# **Child Protection Policy for Boost Foundation**

Boost Foundation is devoted to running projects that have humanitarian benefits. This includes working with infants, children and even the elderly. This document concerns the behaviour we expect all volunteers and members of Boost to have when working with infants and children. Our main responsibility is to make sure that the projects we do are beneficial and not harmful to its recipients. Boost Foundation accepts and recognizes that it is our responsibility to make sure that all participants are aware of issues relating to child protection.

# **Code of conduct for Boost Foundation volunteers**

**When there is One to one contact:**

* When you are alone with a child please make sure you are in an open space where you can be seen by other adults. Avoid being alone with children in bedrooms, bathrooms and rooms which have a shut door.
* Volunteers are requested not to take the children away from their placement alone or without permission from the placement authority or supervisor.

**Physical contact with the children:**

Children may initial physical contact and it is important that you have a warm reaction towards these children. It is very common for children to want to hold hands while walking for example and you as a volunteer should respond well to this. However do be mindful of our guidelines of what is appropriate and inappropriate.

* It is okay to give hugs but try to give ‘shoulder-to-shoulder’ or ‘A frame’ hug. Be mindful of hugging a person from the opposite gender as this may be interpreted in another manner deepening on the culture. Try and encourage other forms of physical contact such as high-fives or a-box instead.
* Be extra careful with pre-teens (ages 10- 12 years) and teenagers as physical contact can be confusing. This includes pre-teens and teenagers who experience intellectual or physical disability.
* Developing a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 is forbidden. It is also not permitted to develop a sexual relationship with anyone who attends the placement or works at the placement regardless of their age.
* Physical and sexual abuse is strictly forbidden. You must never hit or physically assault a child. Physical punishment of any form is forbidden. In some countries and areas it may be still used as a punishment technique but you as a member of Boost Foundation are prohibited to use any physical abuse as a punishment or teaching technique.
* Do not act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade the child. (This is especially important for teachers who need to be careful when disciplining children).
* Do not do things of a personal nature for a child or teenager that they can do for themselves.

**Attachments:**

* While it can feel good to have a child very attached to you, remember that it can be distressing for that child when you leave. Avoid favouring a particular child. Share your attention fairly between all children, even children who might not be easy to interact with.
* Support a child’s attachments with their principal caregivers (local teachers or permanent teachers). Many of the children will already have an attachment figure. This will be either their parents or perhaps a placement staff member. Please respect and support these attachments.
* Do not make promises to the children that you may not be able to fulfil (for example do not promise that you will definitely come back and visit next year).

**Create realistic and positive expectations:**

Children need to have a realistic and a positive understanding of what volunteers are there to do. Volunteers should be seen as a kind and helpful adult. They should also be seen as a positive role model. Although it might seem like the children do not speak very good English, you would be surprised by what they can pick up.

* Due to this we expect volunteers not to discuss anything with inappropriate content whilst at the placement. It is important to regulate your language; no swearing or inappropriate language please.
* Volunteers should avoid being seen as purely a figure of fun or someone who will dispense goods.
* Engaging in over-the-top play (for example piggy back rides and throwing the child in the air) can create an understanding that volunteers are there purely for fun. This can make it difficult for children to concentrate during learning activities when you are present.
* Providing sweets and gifts to the children is a nice gesture but creates unrealistic expectations that all volunteers will do this which is not what we want the children to expect. Children may think that volunteers have sweets and gifts with them every day and will ask for these.
* If a volunteer would like to make a contribution to the children they can speak with their supervisor who will help them do this in a meaningful and helpful way.

**Be aware of sensitive topics:**

Be careful with the questions you ask children, as well as the content and materials used in activities. Be aware that some topics may be sensitive and inappropriate due to the children’s personal situations. Examples include family life and dreams for the future. Do not ask sensitive questions, such as what happened to your parents to the children or in front of the children. Other topics to avoid would be politics and religion. Remember to respect their culture and beliefs even if you believe in something else.

**Confidentiality and information management:**

Be selective and sensitive when taking photos. Always ask permission from staff members and families before taking photos of the child. If possible take group photos and be mindful that some children may be shy and therefore do not force them to be in the photo if they refuse.

**Suspected abuse**

In the case a child came to you to report abuse you should:

1. Let the child speak and listen carefully
2. Take the child seriously
3. Reassure the child it is okay to talk to you about this
4. Record what is said
5. Tell your Supervisor straight away and then follow the instructions your supervisor will give you.

You should not:

1. Promise to keep it a secret
2. Stop the child from speaking
3. Force the child to recall what happened
4. Ask leading or unnecessary questions
5. Make assumptions
6. Ask to see injuries requiring the removal of clothing
7. Ridicule, reject or humiliate the child

If you witness or suspect abuse it is important you inform your supervisor immediately. Consequences will depend on the severity of the offence but can range from, and are not limited to, a verbal warning, a written warning, or removal from the programme. Please contact your supervisor if you would like any additional information or if you are in a situation in which you are not sure how to react.

I, [Volunteer’s Name] sign this document on [DD/MM/YYYY] as an indication that I have read and understood all its content and agree with it.

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| (Volunteers Signature) |