



YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

REACH would like to sincerely thank Plan and Blue Dragon Children's Foundation for sharing their Child Protection Policies with us. REACH's Youth Protection Policy has been developed based on these documents as well as referring to the policies of other organisations such as Childfund, The Asia Foundation, and the "Gender mainstreaming toolkit for NGOs working in Law and Justice sector" by Dr. Nguyen Kim Lan.

I. The Context and Purpose of developing the Youth Protection Policy

In recent years, following the expansion of our operation's scope and scale, the number of young participants in REACH programs has grown enormously. REACH, therefore, needs to increase the number of staff members, volunteers, contractors, and interns to ensure the success of all programs. The success of REACH depends on the strength and unity of all staff, local and international volunteers, contractors, and interns. To fulfil the mission of supporting and protecting the youth, it is crucial for all REACH's members to have a deep understanding of how to keep the youth safe while conducting the organization's activities. This Youth Protection Policy was established to ensure all REACH's members will try their best to create a safe and healthy environment for all young participants in the program, especially for individuals with disadvantaged backgrounds, being in the most vulnerable groups and exposing to the risks of being abused or neglected.

The issuance of the Youth Protection Policy shows REACH's commitment to support and protect the youth as well as make the youth' safety and benefits the organization's top priority. The ultimate purposes of the Youth Protection Policy are:

- (1) Equipping REACH's staff, volunteers, contractors, and interns with basic knowledge and skills to recognise potential risks, then prevent the youth from being abused.
- (2) Listing out the necessary steps to handle situations when youth abuse is



suspected or detected.

- (3) Introducing codes of conduct for each staff and volunteers groups to better protect the youth.

II. Scope of the Youth Protection Policy

All REACH staff, volunteers, contractors, and interns are responsible for implementing REACH's Youth Protection Policy.

The main targets of this policy are the youth and the youth's benefits – as they are REACH's target audience. Within the policy's scope, the term "youth" refers to those from 16 to 30 participating in REACH programs and activities. Besides, this policy applies to all children as REACH commits to protect the rights of all children and the youth associated with the operation of our program.

III. Policy overview

All youth have the right to live, work, learn, and play in a safe and healthy environment.

REACH commits to creating such an environment for all the youth participating in the programs. REACH expects and requires all staff and people involved in REACH's operation and activities to sincerely care for the youth and their benefits.

REACH pays special attention to the youth from ethnic minorities; youth with disabilities, youth with HIV/AIDS; youth recovering from addiction, youth in reintegration programs; and LGBT youth. REACH encourages our partners, customers, and local people to create good conditions for the youth from the above groups to participate in learning, working, and joining their organizations' activities; help them take care of their physical & mental health at work and be a part of their process of reintegration into the community.



IV. Principles and definitions

4.1. Principles:

Youth have the right to be recognised, respected, and protected under the Constitution and the Law.

All REACH programs must guarantee equal participation opportunities for youth and ensure that youth are respected, heard, and prioritized.

REACH commits to going against all forms of violence against youth including neglect, abuse, threat, exploitation, and discrimination.

REACH implements a zero-tolerance policy against any excuses for abusing, threatening, exploiting, and discriminating youth (e.g. using the excuse of following youth's requests or claiming to support youth to violate the Youth Protection Policy).

Policy violation will be treated according to the handling procedure and the severity of the violation. The highest form of discipline is dismissal.

4.2. Definitions

Neglect: Refusing to provide subsistence needs and essential supports to the youth.

Neglect actions include:

- ✓ Not providing food, drink, or proper care, leading to youth's impaired development.
- ✓ Not taking prompt actions to support youth with psychological problems, currently at risks of being abused, exploited, or being victims of human trafficking.
- ✓ Not advising youth on problems they are facing or not reporting to managers



when the problems are not resolved.

- ✓ Not fully and appropriately fulfilling the assigned services/tasks such as providing youth with sufficient market-oriented professional skills, job placements following REACH's employment standards and other assigned related tasks.
- ✓ Not analysing the risks that youth may face when arranging internships and jobs or sending them to places with high risks of accidents and abuse.

Physical abuse/violence: Causing physical harm, or failing to ensure youth's physical safety. Physical abuse actions may include beating, hitting, kicking, slapping, poisoning, and other forms of physical punishment.

Sexual abuse: Taking advantage of youth to perform sexual acts.

Sexual abuse actions might include:

- ✓ Raping.
- ✓ Unwanted physical touching of youth.
- ✓ Forcing youth to witness sexual acts or watch pornographic movies/images.
- ✓ Using sexual words, stories, actions or suggestions (both verbal/non-verbal) with youth.

Mental/Emotional abuse: Referring to any forms of mental abuse that causes psychological harm to youth. These mental traumas can result in stress, anxiety disorder, or depression in the youth. Mental abuse exists in different forms, including:

- ✓ Having a long-term hostility towards youth, having the wrong perception and using abusive language with youth.
- ✓ Constantly teasing or devaluing youth.
- ✓ Intentionally or unintentionally disclosing youth's special circumstances to



unrelated people or their classmates, leading to insults and rumours which negatively affecting their mental states.

Threat & Manipulation: Using actions or words to cause fear and force youth to please one's intention.

Exploitation: Taking advantage of young people's labour for personal gain.

Exploitation includes:

- ✓ Using the power of his/her position to force youth to do things against their will.
- ✓ Facilitating exploitation by introducing youth to workplaces to benefit the assigner's personal connections instead of sending them to more suitable & better workplaces.

Discrimination: Having unfair, degraded, disrespectful behaviours and prejudices that falsely create discrimination among the youth based on genders/sexual orientations (male/female/LGBT) or other social characteristics, for example, youth from ethnic minorities, youth with disabilities, youth with HIV/AIDS, youth recovering from addiction or youth from reintegration/reform programs, etc.

V. Codes of conduct.

5.1. Required actions

- Always put youth's safety and health first.
- Respect human's rights.
- Treat all youth equally, regardless of their sexes and sexual orientations, ethnicities, religions, family backgrounds, physical conditions, etc.
- Make a full analysis of the situations and people that can cause danger to



youth (*Refer to Appendix 1 of this Policy*) and how to handle emergencies, thereby being cautious when arranging jobs and internships to minimize the risks. In particular:

- ✓ Building an environment that encourages young people to learn how to protect themselves: recognize the risks and inappropriate behaviours, as well as feel free to discuss their rights and concerns.
 - ✓ Respecting each individual's boundary.
 - ✓ Raising their awareness of their rights and benefits.
 - ✓ Equipping them with the necessary skills to cope with challenges.
- Act promptly in cases a youth:
 - ✓ need advice.
 - ✓ have an accident.
 - ✓ is likely to be exposed to the risks of being abused, exploited or discriminated against.
 - ✓ In the case that a youth is at risk, immediately prevent that risk and report to the authorities.
 - Immediately report any cases of suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination as required in *Section 6.3* of the Policy.
 - Fully and seriously fulfil all assigned tasks with all youth under one's supervision such as providing them with sufficient professional skills according to market requirements, helping them apply for jobs according to REACH employment standards, etc.
 - When accepting new students, priority should be given to the more vulnerable groups such as young women, youth from ethnic minorities, youth with disabilities, youth with HIV/AIDS, youth recovering from addiction treatment, youth from reintegration/reform programs and LGBT youth.



5.2. Inappropriate Actions

- Private contact with the youth outside the scope of REACH programs.
- Using hands or other objects to physically beat or hit a youth.
- Having sex with the youth who are currently participating in the REACH programs (either studying, being counselled or being supported with job placement).
- Taking advantages of personal connection with the youth to do things for personal benefits/purposes.
- Having romantic relationship with REACH's students within 12 months since their participation in the programs.
- Acting in an abusive way or putting youth at risk of being abused.
- Sexually abusing children (*Part II of the Policy's Appendix*).
- Staying overnight with a youth.
- Ignoring or engaging in abusive or illegal acts or putting youth in dangerous situations.
- Intentionally shaming, humiliating, slandering, belittling or degrading youth.
- Acting or using words to threaten youth.
- Discriminating against or favouring one or some youths over others.
- Taking photos, recording videos, using images and stories without the youths' consent. For young people under 18 years old, family/guardian's consent will be required before taking photos, filming or using their stories and images.
- Providing youth' addresses, phone numbers, workplaces to a third party



without their consent and REACH management team's approval.

- Only supporting some of the assigned youths while ignoring, neglecting and not fully supporting the rest.

5.3. Handling misconduct

5.3.1 The process of handling misconduct

- REACH staff are not only responsible for protecting youth but also have an obligation to report any violating-policy behaviours to the REACH's management team. REACH always supports and highly appreciates the attempt to denounce violations. REACH commits not to dismissing or reducing the salary of the staff who reports violating-policy behaviours.
- When suspecting or identifying any behaviour that violates the Youth Protection Policy, employees should immediately report to the direct management team who is the head of each department such as the HR manager, the M&E Manager, the Finance & accounting manager or REACH centres' managers. The management team is responsible for investigating and verifying the information. Each employee is responsible for cooperating and assisting the investigation when requested. If the employee finds that the settlement is not satisfactory or not handled within 7 days of the report, they can directly report to the higher management level which is REACH's Management Board including the Managing director, and Deputy directors. In case of emergency, employees may report to any members of the management team listed above.
- Handling violation is the responsibility of all members of the management team. Any manager who receives reports of suspected violations or violations has the responsibility to deal with them prudently and timely.
- Whenever staff, volunteers, interns, and contractors do not completely understand the Policy, the direct supervisor will take the responsibility to give extra guidance or organise a refresh training session.
- When a violation is reported or witnessed, the disciplinary procedure will be



conducted according to the following principles:

- ✓ Investigate and verify the accuracy of the violation.
 - ✓ If there is a violation, the manager will first meet the violator(s) privately to explain his/her misconduct and discuss solutions to resolve the violation. Depending on the seriousness of the behaviour, the manager will propose an appropriate disciplinary measure such as verbal warning, reprimand, written warning, delayed salary review, demotion or dismissal.
 - ✓ After the investigation, if the violation is determined to be intentional and very serious, the highest form of penalty, which is dismissal, will be applied.
 - ✓ The decision of dismissal is issued by the Management Board, based on full information provided by all parties involved in the disciplinary procedure.
- Individuals subject to disciplinary action have the right to appeal to the disciplinary decision if they believe that they have not violated the policy (*Appendix III*).
 - The formal disciplinary procedure must be recorded in written form, kept safe and confidential.

All employees or management team who participate in the disciplinary procedure must keep the information confidential during the entire process.

5.3.2 Levels of violation and disciplines:

1st level: In the following cases, the violator(s) will be dismissed immediately:

- Failing to act or giving prompt advice to support the youth who is in danger or at risk of being abused, exploited, trafficked, discriminated against, or having psychological problems.
- Directly engaging in behaviours that lead to the aforementioned risks.
- Encouraging or intentionally pushing the youth to participate in illegal acts.



Some specific examples:

- ✓ Using hurtful words, giving inappropriate suggestions or advice, hurting or insulting the youth.
- ✓ Acting or making gestures that are culturally inappropriate or sexually suggestive.
- ✓ Assaulting or physically abusing the youth.
- ✓ Having romantic relationships with REACH's students within 12 months since their participation in the programs.
- ✓ Acting in an abusive manner or putting the youth at risk of being abused (e.g. prostitution, drugs, illegal acts, etc).
- ✓ Sexually stimulating the youth or having inappropriate behaviours with them.
- ✓ Sexually abusing children or having a sexual relationship with the youth who are currently participating in the REACH programs (either studying, being counselled or being supported with job placement).
- ✓ Staying overnight with the youth.
- ✓ Ignoring or engaging in abusive or illegal acts or putting the youth in dangerous situations.
- ✓ Intentionally shaming, humiliating, slandering, belittling or degrading the youth.
- ✓ Discriminating against or favouring one or some of the youth over others.
- ✓ Taking photos, filming, using images and stories without the youth's consent.
- ✓ Providing the youth's addresses, phone numbers, workplaces to a third party without the consent of the youth and REACH's management team.
- ✓ Only supporting some of the assigned youth while ignoring, neglecting and not fully supporting the rest.



2nd level: Those being warned orally, via email or in writing from one to two times a year will not be graded A or A + during the annual employee assessment, and will not receive the “outstanding teacher/employee” titles. After the second warning, if the violation continues or if its consequence is not fixed, he/she will be dismissed.

Some specific examples:

- ✓ Fail to fulfil the assigned services/tasks such as providing youth with sufficient market-oriented professional skills, job placements following REACH's employment standards and other youth-related assigned tasks.
- ✓ Fail to provide adequate and accurate advice to the youth in the program about employment, training courses, and employers.
- ✓ Fail to promptly report when detecting violations affecting youth’s benefits.

VI. Principles of implementing the Youth Protection Policy at REACH

6.1 General principles

REACH is operated based on the following principles to maintain a safe and healthy environment for the youth:

- The REACH programs are for all disadvantaged youth, regardless of their genders, ethnicities or religions.
- Giving young people the opportunities to participate in the programs and contribute ideas to the activities.
- When building relationships with stakeholders, the REACH's management team always puts the benefits of the youth first.
- Supporting and guiding each individual according to their needs.
- Supporting youth to meet their basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing.
- Providing financial support, health care, accommodation, and other assistance to the youth if it is helpful and consistent with REACH recruitment guidelines.



- Supporting the youth to access the best training and medical services possible.
- Helping youth develop self-esteem, self-confidence, compassion, and other life skills.
- Respecting cultural diversity, enabling youth to continue learning about their cultures, and encourage them to participate in cultural events.
- Work with local authorities to protect youth.
- Encourage youth's participation in making decisions about their future and making plans to achieve their goals.

6.2 Roles of the Management team

- Developing programs, strategies, policies, and regulations, guiding employees to comply with the Youth Protection Policy and dealing with violations.
- Despite not having as much direct contact with youth as teachers or volunteers, the Management team commits to putting the youth's safety and health first.
- Expanding programs for serving the most disadvantaged youth groups such as young women, youth from ethnic minorities, youth with disabilities, youth with HIV/AIDS, youth recovering from addiction, youth in reintegration programs, and LGBT youth.
- Working with local authorities to protect the youth.
- Building networks with both local and international organizations to maximize the youth's benefits.
- Making budgets and recruiting experts to improve staff's capacity, ensuring the quality of enrollment, training, counsellor, and job placements for the youth.
- Recruiting suitably qualified personnel who are committed to implementing REACH's vision and mission in compliance with the Youth Protection Policy.
- Handling any violation of the Youth Protection Policy prudently and timely,



following the Handling procedure (*as outlined in Section 5.3.1*)

6.3 Roles of REACH staff

- Prioritizing youth's best benefits when performing assigned tasks.
- Always complying with the Youth Protection Policy when conducting recruitment, management, teaching, counselling, and job placements for youth.
- Improving self's capacity in teaching, counselling, managing, and supporting youth.
- Reporting any violation and suspected violation of the Youth Protection Policy to the Management levels.

6.4 Roles of Volunteers, Contractors, and Interns

Volunteers, contractors, and interns are hired based on their abilities to meet the strategic objectives of REACH.

REACH recruits both Vietnamese and international volunteers, contractors, and interns. They are selected as they meet the professional requirements and have the abilities to work with the youth.

In addition, volunteers, contractors, and interns must:

- Prioritizing the youth's best benefits when performing assigned tasks.
- Following the codes of conduct outlined in Section V when conducting assigned tasks.

Hanoi, Jan 2nd 2021

REACH'S MANAGING DIRECTOR



YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY APPENDIX

I. Tips for staying safe in dangerous situations (*as reference for point 2, section 5.1*)

In dangerous situations, do not make the following serious mistakes. Please read and keep in mind the outlined advice from experts below to protect yourself and other people¹.

1. Do not take a shower or make use of electrical equipment during lightningstorms

During a lightningstorm, staying indoor is the safest option. However, it is still possible for people staying inside to be struck by lightning via the electricity system, water pipes system or shower faucets in the house. Therefore, using a wired telephone, taking a shower, using a PC or fixing electronic devices may all cause accidents as if you are outdoor. You had better stay away from running water and electrical equipment until the end of the lightningstorm.

2. Avoid being locked inside during a power cut

If there is an electric door in your house, please make sure that everybody knows how to open and close that door during a power cut.

3. Be careful when using electronic devices

If you are wet, walking with bare feet or standing on the water, do not plug any devices into the power source and do use any touch any electrical devices.

4. Precaution when using a fridge

Always close your fridge tightly. Avoid opening the fridges and freezers too often to keep your food fresh.

5. Shut off the power when the house is flooded

¹ The first 11 pieces of advice are extracted from the Reader's Digest.



Electricity can easily travel through water, causing a short circuit or even electric shock. Therefore, it is important to immediately find a safe way to shut off the power when your house is flooded. Do not use any electric appliances when your feet are in the water.

Even after the flood, the electricity system might still be damp and cause danger. The best way is to keep the power cut until an electrician comes and checks the system's safety.

6. Do not place an electric generator inside your house

An electric generator is very useful during a power cut. However, it may threaten your life if it is not used properly. Like any other internal combustion engines, the generator emits CO that leads to a headache, faint or even death. When the Katrina storm hit the US and caused a power loss in 2005, more than 50 people were poisoned by CO due to having a generator on in their houses.

However, we can easily avoid those accidents by not placing the generator inside or right in front of the house. The generator should be placed at least 3 meters away from your house.

7. Do not burn coal stoves in your house

Similar to the case of electric generators, a coal stove emits CO that may cause deaths. The emission of CO from a coal stove placed inside the house (either for cooking, heating or lighting) will directly attack and endanger people. Do not make this fatal mistake. Instead, you should leave it outside the house, just like the way you place the generator.

8. Do not burn candles during a power cut

During a power cut, try to avoid using candles since it may increase the risk of fire. A battery-powered lamp is safer and also brighter.

9. Finding the right shelters during a tornado



When there is a warning sign of a tornado, immediately find shelter in the basement or the innermost room of your house.

You should prepare an emergency toolkit in your car in case you are locked in the car during a tornado.

10. Close your windows during a typhoon

Opening the windows during a typhoon might put you and your family in danger.

11. Remember to unplug electric appliances during a power cut

Unplugging all electric devices during a power cut will eliminate the damages from voltage surges when the power is suddenly restored.

12. Be careful with high-risk locations for the youth

- Fire can happen anywhere. However, the fire risks are higher in crowded places such as construction sites, production workshops, restaurants, bars and shared rental houses. You should participate in fire safety training classes organized by the local authority or non-governmental organizations. Whenever you enter a new place, make sure you know the position of the emergency exit and where fire extinguishers are stored.

- Places with high risks of violence are often dark & abandoned neighbourhoods or places where people use drug, alcohol, or weapons. If you cannot avoid those places, try not to come there all alone, especially in the evening. Keep calm, do not use alcohol, and avoid making provocative gestures. Before going to such places, inform your family/reliable friends of the place you are heading to and the time you expect to return home.

II. Child sexual abuse behaviours (*as reference for point 7, section 5.2*)

1. Sexual intercourse with children

Inserting one's genital into a child's genital (regardless of the level of penetration).

Having sexual intercourse with children under 10 years old, whether with or without penetration, is considered child sexual abuse.



2. Child pornography

Different forms of child pornography include:

- Directly showing pornography in front of minors or convincing minors to perform sex show.
- Temping, enticing or forcing children to make & share their own sexual video recordings or images.
- Temping, enticing or forcing children to live-stream their naked bodies.
- Showing or streaming pornography contents using children's images or with imitated children's images (such as animation or figures created by digital technologies).

3. Other child sexual abuse behaviours

- Inserting a genital into a child's mouth or anus (both boys or girls).
- Inserting a body part (finger, toe, tongue, etc.) or sex toys into a child's vaginal or anus.
 - Using sexually stimulative gestures, messages (oral or written), symbols, images, and sounds with children.
 - Stripping, exhibiting nudity, genitals or other sensitive body parts, or making sexually suggestive behaviours (including masturbation or imitating sexual activities) in the presence of a minor.
 - Describing genital or other sensitive body parts in front of children to create sexual arousal.
- Child sexual trafficking.

Note: The perpetrator could be of the same sex or the opposite sex as the child.

III. Staff Appeals Policy and Procedure (as reference for point 6, section 5.3.1)

REACH employees have the right to defend or appeal if they find their problems (or others' problems) were not handled properly. The defence or appeal process will follow the procedure below:



1. When the issue is not personal and does not involve a direct manager, the employee can first discuss with his/her direct manager to find a solution. The discussion might be oral or written and will be kept confidential.

The direct manager will have to investigate all aspects of the issue and quickly come up with a satisfactory response within 07 days of the employee's report.

2. When the issue is personal or related to one's direct manager, the employee can discuss it with the Admin & HR department (via the head of this department) which is especially dedicated to receive and handle misconduct report to improve the organisation's transparency and democracy. Issues submitted to the Admin & HR dept must be in written form.

Upon receiving the report, the Head of the Admin & HR dept will work with concerned parties to solve the issue. Depending on specific cases, it can be brought to the attention of the board of director.

The Admin & HR dept will first organize a private meeting to discuss the issue with the employee. The employee will be informed of the solution by the Admin & HR dept. If no decision or action is made within 7 days or if the solution is not reasonable, the employee can make a proposal directly to the highest level (Board of Directors) to get the final response.

Please note that:

1. Anonymous report & appeal letter will not be processed.
2. All appeals will be kept confidential.

REACH is always ready to listen to everybody. Issues related to the labour contract or working condition should be raised to the Admin & HR department. All feedback, responses, and appeal letters from employees will be handled as soon as possible. REACH highly welcomes employees' feedbacks.

