



Policy for the Protection of Children

The Scripture is clear that children are a blessing from and beloved by the Lord. We also see harsh warnings to those who would cause any little one to stumble. In an effort to take our charge seriously, IOI requires all staff and volunteers to read, agree to and abide by the following policy:

General

1. As a Christian ministry, IOI is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children entrusted to our care. This includes protecting children from anyone whose history or character suggests that they reasonably pose a risk to the health and well-being of children with whom they may come in contact in connection with their service to or with IOI.
2. All of us share a responsibility to protect children from those for whom children are perceived as objects of sexual desire or fascination.
3. The primary goal of this policy is to reduce the risk of harm to children. By implementing sound child protection procedures, it is also the aim to reduce the risk of false accusations against staff, volunteers, and short-term mission trip participants who work with or interact with children. Because all short-term mission trip participants have the potential to interact with children, whether in formal or informal settings, this policy applies to all participants ages eighteen and older who serve with IOI.

Definitions

1. The term "Child" in this policy shall refer to any individual under eighteen years of age.
2. The term "Physical Abuse" of a child in this policy includes but is not limited to the following: any action that causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical injury to a child; placing a child in a situation where the child is likely to be injured; neglecting or refusing to provide for a child's basic needs; failing to provide adequate supervision in relation to the child's age or development level.
3. The term "Sexual Abuse" of a child in this policy includes but is not limited to the following: committing, allowing to be committed, or threatening any sexual act upon a child which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the perpetrator; indecent exposure in the presence of a child; allowing a child to view sexually explicit or pornographic material; allowing a child to be used in creating any sexually explicit or pornographic material; or allowing a child to witness a sexual act.

Requirements for Staff and Volunteers

1. All staff and short-term mission trip participants ages eighteen and older will, prior to commencement of service in collaboration with IOI, voluntarily submit to background screening and will read and agree to abide by IOI's Policy for the Protection of Children. Signing and submitting the attached form to the IOI office shall indicate consent. The background screening will include but not be limited to the following: an independent background check that includes a nationwide review of criminal history information and sexual predator databases.

2. An individual shall not be allowed to serve as a staff member, volunteer, or short-term mission trip participant engaged in work in collaboration with IOI if the background screening or any other source reveals any information demonstrating that the individual engaged in (1) any prior behavior constituting sexual abuse of a child, (2) any crime of a sexual nature, or (3) any other behavior that reasonably indicates that this individual would pose a risk of sexually or physically abusing a child.

Supervision of Children

1. The general rule is that at least two adults shall provide for the care and supervision of children entrusted to our care. This could mean one team member and one local staff or volunteer. Children are to be supervised at all times; it is never appropriate to leave children unattended. Only where written parental consent is obtained is private one-on-one contact between adults and children permitted. Where such permission is given, the meetings should occur in a public place.

2. Staff, volunteers, or short-term mission trip participants shall never administer discipline to children not their own through spanking or other forms of corporal punishment.

3. The following standards of interaction with children shall be carefully followed at all times:

A. Some positive and appropriate forms of affection and physical interactions may include but are not limited to:

- Cultural greetings
- High-fives
- Handshakes
- Side hugs
- Pats on the back
- Groups holding hands during prayer
- Holding the hand of a small child while walking
- Verbal praise
- Sitting beside small children

B. The following forms of affection and physical interaction are considered inappropriate with children and youth in a ministry setting because many of them are behaviors that child molesters use to groom children for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves sexual abuse. These inappropriate interactions may include but are not limited to:

- Wrestling
- Tickling
- Sitting in laps (except for children aged three and under)
- Kissing on the lips
- Full frontal hugs
- Commenting on children's bodies
- Forcing unwanted affection
- Piggy-back rides
- Touching or hugging from behind
- Laying down with a child
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, or private rooms
- Playing games that involve inappropriate touching

Certification of Screening and Training

Before a mission team leaves for the field, the trip team leader will work with the IOI office to certify in writing (email is acceptable) that every member of the mission team has:

1. Completed and passed the required background screening.
2. Completed reading this policy manual and signified their consent by signing and returning the attached form.

Responding to Allegations or Incidents of Physical or Sexual Abuse of a Child

1. Sexual or physical abuse of a child by a staff member, volunteer, or short-term mission trip participant will not be tolerated. A single act of sexual abuse, regardless of when that act occurred, will result in appropriate legal/administrative action, including the permanent and immediate cessation of ministry participation with IOI.

2. Any suspected incident of sexual or physical abuse of a child should be reported immediately. Appropriate means of reporting include the following: Reporting to team leader, host family and IOI staff.

3. All allegations will be taken seriously and investigated expeditiously by the appointed authorities.

4. All situations will be handled forthrightly and handled with due respect for privacy and confidentiality.

5. Full cooperation will be given to civil authorities when applicable.

Detach and mail or scan and email to IOI office

I, _____, have read and agree to abide by Indigenous Outreach International's Policy for the Protection of Children.

signature

date

**Indigenous
Outreach** 
INTERNATIONAL

PO BOX 10173 JACKSON, TN 38308
info@ioiusa.org