



Link Community Development

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Link Community Development Ireland (LCD Ireland) is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of the children and young people with whom we may come into contact during our work. This child protection policy applies to all management, staff and volunteers. Everyone to whom the policy applies is required to familiarise themselves with the policy before becoming involved with Link Community Development.

We are committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We will adhere to the recommendations of *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, published by the Department of Health and Children (1999). We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Having Child Protection Guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about child protection and principles of good practice with volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know
- Following carefully the procedures for selection of staff and volunteers - application, interview, references and vetting forms
- Liaising with host LCD organisations in Africa to ensure that volunteers receive effective support, supervision and training
- Developing support systems for staff and volunteers
- Following procedures for dealing with incidents and accidents
- Reviewing our policy and practice at regular intervals

Child Protection Policy

Principles of Good Practice when working with Children

Your volunteer placement will offer many varied experiences and situations and throughout your time in South Africa you will interact, to different degrees, with the local community and children in your host school. Interaction with local children is a key component of the overseas placement.

Children may befriend you as you work in schools, as you eat a meal or even as you walk to and from your host family home each day. Whenever you have contact with any child it is important that you always adhere to the following guidelines and to ensure that the safety and welfare of any child is a priority in all your dealings with them.

Adopt a Child- Centred Approach:

- Listen to and respect children and young people.
- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Involve children and young people in decision-making as appropriate
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (based on effort rather than achievement)
- Offer constructive feedback when needed
- Treat all children and young people as individuals
- Respect differences of ability, culture, belief, ethnicity and sexual orientation.
- Respect a child's or young person's personal space
- Encourage feedback from groups and individuals
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials
- Be aware of a child's or young person's other commitments when scheduling activities
- Be cognisant of a child's or young person's limitations, due to a medical condition for example
- Evaluate your work practices on a regular basis
- Observe appropriate dress codes

- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically, for your activities in school
- Volunteers should be thoughtful about their language and tone of voice
- When taking photographs of children, volunteers should always ask the permission of their parents or guardians

Working alone or on a one-to-one basis with children

Link Community Development recognises that volunteers may from time to time work alone with a class group or on a one-to-one basis with children and young people in host schools. In this situation, in addition to the guidelines outlined above, the following is recommended:

- Ensure that other teachers are informed about the structure, content and duration of the lesson (including teaching techniques, material covered, length of lesson)
- Clarify your expectations of children or young people's responsibilities in lessons e.g. come prepared, attend punctually etc.
- Address any difficulties or issues promptly, and keep a written record of issues discussed, names of those involved and dates, as appropriate and report to designated person if necessary

Volunteers should not:

- Participate, with children, in games of either an aggressive or sexual nature
- Invade the privacy of children or make any unnecessary physical contact with a child or group of children
- Spend excessive amounts of time with any one child or group of children
- Make any demeaning remarks or gestures to or about a child.