Academy Mission Child Protection Policy



Children have the right to be protected from being hurt or mistreated, physically and mentally. They should be properly cared for and protected from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them. |

Our Child Protection Policy (CPP) applies to all Minah Academy Mission (THE MISSION) staff, board members, advisors, visitors, researchers and volunteers who directly or indirectly interact with children attending Our Mission Schools or partner schools or participating in any programs or activities sponsored by THE MISSION.

Prevention is the surest way to keep children safe from abuse, and this approach forms the foundation of our policy. With this in mind, the key elements of our policy are to:

- ensure we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of all THE MISSION staff, researchers and volunteers to work with children
- train our staff to recognize the indicators and impacts of abuse
- guide our staff in responding to a child who discloses abuse
- teach children the skills and help impart the self confidence needed to keep them safe
- develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- support children who have been abused in accordance with the agreed CPP
- establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
- require that all staff, board members, advisors, visitors, researchers and volunteers sign a Code of Conduct prior to any interaction with children

children as an essential part of empowering them. Promoting and encouraging children's ability to engage in all decisions that affect them is an important part of child protection. Because of this, we will:

- create and maintain environments where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- ensure children know that there are adults in our schools and leading our health, environmental and other programs who they can approach if they are worried
- create opportunities and experiences that will help children develop the skills they need to recognize and stay safe from abuse

We will work with recognized experts in the field of safeguarding children and follow the guidance issued by UNICEF^{1, 2} to:

- ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role
- ensure we have a nominated board member responsible for child protection
- designate and train a Child Safety Officer in each THE MISSION community to serve as the focal point for child abuse issues
- ensure each member of our staff knows the name of and has access to the designated senior person responsible for child protection
- ensure all staff, board members, visitors, advisors, researchers and volunteers understand their responsibility to both be alert to the signs of abuse and to refer any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection
- ensure that parents and community leaders have an understanding of the responsibility placed on our staff by providing them with an explanation of our policy and the names of their assigned Child Safety Officer and the senior person responsible for child protection
- Require that all visitors, researchers and volunteers are accompanied at all times by a THE MISSION staff member when visiting the community.
- keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately, and ensure those records are kept securely in locked locations

We know that children who are abused or witness violence may feel helpless, humiliated or somehow to blame. THE MISSION staff will support all children, including victims of abuse, by providing activities and creating environments that give children a sense that they are both safe and highly valued.