



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1 Child Protection Policy

1.1 Introduction

Okoa Maisha Ya Watoto (OMAWA), ‘Save Children’s Lives’ in Swahili, is an NGO which was established by a group of teachers in 2010 in Shimbwe, rural Moshi, Kilimanjaro region, Tanzania. OMAWA was established to support and advocate for the needs and rights of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in rural communities irrespective of age, sex, gender, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, religion, political belief, disability, physical/mental health, socio-economic background, or any other aspect of their background or identity. As teachers, the founding members recognized that children were not attending school due to the fact that their basic needs were not being met, and they could not pay school fees, or buy school supplies.

The Organization’s main activity is to support OVC to attend school (primary, secondary and vocational training) with a particular focus on young girls. OMAWA also provides education on HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, and life skills to OVC, youth, caregivers, families, and the local community through monthly meetings and home visits that are facilitated by OMAWA peer educators.

In addition to the provision of material support, OMAWA provides psychosocial support (PSS) to promote children’s social, mental, and emotional wellbeing. At the same time, income-generating activities (IGAs) strengthen the capacity of caregivers, guardians, and families to care for OVC and ensure their economic wellbeing. The Organization also drills bore holes and wells; constructs toilets; develops rain water harvesting systems; installs hand-washing facilities; and conducts trainings on diseases associated with sanitation for school-going children through its Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme.

Through these various efforts, OMAWA has contributed to an increase in the enrolment of OVC in school; a reduction in the number of deaths of children under five-years of age; a reduction in the number of girls who drop out of school due to early pregnancy/marriage; increased access to clean water for school children and local communities; improved income for caregivers and families; and increased access to employment opportunities for young people. Additionally, OMAWA has helped reduce the spread of HIV, stigma, and discrimination among people and children living with HIV/AIDS.

Most of OMAWA’s activities are implemented in rural areas, and the

Organization is currently active in 3 districts across 3 regions in mainland Tanzania: Moshi Rural in Kilimanjaro Region; Babati Rural in Manyara Region; and Kondoa in Dodoma Region. Activities are carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) of Tanzania, Rural District Authorities, Local Government Authorities (LGAs), local and international donors, NGOs, CBOs, public and private companies, public and private primary and secondary schools, and local communities.

Vision: A Tanzania in which every OVC attains the right to attend school at every level: primary, secondary, and vocational.

Mission: To support the education and skills of OVC and thereby create livelihood opportunities and reduce poverty in the rural districts of Tanzania.

Core Values: All of the activities of the Organization are undertaken with an eye to the following values: accountability, ambition, collaboration, creativity, and integrity.

Principles: The principles of participation, non-discrimination, transparency, a dynamic spirit, and advocacy form the operating standards of OMAWA and guide the actions of the organization.

Organizational Structure:

OMAWA is organized into a Council and Board members. The Council is the governing body and includes the Executive Director, Programme Manager, Accountant and field workers, and it oversees day-to-day activities. The Board members (including teachers, farmers, and development/social workers) oversee policy, operations, and review financial reports. The Executive Director, Accountant, and Program Manager are full-time staff. The Executive Director, appointed by the Board members, represents the organization in all legal and contractual obligations

Everyone who participates in **OMAWA** Organisation is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. **OMAWA** organisation has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care. This policy was developed as a tool to help meet these obligations.

OMAWA organisation is committed to implementing policies which ensure that everyone accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is also to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of OMAWA Organisation and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

1.1 Policy Statement

OMAWA organisation is committed to the following:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in a fun and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children
- all **OMAWA** organisation employees who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures

1.2 Application of this policy

OMAWA demands the highest ethical standards within the organisation and amongst collaborating organisations and individuals. This includes:

- Employed staff
- Volunteers and interns

- Board members
- Program Participants (eg trainers, group leaders, facilitators) and consultants
- Collaborating community groups
- Donors and funding bodies
- Sub-contracted consultants for program input, activities or other

This policy is formally binding on those individuals operating under the direction of **OMAWA**, who are required to sign a declaration agreeing to be bound by the policy on commencement. Employee contracts contain provision for the organisation to dismiss, take legal actions, suspend or transfer staff to other duties if they breach the policy.

In addition, **OMAWA** will only collaborate with organisations and individuals who can specifically demonstrate that they can meet a comparable ethical standard to that outlined in this policy.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 as defined in the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (Children’s Act 1977)

1.3 Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The welfare officer should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the management committee.

The policy should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

2 Code of Conduct for Promoting Good Practice

2.1 Introduction

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as The Coaches Code of Conduct.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore **NOT** the responsibility of employees or participants in **OMAWA** organisation to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in section 4.

This section will help identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

2.2 Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person first, before winning
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
- Involve parents/cares wherever possible; encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child.
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism

- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for organizational or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given

2.3 Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking young people alone on journeys, however short
- taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a young person
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person on your motorbike, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/care and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

3 Defining Child Abuse

3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

3.2 Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young

person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill-treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

- **Bullying** may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behavior, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

- **Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling.

Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

In sport, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

3.3 Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- unexplained changes in a young person's behavior e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adult's, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others

- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions
- an unexplained drop off in performance
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- a shortage of money or frequents loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in **OMAWA** to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

3.4 Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All clubs and **OMAWA** centres should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club and Centre welfare officer respectively.

All parents and performers should be made aware when coaches use video equipment as a coaching aid.

4 Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in **OMAWA** in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there

is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspensions of abuse occurring within OMAWA and to allegations/suspensions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspensions.

4.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify
- **Inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **Safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **record** all information
- **report** the incident to the club/welfare officer/executive Director

4.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

4.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

OMAWA Organization expects it's members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
- **Child protection** in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case OMAWA Organization will be involved

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to the OMAWA Organization who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- OMAWA Organization will refer the matter to district social services department
- the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the district social services department
- the chair person of OMAWA organisation should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

4.5 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

5 Recruiting and Selecting Personnel Who Work with Children

5.1 Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

5.2 Controlling Access to Children

- All staff and volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about the applicants past and a self disclosure about any criminal record. Applicants will be required to specifically declare that they have never been charged with child exploitation offences.
- At least two verbal references, including at least one regarding previous work with children should be obtained and documented during the recruitment process. Referees will be asked about the applicant's suitability for the role to work with children and/or to have regular unsupervised contact with children. Referees will be asked whether they hold any concerns about the applicant, or if complaints were made about the applicant, in connection with working or having contact with children.
- Evidence of identity

5.3 Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. During the

interview every applicant be required to answer behaviour-based questions about working with children, for example:

- *Have you worked/volunteered with children in a similar position before? What did you like about it? What did you find difficult?*
- *How have you handled children who did not want to participate in an activity?*
- *Do you mind being supervised?*
- *What motivates you/why do you want to work with children in this program?*
- *Provide me with 3 examples of how to work safely with children.*
- *What do you think makes a good community leader or role model for children and young people?*
- *How would you handle children who were not listening to your instructions?*

5.4 **Induction**

All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self disclosures
- Their qualifications should be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- They should sign up to the organization's Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness

During the induction process, the new employee or volunteer will be required to sign a statement declaring that they understand and agree to be bound by the terms of this policy. In the statement the new employee that will acknowledge that any breach of the policy may result in termination of employment and referral to the police or other child protection authority.

5.5 Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child
- Work safely and effectively with children

OMAWA Organization requires:

- All staff and volunteers who have access to children to undergo a criminal history check
- All employees and volunteers to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- All leaders should have an up to date first aid qualification