

## Child and Young Vulnerable Person Protection and Safeguarding Policy



**Vision: GOALS advances youth leadership through Soccer and Education to create stronger, healthier Communities in rural Haiti.**

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## I. Introduction

### A. Purpose of the Policy

The GOALS Haiti Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is the commitment of the organization to provide a safe and secure environment for children and young vulnerable people involved in its projects. This policy serves as a comprehensive guide for the organization, its staff, volunteers, and individuals who come into contact with children, to ensure their protection from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

In accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18, and young vulnerable people are those individuals who are at risk of harm or exploitation. The policy outlines the definitions of child abuse as provided by the World Health Organization, which encompasses all forms of physical and emotional harm, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, and any other form of maltreatment that could cause actual or potential harm to the child's health, development, dignity, and well-being.

GOALS works with children and young people aged 7 to 18, operating 12 soccer teams. The younger teams range from 7 to 12 years old, while the older teams are from 13 to 18. Our interaction with the children includes daily soccer sessions featuring Purposeful Play, as well as weekly educational sessions on topics such as health, community service, and the environment. In addition, we host friendly matches, two tournaments annually and participate in events like Earth Day, Sports and Peace Day, and Global Handwashing Day.

The policy also includes a Child Protection Pledge, which serves as a facilitator for open discussion and the sharing of information about the safety and protection of children and young vulnerable people. The policy outlines the responsibilities of staff, volunteers, and individuals who work with children, including the requirement for background checks, adhering to a code of conduct, and reporting any allegations of abuse.

GOALS is committed to taking all necessary preventative measures to ensure the safety and protection of children and young vulnerable people involved in its projects. This includes regular monitoring and evaluation of its policies and

procedures to identify areas for improvement and ensure their continued effectiveness.

## **B. Types of Abuse**

- **Physical abuse:** Any intentional physical harm or injury to a child, including hitting, shaking, or burning.
- **Sexual abuse:** Any sexual act or behaviour towards a child, including sexual exploitation, prostitution, or child pornography.
- **Emotional abuse:** Any behaviour that causes emotional harm or trauma to a child, including ridicule, rejection, or bullying.
- **Neglect:** The failure of a caregiver to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision to a child.
- **Exploitation:** Any use of a child for commercial, economic, or political gain, including child labour or trafficking.
- **Discriminatory abuse:** Any form of abuse that is motivated by prejudice, such as racism, sexism, or homophobia.
- **Cyber abuse:** Any form of abuse that occurs through the use of information and communication technologies, such as the internet, mobile phones, or other digital devices. This can include acts such as cyber bullying, online exploitation, sexual abuse, and sextortion.
- **Corporal Punishment:** use of physical force, such as hitting or spanking, as a form of discipline for children.
- **Gender Discrimination:** Behaviour or attitude that treats individuals differently based on their gender, including unequal treatment or bias due to gender stereotypes.
- **Verbal Abuse:** Verbal abuse refers to the use of spoken words or non-physical behaviour to intimidate, control, manipulate, or harm another person. This type of abuse can include, but is not limited to, insults, name-

calling, shouting, threats, humiliation, and other types of spoken aggression.

### **C. Commitment to Child Protection and Safeguarding for Children and Young Vulnerable People**

GOALS Haiti is committed to promoting the rights and welfare of children and young vulnerable people and to protecting them from harm. We recognize that all children and young vulnerable people have the right to be safe, to be protected from abuse and exploitation, and to participate in decisions affecting their lives. We are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment for children and young vulnerable people and to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and other workers understand and follow our child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures.

## **II. Definition of Children and Young Vulnerable People**

### **A. Age Definition**

The UNCRC defines a child as anyone under 18 years old and recognizes their rights to survival, development, protection, and participation, with states having the responsibility to ensure these rights are upheld.

### **B. Young Vulnerable**

Young vulnerable people refer to individuals, often children and youth, who are at risk of harm due to their power dynamic, age, circumstances, or environment. They are often marginalized, disadvantaged, or in a vulnerable situation and require protection and support to ensure their rights and well-being are upheld.

### **C. Alignment with UNCRC and Local Laws**

This policy is aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and relevant local laws and regulations.

## **III. Rights of Children and Young Vulnerable People**

### **A. Right to survival and development**

All children and young vulnerable people have the right to survival and to the necessary care and assistance to ensure their healthy physical and mental development, and GOALS will take all necessary measures to ensure that this right is upheld.

**B. Right to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation**

All children and young vulnerable people have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This includes physical, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse, as well as neglect and exploitation, and GOALS will take all necessary measures to prevent and respond to any incidents of abuse.

**C. Right to participation in decisions affecting their lives**

All children and young vulnerable people have the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives and to express their views freely. This includes the right to be heard and to have their views taken into account in all matters affecting them, and GOALS will ensure that their views are taken into account and their participation is facilitated.

**D. Right to privacy**

All children and young vulnerable people have the right to privacy, including the right to maintain confidentiality and privacy of their personal data, and GOALS will respect their privacy and ensure that their personal information is kept confidential.

**IV. Roles and Responsibilities**

**A. Staff, Volunteers, and Other Workers**

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy of GOALS is designed to ensure the safety and well-being of all children who participate in GOALS activities. The policy applies to all actors within the organization, including staff, volunteers, visitors, board members, interns, consultants, partners, related personnel and regardless of whether they have direct or indirect contact with children.

**Direct contact** refers to situations where individuals are physically present with children, such as during site visits, short or long-term stays, or daily interactions. **Indirect contact**, on the other hand, refers to situations where individuals may come into contact with children's names, photos, details, or case information.

The policy recognizes GOALS' duty of care to safeguard all children from harm when participating in its activities. The policy's main goals are to provide children and young people with the appropriate safety and protection while they are involved with GOALS and to enable all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to any child protection issues that may arise. By adopting this policy, GOALS demonstrates its commitment to promoting the rights, well-being, and safety of all children and young people involved in its activities.

## **B. Managers and Supervisors**

Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their staff, volunteers, and other workers understand and follow this policy. They must also provide appropriate training and support to enable their staff, volunteers, and other workers to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.

## **C. Appropriate Standards of Behavior**

### **Adults should:**

- Contribute to a positive environment which enables personal, physical and social development
- Encourage and respect children's voices and views.
- Be inclusive and involve all children without selection or exclusion on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or any other status. (See Non-discrimination Policy)
- Be aware of the potential for peer abuse, peer discrimination and bullying and be aware of high-risk peer situations (such as unsupervised mixing of older and younger children).
- Avoid placing yourself in a compromising or vulnerable position when meeting with children (e.g. being alone with a child in any circumstances which might potentially be questioned by others).
- Meet with a child in a public location whenever possible.
- Immediately report suspected or alleged abuse to the designated Child Protection Officer (Program Director).
- Lead by example and strive to educate the community at large on the importance of child protection and safeguarding.

## **D. Inappropriate Standards of Behavior**

### **Adults should not:**

- Hit or otherwise physically assault a child.
- Use language that will mentally or emotionally harm a child.
- Act in any way that intends to embarrass, shame, humiliate, or degrade a child.
- Show discrimination based upon sex, age, race, color, gender, sexual orientation, size, religion, disability, HIV status or other status or class.
- Spend time alone with children, unless necessary.

- Develop a physical or sexual relationship with a child.
- Behave in a sexual manner in front of children.
- Use a position of power to intimidate or coerce children into an inappropriate relationship.
- Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other.
- Stand aside when they see inappropriate actions inflicted by children (or adults) on other children because it is frequent and commonplace.

## **V. Reporting and Referral Procedures**

### **A. Recognizing Signs of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation**

All staff, volunteers, and other workers must be trained to recognize signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and to report any concerns they may have.

### **B. Reporting to Relevant Authorities**

If a staff member, volunteer, or other worker has concerns about a child or young vulnerable person's safety, they must report these concerns immediately to the appropriate to Child Protection Committee/ or child protection officer.

Reporting mechanisms include –

Report to Safeguarding officer through email at [contact@goalshaiti.org](mailto:contact@goalshaiti.org) , by phone at 011-509-4609-0701, in person at Biwo Magepa Rue de la Redemption Leogane or by anonymous dropbox location at the Biwo Magepa location.

The Safeguarding officer will document the report/incident to have a copy for the local office file plus send a copy of the report to the Executive Director and the Safeguarding panel plus it will be saved in Dropbox under Program/Safeguarding/Incident Reports.

The Safeguarding officer will investigate the incident and may involve other office staff or coaches to investigate/interview any witnesses or concerned parties.

During the investigation any suspected staff accused of misconduct will be put on suspension pending the results of the investigation.

Depending on the results of the investigation appropriate action will be taken which could include unpaid suspension, written warning, and for serious offence could include termination and notification of appropriate authorities including police and IBESR (Child Protection Services).



### **C. Making a Referral**

#### **A. Recognizing signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation**

GOALS staff, volunteers, and other personnel must be aware of the signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and should report any concerns to the relevant authorities.

#### **B. Reporting to relevant authorities**

In the event of an incident of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, GOALS staff, volunteers, and other workers must report the incident to the relevant authorities without delay.

#### **C. Making a referral**

In the event of a suspected or confirmed incident of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, GOALS will make a referral to the relevant authorities and provide any necessary support to the child or young vulnerable person.

#### **D. Report/Case investigation Procedure:**

- Initial investigation: The first step is to conduct an initial investigation to determine the nature and extent of the violation. This may involve gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses, and reviewing relevant documents.
- Assessment: Based on the information gathered during the initial investigation, a thorough assessment should be made to determine the best course of action. This may involve weighing the rights of the child or young vulnerable person against the rights of other individuals involved, such as staff or volunteers.
- Decision-making: After careful consideration of the facts and circumstances, a decision should be made about how to respond to the violation. This may involve taking disciplinary action against the individual responsible, providing support to the child or young vulnerable person, or both.
- Documentation: The decision-making process and the reasons for the decision should be thoroughly documented, along with any other relevant information, such as the names of those involved, dates, and times.

- **Reporting:** Depending on the nature of the violation, it may be necessary to report the matter to relevant authorities, such as the police or social services. The decision to make a report should be based on the best interests of the child or young vulnerable person, as well as any legal requirements or obligations.
- **Monitoring and review:** The decision-making process and the outcome of any actions taken should be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that they are having the desired effect and to identify any areas for improvement.

## **VI. Confidentiality and Data Protection:**

### **A. Keeping personal data confidential:**

GOALS is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all children and young vulnerable people. Personal data should only be shared on a need-to-know basis, and only with those who have a legitimate reason to access it.

### **B. Data protection laws and regulations:**

GOALS must comply with all relevant data protection laws and regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and any relevant local laws.

## **VII. Training and Awareness:**

### **A. Recognizing signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation:**

GOALS will provide training and awareness to all staff, volunteers, and related personnel on recognizing signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This will help them to respond promptly and appropriately if they suspect that a child or young vulnerable person is at risk.

### **B. Reporting and referral procedures:**

GOALS will also provide training and awareness on reporting and referral procedures to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and other workers know how to report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and understand the relevant reporting procedures.

### **C. Implementing the policy:**

GOALS will ensure that all staff, volunteers, and other workers receive training on implementing the policy and understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection and safeguarding.

**D. Training structure:**

Child protection and safeguarding training will be conducted by a senior manager or by an experienced staff member.

For new employees and volunteers, it is mandatory that they undergo training within two weeks or before they come into contact with children. It will be mandatory for all staff to attend training once a year and sign the code of conduct.

**VIII. Monitoring and Review:**

**A. Reviewing the policy regularly:**

This policy is reviewed annually by Executive Director and the Safeguarding Officer to ensure that it remains up-to-date, relevant, and effective in protecting children and young vulnerable people.

**B. Evaluating its impact:**

GOALS will also evaluate the impact of the policy, including through monitoring its implementation and seeking feedback from staff, volunteers, and other workers.

**IX. Collaboration and Partnership:**

**A. Working with relevant organizations and authorities:**

GOALS will work with relevant organizations and authorities, such as local authorities, schools, and the police, to ensure that it complies with all relevant child protection and safeguarding regulations and that children and young vulnerable people receive the best possible protection.

**B. Foster collaboration and partnerships:**

GOALS will foster collaboration and partnerships with other organizations and stakeholders in the community to help achieve its objectives in relation to child protection and safeguarding.

**X. Implementation and Enforcement:**

**A. Communication and implementation throughout the organization:**

GOALS will communicate the policy to all staff, volunteers, and other workers, and ensure that it is implemented throughout the organization.

**B. Disciplinary action for non-compliance:**

GOALS will take disciplinary action against any staff, volunteer, or other worker who breaches the policy or fails to comply with its provisions.

**XI. Conclusion:**

**A. Commitment to providing care and protection for children and young vulnerable people:**

GOALS is committed to providing care and protection for children and young vulnerable people and ensuring that their rights are upheld. We are working to educate youth on their rights plus work with community members to ensure that child protection is advanced in Haiti.

**B. Upholding the rights of children and young vulnerable people:**

GOALS is committed to upholding the rights of children and young vulnerable people, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and any relevant local laws.