



**AMBO LAZARIST DEAF SCHOOL**

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**UPDATED April 2020**

## **PREFACE**

The Trustees of the Ambo Catholic Deaf School have approved this Child Protection Policy. They are designed to ensure the safety of well-being of children attending the services at the ALDS. The policies and procedures will also ensure that the concerns of pupils and parents are addressed promptly and properly.

It is recognised that the child protection needs to be viewed within the context of the total pastoral care of all the pupils and staff within the school.

Fr. Memheru Mekonen. CM. (Vincentian Provincial Ethiopia)

Fr. Asfaw Feleke. CM. (Parish Priest and Director Ambo Catholic Deaf School)

Mr. Abiyot Eshetu. (Principal of ALDS)

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Creating an environment to enable each student achieve their full potential.

## **SCHOOL VISION**

ALDS is under the trusteeship of the Vincentian (Lazarist) Province Ethiopia. Inspired by the philosophy and traditions of the St. Vincent de Paul we endeavour to care for all our students, cherishing the uniqueness of each person in an atmosphere permeated by the Christian values of Truth, Justice and Peace. ALDS aims in cooperation with parents, to enable each student to achieve his/her full potential physically, emotionally intellectually, socially and spiritually.

Thus the Ambo Catholic Deaf School is committed to creating a safe and protected environment for children and vulnerable adults by providing training to all members of staff in our project who have direct or indirect access to children and young adults.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

The purpose of this child protection policy is to clarify the duties and responsibilities of everyone involved in the ALDS in relation to the protection of children. Thus ensuring that we;

1. Create a safe and positive environment for Deaf children.
2. Demonstrate our commitment to safeguard Deaf children from harm
3. Provide proper guidance in working effectively with Deaf to protect them from any abuse.
4. Clarify what measures/actions need to be taken when abuse is suspected or reported.
5. Promote awareness of the problem of child abuse and related child risks.

## **OUR PRINCIPLES AND BELIEFS IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

(The ALDS's commitment to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. This section presents the principles and the positive approaches to be carried out in work with children. The beliefs described below are translated into a practical code of conduct, which establishes basic minimum expectations of staff and others in relation to their contact with children.)

A decisive component in working to safeguard the welfare of all children is promoting their rights. ALDS believes all children and young persons have the right to:

- A Service that aims to alleviate the participant's experience of poverty, disadvantage and exclusion.
- A Service that empowers the beneficiaries and assists them in becoming self sufficient and independent.
- A Service that promotes the safeguarding, welfare and development of all participants so that they can achieve their full potential.
- A Service that aims to protect all participants from abuse, violence and exploitation.

## **THE REQUIRED STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR**

*(From Staff and Others When They Are In Contact With Children. All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation. The situation of all children must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation. All child abuse involves the abuse of children rights. It is in this context that we committed to protecting children with/ for whom we work).*

When working with children all staff and volunteers should:

- Always treat children with respect and recognize them as individuals in their own right;
- Regard them positively and value them as individuals who have specific needs and rights and a particular contribution to make;
- Work with them in a spirit of co-operation and partnership based on mutual trust and respect;
- Value their views and take them seriously;
- Work with them in ways that enhance their inherent capacities and capabilities, and develop their potential;
- Strive to understand them within the context in which they live.

## OUR DUTY OF CARE

We will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse through the following means:

- **Awareness:** we will ensure that all staff and associate workers in our services are aware of what constitutes child abuse and the potential risks of such abuse to children in our care.
- **Prevention:** we will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimize the risks to children and listen to and takes seriously the views and concerns of children.
- **Reporting:** we will ensure that staff and others are clear as to what steps to take when concerns or allegations arise regarding the welfare of children in our care.
- **Responding:** we will ensure that appropriate action is taken to support and protect children when concerns/allegations arise regarding possible abuse. In order that the above standards of reporting and responding are met, we will train all those engaged in our services too:
  - take seriously any concerns raised;
  - take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns;
  - support children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns;
  - act appropriately and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation;
  - are guided through the child protection process by the principle of 'best interests of the child';
  - Work in partnership with parents/guardians and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children. (See Appendix 1 Below).

## OUR COMMITMENT TO ENSURING MECHANISMS ARE FOLLOWED:

- All staff will sign to abide by the attached code of conduct;
- All staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of the child protection policy;
- Recruitment procedures will include checks on suitability for working with young people;
- Induction will include briefing on child protection issues;
- ALDS will display Contact Person's details for reporting possible child abuse and every member of staff will have details for reporting;
- Systems will be established to investigate and deal with any reported abuse.
- Appropriate training, learning opportunities and support will be provided by the Vincentian's to ensure that commitments are met.

## **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE.**

### **CHILD ABUSE.**

Child abuse is generally categorized into some broad groups such as neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, organized abuse and bullying. Children may be abused in a range of settings, by those known to them or by a stranger. A child may be subject to more than one form of abuse at any time during his or her childhood. All forms of abuse constitute a betrayal of trust and an abuse of power by an adult over a child or young person. Each form of child abuse must be treated seriously – there can be no assumption that some forms are of less significance than others. It is accepted, however, that there is a distinction between sexual abuse and the other ways in which children can be harmed in that the motivation and circumstances for the sexual abuse of children can be very different from those which are involved when people physically or emotionally abuse children or cause them to be neglected.

### **WHO ABUSES?**

Most children are loved and cherished by parents, guardians and communities. Similarly most people working with children recognize that they are in a special position with respect to the influence and power they exercise. Unfortunately however, there are people in all societies, cultures and organizations who have a capacity or inclination to abuse children. Recent cases also highlight the abuse of children by professionals or other adults who are employed in positions of trust where they care for or work with children. There is no one profile of an abuser, the only way to protect children from such harm is through our own personal education, vigilance and organizational child protection procedures.

### **THE TERM CHILD**

The term 'child' will be used to refer to an individual who is under 18 years of age as recognized in Ethiopia.

### **VULNERABLE CHILDREN**

Children with disabilities, children who are separated from family and are reliant on others for their care and protection and homeless children are recognized to be at particular risk of being abused.

### **CHILD PROTECTION**

It is the term used to describe the duties and responsibilities that are undertaken to prevent or to stop children from being abused or ill-treated.

## **WHAT CONSTITUTES ABUSE AND NEGLECT?**

Defining child abuse is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, institution or community setting, by those known and trusted to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

### **INDICATORS OF ABUSE.**

#### **Physical Indicators**

- Soft tissue bruising (unexplained)
- Repeated injuries
- Black eye(s) / mouth injuries
- Torn/ blood-stained clothes
- Burns/ scalds
- Bites
- Marks from implements
- Inconsistent stories re injuries

### **Behavioural Indicators**

- Behaviour change (unexplained)
- Regressive behaviour
- Difficulty in making friends
- Distrustful/ excessive attachment to adults
- Drop in performance
- Inappropriate sexual awareness, language, behaviour
- Reluctance to go home
- Unusual reluctance to remove clothes
- Change in attendance pattern

### **Reasonable Grounds For Concern**

- specific indication from the child that (s)he was abused;
- an account by a person who saw the child being abused;
- evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse e.g. dysfunctional behaviour;
- consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- Aspects of the child's behaviour
- Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child including fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child. (Any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Children First 3.4.1)

### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

- Scratches
- Bite marks or welts
- Bruises in places difficult to mark e.g. behind ears, groin etc
- Burns, especially cigarette burns
- Under nourishment
- Untreated injuries

### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

- Self mutilation tendencies
- Poor concentration/learning
- Chronic runaway
- Aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of returning home
- Undue fear of adults
- Bullying/being a victim

## **NEGLECT**

An omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to affection from adults, medical care. Children First:3.2.1.

### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

- Exposed to danger; lack of age appropriate supervision
- Over protection- extreme control
- Low self esteem
- Child as parent (parentified)
- Caring for younger siblings
- Accident prone
- Poor hygiene - lack of self care
- Untreated illnesses

### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

- Tiredness, listlessness
- Hunger
- Dental issues
- Dirty/smelly
- Bed wetting/soiled
- Failure to thrive
- Learning difficulties
- Lack of provision of health care
- Age inappropriate appearance - dress/style

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

It is the persistent or emotional ill treatment of a child that adversely affects their development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate, there only to meet the needs of another; or where inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. In addition it includes children who are regularly frightened, exploited or corrupted.

### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

- Sudden speech disorders
- Eating disorders
- Self harm
- Wetting and soiling
- Signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Frequent vomiting

### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

- Mood change e.g. depression, failure to communicate
- Rocking, thumb sucking
- Fear of change
- Chronic runaway
- Poor peer relationships/isolation
- Truancy
- Delinquency

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include rape, incest, involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

- Soreness, bleeding, itching in the genital or anal area
- STI's
- Pregnancy
- Genital injury
- Eating disorders
- Stomach pains or headaches
- Pain on urination
- Bruises on inner thighs or buttocks

## **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

- Inappropriate language, sexual knowledge for age group
- Chronic depression/low self-esteem
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Substance/drug abuse
- Self harm

## **ORGANISED ABUSE**

Organized abuse is sexual abuse where there is more than a single abuser and the adults concerned appear to act together to abuse the child or children, and/or children, and /or where an adult uses and institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children fro sexual abuse.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying is increasingly recognized as harmful to children and adolescents. It could involve physical intimidation, verbal intimidation or emotional intimidation. It may include racist and sexist remarks or isolating or excluding someone. It always involves a less powerful person experiencing deliberate hostility.



## **PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES.**

Reporting, Investigation and Management Procedures.

### **CONTACT PERSONS.**

The Provincial of the Vincentian's in Ethiopia with his council will:

- Arrange a nominated Local Contact Person and Deputy Local Contact Person for ALDS: (Please refer to the Child Protection Statement which is posted on in the main offices and staffroom)
- Organize and conduct appropriate training for contact persons
- Agree that the contact person(s) should inform the Provincial (Overall Contact Person) of any findings regarding abuse.
- Agree that the individual appointed as a Local Contact Person will deal with all media queries concerning complaints of abuse. Where necessary a lawyer will be employed to handle particular cases.

#### **Overall Contact Person:**

(given the size of the country and the scope of works etc, the Provincial of the Vincentian's will appoint a Local Contact Person in each region/project. Their details will be posted in the ALDS. The Provincial will take on the overall coordination of implementing the Child Protection Policy and of ensuring appropriate and adequate training for all other' Local Contact Persons').

#### **Overall Contact Person.**

Overall Contact Person Fr. Memheru Mekonnen. (Provincial)

Phone: +251 911896220

Email: memkonnne@yahoo.com

Address: Lazarist House, P.O. Box 2583, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

#### **Local Contact Person Fr. Asfaw Feleke C.M.**

Phone: +251 912716112

Email: felekeasfaw@gmail.com

Address: St. Justins, P.O. Box 177

Catholic Church, Ambo.

Deputy Local Contact: Mr. Abiyot Eshetu

Phone: +251 954846511

Email: abiyoteshetu2012@gmail.com

Address: ALDS, Ambo.

## **DEALING WITH A CONCERN OR ALLEGATION OF ABUSE.**

Procedures in relation to receiving concerns or allegations of abuse.

If as a member of staff/board of management you receive a disclosure or an allegation of abuse, please remember that it is not your role to investigate. The following section details the actions you must take when you receive a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse.

- Act immediately on any concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse
- Refer all information to the Local Contact Person as soon as possible.
- Where ever possible take notes, ask permission to do so first and if the child/adult does not feel comfortable with note taking, write your notes, if not immediately after, then as soon as possible, but not later than the end of the day.
- You must pass on all original child protection recording forms as well as any rough notes, taken throughout the course of a disclosure to the project Local Contact Person as soon as possible
- Record all information on the ALDS child protection form. This should be signed and dated by the author.
- Include all of the details even those you think may not be relevant at the time.
- The Local Contact Person will compile a child protection case file and will store all original copies of information in a safe and secure setting for retention.
- If you deem there to be an immediate risk to the child then act immediately. Refer to the Statutory services and do not wait for a referral from the Local Contact Person.
- Pass on the contact details of the Local Contact Person to the person making a child protection allegation/concern.
- Maintain professional confidentiality at all times. An allegation of abuse may have serious consequences for the reputation of the child concerned and for the person against whom the allegation if made. Any enquiry must be carried out in a manner that protects the reputation and welfare of both parties.

### **The Key things to remember when responding are:**

- Receive: listen, believe.
- Reassure: No promises, not child's/claimant's fault.
- React: non-intrusive, open questions, Remain calm.
- Record Write up notes before the end of the day (observable/verifiable facts)
- Remember: The C.P. Guidelines.

### **A member of staff who makes a complaint or expresses concerns that abuse may have occurred should be reassured that:**

- They will be taken seriously.
- The matter will be treated in strictest of confidence.
- They will be protected from any reprisals or intimidation.
- They will be kept informed of action that has been taken and its outcome.

### **Responsibility of the Local Contact Person.**

Once the Local Contact Person has received details of the complaint he/she will take responsibility for the overall coordination and response to the complaint, thus she/he will:

- Receive any enquiries and information by any staff member or volunteer of the Vincentian's services, concerning the particular complaint.
- Will implement their organisations child protection safeguarding procedures. A decision will be made about the most appropriate course of action to take that will best protect and support both the staff member and the child making the allegation/disclosure.
- Treat any information received in relation to the complaint of abuse in the strictest of confidence during the process of examination in order to respect the rights of both the suspected abused person and the alleged abuser. However, because of the Vincentian's policy on reporting such complaints to the civil authorities, no absolute guarantee of confidentiality should be given.
- Will identify a safe place to file all information in a secure and confidential manner. (A copy should be retained by the staff member/board member who initially received the complaint and stored within the ALDS's child protection and safeguarding system.

### **She/he will:**

- Ensure that a basic level of training in child protection is provided for all staff, volunteers and other workers in the ALDS
- Provide information and advice on child protection within the programmes or projects.
- Maintain appropriate records in line with the policy on confidentiality of the Vincentian's and their services.
- Receive and consider all child protection concerns and ensure that policy and procedures are followed.
- Inform parents or guardians if a report is to be submitted to the statutory authorities.
- Will take the lead role in securing a follow-up report where there this is deemed necessary. Any such report must detail in writing the outcome of the child abuse allegation, suspicion or concern.

### **Complaints against School Staff.**

The following procedures will be followed where a complaint is made about possible abuse by a member of staff of the school. This term is used to include volunteers, students on placements and contractors.

A complaint or allegation may be made, in the context of child protection, about the conduct or activities of a member of staff or the school towards a child or children. If the complaint has not been made directly to the Vice Director or Director, he/she is not the subject of the complaint; it will be referred directly to her/him by the person to whom it was made.

To form a clearer view of the complaint, the Principle or Director may need to seek discreet preliminary clarification from the person making the complaint or giving the information or from others who may have relevant information. It is not however the responsibility of the school to carry out investigations into suspected abuse or make intensive enquiries of members of the child's family or other carer. The school will not take action which would run counter to the investigations which may be conducted by the relevant Statutory authorities.

Having satisfied him/herself that a complaint has indeed been made the Principle will immediately: Inform the Local Contact Person (if he/she is not the subject of the complaint), who will initiate the record of the complaint;

Advise the Overall Contact person and the Board of Management of the School.

Deciding what to do when such a complaint is made is a difficult and sensitive matter. The need to protect children is paramount, but the need to protect members of staff against unfounded, but nonetheless potentially damaging, allegations must be considered. The partner organisation in Ireland, namely the Vincentian Community are available to give advice in such a situation.

In the light of any advice taken, the Principle, (where he/she is not the subject of the complaint), in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees or Board of Management, will decide that: Further clarification is required, eg.

- The allegation is apparently without substance and no further action is necessary;
- Or
- An immediate referral to the Statutory authorities is warranted;
- Or
- The allegation concerns inappropriate behaviour which needs to be considered under the disciplinary procedures.

The following are some general examples (by no means exhaustive) of the types of complaints or allegations, and/or circumstances, in which a decision falling within these categories may be made:

**No further action:**

- Where the Principle is able to satisfy her/himself immediately that it would have been impossible for the person complained of to have committed the alleged action or offence, for example where it was established that he/she was absent from the alleged location (perhaps on holiday abroad, hospitalised, on a training course or attending a conference) at the time when it was claimed the alleged offence took place.

**An immediate referral:**

- Is warranted: where the Vice Director believes that it was possible for the alleged offence to have been carried out by the person against whom the allegation is made; and where the allegation is sufficiently detailed, and in particular, if it is substantiated (e.g. by an account from a third party, or by physical evidence), in such a manner that the principle or director believes that the allegation may have substance. Clear, detailed allegations which give rise to concerns about possible physical abuse, or inappropriate sexual conduct, either verbal or physical, towards a child, whether or not corroborated, will always merit a referral. In particular, allegations of sexual abuse made by a child need to be investigated by the civil authorities. Children, particularly young children, rarely fabricate claims of sexual abuse, and in such cases the presumption will always be in favour of the protection of the child or children.

The complaint will be addressed under the disciplinary procedures: where the complaint related to inappropriate teaching content or certain types of bullying behaviour by a teacher or other member of staff.

### **No Further Action.**

- Where it is decided that no further action is necessary, the Principle will:  
Advise the member of staff concerned (where this has not already been done) that a complaint has been made and the nature of it; and also the fact that it is being considered to be without substance and no further action is being taken;  
Advise the Overall Contact Person of the decision taken; and  
Advise the complainant, in writing of the action taken on foot of the complaint and its outcome, including information of other means of pursuing their complaint if they remain dissatisfied: for example, to the Chairperson of the Board of Management or the Overall Contact Person including how he/she can be contacted through the school.  
In these circumstances the Vice Director will consider whether the child may have been abused by someone else, and if necessary report the matter to the Statutory Agency for follow up.

### **Record Keeping.**

The Vice Director will place a brief record of the complaint on the file of the pupil concerned, indicating the nature of the complaint, when, and by whom and to whom it was made, and a short explanation why it was considered that no further action should be taken, together with any correspondence on the complaint. A copy of this information will also be placed on the personnel file of the accused member of staff.

### **A Formal Referral.**

Where the Vice Director decides that a formal referral of the complaint is necessary, she/he will ensure that the following are notified immediately:

- Where sexual abuse is suspected or alleged, the Women and Children unit of the local Police.
- The Local Contact Person.
- The Chairperson of the Board of Management who will bring the matter to the attention of the Board at the next available opportunity.

### **Precautionary suspension.**

An immediate decision will be necessary on whether the member of staff (teaching or non-teaching) who is the subject of the complaint or allegation will be suspended with pay as a precautionary measure. A member of the staff of the school may be suspended by the Vice Director or by the Chairperson of the Board of Management or Trustees. Precautionary suspension is automatic, and, depending on the circumstances of the case, some preliminary investigation by the relevant statutory authorities and or the Police may be necessary before a decision should properly be taken or suspended, even as a precautionary measure. In all cases where the Vice Director has decided that a formal referral is warranted, the member of staff will immediately be removed from direct contact with children and will undertake non-contact duties; depending on the nature and severity of the allegation and the potential risk to children it may be necessary for the member of staff to be suspended immediately.

Where the suspension is implemented by the Vice Director, the Chairperson, or in his/her absence, the Vice-chairperson, will be informed immediately. All the members of the Board of Management will be informed of the suspension as soon as possible.

In some cases the school may be made aware of an allegation against a member of staff by the Statutory Authorities or the Local Police Force, to whom the allegation has been made directly. In any case where the Vice Director considers that a child or children may be at risk, or the Statutory Authorities advise that the member of staff's continued presence in the school would impede their investigation, the member of staff concerned will be suspended as a precautionary measure. Once a decision has been taken to make a formal referral and that the member of staff will be suspended, he/she will be advised in writing of the nature of the allegation and the reason for the precautionary suspension and will be advised to seek professional advice before making any form of response. Where the member of staff is informed orally of his/her suspension, written notification will follow as soon as possible.

The person making the complaint (and the pupils' parents, where different) will be informed immediately, in writing, of the decision to make a formal referral and of the suspension of the member of staff concerned. The Vice Director will take steps to ensure that he/she is kept informed of the progress by investigating agency to which the referral was made. If an allegation is substantiated, the investigation may need to be widened to determine whether other children have been involved. The Statutory agency, and or Police force will advise how to manage such information to parents, children and other staff.

#### **Record Keeping.**

Where a formal referral is made, the Vice Director will ensure that a detailed written record of the complaint, including dates and times is maintained. This will include:

- When, by whom and to whom the complaint was made;
- What supplementary evidence, if any, was offered, from whom, and its nature;
- Details of any physical injury noted;
- From whom advice was sought, and its nature,
- The decision taken and how, when, and by whom and to whom it was conveyed and the reasons for it;
- By whom, to whom and when the referral was made; and
- A copy of any correspondence on the complaint.

This record will be signed and dated by the Vice Director, countersigned by the Local Contact Person (where neither is the subject of the allegation) and retained in the school, on files of both the child and the member of staff concerned, and entry will also be made on the school's record of Child Abuse Complaints. (See Below)

If on foot of a subsequent investigation by one of the civil authorities, the member of staff concerned is totally exonerated, the record on file of the member of staff will be expunged, and the entry in the School's Record of the Child Abuse Complaints deleted or struck through. The record on the child's file will be noted accordingly, and will stand until the child's twenty-first birthday, in case there should be a subsequent complaint. In all other cases, the record on both the child's file and the staff member's file will be maintained indefinitely.

### **Internal inquiries by the school**

Once a formal referral is made, the civil authorities will conduct their own investigation in accordance with local child protection procedures. Early action by the school to establish the nature of the allegation and consideration of whether it should be investigated will be undertaken in such a way that it does not prejudice any subsequent action. In particular, there will be no interference with evidence. Any investigation by the Police or the Social Affairs Office will take priority over internal inquiries by the school or residence. Normally any internal inquiries will be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the external investigation.

### **Complaints to be pursued under disciplinary procedures.**

A complaint may be made in the context of child protection about the conduct or behaviour of a member of staff towards a pupil or pupils which, in the opinion of the Vice Director does not warrant a formal referral as a child protection matter but nevertheless warrants pursuit as a disciplinary matter. In considering such cases the Vice Director will take into account:

- Whether the behaviour complained of goes beyond the actions and conduct which could reasonably be expected of a teacher in encouraging pupils to learn.
- Whether the behaviour complained of exceeds what should be properly pursued as a disciplinary matter and does, in fact, constitute abuse, in which the appropriate child protection procedures should be instituted.

Where the Vice Director takes the view that the behaviour complained of should be pursued as a disciplinary matter, the disciplinary procedures as set out by the Board of Management will be followed, but in addition the Vice Director will ensure that details of the complaint and the disciplinary sanction, including dates and details of all spoken communications and copies of all correspondence, are maintained on file of both the member of staff and of the child or children, concerned for a period of 5 years, and a summary entered in the schools record of Child Abuse Complaints. (It should be noted that his recording procedure in disciplinary cases applies only to those cases raised in the context of child protection).

As soon as possible after the decision is taken, the complainant will be informed that the complaint is being pursued under disciplinary procedures, and he/she will be kept regularly informed of the proceedings and the result, including the sanction taken as appropriate.

### **Complaints which do not result in a conviction.**

For a variety of reason, a complaint against a member of staff referred to one of the civil authorities may not result in a prosecution, or prosecution in pursuit of a complaint which is referred to the Police or the Social Affairs Office may not result in a conviction, even when the school believes the evidence against the member of staff is strong and he/she represents a risk to a child or children. We are aware that in such cases it remains open to us to pursue disciplinary proceedings against the member of staff concerned, and that the burden of proof is less stringent in employment law than in criminal law. The school will see advice from civil authorities and their legal advisers in such cases. If the member of staff is subsequently dismissed, the Board of Management will convey their concerns to any other school that may be considering offering the said teacher of staff member a position. Complaints against the Vice Director.

Where a member of staff receives a complaint concerning possible child abuse by the Vice Director, all aspects of the abuse procedures against a member of staff will be followed, save the role set out above for the Vice Director will be exercised by the Overall Contact Person (Provincial Of Vincentian's, Ethiopia) in whom the power to suspend is vested. The legal advisers will immediately be consulted in such a case.

#### **Anonymous Information.**

The school may receive an anonymous letter or telephone call alleging abuse either by someone outside the school or a member of staff. In such a case the Vice Director or Director of Care will consider carefully whether the allegation may have substance, as in the case of information from named source, the impetus for action should be a potential risk to children. If the Vice Director believes that the allegation may have substance, he will ensure that it is referred immediately to the Statutory Authorities. Again if he/she is unsure about the appropriate course of action, or unsubstantiated anonymous information is received which the Principle believes to be malicious or mischievous, the Overall Contact Person will be able to advise. If a referral is made, the procedures above will be followed on the same basis as a complaint from a named source, including recording arrangements.

#### **ALDS child protection procedure.**

Actions to be taken when you receive a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse. Responsibility to person accused or suspected of abuse.

(When an accusation or suspicion of child abuse arises against a teacher, administrator, or supporting staff employed or associated with the Vincentian's services Ethiopia, we will pay attention to two responsibilities).

#### **Referring to the victim:**

The Vincentian's will guarantee that all suitable procedures are pursued in line with reporting the issue to the civil authorities and to safeguarding children from abuse.

Referring to the accused:

Proper procedures are practiced in relation to the person charged on the basis of justice. The accused person should be treated as innocent until he/she is found guilty.

With Regards to Implementing the Policy and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from abuse, the Vincentian's Ethiopia have a responsibility to:

- Respond on time and appropriately to grievances of abuse.
- Report every formal complaint of abuse received to the civil authorities.
- Provide emotional and spiritual support and encouragement to the victim.
- Consider the rights of the person who has been accused and his/her emotional and spiritual well being, till he/she has been proven guilty.
- Treat each allegation or disclosure of abuse with the strictest confidentiality and should only discuss the case with the Overall Contact Person.



## DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES.

- Listen carefully to the complainant. Take what he/she says seriously.
- Give the child/adult time to speak about the disclosure at his/her pace.
- Be as calm and normal as possible. Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and/or liked—not because you are an expert or counsellor.
- Be conscious that the revelation is very difficult for the child/adult involved.
- Bear in mind that at the start, the child may be checking your responses and perhaps will only be completely open over a period of time.
- Don't question the child or adult directly about details of the abuse or attempt to translate for the child as this could later make difficulties in the investigation;
- Avoid leading questions; don't make the child/adult to repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Provide the child/adult reassurance that he/she has done the right thing in talking to you and tell him/her that you are willing to give support.
- Discuss what will happen next and where possible or appropriate seek his/her permission.
- Tell the child/adult that you will inform him/her of any thing that you will do based on what you have been told.
- Don't be overly emotionally engaged to the victim, so that you avoid becoming part of the problem rather than the solution.
- Take in writing the name, address, and telephone number of the person making the complaint.
- Make a careful written record of what the victim has said together with the views expressed by the child's parents or guardians and pass it to the Local/Overall Contact Person.
- Don't express your personal opinion to the victim relating to the complaint being made.
- Don't attempt to carry out your own personal investigation. Always pass all suspicions and complaints onto the Local Contact Person.
- Parents or guardians should be informed unless to do so would put the child at more risk i.e. where the allegation of abuse relates to the home environment.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT.**

(This is the key means of raising awareness and preventing child abuse. By setting standards for appropriate behaviour it also protects people who come into contact with children from unfounded accusations or improper conduct. It clarifies unacceptable forms of behaviour that will result in a formal enquiry and which could lead to disciplinary measures being taken or criminal proceedings instituted. All employees, volunteers, service providers having direct or indirect contact with children should be given a copy of and adhere to the Code of Conduct outlined by the Vincentian's Ethiopia as a condition of employment, visit or service).

**Prohibitions:** Staff and others in contact with children must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault children.
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children.
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitive or abusive.
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Have a child/children with whom you are working to stay overnight at your home unsupervised and/or sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom you are working;
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- Overlook, or participate, in behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise commit any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Spend too much time alone with children away from others.
- Take children to your home, especially where you will be alone with them.
- Where a person has reason to be suspicious, or has received information anonymously, that there has been abuse, such suspicions or information should immediately be passed to the Local Contact Person.

**Do:**

1. Be aware of situations which may present risks and be able to manage them.
2. Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
3. Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.
4. Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns.
5. Empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.
6. Ensure everyone in your services knows that if he/she in good faith, raises a concern which through the process of investigation is not validated, he/she will continue to be supported in their initial action. The Vincentian's encourages responsible action and are committed to supporting any staff member/volunteer who has received a disclosure by a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

**Remember:**

The protection of children with whom the ALDS staff and board members come into contact, directly or indirectly is the responsibility of all staff, board members and associated personnel. It is the responsibility of all staff and members to protect children by:

- Being familiar with and adhering to the above procedure;
- Maintaining the best interests of the child as paramount at all times;
- Ensuring that all allegations and suspicions of child abuse are treated seriously and with the utmost professional integrity. Protecting children is everyone's responsibility.
- Treating children with respect, dignity, sensitivity and respecting their right to privacy
- Taking time to listen to children and spending time getting to know each child,
- Consulting and involving children in an age appropriate way
- Never showing favouritism
- Enabling children to freely express their feelings, fears and experiences openly and without fear of retribution or sanction
- Building a professional relationship in which the child can learn to trust and respect adults and which recognises the difference between confidentiality and secrecy.

(The ALDS needs to be aware that children living with the disability of deafness are at an additional risk of abuse or exploitation and should carefully consider issues such as language, interpreting etc when dealing with allegations of abuse. It is recommended that the ALDS get additional assistance from other organisations engaged with the safeguarding of deaf children to ensure their policy is up to date and relevant.)

**STANDARD FORMAT FOR REPORTING: ALDS Reporting Form.**

(private and confidential)

1. Details of Child expressing concern or making an allegation.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

1a. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. no \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. no \_\_\_\_\_

1b. Is the student living at home or in rented accommodation;

Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Rented Accommodation: \_\_\_\_\_

1c. If Rented Accommodation: Who is responsible for their care in Ambo?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. no \_\_\_\_\_

1d. House Hold Composition;

Brothers: (Name and Age)

Sisters: (Name and Age)

Grandparents: (Name)

Any Other Relations: (Name and relationship. i.e. Aunt/Uncle/Cousin)

Any Other Persons:

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s), dates, times, description

Statement of Allegation:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Concern:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Description of any injuries observed:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Details of person(s), allegedly causing concern in relation to the child

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the child \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name and address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child

Social workers:

Hospital/Health Services:

Government Department:

Others specify:

5. Are parents/ legal guardians aware of this referral to the concerned department?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, what is their attitude?

Details of person reporting concerns:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. No \_\_\_\_\_

6. Details of person completing form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_



**Child Protection: Policy Statement.  
Ambo Lazarist Deaf School.**

We in Ambo Lazarist Deaf School value and encourage the participation of children and young people in our activities. Our aim is to enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development. We recognise the dignity and rights of all children and are committed to their protection and support.

In keeping with this we will work to do all in our power to create a safe environment for children and young people in order to secure their protection and enable their full participation in the activities of this project.

The Ambo Lazarist Deaf School is committed to promoting and protecting the rights and welfare of all children who engage in any of the projects activities.

Their Child protection policy highlights the need to ensure a safe and welcoming service that values children and does all it can to ensure their welfare and rights are respected and protected.

<b>Child Protection Officer:</b>	Abba Asfaw Feleke CM.	Ph: 091 271 6112
<b>Assistant Protection Officer:</b>	Mr. Abiyot Eshetu:	Ph: 092 160 3212
<b>Assistant Protection Officer:</b>	Ms. Lemlem Adguna:	Ph: 092 368 3487
<b>Dept of Women &amp; Children's Affairs:</b>	Ms. Mulate:	Ph: 091 009 3688
<b>Ambo Police Station:</b>	Child Welfare Officer:	Ph: 011 236 213

Abba Asfaw Feleke CM

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Mr. Abiyot Eshetu

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