

Child-Safe Policy

1. Context

Beyond Social Services is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young persons encountered in the course of its work. It ensures that its staff, volunteers, partners, and vendors do no harm to children and young person and that they do not expose them to the risk of discrimination, neglect, harm, and abuse; and that any concerns about the safety of young people encountered in the course of work, are addressed in accordance with established child safety/safeguarding protocols and reported to the appropriate authorities.

Beyond Social Services encounters children and young people whose safety and well-being may be compromised in its areas of work; namely,

- The Healthy Start Child Development Centre (HSCDC) &
- Educational, Social, and Outreach activities.

This policy guides the organisation to achieve,

- Compliance with relevant statutes, regulatory standards, and codes of practice,
- Best practices in the management of suspected child abuse,
- An effective working relationship with the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), Child Protective Service (CPS) and Child Protection Specialist Centres,
- Continual capability and capacity building for safeguarding children.

2. Policy Statement

Beyond, in line with its Mission and Vision is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young persons, has zero-tolerance for the abuse and exploitation of children and young persons. Beyond recognises that safeguarding is a responsibility of everyone in the organisation and that it has an obligation to put in place reasonable measures to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and wellbeing of children and young persons in its programmes and those in the communities it engages.

Safeguarding measures are guided by Family Preservation 12 Guiding Practice Principles and Core Values listed in MSF's practitioner's resource guide published in 31 January 2019. Please refer to Annex 3.

- 1) Safety of children and young persons is paramount
- 2) It is best for children and young persons to be raised by their natural families
- 3) Crisis is an opportunity for growth and change
- 4) The voices of children and young persons should be at the centre of intervention
- 5) A collaborative approach with families supports their efforts to care for children and young persons and ensure their safety
- 6) A rigorous and comprehensive assessment is the basis of a relevant and effective case plan

- 7) A community of safety and support for children, young persons and families must be developed, regularly reviewed, and enhanced
- 8) Trauma informed intervention is key to supporting children, young persons, and families
- 9) Work with families through home-based services or within children and young persons' natural environments
- 10) Practitioners are agents of change and will advocate for clients where there are barriers to access services to meet families' needs
- 11) Practice should be sensitive to the cultural diversity of the families
- 12) Families' progress on case plan goals should be monitored through periodic and timely reviews.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy is mandatory for all staff, interns, volunteers, and programme participants as well as contractors and partners whom we fund are expected to subscribe to the policy statement of as a condition of their involvement with Beyond. They are also required to adhere to the Code of Conduct articulated in the policy.

4. Code of Conduct

All people involved with Beyond are expected to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct in their physical and online interactions with children and young people under the age of 18 years. The Code explicitly states what they will and will not do as well as what they will do if they think the code has been breached by another person in the organisation. Please refer to Annex 2.

5. Policy Goals in Areas of Work with Children and Young Persons

5.1 The Healthy Start Child Development Centre (HSCDC)

5.1.1 Compliance with relevant statutes, regulatory standards, and codes of practice

The Healthy Start Child Development Centre is licenced under the Early Childhood Development Centres Act ("ECDC Act") and Regulations. Compliance with the Regulatory Standards will be assessed via an audit that each licensee must undergo as part of the licence renewal assessment process. The Regulatory Standards consists of 72 statements (inclusive of statements which are unique to infant services), which correspond with a set of performance indicators. ECDCs are required to meet all performance indicators before they can be considered to have met the assessment statement. ECDCs must show observable and verifiable evidence that they have met each indicator. All ratings are primarily based on observing the centre, reviewing documentary records, and interviewing relevant staff during the regulatory officer's visits to the ECDC.

5.1.2 Best practices in the management of suspected child abuse

- a. HSCDC adheres strictly to the protocol for Incident Management in the Code of Practice (Second Edition 2021). Chapters 5 and 10 address Safety and Incident Reporting respectively.
- b. Reporting protocol for suspected child abuse and absenteeism are articulated in Annex 26 and Annex 27 of this paper.
- c. A register of children monitored by the Child Protective Service is maintained and these students are highlighted to teachers during routine briefings and the team's mobile phone chat group for close monitoring and liaison with the children's social worker assigned by the Child Protective Service (CPS).
- d. If a child has been absent for 2 days, care-givers will be contacted via phone messaging for a video call to sight the child.
- e. Care-givers who refuse must take a photograph of the child and send it over to the Centre's duty phone.
- f. For those with child protection concerns, CPS and relevant stakeholders will be informed via phone messaging and email if care-givers refuse either a video call or to send a photograph. All other absenteeism records will be documented in line with ECDA protocol.
- g. The duty phone is on 24 hours and held by the Principal or a covering staff, who will attend to requests for assistance, concerns about children or the family situation. Where potential risk is identified, Principal will follow up with CPS/CPO and other stakeholders via phone messaging and/or emails.
- h. The same applies for potential risk identified during planned or incidental conversations with care-givers.
- i. When necessary, chat groups comprising members of the child's family and support network are created and administered by the Principal. Members of the support network may comprise officers from CPS, family service centres, primary school, and KidStart.

5.1.3 An effective working relationship with the Early Childhood Development Agency, Child Protective Service and Child Protection Specialist Centres

- a. The Principal adheres strictly to the ECDA's Code of Practice and liaises with these authority bodies as stipulated.
- b. As HSCDC is a dedicated facility for children from disadvantaged circumstance, it is recognised that the risk to children's safety and wellbeing are relatively higher. The Principal fosters ongoing dialogues to address concerns raised by these authority bodies and HSCDC is committed to the ongoing strengthening of the working relationship with these authority bodies.

5.2 Educational, Social and Outreach Activities

5.2.1 Compliance with relevant statutes, regulatory standards, and codes of practice

Beyond will be guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children and Young Persons Act, the Sector Specific Screening Guide and the Child

Abuse Reporting Guide which all serve to safeguard the care, protection and rehabilitation of children and young persons below 18 years old.

5.2.2 Best practices in the management of suspected child abuse

- a. Standard Operating Process for Suspected Child Abuse in Families established and aligned with Sector Specific Screening Guide. Please refer to Annex 25.
- b. Concerns about the safety of children highlighted by residents, volunteers, or our staff where we have no visual or ability to engage the family, we contact the Principal Social Worker from the Office of the Director General of Social Welfare directly with a brief report for further action.

5.2.3 An effective working relationship with Child Protective Service and Child Protection Specialist Centres

- a. Beyond takes the view that the safety and safeguarding of children and young persons are enhanced when it is working collaboratively with the Child Protective Service and Child Protection Specialist Centres in a manner where concerns are shared, information exchanged, and interventions leverage on each other's identity, role, and strengths.
- b. On a bi-monthly basis, Beyond will reconcile their register of children and young persons with child protection concerns with the Child Protective Service with a view of facilitating collaborative intervention and cooperation. The executive director will be responsible for ensuring this is done.

6. Continual Capability and Capacity Building for Child Safety across the Organisation

Beyond adopts the checklist in the ECDA's Code of Practice (Second Edition 2021) to develop and maintain a Child-Safe environment by:

- Informing organisational priorities
- Identifying strengths and flagging out gaps that need action
- Facilitating discussion and encouraging reflective self-assessment

This checklist will be reviewed twice a year and an updated status of the checklist will reflect on Annex 1 of this policy. Below are the areas of observance.

- 1) Risk Management Plans
- 2) Recruitment and Screening of Staff and Volunteers
- 3) Staff Supervision and Training
- 4) Volunteer Supervision and Training
- 5) Child Engagement
- 6) Information Sharing and Communication
- 7) Self-Reflection and Improvement Plans

7. List of Annexes

Policy

- Annex 1 Capability and Capacity Building Check List for a Child-Safe Environment
- Annex 2 Code of Conduct
- Annex 3 MSF Safe and Strong Families Pilot Practitioner's Resource Guide Chapter 1

Risk Management Plans

- Annex 4 Risk Management Plan for Volunteer Management

Recruitment and Screening of Staff and Volunteers

- Annex 5 Staff Application and Declaration for Offences Form
- Annex 6 ECDA Staff Declaration for Offences and Warnings Form
- Annex 7 ECDA Key Appointment Holders Declaration for Offences, Warnings and Financial Capacity Form
- Annex 8 Pre-Interview Screening Form
- Annex 9 Professional and Personal Reference Check Form
- Annex 10 ECDA Medical Screening for Infectious Diseases Form
- Annex 11 Staff Training in Recruitment Practices
- Annex 12 Staff Recruitment Interview Assessment
- Annex 13 Volunteer Interview Questions
- Annex 14 Volunteer Declaration Form for Offences

Staff Supervision and Training

- Annex 15 Staff Orientation Slides

Volunteer Supervision and Training

- Annex 16 Befriender Training Slides
- Annex 17 Befriender Training Session Plan
- Annex 18 Befriender Training Role-Play Scenarios
- Annex 19 Volunteer Orientation Slides
- Annex 20 Guidelines for Volunteers at Beyond
- Annex 21 Guidelines for Volunteers at HSCDC
- Annex 22 Guidelines for Volunteers Supporting Preschoolers

Child Engagement

- Annex 23 Singapore Children's Society's KidsLive I Can Protect Myself Booklet
- Annex 24 7 Body Safety Rules: Every Kid Should Know Booklet
- Annex 25 Beyond Protocol for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse
- Annex 26 HSCDC Protocol for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse
- Annex 27 HSCDC Protocol for Reporting Child Absenteeism
- Annex 28 HSCDC Incident Management Plan
- Annex 29 HSCDC Submission of Incident Report
- Annex 30 Centre Management System (CMS) Incident Management Module: Centre User Manual

Information Sharing and Communication

Annex 31	Privacy Policy Statement
Annex 32	Non-Disclosure Agreement Form
Annex 33	Media Consent and Release Form