



Child Protection Policy

Purpose:

This policy is designed to protect children who come into contact with D-tree International's programs and make sure they are safeguarded to the maximum extent from maltreatment including all forms of physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect, ill-treatment, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to child's health, development or dignity. This policy promotes the standards of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which outlines the fundamental rights of children.

Definitions:

Child/Children: a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years. D-tree affirms that all children have equal rights to protection.

Representatives: D-tree staff, volunteers, consultants, visitors, and partner or sub organizations intervening or acting on behalf of D-tree

Child abuse, exploitation, or neglect: Constitutes any form of physical abuse; emotional ill-treatment; sexual abuse; neglect or insufficient supervision; trafficking; or commercial, transactional, labor, or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, well-being, survival, development, or dignity. It includes, but is not limited to: any act or failure to act which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm to a child, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a child.

Physical abuse: Constitutes acts or failures to act resulting in injury (not necessarily visible), unnecessary or unjustified pain or suffering without causing injury, harm or risk of harm to a child's health or welfare, or death. Such acts may include, but are not limited to: punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, or hitting (regardless of object used), or burning. These acts are considered abuse regardless of whether they were intended to hurt the child.

Sexual Abuse: Constitutes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

Emotional abuse or ill treatment: Constitutes injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of the child caused by acts, threats of acts, or coercive tactics. Emotional abuse may include, but is not limited to: humiliation, control, isolation, withholding of information, or any other deliberate activity that makes the child feel diminished or embarrassed.

Exploitation: Constitutes the abuse of a child where some form of remuneration is involved or whereby the perpetrators benefit in some manner. Exploitation represents a form of coercion and violence that is detrimental to the child's physical or mental health, development, education, or well-being.

Neglect: Constitutes the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide needed, age-appropriate care where the caregiver is in a position to be able to provide such care.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Representatives as defined above at all times. D-tree shall include provisions regarding compliance with this policy in all subawards.

Prevention & Protection

Awareness Raising

The Child Protection Policy will be provided to all employees and to all Representatives who will come in contact with children as a result of their engagement with D-tree in appropriate languages to promote understanding; additional training may be provided depending on the role of each of these entities and on the nature of their work and the expectation of interaction with children.

Recruitment & Selection

Recruitment and selection of staff and others must reflect D-tree's commitment to safeguard children by ensuring warnings, checks and procedures are in place to screen out anyone who may be unsuitable to work with children.

D-tree will minimize risk to children through its process of employee recruitment.

Prior to advertisement, open staff positions shall be assessed for the level of contact with children. Jobs that involve contact with children either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment may require additional screening to include background checks and/or interviews with behavioral based questions, reference checks with questions about candidate's interaction with children, verification of detailed history of employment and education, and criminal record checks.

During the recruitment process, D-tree will provide Child Protection Policy and shall require candidate's signature acknowledging receipt and certifying compliance as a condition of employment.

Risk Assessment and Risk Management

All activities within D-tree must be assessed to make sure that any child safeguarding risks are identified and adequate controls developed. Engagement with children and their care givers for the purposes of marketing, media/communications, consultation, participation and advocacy should be with informed consent, and should not exploit the child or care giver, nor increase their vulnerability, or place them at risk.

Information & Communications Technologies

Representatives must use electronic resources, social media, and other communications technologies appropriately, and never exploit or harass Children or access material that is exploitative of children through any medium.

Behavior Towards Children

Representatives must not participate in any of the abusive behaviors described in the Definitions above nor shall they do any of the following:

1. Act in ways that may be abusive in any way or may place a child at risk of abuse
2. Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years regardless of the age of majority/consent or custom locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
3. Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
4. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive to Children
5. Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
6. Sleep in the same bed as a child with whom they are working
7. Sleep in the same room as a child with whom they are working
8. Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do themselves
9. Condone, or participate in, behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
10. Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
11. Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment or favor to particular children to the exclusion of others
12. Spend any time alone with children away from others
13. Adults may not be alone when in contact with a child. Wherever the 'two adult rule' cannot be applied, a suitable alternative must be arranged
14. Place themselves in a position where they are made vulnerable to allegations of misconduct

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. Representatives should at all times avoid actions or behavior which may allow behavior to be misrepresented, constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behavior.

Reporting & Responding

Representatives who have good faith suspicions of violation of the Child Protection Policy must report the concern promptly to any of the following contacts:

Location	Contact
Any location	ethics@d-tree.org
Tanzania (mainland)	[redacted for external website]
Zanzibar	<u>Pemba:</u> [redacted for external website] <u>Unguja:</u> [redacted for external website]
Malawi	[redacted for external website]
United States	+1 978-238-9122

Other community-specific contacts may be identified for reporting by children and community members.

D-tree considers the abuse and exploitation of children to be completely unacceptable. D-tree will take all concerns and reports of child abuse seriously and investigate and act on these reports immediately, with the highest priority, and in accordance with any applicable procedures established by D-tree for addressing such reports in specific D-tree locations.

An allegation of child abuse is a serious issue. In following this policy, it is essential that all parties maintain confidentiality. Sharing of information, which could identify a child, an alleged perpetrator or the informant/reporter could put them at harm so should be done so strictly on a 'need to know' basis. Unless abuse has actually been proved to have occurred, one must always refer to "alleged abuse".

If a Representative raises a legitimate concern about suspected child abuse, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the Representative.

Any employee who makes false and malicious accusations, however, will face disciplinary action. D-tree may take appropriate legal or other action against other participants or Representatives who makes false and malicious accusations of child abuse.

Procedure:

All D-tree employees and all Representatives who will come in contact with children as a result of their engagement with D-tree must agree to abide by this policy and the procedures.

Each person will:

- sign an acknowledgement form indicating his/her acceptance of the Child Protection Policy;
- report any incidents or behavior they may witness as perpetrated by a Representative of D-tree which they believe to be in violation of this policy or give rise to concerns over the welfare or safety of the Children involved;
- cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations

Representatives who fail to comply with this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action including contract termination, contract non-renewal or other appropriate action possibly including report to relevant external authorities.

Administrative:

Approved by: Alison Clark, COO

Effective date: January 1, 2021

Last modified: January 1, 2021