

<b>Title</b>	<b>CHILD &amp; VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY</b>			<b>Policy #</b>	<b>HR008</b>
<b>Applies to</b>	<b>Headquarters, Other US Offices, and Field Offices</b>			<b>Origination date</b>	<b>11/01/11</b>
<b>Policy Owner</b>	<b>Director of Human Resources</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Finance and Administration</b>	<b>Effective date</b>	<b>04/10/2019</b>
<b>This policy supersedes</b>	<b>Policy last modified 04/10/2019</b>			<b>Next review date</b>	<b>6/1/20</b>

### Background

Medical Teams International (MTI) is committed to the protection and welfare of children and vulnerable adults that are served by our programs and other activities that we host. We oppose all forms of abuse and are committed to upholding all State, Federal, host country and international laws on child and vulnerable adults' rights, welfare, and protection. We are committed to proactively educating our staff and volunteers about the requirements to protect children and vulnerable adults through implementation of thorough orientation programs and periodic reminders.

### Purpose

The purposes of this policy are to:

- A) Ensure a safe and secure environment for children and vulnerable adults when they are in our care and/or on our premises, in compliance with legal and societal standards,
- B) Establish clear procedures for reporting and investigating cases of suspected abuse, and
- C) Protect MTI employees and volunteers from false allegations of abuse or exploitation of children or vulnerable people.

## **1 Our Commitment**

- 1.1 MTI believes that God created all people in His image. Thus, we must treat every person with respect, honor them for their intrinsic value, and care for them in ways that bring honor to God.
- 1.2 MTI believes that all children or vulnerable people have a right to protection from abuse and exploitation irrespective of race, nationality, social background, age, gender, skin color, disability, or religious beliefs.
- 1.3 MTI believes that abuse and exploitation are wrong and that keeping silent is also wrong if one knows or suspects a person is being or has been abused or exploited.
- 1.4 MTI believes that preventive measures should be taken to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse or exploitation by MTI employees and volunteers and to protect MTI staff and volunteers and our corporate integrity from false allegations.

## **2 Definitions**

**2.1 Child:** Anyone under eighteen (18) years of age.

**2.2 Vulnerable Adult:** A person who is 18 years of age or over, and who has been made vulnerable by reason of disaster or conflict. They may be unable to take care of or protect themselves against significant harm, exploitation, or abuse. They may also be someone in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

Factors of a Vulnerable Adult:

- Is elderly and frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- Has a learning disability
- Has a physical disability and / or a sensory impairment
- Has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- Has a long-term illness / condition
- Misuses substances or alcohol

- Is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support.
  - Made vulnerable because of disaster or conflict
  - Marginalized due to social or economic status
- 2.2 Physical Abuse:** Actual or likely physical injury to a child or vulnerable adult or failure to prevent physical injury, suffering or harm. This may include, but is not limited to deliberately hitting, beating, shaking, or throwing a child or vulnerable person.
- 2.3 Neglect:** The persistent or severe neglect of a child or vulnerable adult, failure to protect from exposure to danger including cold or starvation, and the failure to carry out important aspects of care resulting in the impairment of the child or vulnerable adult's health or development.
- 2.4 Mental/Emotional Abuse:** Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioral development of a child or vulnerable adult caused by persistent or severe emotional mistreatment, rejection, or threat. Emotional abuse can include inappropriate use of spiritual authority (for example, the Bible, church, tradition, church authority, etc.)
- 2.5 Sexual Abuse:** Actual or likely enticement, inducement, persuasion, or coercion of any child or vulnerable adult to engage in or assist with any sexually suggestive or explicit conduct by those responsible for the individual's care or control. Such abuse can be violent or non-violent and can involve physical contact and/or verbal comments or insinuations.

### 3 Policy

#### 3.1 Behavioral Protocols

- 3.1.1 MTI expects its staff and volunteers to treat all children and vulnerable adults hosted by MTI with respect and dignity.
- 3.1.2 MTI staff and volunteers must never be alone with a child or vulnerable adult, other than their own, in a private place or any place where other responsible adults cannot easily observe and overhear all interactions.
- 3.1.3 MTI staff and volunteers must not discipline or attempt to discipline a child or vulnerable adult physically under any circumstances.
- 3.1.4 MTI staff and volunteers shall never hit or otherwise physically assault a child or vulnerable adult even if this is locally acceptable.
- 3.1.5 MTI staff and volunteers shall not act in ways that shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade a child or vulnerable adult, or otherwise perpetuate any form of abuse including participation in harmful traditional practices or spiritual ritualistic abuse.
- 3.1.6 MTI staff and volunteers must not touch a child or vulnerable adult inappropriately. (A general guideline is not to touch areas that would normally be covered by shorts and t-shirt.)
- 3.1.7 MTI staff and volunteers must not use offensive language, suggestions, or advice.
- 3.1.8 MTI Staff and volunteers must not expose a child or vulnerable adult to pornography or other sexually explicit or inappropriate images or media.
- 3.1.9 MTI staff and volunteers must not share alcohol, tobacco or drug substances with a child or vulnerable adult or be intoxicated or consume alcohol or drugs before or during encounters with them.
- 3.1.10 MTI Staff and volunteers must never sleep in the same room or bed with a child or vulnerable adult.
- 3.1.11 MTI staff and volunteers must not enlist or engage a child or vulnerable adult in activities without parental or guardian consent or drive a child or vulnerable adult without parental or guardian consent and at least one other adult in the car.
- 3.1.12 MTI staff and volunteers must never take, produce, or create images of a child or vulnerable adult that are humiliating, degrading, shameful, or otherwise offensive. Children and vulnerable adults should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be perceived as sexually suggestive.
- 3.1.13 Children or vulnerable adults should never be left alone with unsupervised non-MTI staff or volunteers who are visiting project areas.
- 3.1.14 MTI staff and volunteers must comply fully with all state, federal and United Nations Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors or vulnerable adults.

- 3.1.15 MTI staff and volunteer contact and interactions with children or vulnerable adults in all program contexts will be randomly monitored.
- 3.1.16 Ignoring these protocols or their intent may result in immediate termination of employment or volunteer assignments.

### 3.2 Criminal Background Checks

- 3.2.1 MTI staff and volunteers who will work with children or vulnerable adults will be screened according to professional standards that include a criminal background check.
- 3.2.2 The purpose of the background check is to confirm that there have been no previous convictions for abuse against children, vulnerable adults, or other violent or questionable behavior that could raise concerns about the wellbeing of children in the applicant's care. Any adverse findings will be disclosed to the applicant.
- 3.2.3 MTI is committed to maintaining the highest level of confidentiality when it comes to background checks and related personal information. The established background check process shall strictly limit the people involved in reviewing background check results and ensure that staff and volunteer files are inaccessible to other MTI employees

### 3.3 Designated Staff Person

- 3.3.1 The Director, Human Resources is the Designated Staff Person responsible for dealing with child or vulnerable adult protection issues or complaints within MTI. In the absence of the Director, Human Resources, the VP of Finance & Administration will be the Designated Staff Person.

### 3.4 Reporting of Suspect Behavior

- 3.4.1 MTI staff and volunteers agree to inform MTI's Designated Staff Person(s) immediately of any observations or information that cast doubt on a staff member's or volunteer's strict compliance with this policy.
- 3.4.2 Any such reports will be treated with discretion and urgency. MTI prohibits any kind of retaliation against an employee or volunteer who, in good faith, submits a complaint under this policy.
- 3.4.3 MTI staff and volunteers, or any other representative of MTI programs, may utilize the Integrity and Compliance hotline, Report Line at (800) 461-9330 or REPORTLINE.MEDICALTEAMS.ORG to report suspect behavior.

### 3.5 Response to Allegations

- 3.5.1 When a report has been made that an MTI staff person or volunteer is suspected of inappropriate behavior with a child or vulnerable adult, MTI, under the direction of the Designated Staff Person(s), will act as set out in "Guidelines: Responding to Allegations of Child or Vulnerable Adult Abuse". Note that the first action step is to seek and adhere to the advice of MTI's legal counsel.
- 3.5.2 All reports of alleged abuse will be investigated thoroughly, including any such reports or accusations made by children or any vulnerable adult. The investigation process will be directed and documented by the Director, Compliance, and a written report of findings will be completed within 30 days of the report. When a report is made, the employee will either be placed on suspension or reassigned work duties as necessary to ensure no further contact between the employee and child (ren) or vulnerable adult (s) occurs until the investigation is finalized.
- 3.5.3 Both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator will be treated with respect and without prejudice from the start of the process to the end.
- 3.5.4 MTI will work in cooperation with child welfare and legal authorities during the course of an investigation as appropriate.
- 3.5.5 The allegation will be kept confidential with only those directly involved having access to this sensitive information. MTI staff or volunteers who are found violating confidentiality of such allegations will receive a written warning and/or be subject to termination.
- 3.5.6 If an investigation leads to the conclusion that abuse has or may have occurred, the appropriate legal authorities will be notified if they have not already been involved in the investigation. If an MTI staff person or volunteer is found to have committed abuse, through internal investigation and/or through the court system their employment will be terminated immediately.

- 3.5.7 A file will be made of all facts related to any report and subsequent investigation. The Designated Staff Person will securely file and retain all such documents consistent with state retention requirements.

### 3.6 Communication

- 3.6.1 MTI will take special care to protect the identity and specific geographic location of children in all public relations and other materials. In cases where a specific child or vulnerable adult's name is used, MTI will obtain all appropriate parental or legal releases in advance.
- 3.6.2 If the police and/or media become involved in or aware of an alleged instance of abuse, MTI's Designated Staff Person or appointee will deal with the media and the police as set out in "Guidelines: Responding to Allegations of Child and Vulnerable Adult Abuse". In general MTI staff or volunteers will not be in contact with the police except as authorized by the Designated Staff Person(s), or the media except as authorized by the Designated Staff Person(s) and the VP Marketing and Development.
- 3.6.3 Disclosure of information about past or present abuse of children, vulnerable adult, or any of the persons involved will be limited only to the people who need to know for purposes of the investigation and corrective action.

### 3.7 Orientation, Training, and General Awareness of Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policies

- 3.7.1 Orientation and training in child abuse prevention and protection is a priority for MTI and all its operations.
- 3.7.2 MTI's general orientation for all newly employed staff and volunteers will include a section explaining our policies and practices on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- 3.7.3 Human Resources will distribute a current copy of this policy to all staff and to volunteers annually.

Human Resources

# CHILD & VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

**Related Policies** HR027 Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

**References** None

**Related Forms, Attachments, Waivers, Guidelines**  
None

**End of Policy**