



# Child Protection Policy

Upholding the Rights  
and Privileges of  
Children

# Child Protection Policy for Feed My People Africa

Commitment to the well-being of children involves many people and many actions. One part of protecting children involves implementing a child protection policy which specifies the commitment to a child-safe organisation and supports the safety of children in their communities.

## **The FMP policy has 11 components:**

1. Awareness raising about child abuse and the protection of children.
2. Program planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation focussing on the participation and protection of children.
3. Recruitment and screening of staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, and board members, plus screening of visitors.
4. Managing visitors to FMP projects.
5. Behaviour protocols/codes of conduct for all those linked with FMP.
6. Child Abuse: Allegation management, including the care and support of the affected child(ren).
7. Child protection in sponsorship.
8. Advocacy on child protection and child rights.
9. Communications about children.
10. Confidentiality of all child information.
11. Partner organisations and their commitments to child protection.

Each FMP office is responsible for its country-specific policy, which should reflect local child protection and labour laws.

## **Behaviour Protocols and Feed my People**

We would like children and their families to feel comfortable and at ease while involved in our programmes and when welcoming visitors. We would also like visitors to have a positive experience when visiting our programmes and children. As a result, FMP has very specific behaviour expectations called protocols (also called codes of conduct) for staff, visitors, and all who are associated with FMI, as follows:

### **Visitors, Volunteers and Staff**

These behaviour protocols are universal to FMP, and all are expected to adhere to them:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Listen to children.
- All visitors and staff must have a police background clearance where it is legally permitted to obtain one. All visitors to FMP projects must be accompanied by a designated FMP staff member at all times.
- Be sensitive to the unwritten laws of personal familiarity in language, conversation, and physical intimacy, and observe them.
- Stop any interaction with a child if a child says stop, or if the child appears uncomfortable with the interaction. Always ask permission from a child and the child's parent guardian if you wish to take a photograph.
- Do not touch sexual areas of the body or have sex with a child. Having sex with a child is a grave offence, and punishable by imprisonment in many countries.
- Do not expose anyone to sexual materials or abuse them through non contact sexual activity. Be cautious in sending verbal, nonverbal, or written messages that could be misinterpreted by the child or adults.
- Dress In culturally appropriate ways.
- Always be in view of another adult when with a child (i.e., do not spend time alone with a child). This is for the child's protection and to protect you from possible false accusation.

- FMP staff do not hire children as house help or place a child in situations of exploitative labour. Children have a right to education and play.
- Do not slap, hit or physically abuse any child. FMP does not support corporal punishment, but recommends alternative methods of discipline.
- Do not psychologically and or verbally abuse any child.
- Adults are ALWAYS responsible for their behaviour with a child, even when the child's behaviour can be interpreted as seductive.

## REMEMBER

FMP personnel and visitors are expected and required to report any suspicions of child abuse to the national director immediately.

- FMP has policy and procedures for investigating accusations, which allow for a process that respects all involved.
- Non-compliance with these requirements will be taken seriously. This will involve a thorough investigation and referral of cases to the police and/or social services if child rights laws have been broken.
- FMP personnel and visitors will be expected to sign a document that signifies that they agree to abide by the behaviour protocols.

For more information regarding the contents of this brochure, please ask the child protection point person in the local FMP office.

While these particular behaviour protocols focus on children, we expect your interactions with adults to show similar respect for culture and human rights.

This leaflet is produced by Feed My People. Please contact your local Feed My People office for more information about Feed My People's Child Protection Policy.

## There are many types of abuse in our world:

- **Physical Abuse** - Hitting, burning, or caning children, or punishing by denying food/nutrition, abduction or kidnapping.
- **Sexual Abuse** - Inappropriate touching to rape, and non-contact sexual abuse, which is forcing a child to observe sexual acts, and showing pornography to a child.
- **Emotional Abuse** - Humiliation, uncaring attitudes, absence of praise, ridiculing, bullying, denying time to play, demoralising the child rather than focussing on behaviour changes. Stigmatising children with disabilities.
- **Harmful Cultural Practices** - deny children their rights. These include female genital mutilation, female infanticide, and early marriage.
- **Early Marriage** - which often leads to pregnancy at a young age, and being unable to finish schooling.
- **Exploitative child labour** - involves giving a child tasks for which he or she is not developmentally ready, expecting children to do work that does not allow time for their education, rest, and play. Examples include bonded or forced labour, persuading children to sell drugs, recruiting children into fighting forces, domestic workers and trafficking.

## Who abuses children and where does abuse take place?

Child abusers can be identified when their behaviour fits certain criteria, and is seen to be a regular or occasional breach of moral and children's rights laws. Abusers can be male or female and of any social, cultural or economic group and of any age.

- **Abuse in the Family** - Most abuse of children occurs within the home, by other family members.
- **Within the Community** - In most cases, children are abused by people known to them, and the abuse takes place in the local area.
- **In Institutions** - In schools, daycare centres, refugee camps, correctional rehabilitation and children's homes.
- **By visitors to communities** - By outsiders who take advantage of a child's vulnerability, for example, drug dealers, sex tourists, paedophiles, debt collectors, the military, and recruiters for brothels.

## **Feed My People - and Children**

FMP is committed to the holistic development of all children and the realisation of their rights. Children have a right to survival, development, protection, and participation as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**FMP defines a Child** as any human being under the age of 18 years as recognised by international law such as the UN CRC.

### **Child Protection**

**FMP offices around the world are actively involved in protecting children in the communities in which they work.**

**FMP partners with communities** to provide clean drinking water, adequate nutrition, and primary health services that protect children from preventable diseases and provide early treatment for illness.

**FMP partners with children as an essential part of empowering children.** Promoting and encouraging children's abilities to engage in all decisions that affect them is an important part of child's protection.

**FMP partners with the most vulnerable children and their families:** Children in need of special protection such as girls and boys involved in exploitative child labour; those who survive war and conflict; those who are survivors of abuse and neglect; and those who suffer from harmful traditional practices.

**FMP partners with other NGO's UN agencies and other organisations** to have a united voice on issues that affect children and to learn from one another.

**FMP advocates with governments and opinion leaders** for policies, laws and practices that strengthen the protection of children.

**We continue to learn that there is much more we can do to protect children effectively, especially in partnership with others.**