

MOUNTAIN OF LIFE TABERNACLE INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES LTD

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Organization: Mountain of Life Tabernacle International Ministries Ltd
Registration Number: MIA/NB/2023/05/5662
Location: Mbarara City, Southwestern Uganda
Policy Title: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Policy Version: 1.0
Effective Date: Upon Board Approval
Review Period: Every two years or when necessary
Responsible Authority: Board of Directors

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mountain of Life Tabernacle International Ministries Ltd is a registered non-governmental organization in Uganda committed to improving the welfare and livelihoods of vulnerable communities through Christian ministry, humanitarian assistance, education, community development and social empowerment.

The organization recognizes that children, particularly girls and children from disadvantaged backgrounds, face various forms of vulnerability, including physical and emotional abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect, child marriage, trafficking, discrimination and economic exploitation.

The organization is therefore committed to creating safe, inclusive and protective environments in all its programmes, activities and community engagements.

This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy establishes the principles, standards, procedures and responsibilities that guide the prevention of abuse, identification of safeguarding concerns, reporting of incidents and protection of children participating in organizational activities.

The policy applies to all organizational programmes, including the 4Girls Forward initiative, community outreach, educational support, mentorship, counselling, vocational training and other activities involving children.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Protect all children participating in the organization's programmes from abuse, exploitation, neglect and harm.

2. Establish clear safeguarding standards for board members, employees, volunteers, consultants and partners.
3. Prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, discrimination and other forms of violence against children.
4. Provide accessible and confidential mechanisms for reporting safeguarding concerns.
5. Establish appropriate procedures for responding to safeguarding incidents.
6. Promote children's rights, dignity, participation and welfare.
7. Ensure that all organizational activities are conducted in safe, inclusive and child-friendly environments.
8. Strengthen accountability and compliance with national child protection standards and applicable laws in Uganda.

3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy applies to:

- Members of the Board of Directors.
- Management and programme coordinators.
- Employees and project staff.
- Volunteers and community mobilizers.
- Consultants and service providers.
- Contractors and implementing partners.
- Religious leaders and mentors engaged in organizational activities.
- Any individual representing or working on behalf of the organization.

All individuals covered by this policy must understand, accept and comply with its safeguarding requirements.

The policy applies during organizational activities, field visits, community meetings, training sessions, residential activities, transportation, online engagements and any other situation where an individual represents the organization or interacts with programme beneficiaries.

4. DEFINITION OF A CHILD

For purposes of this policy, a child is any person below the age of 18 years, in accordance with Uganda's child protection framework.

Safeguarding refers to the measures taken to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence and other forms of harm affecting children.

Child abuse includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation, harmful practices and any conduct that threatens a child's safety, dignity or development.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The organization shall implement this policy based on the following principles:

5.1 Best interests of the child

The safety, welfare and best interests of every child shall be the primary consideration in all organizational decisions and activities.

5.2 Zero tolerance for abuse

The organization will not tolerate child abuse, sexual exploitation, harassment, neglect, discrimination or any form of violence against children.

5.3 Non-discrimination

All children shall be treated equally regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic background, educational status or other circumstances.

5.4 Child participation

Children shall be encouraged to express their views, raise concerns and participate in decisions affecting their welfare, taking account of their age, maturity and evolving capacities.

5.5 Confidentiality and dignity

Safeguarding concerns shall be handled respectfully, with information shared only with individuals who need it to protect the child and respond appropriately.

5.6 Accountability

All staff, volunteers, board members and partners shall be accountable for complying with safeguarding standards.

6. FORMS OF CHILD ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

The organization recognizes the following forms of abuse:

1. **Physical abuse:** Hitting, beating, burning, pushing, inappropriate punishment or other deliberate physical harm.

2. **Sexual abuse:** Sexual contact, inappropriate touching, sexual assault, exploitation or exposing children to sexual activities.
3. **Emotional abuse:** Threatening, humiliating, insulting, intimidating or degrading children.
4. **Neglect:** Failure to provide necessary care, protection, supervision or essential support.
5. **Sexual exploitation:** Using a child for sexual purposes in exchange for money, gifts, assistance, opportunities or other benefits.
6. **Economic exploitation:** Engaging children in hazardous labour, forced work or activities that interfere with their education and development.
7. **Online abuse:** Cyberbullying, grooming, inappropriate communication, exploitation or sharing harmful images involving children.
8. **Harmful practices:** Child marriage, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other practices harmful to children's welfare.

7. CHILD SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

All personnel and representatives of Mountain of Life Tabernacle International Ministries Ltd shall:

- Treat every child with dignity, respect and compassion.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Use positive, non-violent and child-friendly approaches when interacting with children.
- Avoid being alone with a child in an isolated or inappropriate environment.
- Never engage in sexual activity or inappropriate relationships with children.
- Never exchange money, gifts, assistance or opportunities for sexual favours.
- Never use physical punishment, threats, humiliation or intimidation.
- Avoid inappropriate physical contact with children.
- Never expose children to pornography, sexually explicit material or inappropriate conversations.
- Obtain appropriate consent before photographing or recording children.

- Never publish children's personal information, photographs or stories without proper authorization and safeguards.
- Report suspected abuse, exploitation, neglect or other safeguarding concerns immediately.
- Respect the privacy, identity and personal circumstances of every child.

Any breach of this code may result in disciplinary action, termination of engagement and referral to relevant authorities where appropriate.

8. PREVENTION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The organization shall take proactive measures to prevent safeguarding incidents.

8.1 Recruitment and screening

All staff, volunteers and personnel whose responsibilities involve contact with children shall undergo appropriate recruitment and screening procedures, including:

- Verification of identity and qualifications.
- Reference checks.
- Assessment of suitability for working with children.
- Criminal record or police clearance checks where legally available and appropriate.
- Signing of the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

8.2 Safeguarding awareness and training

All personnel shall receive safeguarding orientation and periodic refresher training covering child protection, appropriate conduct, reporting procedures, confidentiality and prevention of abuse.

8.3 Safe programme environments

The organization shall ensure that programme venues are safe, accessible and appropriate for children.

Activities shall be supervised by responsible adults, with appropriate safeguards for meetings, mentorship sessions, transportation and field activities.

8.4 Parental and guardian engagement

Parents and guardians shall be appropriately informed about children's participation in programmes. Consent shall be obtained where required, while children's views and best interests remain central.

8.5 Safe transportation and accommodation

Where transportation or accommodation is necessary, appropriate supervision, parental or guardian authorization, approved transport arrangements and risk assessments shall be implemented.

8.6 Digital safeguarding

Staff and volunteers shall use approved communication channels when interacting with children. Private, inappropriate or secretive communications with children are prohibited.

9. SAFEGUARDING REPORTING PROCEDURES

Mountain of Life Tabernacle International Ministries Ltd shall maintain accessible reporting mechanisms for children, parents, staff, volunteers and community members.

Safeguarding concerns may be reported through:

- The designated Child Safeguarding Officer.
- The Programme Coordinator.
- The organization's management.
- The Board of Directors where management is implicated.
- Appropriate statutory child protection authorities.

Reports may be made verbally or in writing. Children shall be supported to report concerns in a language and manner they understand.

All safeguarding concerns must be reported promptly. Individuals must not investigate allegations independently or attempt to conceal incidents.

Where a child faces immediate danger, urgent protective action and referral to appropriate authorities must take priority.

10. RESPONSE TO SAFEGUARDING INCIDENTS

Upon receiving a safeguarding report, the organization shall:

1. Listen carefully and respectfully to the person reporting the concern.
2. Ensure the immediate safety of the affected child.
3. Provide appropriate emotional and practical support.
4. Record the information accurately and confidentially.
5. Notify the designated Child Safeguarding Officer.

6. Assess the urgency and nature of the reported concern.
7. Refer the matter to the appropriate authorities and professional service providers.
8. Maintain appropriate follow-up to ensure the child's safety and welfare.

Where allegations involve an employee, volunteer or organizational representative, the organization shall take appropriate interim protective measures, which may include restricting contact with children or suspending relevant duties pending an appropriate investigation.

The organization shall not conduct investigations that interfere with police or statutory child protection processes.

11. REFERRAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The organization shall establish working relationships with relevant child protection stakeholders, including:

- District and local government probation and social welfare officers.
- Uganda Police Force, including the Child and Family Protection Unit.
- Health facilities and qualified healthcare professionals.
- Child protection and legal support organizations.
- Psychosocial counselling and social work professionals.
- Community development officers and other relevant authorities.

Children affected by abuse or exploitation shall be supported through appropriate referral pathways, including medical assistance, psychosocial support, legal protection and reintegration services where necessary.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

All safeguarding records shall be handled securely and confidentially.

The organization shall:

- Restrict access to safeguarding records to authorized personnel.
- Maintain secure incident reporting and documentation systems.
- Avoid unnecessary disclosure of children's identities.
- Obtain appropriate consent for information sharing where possible and lawful.

- Share information with authorities and relevant service providers when necessary to protect children or fulfil legal obligations.
- Comply with applicable data protection and privacy requirements.

The identity of a child reporting abuse shall not be disclosed publicly or to unauthorized individuals.

13. CHILD PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

The organization recognizes children, particularly girls, as rights holders and active participants in their own protection and development.

Through programmes such as 4Girls Forward, the organization shall:

- Encourage girls to participate in programme planning and decision-making.
- Establish safe spaces for girls to express concerns and share experiences.
- Provide age-appropriate information about children's rights and protection.
- Promote leadership, confidence and self-advocacy.
- Encourage children to report abuse without fear of punishment or discrimination.
- Ensure that children with disabilities and other marginalized groups can participate meaningfully.

14. PHOTOGRAPHY, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

The organization shall protect children from exploitation through photographs, videos, social media and other communication materials.

Photographs and recordings shall only be taken and used for legitimate organizational purposes with appropriate parental or guardian consent and the child's informed agreement, according to age and understanding.

The organization shall prohibit:

- Publishing identifiable images that expose children to risk.
- Sharing sensitive personal information.
- Using degrading or exploitative images.
- Publishing information that could expose children to stigma, discrimination or abuse.

Children's dignity and privacy shall always take priority over organizational publicity.

15. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Board of Directors

- Approve and oversee implementation of the policy.
- Provide institutional leadership and accountability.
- Ensure appropriate resources are allocated to safeguarding.
- Address safeguarding allegations involving senior management.

Executive/Organizational Management

- Ensure implementation of safeguarding standards.
- Appoint a designated Child Safeguarding Officer.
- Ensure personnel receive appropriate training.
- Support reporting, referral and response procedures.

Child Safeguarding Officer

- Receive and document safeguarding reports.
- Coordinate appropriate protective responses.
- Maintain confidential safeguarding records.
- Facilitate referrals to relevant authorities.
- Monitor compliance and prepare safeguarding reports.

Programme Coordinators

- Ensure programme activities are child-friendly and safe.
- Monitor safeguarding risks during implementation.
- Promote children's participation and awareness.
- Report concerns immediately.

Staff and Volunteers

- Follow the safeguarding code of conduct.
- Protect children from abuse and exploitation.
- Participate in safeguarding training.
- Report suspected incidents promptly.

16. MONITORING, COMPLIANCE AND REVIEW

The organization shall periodically assess implementation of this policy through:

- Safeguarding compliance reviews.
- Staff and volunteer training records.
- Monitoring of programme activities.
- Confidential incident reporting and follow-up.
- Beneficiary feedback and complaints mechanisms.
- Periodic safeguarding risk assessments.

This policy shall be reviewed every two years or earlier where changes in legislation, organizational activities or safeguarding risks require revision.

All personnel shall be required to acknowledge their understanding and commitment to this policy.

17. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy shall be implemented in accordance with applicable Ugandan laws and child protection standards, including:

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, as amended.
2. The Children Act, as amended.
3. The Penal Code Act, as amended.
4. The Domestic Violence Act, 2010.
5. The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2010.

- The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009.

6. The Data Protection and Privacy Act, 2019.
7. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
8. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Where any provision of this policy conflicts with applicable law, the relevant legal requirements shall prevail.

18. POLICY APPROVAL AND COMMITMENT

Mountain of Life Tabernacle International Ministries Ltd commits to promoting a safe, inclusive and protective environment for every child participating in its programmes.

The organization shall ensure that all board members, employees, volunteers, partners and representatives understand and comply with this policy.

This policy shall become effective upon formal approval by the Board of Directors.

Approved on behalf of Mountain of Life Tabernacle International Ministries Ltd

Name: Mr. Agaba Denis

Position: Chairperson, Board of Directors

Signature: Agaba Denis

Date: 30/10/2026

Organization Stamp: MOUNTAIN OF LIFE TABERNACLE INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES LTD. 30 OCT 2026 P.O BOX 1767, MBARARA

ANNEX 1: CHILD SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Information required	**Details**
Date of report	
Name of reporting person (if appropriate)	
Contact information	
Date and location of incident	
Name or identification of affected child (secure record)	
Nature of safeguarding concern	
Brief description of concern	
Immediate action taken	
Referral made to	
Name of safeguarding officer	
Follow-up action required	
Date report closed	

All incident reports must be stored securely and access restricted to authorized personnel.

ANNEX 2: STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SAFEGUARDING DECLARATION

I, Mr. Agaba Denis, acknowledge that I have read and understood the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy of Mountain of Life Tabernacle International Ministries Ltd.

I commit to:

1. Respecting and protecting the rights and dignity of every child.
2. Maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.
3. Preventing abuse, exploitation, neglect and discrimination.
4. Reporting all suspected safeguarding concerns.
5. Maintaining confidentiality and respecting children's privacy.
6. Complying with all safeguarding procedures and organizational requirements.

Name: Mr. Agaba Denis

Position: Director

Signature: Agaba Denis

Date: 30/10/2026

MOUNTAIN OF LIFE TABERNACLE INTERNATIONAL M. STRIES LTD.
30 OCT 2026
P.O BOX 1767 MBARARA

Recommended steps before submitting the policy to OPEN for Girls

To make the policy operational and demonstrate institutional readiness, I recommend that Mountain of Life Tabernacle International Ministries Ltd completes these five actions:

1. Board approval: Have the Board of Directors formally approve and sign the policy.
2. Appoint a Child Safeguarding Officer: Designate one responsible person and an alternate, with clear reporting responsibilities.
3. Establish reporting channels: Provide a safeguarding telephone contact and confidential reporting arrangements.
4. Sign staff declarations: Require every employee, volunteer and programme facilitator to sign the safeguarding declaration.
5. Establish referral arrangements: Identify the relevant Probation and Social Welfare Officer, Police Child and Family Protection Unit, health facility and child protection service providers in Mbarara.