

TSHESEBE ORPHAN PROJECT (TOP) CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy has been based on the Child Protection policies of several UK based organisations. We feel that the laws concerning Child Protection are more mature in the UK than in Botswana. Irrespective of this, we aim to follow the following guidelines in an effort to protect the children in our care. The overriding principle that we will follow is that “the welfare of the child is paramount”. This phrase has been taken from The Children Act 1987 states that the "**welfare of the child is paramount**".

Policy Statement

Each employee and volunteer will be trained to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of every member of our community, particularly the abuse of OVCs. We will create an environment in which children can feel safe, and in which we prevent harm and abuse of every kind. Any abuse, discovered or suspected, will be reported. Codes of practice will be written once we are on site.

All staff and volunteers working with TOP will accept responsibility for the welfare of children they come in contact with. Any concerns about a child will be discussed in confidence with the individual responsible for Child Protection. This will probably be a Motswana that will not be found until the project is underway.

This policy statement will be used in recruitment and training of **all** staff. They will be required to sign a copy of this document before being allowed to work in the project.

All staff will be encouraged to work with a culture of mutual respect between children and staff. Adults will treat and respect children as individuals conducting appropriate conduct. Bullying, Shouting, Racism, Sectarianism and Sexism will not be tolerated.

All staff will be checked appropriately and will be required to bring evidence of a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check, or the equivalent in their country of origin. Every reasonable step will be taken to ensure that we do not recruit individuals who may potentially harm or abuse the children. The following definitions of abuse will prevail;

- **Physical Abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may be the result of a deliberate act, but could also be caused through the omission or failure to act to protect.
- **Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment 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, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including rape or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and / or females, and by other young people. It also includes non-contact activities such as involving children in watching or taking part in the making of pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is 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. It may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or failing to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment.