

KICKING



AIDS OUT!

Child Protection Policy

Introduction

As a Network of organizations working with and for children and youth, Kicking AIDS Out members must continuously strive to create and sustain protective, safe, healthy and stimulating environments. Further, they must find ways to let children and youth express their opinions and give them a voice to actively participate in addressing challenges that face youth all over the world. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Children (1989) sets out to secure children's rights through 42 amendments, of which we want to highlight the following; best interest of the child, freedom of expression, freedom of information and the right to play and recreational activities.

It is also of an utmost importance that Kicking AIDS Out has a Child Protection policy in place to safeguard our children and youth from any type of abuse as far as possible. A peer leader, a coach or an instructor is in regular contact with the children and the youth, and are important in identifying situations and cases where they will need protection. The UN Convention states that all children have the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. A child is here defined as a young person under the age of 18 years of age. UNICEF uses the term 'child protection' to refer to preventing and responding to exploitation, abuse and violence against children.

Abuse and exploitation of children unfortunately happens in all countries and societies around the world. The Kicking AIDS Out Network regards any abuse as unacceptable and also as nearly always preventable, and we therefore aim to set out common values in meeting our commitments towards protecting our children and youth. Key principles for the Kicking AIDS Out Network and examples on guidelines for good practices and practices to be avoided will be outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Our mission

is to empower youth to positively influence their lives and the lives of others by actively enhancing life skills through sport.

Policy aims

- To ensure that we provide our children and youth with protective, safe, healthy and stimulating environments
- To ensure that peer leaders, coaches and instructors respond adequately to child protection issues
- To ensure that our partner organizations develop and meet minimum standards of child protection in their programmes and activities

Code of conduct

The safety and the welfare of the child should always be our priority. We should aim to empower children by involving and discussing with them; about their rights, what is acceptable and what is not acceptable and how can they respond if there is a problem. We find the following *key principles* as essential in our work with children:

- Children should always be treated with respect
- Children should be free from any physical or mental abuse
- Children should be offered the opportunity to participate in sport activities regardless of gender, race, culture, language, age, sexual orientation, HIV status, religious beliefs and (dis)ability
- Children should experience an open environment where they can express themselves and be listened to
- Children should be informed that they are free to report any kind of abuse to the authorities without fear of any repercussions
- Children should experience the continuous promotion of fair play
- Children should participate in Kicking AIDS Out! activities and events of their own free will
- Children should be provided with appropriate education on HIV and AIDS

Appendix 1 lists *common examples* of how to create healthy and stimulating environments that provide positive spaces to build a culture of respecting the rights of children, reflecting the key principles outlined above. To give children a voice and to keep children safe should be a constant state of mind.

Procedures and responses

Members of the Kicking AIDS Out Network must make a common commitment to the protection of children and youth. Any and all instances of abuse, or suspicions of abuse, must be reported and responded to. The implementation of reporting and responding will need to be within the responsibility of each and every organization, but with the support of the Network and the Secretariat. The organizations within the Network must thus develop a plan for the follow-up on awareness, prevention, reporting and responding within their own organization. This plan and / or the Child Protection Policy within own organization that includes such a plan for reporting and responding, will be submitted or forwarded to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will facilitate and support the organizations in the process, and such guidelines will be outlined in Appendix 2.

All member organizations are obliged to sign the Kicking AIDS Out Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, and are thus also obliged to adhere to its contents. Especially, the organizations need to ensure that information about child protection and the applicable procedures are given to all leaders and participants. The organizations are also obliged to submit their plan for implementation to the Secretariat.

Kicking AIDS Out considers the acceptance of the content in this policy as a precondition of membership in the Network. The policy needs to be dated and signed before commencement of the membership.

Kicking AIDS Out will keep the Declaration of Acceptance on file.

Declaration

On behalf of _____, we, the undersigned, hereby declare that we have read and understood the Kicking AIDS Out Child Protection Policy. We agree to abide by its conduct, oversee the implementation and take the necessary steps to ensure that it is at the forefront of our practices.

Date: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Place: _____

Signature:

Signature:

Witness:

Witness:

Appendix 1 Code of conduct – A guideline

This appendix lists common examples on how to create the healthy and stimulating environments that we aim towards. Such lists can not be exhaustive or exclusive. We must strive towards always putting the needs of the children first, and to avoid all actions and behaviours that could harm the safety and the welfare of our children.

The following examples will also serve as a guideline on what each organization should address in their training on the Code of Conduct, and can thus be further extended according to the relevance in each and every member organization.

Good practices:

- Build relationships based on mutual trust
- Be a good role model, whatever position you are in
- Involve the children and youth in decision making and planning of the sporting activities
- Foster the learning and developing processes of the children in a manner that is suitable for their needs and interests
- Make sport fun and enjoyable for everyone
- Give motivating and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Strive to ensure a culture of openness where the children are free to raise any issues or concerns
- Try to work in partnership with parents / guardians in the everyday activities and in the education of children's rights
- Be aware of situations that may present risks for the children
- Report (and respond to) any abuse that you may be aware of

- During tournaments, there should always be a female coach / leader staying together with the girls
- Always treat information about children (also photos) and their families with discretion and respect

Practices to be avoided:

- Take children for any kind of HIV testing against their will or informed consent of their parents / guardians
- Use inappropriate language, or allow the child to use inappropriate language, that is discriminating, derogatory or disrespectful to other people
- Smoke or drink alcohol in the company of children and youth
- Hit or physically hurt a child
- Occupy a room alone with a child (without very good reason)
- Make sexually related comments to a child, even in fun
- Allowing, or engaging in, inappropriate touching
- Develop physical or sexual relationship with children (mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense)
- Exchange favors / advantages / services for sex

The guidelines will be reviewed during the next Network meeting.

Appendix 2 Procedures and responses – A guideline

The implementation processes of the Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct are essential to meet the policy aims and to fulfill our mission. Both on the individual level and on the organizational level, we need to understand its implications. Therefore, the following will supply examples and ideas on procedures regarding awareness, prevention, reporting and responses, all means that this appendix seeks to address in order to secure a dynamic policy and best practices. The Secretariat will initiate these processes and ensure that positive steps are taken to ensure the best interests of our children.

This section will be further developed in the period towards and during the next Kicking AIDS Out Network meeting. It is important that this is done in partnership and through discussion and sharing of ideas, experiences, examples and recommendations.