



LightForce International Child Protection Policy.

Reviewed January 2019.

LightForce International Child Protection & Positive Discipline Policy.

Glossary of Terms.

These definitions are taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children: July 2018.

A form of maltreatment of a child.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

(Definition provided by Working Together 2018)

Physical abuse:

A form of abuse which 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse:

- The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
- It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse.

- Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Sexual Exploitation:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Neglect.

The 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
 - protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
 - ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
 - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

MISSION STATEMENT

LightForce International is a pioneering charity which is committed to taking good news to the poor and practical help to those in need. At LightForce International we recognise the importance of our ministry to children and young people and the responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted in the care of LightForce International. We firmly stand by and adhere to the UNCRC (United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child).

As part of its mission, LightForce International is committed to:

- Safeguarding and promoting the interests and well-being of all children and young people in our care - valuing, listening to, and respecting them at all times.
- Ensuring that all staff/volunteers working with children and young people are recruited safely, have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities.
- Taking all reasonable practical steps to protect children and young people from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment as well as adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- Upholding the ethos and guidelines of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

LightForce International recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children and young people. It also acknowledges that children and young people can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect. Therefore the organisation has adopted the procedures set out in this document (hereafter). It also recognises the need to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary child protection agencies.

Safe recruitment procedure.

Staff- staff or volunteers recruited in projects outside of the UK will be subject to reference checks and an interview.

Volunteers- any volunteer from outside of our project country will need to go through the process of a DBS check (UK) or check associated with their country of origin.

Basic guidelines for dealing with disclosures

1. Remember that the child's welfare and interests must be the paramount consideration at all times.
2. Listen carefully and actively to the child. At this stage there is no necessity to ask questions. Let the child guide the pace.
3. Do not show shock at what you are hearing. This may discourage the child from continuing their disclosure as they will feel that the adult receiving the information is unable to cope with what they are hearing and may be thinking badly of the child.
4. Do not investigate. If you need to clarify what is being said and whether the child is at risk, ask open questions (what, when, who, how, where, do you want to tell me anything else? etc.) but only to the point of clarification being achieved. Avoid the question 'why?' as this can imply guilt / responsibility on the child.
5. Stay calm and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you.
6. Never promise to keep a secret or confidentiality.
7. Write down exactly what was said, not your opinion.

What to do when you suspect a child is being abused:

- Report immediately and directly to the designated lead for your trip.
- If you are a member of LightForce staff report to your immediate manager or the Director of LightForce International.
- Do not talk about the report to anyone but the designated staff member.

If reports refer to Director or Designated Child Protection member of staff.

If an allegation is made about the Director of LightForce International or the designated child protection member of staff then it is the responsibility of the person to report to the local authorities themselves. This will then be processed and investigated by the authorities.

Employment terms after an allegation is made about Employed Staff.

The member of staff whom the allegation involves will not automatically be suspended. The decision to suspend will be a neutral decision (not disciplinary) and will only be taken after consultation with the local authorities. Suspension may take place at any time within the investigative process. Suspension will only take place when:

- where a child or children is/are at risk;
- where serious allegations may lead to gross misconduct
- where suspension is necessary to allow investigation to proceed unimpeded

Confidentiality.

It is imperative that any reports of suspected abuse are discussed with only the Director, LightForce designated staff member or Local Authorities. Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made and kept in a secure place.

How we will protect volunteers under the age of 18.

- Volunteers will always be accompanied by an adult.
- Volunteers will never be expected to be alone with children in a classroom, examination room or room within the care home.
- Volunteers under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult from their education setting, church, organisation or parent/ carer.
- All LightForce staff or volunteers over 18 years old have gone through a safe recruitment procedure appropriate to their country of origin.
- Any staff or volunteers with convictions or suspicions of abuse relating to children will not be recruited or employed by LightForce International.