



Happy Child International Limited

Child Protection Policy

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Index:

Section:	Detail:	Page No:
1	Personnel Recruitment Procedure	2
2	Education and Training	2
3	Management Structure	2
4	Behaviour Protocols	3
5	Communications About Children	3
6	Reporting and Reaction Protocol	4
	Appendix 1 – Code of Conduct	5
	Appendix 2 – CRB checks	6
	Statement of Commitment	7

THE HAPPY CHILD INTERNATIONAL LIMITED CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Our vision is to build a “child safe organisation”. We will work towards this by developing and implementing policies and procedures, to the best of our ability, to ensure the respect and wellbeing of children who come into contact with our organisation. The implementation of this policy and the guidelines outlined below should be based on a spirit of positive commitment at all times to the best interests of the child.

(Text taken from The Consortium for Street Children, Child Protection Policy, 2004)

Section 1: Personnel Recruitment Procedure

When recruiting Employees, whether paid or unpaid, full time or part time, temporary or long-term, having direct or indirect contact with children (and hereafter referred to as Employees), Happy Child International Limited (hereafter referred to as Happy Child) will adhere to a thorough and standardised procedure which will include:

- i. Obtaining, whenever possible a standard or enhanced disclosure record (depending on level of contact with children) through the Criminal Records Bureau. (See Appendix 2). If lack of time does not permit this prior to the departure of the person abroad, Happy Child will still however submit an application to the Criminal Records Bureau.
- ii. A requirement for the potential employee to read, understand and accept compliance with the Child Protection Policy and guidelines of Happy Child as part of the terms and conditions of employment.
- iii. The requirement for the potential employee to sign a personal declaration giving details of any criminal convictions, including those considered ‘spent’.
- iv. The required minimum of two satisfactory character references (excluding family members and those who have known the applicant personally for less than 2 years).

Section 2: Education and Training

- i. The Happy Child induction process for all employees includes: familiarisation with the Child Protection Policy and procedures of Happy Child.
- ii. Employees who will have direct contact with children either in the UK (e.g. through school or youth group contact) or overseas (e.g. through project visits) will be fully trained on the behaviour protocols and guidelines of Happy Child and will be informed who to contact in the event of any concerns.
- iii. Employees who have access to information about children such as personal contact information, including their address, specific cases or incidents, or any other details of a child’s personal life will be informed of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable sharing of information regarding children.

Section 3: Management Structure

- i. Sarah de Carvalho and Mark Pinks are the designated persons within Happy Child who are responsible for the implementation of the child protection policy. Staff are aware that they can talk to either about child protection issues.
- ii. All individuals working directly with children or with direct access to information on children will be monitored.
- iii. The disclosure of personal information about children, including legal cases, is limited to those employees who need to know.
- iv. The Directors of Happy Child have the responsibility of assuring themselves that the Child Protection Policy of Happy Child is being implemented.

Section 4: Behaviour Protocols

- i. Happy Child has developed a Code of Conduct (Appendix 1) which gives guidance on expected behaviour of adults towards children.
- ii. The Code is easily accessible for all organisation representatives.
- iii. The Code of Conduct should be interpreted in a spirit of transparency and common sense, with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration.
- iv. Happy Child representatives shall disseminate and promote copies of the Code of Conduct in all situations where the organisation is responsible for bringing children in contact with adults.

Section 5: Communications about Children

- i. Happy Child recognises that every child has the right to be accurately represented through both words and images. The portrayal by Happy Child of each child must not be manipulated or sensationalized in any way. Children must be presented as human beings with their own identity and dignity preserved.
- ii. Happy Child will avoid: **a)** language and images that could possibly degrade, victimise or shame children; **b)** making generalisations which do not accurately reflect the nature of the situation; **c)** discrimination of any kind; **d)** taking pictures out of context (e.g. pictures should be accompanied by an explanatory caption where appropriate).
- iii. In all images used by Happy Child, children will be appropriately clothed and not depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually provocative.
- iv. Personal and physical information that could cause them to be put at risk will not be used on the website of Happy Child or in any other form of communication for general or public purposes.
- v. Happy Child employees should ask permission from the child / children themselves before taking photographs except under circumstances where this might not be possible or appropriate.

- vi. Happy Child acknowledges that it is important that text and images included in any print, broadcast or electronic materials such as brochures, publications, reports, videos or websites depict an accurate and balanced depiction of children and their circumstances.
- vii. Where children are indeed victims, the preservation of the child's dignity must nevertheless be preserved at all times.
- viii. Individuals or organisations requesting the use of Happy Child's resources such as photographs will be sent a note saying "This picture is supplied for the use of the accompanying article / press release ONLY and may not be distorted or misrepresented in any way; it is the copyright of the Happy Child International charity.
- ix. People and employees visiting Brazil to see the work of the ministry will be asked to sign a legal declaration relating to the correct procedure / restrictions for taking and subsequently using photos / videos / tapes and other recording methods.

Section 6: Reporting and reaction protocol

- i. Happy Child acknowledges that the guiding principle that the best interest of the child and the desire to secure the best outcomes for the child should always govern decisions regarding what action should be taken in response to concerns.
- ii. All incidents, concerns and referrals must be reported, storing these securely. Records must all be signed and dated. All records are kept securely in a locked filing cabinet to which access is restricted. Sarah de Carvalho and Mark Pinks have a responsibility for maintaining the confidentiality of these records and must ensure that the records, or any information they contain, are made available only to relevant parties. The transfer of information – verbally, through the mail, electronically, etc. – must be done in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.
- iii. All Happy Child employees must act immediately and report suspicions, however uncertain, to Sarah de Carvalho or alternate designated person, Mark Pinks, in accordance with the organisation's reporting procedure. Either may in turn seek guidance on further action from local social services and the police.
- iv. Contact details for child protection services, local social services department, police, emergency medical help and helplines (e.g. NSPCC) are readily available and easily accessible to organisation representatives.
- v. Happy Child will take all appropriate steps within its power to protect the child / children in question from further harm.
- vi. Happy Child provides guidance on confidentiality and information sharing which clarifies that the protection of the child is the most important consideration.
- vii. Happy Child provides guidance on dealing with allegations from a child that ensures that the child is treated with respect.

- viii. If an allegation of child abuse is made from a verifiable source, concerning a named member of staff, trustee, volunteer or contractor, they may be suspended from all activity and association with Happy Child pending the outcome of an independent investigation.
- ix. Depending on the outcome of this independent investigation, Happy Child will take any further action which may be required which could include disciplinary action, dismissal and/or the ending of the relationship with Happy Child.

APPENDIX 1

The Happy Child Code of Conduct for Working with Children

1) Minimising risk situations:

- **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, in a designated organisational Child Protection Log Book or incident report sheet, the circumstances of any situation which occurs which may be subject to misinterpretation; keep in mind that actions, no matter how well intended, are always subject to misinterpretation by a third party.
- **Try not to** be alone with a single child, including in the following situations: in a car (no matter how short the journey); overnight (no matter where the accommodation); in your home or the home of a child. Do not show favouritism or spend excessive amounts of time with one child.

2) Sexual behaviour:

- **Do not:** engage in or allow sexually provocative games with children to take place; kiss, hug, fondle, rub, or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way; sleep in the same bed as a child; do things of a personal nature that a child could do for him/herself, including dressing, bathing, and grooming; encourage any crushes by a child.

3) Physical behaviour:

- **Do:** wait for appropriate physical contact, such as holding hands, to be initiated by the child.

4) Psychosocial behaviour:

- **Do:** Be aware of the power balance between an adult and child, and avoid taking any advantage this may provide.
- **Do not:** use language that will mentally or emotionally harm any child; suggest inappropriate behaviour or relations or any kind; act in any way that intends to embarrass, shame, humiliate, or degrade a child; encourage any inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour, such as tantrums, by a child; show discrimination of race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, or political persuasion.

5) Peer abuse:

- **Do:** be aware of the potential for peer abuse; 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.

6) Physical environment:

- **Do:** develop clear rules to address specific physical safety issues relative to the local physical environment of a projects (e.g. for projects based near water, heavy road traffic, railway lines).

CHILD PROTECTION – APPENDIX 2

1. Introduction

This document, as agreed by the Directors of Happy Child, shall form a part of the Child Protection Policy and relates to Criminal Records Bureau checks. This policy is in line with best practice as outlined by the Consortium for Street Children.

2. Content:

- i. All present Directors and staff will be asked to agree to the charity seeking a police check via the Criminal Records Bureau.
- ii. The level of check for each person will be in accordance with CRB guidelines.
- iii. When new Directors are appointed, it will be on the understanding that they will agree to an appropriate CRB check and should they decline this will prohibit them from being appointed as Directors of Happy Child.
- iv. All applicants to paid positions must agree to the CRB check, which in turn must be clear and acceptable to Happy Child.
- v. All volunteers wishing to offer their services to the charity will be asked to agree to an appropriate CRB check, even if their association with the charity is for a short period of time.
- vi. Those wishing to represent the charity as speakers, either on a voluntary or part paid basis will be asked to agree to an appropriate CRB check. A refusal will result in them not being appointed.
- vii. Church and Area volunteer representatives will be asked to agree to an appropriate CRB check and a refusal will result in them not being appointed.
- viii. All CRB checks for paid staff and for future staff and Director applicants will be paid for by the charity. (Volunteers are not charged by CRB for checks.)
- ix. The Registered Body copy of a disclosure will be kept in the appropriate files in a locked cabinet.
- x. All disclosures will be considered valid for a period of three years.
- xi. The registered body for the purposes of Happy Child asking the CRB for a disclosure is the Consortium for Street Children.
- xii. The countersignatory for Happy Child when requesting a disclosure from CRB is Sarah de Carvalho.
- xiii. The disclosure will only be used in accordance with the Code of Practice and any other guidelines issued by the CRB.
- xiv. Agreeing to ongoing CRB checks will form a part of the contract of employment for future employees.

**STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT
to
HAPPY CHILD
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**This form to be completed by all Happy Child Staff and Volunteers and by
those visiting Happy Child Partner Projects overseas**

_____ (*insert name*)

have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in the Happy Child Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing child protection policies and practice while visiting a project or working with Happy Child

_____ (*print name*)

_____ (*signature*)

_____ (*job title/role*)

_____ (*date*)