

- ® The term 'Allegation' refers to a report that a crime has been committed, for which, evidence has not yet been found.
- The term 'Accusation' refers to the fact that some evidence has been provided that a crime was committed.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OF THE MILL HILL MISSIONARIES

It is the policy of the Mill Hill Missionaries in Uganda to be frilly committed to the safeguarding of children, and so to foster practices that will protect children from harm, neglect or abuse.

The Policy of the Mill Hill Missionaries in Uganda applies to:

- All members, associates and students in training of the Mill Hill Missionary Society working and residing in Uganda or visiting Uganda.
- All those employed by the Mill Hill Missionaries and all those who work voluntarily for the organisation and come into contact with children

GENERAL GUIDELINES OF THE PROTECTION POLICY

It is the responsibility of all people to ensure the protection of children by adhering to the best possible practise and behaviour in relation to children, that is:

- treat all children with respect and dignity;
 - treat all children equally,
 - model positive, appropriate behaviour to all children and with whom we come into contact;
 - challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour;
 - develop a culture where children have permission to talk about any concerns or worries that they may have;
 - respect children's boundaries and support them to develop their own sense of rights;
 - be visible to others when working with children and maintain appropriate distance; and
- « whenever possible, in meeting a child, ensure the presence of another responsible adult

You must never:

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;
- develop sexual relationships with children

- develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- act in any way that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;
- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way;
- do things for a child of a personal nature that they can do themselves;
- condone or participate in behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- act in any way that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade;
- or
- discriminate against, favour or treat differently particular children to the exclusion of others.

In general it is inappropriate to:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others; and
- Take children away to your own home, room or office, especially where they will be alone with you.

RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE

Children have a right to be listened to, heard and believed. As Mill Hill Missionaries, we are committed to responding effectively and sensitively to all allegations and suspicions of child abuse. We therefore seek to foster a safe environment in all our centres and parishes.

In regard to this, the Mill Hill Missionaries have appointed two designated officers in Uganda to oversee the implementation of, and adherence to, the Child Protection Policy.

The designated officers for the Mill Hill Missionary Society in Uganda are:

- Fr. Bernard C. Phelan mhm (Phone:0782338199)
- Sr. Josephine Nafllila mms (Phone:0775107433)

The designated officer(s) will:

- Ensure understanding of, and adherence to, this policy by all Mill Hill members, associates and students working and residing in Uganda;
- Ensure understanding of, and adherence to, this policy by those employed by the Mill Hill Missionaries and those who are working voluntarily for the organisation;
- Be responsible for following up suspicions or allegations of child neglect or abuse;
- Inform the General Superior of the Mill Hill Missionaries immediately of any suspicions or allegations of child neglect or abuse;
- Take the lead role in the reporting and follow up of child protection referrals to the statutory services in Uganda.
- Act as liaison with statutory services in Uganda in matters relating to child protection; and
- Act as resource persons to the organisation providing support and guidance in matters relating to child protection;

It is the responsibility of all to take seriously any rumour, allegation or accusation of child abuse and to report it to one of the designated officers of the Mill Hill Missionaries¹ and, in dioceses where such exist, to the Diocesan designated officer.

REPORTING PROCEDURE IN RELATION TO CHILD ABUSE

ALLEGATIONS/CONCERNS

- If you receive a concern, suspicion or allegation of abuse, you must act immediately and refer the matter to one of the above named designated officers. Never guarantee absolute confidentiality to the one who discloses the information, as all suspicions, allegations and concerns must be reported to the designated officer, and in turn to the statutory services. It is the role of the designated officer to report the matter to the statutory services.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

‘Over recent years there has been increasing recognition not only of the existence of child abuse but the global nature of child abuse. Abuse of children , 4 ss the world occurs on a staggering scale. It is

¹ The General Superior of the Mill Hill Missionaries should also be contacted directly and he will report the information to the relevant designated officers.

estimated that *
71
year.

30,000 children are abused each

As Mill Hill Missionaries^{1 2} we affirm the basic guiding principles that:

- Each child shall be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God, with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which shall be nurtured and protected by all.
- All children, regardless of gender, culture, race, tribe, language, religious beliefs or social status, have a right to protection and care.
- As the most vulnerable members of the community, children need a safe environment and special protection in society: an environment free *from discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect.*³
- Everyone in the Church has an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected.

CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

- The term ‘Abuse’ refers to any harm, be it physical or mental, that detracts from a child’s right to a full life. Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or by neglect.
- The term ‘Child’, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989⁴ and as legally defined by ‘The Children Act¹ of Uganda (1997)⁵, refers to a person under the age of 18.
- The term ‘Rumour’ refers to general gossip among people.

¹ Misesan Cara, *Child protection and safeguarding policy*, Updated March 2012, p.4

² The Mill Hill Missionaries are legally incorporated in Uganda as ‘Mill Hill Missionary Association Ltd.’, by guarantee, which incorporation was effected on January 22nd 1998 by the Registrar of Companies and with file number 36844.

³ The Republic of Uganda, ‘The Children Act’ (1997) Article 5(2)

⁴ Article 1

⁴ Article 2

- Remember, it is not your responsibility, or the responsibility of the designated officer, to *investigate* the allegation. This is the role of the statutory services that are trained to carry out child protection investigations.
- Whenever possible and appropriate, written notes should be taken during the reporting of the concern, suspicion or allegation of abuse. Ask permission to do so first and if the child/adult does not feel comfortable with note taking, write your notes as soon as practicable following the report.
- **Under no circumstances should a child be left at risk/ in danger**

Remember, it is the responsibility of all members, associates and students of the Mill Hill Missionaries, as well as those employed by, or working voluntarily for, the organisation, to safeguard and protect children by:

- Being familiar with, and adhering to, the above procedure,
- Maintaining the best interests of the child as paramount at all times; and
- Ensuring that all allegations and suspicions of child abuse are treated seriously and with the utmost professional integrity.

Further Reading

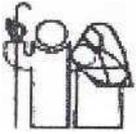
The content of this policy has relied heavily on various documents which could be useful for further reading and understanding:

- Misesa Cara, *Child protection and safeguarding policy* (Updated March 2012)
- Kenya Episcopal Conference, *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Procedures* (2011)
- The Republic of Uganda, *The Children Act* (1997)
- The Republic of Uganda. *The Penal Code (Amendment) Act* (2007) Act 8
- Mill Hill Missionaries. *Protocol on Dealing with Abuse of Children and Vulnerable Adults* (2010)

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MILL HILL
MISSIONARIES

St Joseph's Missionary Society

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

For
UGANDA

May 2012