

Child Protection Policy

Policy Name	Child Protection Policy
Policy Reference	HRM-CPP

	Print Name	Role	Signature
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Key Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chairman - Trustees - Managers - Staff and Volunteers

1. Introduction

Human Relief Mission (HRM) is unwavering in its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Recognising the vulnerabilities of children in crisis situations, this Child Protection Policy outlines HRM's dedication to creating a safe environment for all children engaged with its programs and activities. This policy sets forth HRM's framework for ensuring that children are protected from abuse, exploitation, and harm.

1.1 Purpose and Background

The primary purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines and procedures for preventing and responding to child abuse and exploitation. HRM operates with a steadfast commitment to ethical conduct and recognises the fundamental rights of children to be protected from harm. This policy aligns with international child protection standards and reflects HRM's dedication to creating a safe and nurturing environment for all children.

1.2 Regulatory Context

HRM acknowledges the importance of complying with national and international child protection laws and standards. This policy is guided by key frameworks, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), local child protection legislation, and sector-specific guidelines. HRM is committed to aligning its practices with these regulations to ensure comprehensive child protection.

1.3 Organisation's Commitment

HRM recognises its responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse and exploitation. The organisation is committed to implementing rigorous child protection measures and fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and vigilance. By adopting this Child Protection Policy, HRM underscores its commitment to safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of children.

1.4 Importance of Child Protection

Protecting children is fundamental to HRM's mission of alleviating suffering and promoting sustainable development. Child abuse and exploitation undermine the core values of justice, fairness, and equality. This policy reflects HRM's recognition of its role in contributing to global efforts to safeguard children's rights and promote their welfare.

1.5 Integration with Organisational Values

HRM's mission and values are inherently aligned with the principles of child protection. This policy integrates seamlessly with HRM's broader organisational fabric, reinforcing its commitment to ethical conduct, transparency, and accountability. By prioritising child

protection, HRM ensures that its programs and activities uphold the highest standards of integrity and respect for children's rights.

1.6 Collaboration and Shared Responsibility

HRM acknowledges that child protection is a collective responsibility. This policy emphasises collaboration with stakeholders, including children, families, communities, partners, and regulatory bodies. By working together, HRM aims to create a protective environment for children and strengthen global efforts to combat child abuse and exploitation.

2. Scope

This Child Protection Policy applies to all HRM staff, volunteers, board members, partners, and any individuals associated with HRM who interact with children or are involved in programs and activities that impact children.

2.1 Applicability

This policy is applicable to all individuals associated with HRM, including but not limited to staff, volunteers, board members, partners, and donors. Any person or entity representing HRM in activities that involve or impact children is subject to the provisions outlined in this policy.

2.2 Geographic Reach

Given HRM's global operations, this policy extends to all regions where HRM operates. HRM recognises the need for a consistent and unified approach to child protection across all its programs and activities, regardless of geographical location.

2.3 Inclusivity

Child protection is an inclusive responsibility at HRM. All individuals associated with the organisation are expected to understand, uphold, and comply with the provisions outlined in this policy. This includes staff at all levels, volunteers, partners, and any other stakeholders engaged in activities that impact children.

2.4 Specific Activities

This policy encompasses a broad range of activities, including but not limited to:

- **Program Implementation:** All programs and initiatives directly involving children or impacting their wellbeing.
- **Partnerships and Collaborations:** Activities conducted in partnership with other organisations, contractors, or entities where children are involved.
- **Fundraising and Donations:** Financial transactions and activities related to fundraising and donations where children are beneficiaries.

- **Events and Outreach:** Public events, outreach programs, and community engagements that involve children.

2.5 Third-Party Relationships

HRM acknowledges that child protection often involves interactions with third parties, including partners, contractors, and service providers. This policy extends to such relationships, emphasising the importance of due diligence and collaboration to mitigate child protection risks associated with third-party engagements.

2.6 Training and Awareness

This policy applies to all training programs and awareness initiatives conducted by HRM. All individuals undergoing child protection training are expected to comply with the principles outlined in this policy in their respective roles within the organisation.

2.7 Future Operations

As HRM expands its operations or engages in new activities, this policy will automatically apply to such endeavours. The organisation commits to assessing and adapting its child protection measures to address emerging risks and compliance requirements associated with new operations.

2.8 Regulatory Changes

In the event of changes to child protection laws and regulations in any jurisdiction where HRM operates, this policy will be updated accordingly to ensure ongoing compliance.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Commitment to Child Protection

HRM is unwavering in its commitment to safeguarding children from abuse, exploitation, and harm. The organisation recognises the importance of actively preventing child abuse and ensuring that all interactions with children are conducted in a safe and respectful manner.

3.2 Ethical Conduct

HRM places a high premium on ethical conduct and responsible stewardship. This Child Protection Policy underscores HRM's commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards in all its programs and activities involving children, reinforcing trust with stakeholders and ensuring the wellbeing of children.

3.3 Integration with HRM's Mission

This Child Protection Policy integrates seamlessly with HRM's overarching mission of alleviating suffering and promoting sustainable development. By actively safeguarding

children, HRM ensures that its resources are directed towards their intended humanitarian purposes, directly benefiting the communities it serves.

3.4 Continuous Improvement

HRM is dedicated to continuous improvement in its child protection practices. The organisation commits to regular reviews and updates of its child protection measures to address emerging risks, enhance effectiveness, and align with evolving legal and regulatory requirements.

3.5 Collaboration and Shared Responsibility

HRM recognises that protecting children is a shared responsibility that extends beyond organisational boundaries. The organisation is committed to collaborating with regulatory bodies, law enforcement agencies, and the wider humanitarian sector to collectively combat child abuse and exploitation.

3.6 Stakeholder Trust

HRM acknowledges that the trust of its stakeholders, including children, families, donors, partners, and the public, is paramount. By adhering to robust child protection practices, HRM ensures that its activities are transparent, accountable, and aligned with the values of integrity and responsibility.

3.7 Legal and Regulatory Adherence

HRM is dedicated to strict adherence to child protection laws and regulations. The organisation commits to staying informed about changes in relevant legislation and updating its child protection measures promptly to ensure ongoing compliance.

3.8 Reporting and Investigation

HRM encourages a culture of reporting and investigation within the organisation. Any staff member or stakeholder who suspects or identifies potential child abuse or exploitation is encouraged to report such concerns promptly through the established reporting mechanisms. HRM commits to thoroughly investigating reported concerns and taking appropriate actions, including reporting to relevant authorities when required by law.

3.9 Non-Retaliation

HRM guarantees protection against retaliation for individuals who, in good faith, report concerns related to potential child abuse or exploitation. Non-retaliation is integral to HRM's commitment to fostering an environment where individuals feel secure in reporting suspicions without fear of reprisal.

4. Risk Management

4.1 Purpose of Risk Management

The primary purpose of HRM's risk management strategy is to systematically identify and evaluate vulnerabilities within the organisation that may expose children to abuse, exploitation, or harm. This comprehensive assessment aims to cover all aspects of HRM's operations, considering the diversity of its activities, partners, and geographical locations.

4.2 Risk Assessment Process

HRM commits to conducting regular risk assessments at intervals deemed appropriate by the organisation. This ensures that the risk landscape is continuously monitored, and adjustments are made to child protection measures in response to evolving threats. The risk assessment methodology involves a thorough examination of HRM's operations, including but not limited to:

- **Nature of Activities:** The types of humanitarian activities, projects, and partnerships undertaken by HRM.
- **Geographical Presence:** The regions and countries where HRM operates, considering the varying child protection risks associated with different jurisdictions.
- **Partnerships and Collaborations:** The nature and extent of partnerships and collaborations with other organisations, including financial institutions.
- **Volunteer Engagement:** Evaluation of volunteer relationships, with consideration given to the potential risks associated with diverse engagement sources.
- **Beneficiary Interactions:** The volume and frequency of interactions with children and their families.

4.3 Risk Mitigation Strategies

Based on the findings of the risk assessment, HRM will develop and implement targeted mitigation measures to address identified vulnerabilities. These measures may include enhanced due diligence procedures, enhanced monitoring, and specific training programs. HRM commits to allocating resources effectively to implement risk mitigation measures. This may involve training staff, enhancing technological systems, and collaborating with external experts where necessary. The effectiveness of risk mitigation measures will be regularly reviewed, and adjustments will be made as needed. HRM acknowledges the dynamic nature of child protection risks and the need for ongoing evaluation and adaptation of mitigation strategies.

5. Due Diligence

5.1 Purpose of Due Diligence

Due diligence is an essential component of HRM's child protection strategy. The primary purpose of due diligence is to ensure that all individuals and entities associated with

HRM are thoroughly vetted and assessed for their suitability to work with or interact with children. This process helps to prevent individuals with a history of child abuse or exploitation from becoming involved with HRM's programs and activities.

5.2 Due Diligence Process

HRM's due diligence process involves comprehensive background checks and assessments of all staff, volunteers, partners, and third parties who may interact with children. The process includes:

- **Background Checks:** Conducting criminal background checks and verifying references for all individuals involved in HRM's programs and activities.
- **Interview and Screening:** Implementing rigorous interview and screening procedures to assess the suitability of individuals for roles involving children.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Establishing mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and re-assessment of individuals and entities to ensure continued compliance with child protection standards.

5.3 Third-Party Due Diligence

HRM recognises that third parties, including partners and contractors, may also pose child protection risks. Therefore, the due diligence process extends to third parties, including:

- **Partnership Agreements:** Incorporating child protection clauses into partnership agreements and contracts to ensure that third parties adhere to HRM's child protection standards.
- **Risk Assessments:** Conducting risk assessments of third-party entities to identify and address potential child protection risks.
- **Monitoring and Auditing:** Implementing monitoring and auditing procedures to ensure that third parties comply with HRM's child protection policies and procedures.

5.4 Training and Awareness

HRM is committed to providing ongoing training and awareness programs to ensure that all individuals involved in its programs and activities understand and comply with the due diligence requirements. Training programs include:

- **Child Protection Training:** Comprehensive training on child protection principles, policies, and procedures.
- **Role-Specific Training:** Tailored training for individuals in specific roles to address the unique child protection risks associated with their responsibilities.
- **Continuous Education:** Ongoing education and updates on emerging child protection issues and best practices.

7. Conflicts of Interest

7.1 Purpose of Managing Conflicts of Interest

Managing conflicts of interest is crucial to maintaining the integrity and credibility of HRM's child protection efforts. Conflicts of interest can undermine trust and lead to decisions that may not be in the best interest of children. This section outlines HRM's approach to identifying, managing, and mitigating conflicts of interest to ensure that all actions and decisions are made with the utmost integrity.

7.2 Identifying Conflicts of Interest

HRM is committed to proactively identifying potential conflicts of interest that could impact its child protection efforts. This involves:

- **Self-Disclosure:** Requiring staff, volunteers, board members, and partners to disclose any personal, financial, or professional interests that could conflict with their responsibilities towards child protection.
- **Regular Reviews:** Conducting regular reviews and assessments to identify potential conflicts of interest within the organisation and its activities.

7.3 Managing Conflicts of Interest

Once a conflict of interest is identified, HRM will take appropriate steps to manage and mitigate it. This includes:

- **Declaration and Documentation:** Documenting and declaring conflicts of interest to relevant authorities within the organisation.
- **Recusal:** Requiring individuals with a conflict of interest to recuse themselves from decision-making processes or activities where the conflict could impact their judgement.
- **Third-Party Oversight:** Involving third-party oversight or independent review in cases where conflicts of interest could significantly impact child protection outcomes.

7.4 Transparency and Accountability

HRM is committed to transparency and accountability in managing conflicts of interest. This involves:

- **Public Disclosure:** Providing transparency about conflicts of interest and how they are managed, including public disclosure where appropriate.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging with stakeholders, including donors, partners, and beneficiaries, to ensure that they are informed about HRM's approach to managing conflicts of interest.
- **Regular Reporting:** Including information about conflicts of interest and their management in regular reports to HRM's governing bodies and relevant stakeholders.

7.5 Training and Awareness

HRM will provide training and awareness programs to ensure that all individuals understand the importance of managing conflicts of interest and are equipped to identify and address them. This includes:

- **Conflict of Interest Training:** Specific training on identifying and managing conflicts of interest, tailored to the roles and responsibilities of individuals within HRM.
- **Ongoing Education:** Continuous education and updates on best practices for managing conflicts of interest, including changes in relevant regulations and standards.

10. Reporting and Whistleblowing

10.1 Purpose of Reporting and Whistleblowing

The purpose of reporting and whistleblowing mechanisms is to provide a safe and confidential way for individuals to report concerns about child abuse, exploitation, or other unethical conduct involving children. These mechanisms are essential for maintaining HRM's commitment to child protection and ensuring that all concerns are investigated and addressed appropriately.

10.2 Reporting Mechanisms

HRM provides multiple channels for reporting concerns to accommodate different preferences and situations. These mechanisms include:

- **Internal Reporting Channels:**
 - **Designated Contact Persons:** Establish specific individuals or teams (e.g., Child Protection Officer, Ethics Committee) responsible for receiving and handling reports of child abuse, exploitation, and other unethical conduct.
 - **Reporting Forms:** Provide standardised forms or templates for reporting concerns, which can be submitted via email, postal mail, or through an internal online system.
 - **Hotline:** Implement a confidential hotline (telephone or online) that allows individuals to report concerns anonymously if preferred.
- **External Reporting Channels:**
 - **Regulatory Bodies:** Provide information on how to report concerns to relevant regulatory or law enforcement authorities, if applicable.
 - **Independent Whistleblowing Services:** Offer access to external, independent whistleblowing services for individuals who prefer an external reporting option.

10.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

- **Confidential Reporting:** Ensure that all reports are handled with the highest level of confidentiality. Only those involved in the investigation and resolution process will have access to the details of the report.

- **Anonymous Reporting:** Allow individuals to report concerns anonymously if they choose. While anonymous reports may limit the ability to follow up for additional information, HRM will still consider and investigate them to the extent possible.

10.4 Protection from Retaliation

- **Anti-Retaliation Policy:** Implement a strict anti-retaliation policy to protect individuals who report concerns in good faith from any form of retaliation, such as dismissal, demotion, or harassment.
- **Monitoring and Enforcement:** Monitor and enforce the anti-retaliation policy to ensure that it is effective and that any instances of retaliation are addressed promptly.
- **Support Services:** Provide support services, such as counselling or legal assistance, for individuals who may experience retaliation or feel vulnerable after reporting concerns.

10.5 Investigation Process

- **Initial Review:** Conduct an initial review of reported concerns to determine the nature and seriousness of the issue. This may involve preliminary fact-finding to assess whether the concern warrants a full investigation.
- **Investigation Procedure:** Implement a structured investigation procedure to examine the reported concerns. This includes gathering evidence, interviewing relevant individuals, and assessing the findings in relation to HRM's policies and procedures.
- **Resolution:** Based on the findings of the investigation, take appropriate corrective actions, which may include disciplinary measures, changes in procedures, or reporting the findings to relevant authorities if required by law.
- **Documentation:** Maintain detailed records of the investigation process, findings, and actions taken. This documentation provides an audit trail and supports transparency and accountability.

10.6 Reporting Outcomes

- **Communication:** Communicate the outcomes of investigations to the individuals who reported concerns, where appropriate. Provide feedback on the actions taken and any measures implemented to address the reported issues.
- **Follow-Up:** Implement follow-up procedures to monitor the effectiveness of actions taken and ensure that any issues identified are fully addressed.

10.7 Training and Awareness

- **Training Programs:** Provide regular training to staff, volunteers, and board members on the reporting and whistleblowing procedures. Training should cover

how to report concerns, the protections available, and the importance of reporting unethical conduct.

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct awareness campaigns to keep reporting and whistleblowing procedures at the forefront of organisational practices. Use various communication channels to ensure that all stakeholders are informed about how to report concerns and the protections in place.

10.8 Review and Improvement

- **Regular Review:** Regularly review and assess the effectiveness of the reporting and whistleblowing mechanisms. This includes evaluating the ease of access to reporting channels, the responsiveness of the investigation process, and the protection measures in place.
- **Policy Updates:** Update reporting and whistleblowing policies and procedures as needed to reflect changes in regulations, best practices, and organisational needs. Ensure that any updates are communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

By implementing robust reporting and whistleblowing mechanisms, HRM aims to create a transparent and accountable environment where child abuse and exploitation are promptly identified and addressed, and individuals are protected from retaliation. This commitment helps to uphold HRM's values and ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children involved in its programs and activities.