CHILD PROTECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Management Policy Statement and Definition

The principle that every child should be known, loved and protected is the foundation of Compassion's programme. Compassion neither tolerates nor condones the abuse or maltreatment of children. Following an incident of abuse, the well-being and restoration of the child is Compassion's primary concern.

Compassion defines child protection as the prevention of and response to person-to-person harm. This includes any behaviour by a person, either an adult or a child, which causes harm to a child through physical, sexual, emotional, harmful cultural practices, exploitation or neglect. Compassion will endeavour to prevent and respond to the harm of all beneficiaries regardless of age. Most of the beneficiaries are under 18 years of age, and therefore the term "child" is used, however the protection efforts are inclusive of beneficiaries over the age of 18 years.

Prevention

Compassion will work to prevent abuse by:

- Empowering those involved in the ministry to promote child protection, prevent abuse and intervene if they have child protection concerns
- Having robust systems in place to help to identify and prevent potential perpetrators.
- Educating and empowering children to speak up for themselves and others.
- Educating caregivers to speak out and act against the harm of children.

Management Policy Scope

This policy incorporates Compassion's global child protection standards, as well as Compassion Ireland specific applications. Compassion's global child protection standards apply to Compassion International, Inc., all consolidated affiliates, and all the Global Partners and the term "Compassion" is used in this document to indicate this global application. Compassion Ireland applications will be referred to specifically and the term "Compassion Ireland" is used.

A breach of global child protection standards is an act of misconduct and is grounds for disciplinary action and/or termination of employment or relationship, applicable across all of Compassion globally.

Risk to the children

Compassion believes that all children are created in the image of God, and that each child has immeasurable dignity and value as a gift from Him. Children are born dependent upon others for survival and development. Children experience an elevated vulnerability to the risk of abuse, exploitation and violence throughout childhood.

There is a risk that children participating in programmatic activities may experience some form of abuse or maltreatment, resulting in harm to the child, perpetrated by:

- another beneficiary
- a leader, a volunteer or staff member of a church partner,
- a Compassion staff member, board member, contractor, sponsor, donor, or visitor

There is also the risk that beneficiaries may experience maltreatment or harm from community or family members unrelated to the activities of the church partner or Compassion. Compassion staff members, church partner staff, volunteers and board members should respond appropriately to allegations or incidents of child maltreatment to reduce the risk of continued abuse to the child.

Global Child Protection Standards

Compassion's first and foremost responsibility is to protect children from harm. If a child is harmed, the priority is to restore the child's safety and provide opportunity for them to experience healing.

Compassion will work with frontline church partners to understand, accept and implement Compassion's child protection standards in their work with beneficiaries.

Global Program is responsible to develop and implement (directly, and in partnership with the local frontline church partner or Global Partner) Child Protection Standards including:

1. Ensuring that there is an appropriate and timely response to safeguarding concerns, Including:
    a. A clear process to internally report on child protection concerns to the child protection specialists or leads in each office or frontline church partner
    b. A clear process for the child protection specialist and leads to report concerns to the Global Child Protection team.
2. Expectations for partnership engagement and preparation to ensure potential frontline church partners share the same understanding of and commitment to the protection of children and prevention of maltreatment.
3. A statement of commitment to Child Protection and code of conduct, which includes behavioural expectations related to the protection of children, which must be signed, at a minimum, by:

a. Staff members and Independent contractors

b. Board members

c. Those who interact or visit face-to-face with beneficiaries

4. High quality training will be provided to those who are asked to sign the Statement of Commitment to Child Protection. This training will include child maltreatment awareness, prevention measures and appropriate responses to abuse or suspected abuse. This training will also be available to others.

5. Expectations for those who sign the Statement of Commitment to Child Protection, as well as beneficiaries, to respond appropriately to all incidents of child abuse, suspected or known.

6. Educating and empowering beneficiaries to speak up for themselves and others, and also educating caregivers to speak out and act against the harm of children.

7. Appropriate recruiting, hiring, disciplinary and other personnel practices which include stringent child protection considerations to ensure children are adequately protected, including disciplinary procedures following any incident of abuse (including but not limited to suspension, termination and referral to legal authorities).

8. Robust processes for the protection of whistleblowers and anyone who makes a report of either suspected or actual child harm or abuse.

9. Expectations for appropriate communications across all platforms and media to do all that is reasonably possible to promote the protection of children.

10. Expectations for beneficiary behaviour with other children (including other beneficiaries), and guidance for addressing beneficiary-to-beneficiary abuse.

11. Guidelines for engagement with appropriate like-minded organisations and systems at all levels (local, national, international) to promote the protection of children, prevention of maltreatment, and provision of services in response to allegations or incidences of maltreatment.

External Reporting

Compassion's definition of abuse or maltreatment is informed by international standards set by organisations like the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). This may differ from the legal or criminal definitions of abuse set by individual countries. Compassion strives to have policies in place which are at least as strong, if not stronger, than national legal or criminal standards. Compassion follows all relevant national laws relating to the reporting of child maltreatment and criminal behaviour. Compassion will fully cooperate with legal investigations and participate as needed in criminal or civil prosecution. Compassion's internal investigations into allegations of abuse do not replace any investigations by legal authorities. Compassion's interventions and internal decisions about abuse cases are also not limited by a government's ability to prosecute a case.

In all cases, Compassion Ireland will determine whether it is necessary and if so, report child protection incidents adequately and appropriately to relevant authorities, police and regulators. Reporting will not be avoided on the basis that it may cause harm to the reputation of Compassion Ireland or expose Compassion Ireland to a potential claim by the victim or investigation by a state body.

Ireland Child Protection Officer

The Board of Compassion Ireland will appoint a Child Protection Officer to oversee the implementation and ongoing monitoring of this policy and to act as a point of contact for all Child Protection concerns.

How to report child protection concerns in the Ireland

Compassion Ireland is committed to building a safe environment where anyone who has concerns about suspected abuse feels empowered to report those concerns; both internally as well as from external sources such as members of the public, volunteers, partners and official bodies. Compassion Ireland takes all allegations of child maltreatment seriously.

Anyone who has a complaint or concern relating to child protection should report it immediately to the Child Protection Officer at childprotection@compassion.uk.org

Individuals reporting through the Child Protection email route will enjoy the same protections as are contained in the Whistleblowing Policy.

The Compassion Ireland Child Protection Officer will follow global reporting standards, which include reporting each incident to the international child protection team and any external body, as required.

Following an incident of abuse, the well-being and restoration of the child is Compassion's primary concern.

Related Ireland Management Policies

Compassion Ireland's **Whistle Blowing Policy** is intended to cover serious concerns that fall outside the scope of this policy. The whistle blowing policy is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

Update Frequency

This policy must be reviewed and approved every three years.

Last Approval Date

October 2018

Definitions for this Policy

Church partners	Frontline Church partners in our field countries
Maltreatment	Any behaviour by a person – either an adult or a child - which causes harm to a child. This could be physical, sexual, emotional, harmful cultural practices, exploitation or neglect.
Compassion	Where "Compassion" is referred to, this means Compassion International, Inc., all consolidated affiliates, and all the Global Partners
Global Program	The division of Compassion International that is responsible for the effective design and implementation of Compassion's programme's through a partnership with the local church and the ongoing communication needs related to these programmes.
Beneficiaries	Any individual enrolled in Compassion's programme.

COMPASSION
FOR CHILDREN