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EMPOWERING
YOUTH
SOUTH AFRICA

The President's Award for Youth Empowerment

Policy on Child Protection and Abuse

2018

Adopted on 1 June 2018 by the CEO _____

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	DEFINITIONS	4
3	PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR CHILD PROTECTION	4
4	PREVENTATIVE MEASURES	4
4.1	RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION	4
4.2	SCREENING	4
4.3	REFERENCE CHECKS	4
5	TRAINING AND EDUCATION	5
6	BRAND COMMUNICATIONS.....	5
7	REPORTING	5
8	SUPERVISION	6
9	CONTACT WITH CHILD.....	7
10	COMMUNICATIONS	7
11	DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY	7
12	MONITORING	7

1 Introduction

The President's Award for Youth Empowerment (TPA) aspires to improving the quality of life by building secure and safer communities through the recognition and realisation of community safety as a common good. TPA is dedicated to developing, informing and promoting innovative evidence-based crime prevention focussed on groups identified as being vulnerable to victimisation or offending.

TPA does this by:

1. Conducting rigorous research into issues of relevance to policy-makers, public officials, development partners and crime prevention practitioners.
2. Facilitating the implementation of crime prevention projects.
3. Providing accredited sector-specific training in crime prevention.
4. Advocating and lobbying for crime prevention agenda that supports effective service delivery.

This policy is informed and guided by the following:

1. Child Justice Act, 75 of 2008
2. Children's Act, No 38 of 2005
3. Child Care Amendment Act (Act 96 of 1996)
4. The South African Constitution
5. Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act of 2007

Nature and Purpose of This Policy

1. TPA conducts scientific studies on issues related to children and child safety.
2. This often entails asking sensitive questions to children making them particularly vulnerable.
3. We recognise the importance of protecting children and for this reason all researchers and fieldworkers are trained to ensure that any engagement with children and child are governed by strict ethical principles that ensure that no harm comes to those who participate in our research studies or programmes, and also protect the employees and contractors from false accusations.
4. TPA also provides direct services in the form of early crime prevention programmes and interventions. This necessarily entails working with children on issues related child safety.
5. We recognise the importance of protecting children and for this reason all programme staff are trained to ensure that any engagement with children and child are governed by strict ethical principles that ensure that no harm comes to those who participate in our research studies or programmes, and also protect the employees and contractors from false accusations.

2 Definitions

1. Staff: all employees, full and part-time, and programme volunteers that have any contact with child or access to facilities
2. Child: all individuals under the TPA Programme between the ages 14 age to 24 years.

3 Principles and Guidelines For Child Protection

1. No research interviews will be conducted unless the consent has been obtained from the parent/legal guardian as well as a signed assent from the child.
2. No programme interventions will be conducted unless the consent has been obtained from the parent/legal guardian as well as a signed assent from the child.
3. No photographs or images will be captured unless the consent has been obtained from the parent/legal guardian as well as a signed assent from the child.
4. Only parents and legal guardians can provide consent and children can only provide assent.
5. The identity of all children to remain anonymous.
6. Treat all children with respect regardless of differences of religion, age, culture, gender, ability and economic conditions.
7. Allow children to have a say in decisions that affect them and listen earnestly to their concerns.
8. Engage in appropriate behaviour and use language that is not intended to shame or humiliate children in any way.
9. Take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe and comfortable to answer research questions when being interviewed and when participating in programmes and interventions.
10. No child should ever be placed at risk of harm in any way.

4 Preventative Measures

4.1 Recruitment and Selection

1. TPA follows stringent recruitment processes to ensure that all staff who are recruited understands and commits to the TPA Policies and Procedures.
2. Reference checks are done on all candidates.
3. Before commencing employment all staff are required to attend an intense induction course where the TPA policies, procedures and guidelines are discussed in detail to ensure there are no misunderstandings.
4. Staffs are required to sign confidentiality agreements, which further safeguard the integrity and confidentiality of the child.

4.2 Screening

All TPA staff will be screened in accordance with this policy. All TPA staff and volunteers who work directly with children will be screened against both the National Child Protection Register AND the Sexual Offences Register.

4.3 Reference Checks

1. All applicants must provide at least three (3) references.
2. References may be personal or professional and be presented in written form or by providing phone contact information.

5 Training and Education

1. All staff will receive an orientation that includes:
 - a. Review and receipt of the TPA Code of Conduct - an original signed copy will be kept in the individual's personnel file
 - b. Review of policies related to safety, transportation, prevention and reporting of child abuse and emergency procedures - within the first week of their activation
2. Policy volunteers will review this policy as part of their initial orientation
3. Programme Manager is also equipped with the necessary containment skills to be able to respond appropriately when situations arise in field.

6 Brand Communications

1. TPA has a responsibility and duty to market its product/programmes/services in a responsible manner that governs the use of branding material and/or images.
2. Prior to any use of images of participants on TPA marketing material, written consent must be signed by the participant's parent/guardian.

7 Reporting

1. All TPA field sites must have a reporting box for children to insert a written report in private, should they lack the confidence to report the matter verbally.
2. All TPA staff on site visits must regularly inform all children about the following:
 - a. The importance of reporting abuse or neglect to a responsible adult
 - b. The process to follow when making a report of abuse or neglect to TPA staff
 - c. What children can do if they report abuse or neglect to a TPA staff member and no action is taken.
3. All TPA Programme Managers at the site or venue must display a list of emergency contact numbers for children to use if they need to report abuse or neglect.
4. For purposes of this policy, "abuse", in relation to a child, means any form of harm or ill-treatment deliberately inflicted on a child, and includes—
 - a. Assaulting a child or inflicting any other form of deliberate injury to a child
 - b. Sexually abusing a child or allowing a child to be sexually abused
 - c. Bullying by another child
 - d. A labour practice that exploits a child
 - e. Exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm the child psychologically or emotionally
5. Any irresponsible and unprofessional behaviour must be reported within 24 hours to the Head Master or child helpline on the number 08000 55 55. "Irresponsible and unprofessional behaviour" is defined as follows:
 - a. Any conduct or speech that might potentially cause emotional, physical or psychological harm to a child and in doing so, violates any rights the child may have in terms of the South African constitution, the Children's Act and the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act.
 - b. Any conduct or speech that breaches the South African Council for Social Service Professions Code of Conduct where the staff member in question is a social worker or a social auxiliary worker.

6. The safety of children is always our priority and therefore strict action is taken when concerns, witnessed or suspected disregard of the Child Protection Policy is reported.
7. The process below must be followed by all internal TPA staff.

STEP 1:

1. All TPA staff will report known or suspected child abuse immediately or as soon as practically possible, taking note of the following:
 - a. Child's name, address and telephone number.
 - b. Parents or guardians name and telephone numbers.
 - c. Reasons for concern and any relevant statements made by the child.
2. If an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at or during TPA programmes or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:
 - a. Report the incident to the Head Master. Where the youth is not from a school but from a community follow steps below:
 - b. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified
 - c. The appropriate authorities will be notified, consistent with applicable legislation
 - d. The alleged perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be suspended from the organization pending an investigation
3. Staff will follow an internal chain of command for the reporting of abuse, making all reports to the relevant line manager
4. Staff may report directly to the CEO, if their supervisor does not handle any report immediately.

8 Supervision

1. Supervision of child, programmes, facilities and staff will be designed to protect child and staff at all times.
2. Practices to ensure a safe and caring environment will include:
3. Management staff may make unannounced visits at least two times per month to every programme.
4. Staff members will never be alone with an individual child where they are not observable by others.
5. All sites of operation will have access to a telephone or cell phone on location during operating hours.
6. Child will never be left unsupervised; including bathrooms, locker rooms, or showers.
7. Staff will not disrobe a child other than outer garments without the presence of another staff member.
8. Staff will avoid changing clothes in front of child.

9 Contact with Child

1. It is understood that caring quality staff will develop positive relationships with child while involved in TPA programmes.
2. The following practices will be followed to ensure the protection of both child and staff outside of TPA programmes or activities.
3. Staff will not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for child outside of TPA programmes and activities, including baby-sitting or private instructions. Staff with prior or family relationships to child may be relieved of this restriction with prior documented Executive approval.
4. Staff will appear and behave in a manner consistent with the mission and values of TPA at all times while on or off duty; including electronic, written and verbal communications.

10 Communications

1. TPA will promote positive values and child protection strategies in its programmes, facilities, with parents and in the community.
2. Parents will receive regular written information about the programmes content and schedules; feedback regarding their child's participation in programme including behaviour and general health; and an introduction to the programme staff.
3. Parents will be allowed to observe programmes at any time as appropriate

11 Dissemination of the policy

1. TPA is committed to ensuring that all relevant parties are informed about its policy and understand the importance of keeping children safe.
2. TPA's Child Protection Policy is:
 - a. Circulated and discussed with all current and future TPA employees, contractors and stakeholders.
 - b. Circulated and discussed with all existing and potential funders.
 - c. Circulated and discussed with all current and future board members.
 - d. Circulated and discussed with the communities with whom TPA collaborates.

12 Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed and updated as needed by the Management Committee on an annual basis.