

Youth With a Mission Central Europe

Child Protection Policy Updated 10/2021¹

Name of Location:

These child protection guidelines are to cover any children² with whom Youth with a Mission (YWAM) locations come into contact.

All staff need to review this document and sign it on a yearly basis.³

1. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT:

- 1.1. YWAM believes that all children have value, worth and dignity as they are made in the image of God. Thus, we believe that all children should be treated with respect and cared for in ways that honor God.
- 1.2. YWAM is committed to the welfare of children and youth worldwide. YWAM students, staff and leaders are expected to engage in positive supportive relationships with children, young and older adults in all aspects of our mission. YWAM opposes all forms of child exploitation and child abuse. If abuse is suspected, we will not keep silent.
- 1.3. YWAM believes that all children have a right to protection from abuse irrespective of race, social background, age, gender, skin color, disability, religion, nationality or beliefs.
- 1.4. YWAM believes in the importance of child protection measures so that children can be protected from abuse by any YWAM staff, students, volunteers, friends and/or visitors. These measures also protect any involved with YWAM and the mission's integrity.
- 1.5. YWAM believes that children have the right to speak and be taken seriously. Where appropriate, children should be included in planning activities that involve them.
- 1.6. The different forms of child abuse are described:
 - 1.6.1. **Physical Abuse:** Any physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury, or suffering, including deliberate hitting, beating, shaking, throwing, burning, drowning, suffocating, or poisoning. This also includes denying the child permission to use the bathroom when needed, withholding food, water, or other physical needs that the child may have.
 - 1.6.2. **Mental/Emotional Abuse:** Anything that would impact on the normal psychological development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. May involve conveying to the child that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate and cause children to feel frightened, in danger and corrupted. Can also include manipulation, punishment through denial of love, pressuring a child and rejection as punishment. Emotional violence is

¹ Based on YWAM Children Protection Guidelines from 15 September 2008

² Anyone under the age of 18, or adults with intellectual disabilities

³ YWAM locations can use them as is or their Boards and/or leadership teams can adapt them to comply with the national requirements. As YWAM is a decentralized movement, this is to assist YWAM locations to ensure that they have an appropriate child protection policy in place. The primary purpose of this document is to cover children being ministered to by YWAM Ministries and those in YWAM Locations

behavior leading to the destruction of trust between child and authority figure and hinders the development of the child's personality. The damage from such is momentous and can be as equally traumatizing as physical/sexual abuse.

- 1.6.3. **Sexual Abuse:** is the purposeful engagement in sexual acts with, on, or in the presence of children. Besides sexual intercourse, it also includes any form of touching of genital areas as well as crossing of physical boundaries stated by the child. It is any exploitation of a child in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate social taboos or family rules. Sexual abuse also takes place through sexualised comments, exhibitionism, and forcing the child to watch or take part in pornography.
- 1.6.4. **Spiritual Abuse:** is linked with other forms of abuse, and could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying, or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves.

2. BEHAVIORAL PROTOCOLS:

- 2.1. YWAM expects all its staff, students, volunteers, friends, and visitors to give respect and dignity to all children.
- 2.2. There should be training once a year on child protection that all staff members need to attend.
- 2.3. All YWAM staff, students, volunteers, and anyone involved in ministry with children must sign a statement to say that they have read the policy, will respect it and understand that action will be taken in cases of inappropriate behavior. This is recommended to be done once a year.
- 2.4. YWAM staff, students, volunteers, supporters, or visitors should never be alone with a child who is not their own offspring in a private place that cannot be readily seen by other adults or children.
- 2.5. Children from Children's Homes or YWAM projects will not stay overnight with a YWAM staff, student, volunteer, supporter, unless consented to by the legal guardian in writing or placed in custody of YWAM staff by the local social services and/or by a court of law.
- 2.6. YWAM staff, student, volunteers, visitors, and supporters will not touch a child in an inappropriate way or expose them to inappropriate materials such as pornographic videos and literature (*A general guideline for touching inappropriately is not to touch children in areas that would normally be covered by shorts and t-shirt, but also includes kissing and tickling in an inappropriate way.*)
- 2.7. YWAM staff, students, volunteers, supporters, and visitors will not discipline a child in a humiliating way. (i.e. hitting, slapping, beating, grabbing and no verbal abuse such as swearing or use of demeaning language).
- 2.8. YWAM staff, volunteers, visitors, and supporters will not violate the rights of a child (based on the UN Rights of a Child – <https://www.unicef.org.au/upload/unicef/media/unicef-simplified-convention-child-rights.pdf>).
- 2.9. When a child is being driven in a vehicle, there needs to be at least one other person present or have the consent of their legal guardian, unless the child is a family member.
- 2.10. Adults are always responsible for their actions. The child cannot be blamed, even if it has provoked or behaved seductively. If a relationship between an adult and a child becomes inappropriate, it is up to the adult to set healthy boundaries.
- 2.11. If protocols are broken, the person involved will be disciplined and may lose his/her position and right to work within YWAM and will be subject to criminal proceedings where laws have been breached.

3. RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING:

- 3.1. All YWAM staff, students and long-term and short-term volunteers will be carefully and properly screened during their recruitment period. This includes agreeing to the Child Protection Policy and stating that there have been no previous convictions for abuse against children, violent behavior or other convictions that would raise concern about behavior towards children.
- 3.2. All YWAM staff, students and long-term volunteers will be screened according to local standards, with a minimum of 2 references during their recruitment period, including a legal/police clearance document/certificate of moral integrity where possible.
- 3.3. All local short-term volunteers will be screened according to local standards, with 1 reference during their recruitment period, including a legal/police clearance document/certificate of moral integrity where possible.
- 3.4. YWAM locations will ensure that all the references of all staff for work are checked, preferably by telephone, and recorded in the staff files, before the new staff member is invited to join the ministry.
- 3.5. YWAM locations will not accept as volunteers any children under 18 without parental/guardian consent. (*Suggested consent form found in Appendix 2*)

4. RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS:

- 4.1. YWAM staff, students, volunteers, friends, and donors will be encouraged to be open in discussing the potential of abuse within the organization.
- 4.2. YWAM prohibits any retaliation against any staff, students, or volunteers who, in good faith, has registered a complaint under this procedure.
- 4.3. There is a designated Concern Circle who are responsible for dealing with child protection and other issues within Central Europe. They may be contacted on concern@ywamce.com Each nation/location should work towards appointing a Child Protection Coordinator.
- 4.4. Where an allegation has been made that a YWAM staff, student, volunteer, or visitor has abused a child, YWAM will take the appropriate action to deal with the situation, as outlined in the procedural plan of action for crisis situations (section 6). If the laws of the local jurisdiction require to do so, an immediate report of the alleged abuse will be made to the police or government social services agency.

5. COMMUNICATION:

1. YWAM is committed to truthful, accurate, timely and relevant communication. We believe good communication is essential for strong relationships, healthy families and communities, and effective ministry. (*YWAM Foundational Value 18*)
2. Anything we share about children, whether online or in person, should uphold their value and dignity and be respectful, not seeking to exploit their situation.
3. No photographs or videos which could identify children should be shared publicly online without prior consent from a legal guardian. If there is no consent, or if in doubt, photographs should not be able to identify the children, e.g. taken from behind or blurring of faces.
4. Even with parental permission, YWAM should take special care to protect children's identities in public relations materials using identifiable faces. YWAM should never post children's names or contact information.
5. To protect any children involved in past or present abuse, disclosure of information about any of the persons involved should be limited to only the people who need to know (as outlined in 6. Child Abuse Allegation).

6. CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATION

Where an allegation has been made that a YWAM staff, student, volunteer, or visitor (hereafter "YWAM Staff") has abused a child, YWAM will take the appropriate action to deal with the situation, as outlined below:

1. YWAM staff are required to report suspected abuse to either their ministry or location leader (or where available the Child Protection Coordinator). In situations where that would be inappropriate the alleged abuse should be reported to the National Leadership Team/Convener or Concern Circle (concern@ywamce.com).
2. All reports of alleged abuse will be investigated. The investigation process will be documented, and a written report of findings will be completed within 30 days of the allegation. Outside expertise or legal authorities may be involved.
3. During this process, the YWAM Staff will not be involved in any ministry until the investigation is concluded.
4. The National Leadership Team/Convener, legal board and Concern Circle need to be informed of all child abuse allegations that are being investigated, so they can assist in the process.
5. If the local jurisdiction laws require it, an immediate report of the alleged abuse will be made to the police or government social services agency.
6. The allegation will be kept confidential, with only those directly involved having the appropriate information.
7. YWAM will work in cooperation with child welfare and legal organizations during an investigation as appropriate, especially where the child involved requires extra protection.
8. Both victim and offender will be treated with respect from the start of the process to the end.
9. YWAM will not dismiss a child's accusation of abuse without appropriate investigation, no matter who the alleged offender is.
10. YWAM will designate a point person to deal with the media/social media and the police. Please refer to the Member Care Communication and Media guidelines. Consult with the Concern Circle before any statements are given.
11. Conclusion of investigation process: If the investigation leads to the conclusion that abuse has occurred, then the appropriate legal authorities will be notified if they have not previously been involved in the process.

11.1 Where no evidence of abuse has been found, the informant, alleged victim and alleged offender will be notified. Where appropriate, the YWAM Staff can be reinstated into ministry. The written report of the investigation will be confidentially filed in the local staff file.

11.2 If the investigation proves that there was abuse, then they will be removed immediately and subject to criminal prosecution. The written report of the investigation will be kept locally and shared with the Concern Circle. If they are YWAM Staff, the report should be shared with their home church pastor and/or the people who gave them references to be on staff.

11.3 It is recommended that all involved are thoroughly debriefed about the process. Please contact Member Care for assistance.

7. DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

To be signed by all YWAM staff and volunteers on a yearly basis. A copy will be kept on file at the appropriate YWAM operating location. (a suggested format for teams can be found in Appendix 1)

I declare that:

- I have read and understand the YWAM Child Protection Policy.
- I will work within the procedure as laid out in the YWAM Child Protection Policy.
- I have not been convicted of any offence involving physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.
- I have not been accused of any offence involving physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.
- I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse of children while being staff/visitor/volunteer with YWAM, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____ (dd/mm/yyyy)

Place: _____

APPENDIX 1: DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT FOR TEAMS

To be signed by all YWAM staff and volunteers on a yearly basis. A copy will be kept on file at the appropriate YWAM operating location.

I declare that:

- I have read and understand the YWAM Child Protection Policy.
- I will work within the procedure as laid out in the YWAM Child Protection Policy.
- I have not been convicted of any offence involving physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.
- I have not been accused of any offence involving physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.
- I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse of children while being staff/visitor/volunteer with YWAM, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities.

Date: ____/____/____ (dd/mm/yyyy)

Place: _____

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Signature:</u>

APPENDIX 2: GUARDIAN RELEASE FORM

ACTIVITY

Name of Activity: _____ Duration: _____

Place/Destination: _____

Activity Leader

Name: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____ (dd/mm/yyyy)

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

To be filled out and signed by child's parents or legal guardian(s):

Child

Name: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____ (dd/mm/yyyy)

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

1) AUTHORIZATION

A. Volunteering and/or Travel

I/We have studied the purpose, schedule, and itinerary of the above-mentioned activity and give permission for my/our child to join this volunteering program and/or travel for ministry.

In case of overseas travel:

Passport Number: _____

Passport Nationality: _____

B. Disciplinary matters

I/We agree that in the event that my/our child does not respond positively to correction, YWAM leadership should contact us so that the next step of discipline can be decided upon together. It is further agreed that, should there not be a change in response to these disciplines, my/our child may be sent home at my/our expense.

C. Medical matters

If there is a medical emergency, I/We give permission to the performance of any treatment, anesthesia and operation that is deemed necessary in the opinion of the attending physicians.

D. Permission for use of Photo/Video

I/We give permission that YWAM can use photos/videos of my child on social media and for public relations purposes.

2) PARENTS ASSUMPTION OF RISK

A. Agreement not to sue

I /We will never institute or assist in any action at or against YWAM or the above-mentioned leader on account of any consequence of the participants involvement in the above-mentioned activity.

B. Insurance coverage

I/We hereby confirm that we have checked with our insurance company the coverage of the above-named participant in case of accident, sickness, loss or damage of property. The insurance coverage is sufficient for the above-named activity and the places being traveled to.

I/We are aware of the fact that YWAM will not take financial responsibility for sickness, accident, loss or damage of property or any unforeseen events.

I/We have read this agreement and understand all its terms to my/our complete satisfaction and have executed this document freely and with full knowledge of its legal significance.

Date: ____/____/____ (dd/mm/yyyy) Place: _____

Legal Guardian(s)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Signature: _____

(If parents are separated or divorced and both have legal custody of the participant, both parties should sign this document.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Signature: _____