

## **MTW Code of Conduct for Child Protection**

**Adult participants (ages 18 and older) must read this Code of Conduct and sign the Adult Acknowledgement page.**

**Youth participants (ages 13-17) must read and sign the Youth Acknowledgement page**

### **Visibility**

All work with children shall be planned in a way that minimizes risks as far as possible. This includes being visible to other adults when working with children. This can be accomplished by planning activities in areas where other adults are present and at a time when other activities are occurring. It can also be accomplished by installing windows in all classrooms and other rooms used by children or keeping doors open.

### **Overcoming Isolation**

At least two unrelated adults shall be present in work with children. When this is not possible, reduce isolation by having a minimum of two children present, informing the child's parent of your meeting, and doing it during a time and/or in a location where your interaction with the child is visible to others. Isolation could be overcome, for example, by taking two or more children to the bathroom together rather than only one, dropping off siblings last in a carpool, or taking your own child or spouse along when providing rides. We expect an adequate number of adults to supervise youth events, especially overnight activities.

### **Accountability**

When ministry to a child involves one-on-one contact, the following procedures shall be followed, as applicable. Always be accountable to other adults regarding your interactions with youth or children. Counseling or other necessarily confidential meetings with children shall be done in an office with a window in the door and only when another adult is in close vicinity, aware that the meeting is occurring, and willing to stay in the vicinity until it is completed. Parents and/or supervisors are to be notified beforehand of any activities with youth or children. For example, before transporting a youth or child, keeping a child after school or a youth activity, or when tutoring a child or youth.

### **Parent Involvement**

Parents are responsible for knowing where their children are at all times. Therefore, parents shall be informed of planned school or dorm activities (e.g. trips included in the schedule for the term) and asked to sign a consent form whenever possible. Parents shall be encouraged to make unannounced visits to program activities, as this also reduces the risk of abuse.

### **Supervision**

Supervision also reduces risk. Program administrators shall periodically and randomly inspect classrooms, offices, work areas and other areas where children and adults are together.

### **Technology**

Technology should be used appropriately to protect children or youth from abuse and exploitation, for example, to prevent downloading pornographic material from the Internet, access to inappropriate emails, chat rooms, or movies.

### **Discipline**

Discipline should be used to teach and correct rather than punish. It should not include slapping, hitting, shaming, yelling at, or belittling a child.

## Touch

Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children but unhealthy touch is abusive, the following guidelines apply. Touch shall be open rather than secretive. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors. Touch should be in response to the need of the child, and not the need of the adult. Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult. It should be with the child's permission and any resistance from the child should be respected. Touch should always communicate respect for the child. Adults should avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they are able to do for themselves, including dressing, bathing, etc. Adults and other youth or children should not hit, slap, pinch, push, hold against their will, or otherwise assault children. The following signs of affection are generally appropriate within specific contexts: verbal praise, side hugs, shoulder to shoulder hugs, pats on the shoulder, back, or head (when culturally appropriate). For smaller children, touching their hands, faces, shoulders and arms, arms around their shoulders, hugs, or holding them when others are present. The following behaviors between staff or volunteers and children are inappropriate or may be perceived as inappropriate and shall not be engaged in: touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs; showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child; sleeping in bed with a child; inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development; flirtatious or seductive looks; any form of affection that is unwanted by the child; showing sexually-suggestive videos or playing sexually-suggestive games with any child; any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature. Team members shall monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

## Verbal Interaction

Words can also be used to support and encourage a child, such as praise, positive reinforcement, and appropriate jokes. Inappropriate verbal interaction includes the following: shaming, belittling, humiliating, name calling, using harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate the child, cursing, or making derogatory remarks about the child. Adults shall avoid favoring or showing differential treatment to particular children or youth to the exclusion of others.

Inappropriate verbal interaction also includes telling off-color or sexual jokes, making sexually suggestive comments, telling inappropriate secrets, or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with children.

## Reporting of Abuse

When anyone has reason to suspect or has knowledge of child abuse within the scope of MTW's work and ministry, he or she must report it immediately to one of the following in the MTW office: the **director of Spiritual Life, the Chief Operations Officer, or the Personnel director**. It is preferred that the initial report be made either in-person, via telephone conversation, or electronic mail, without taking any other action or doing any preliminary investigation.

## Child Protection Policy

Child abuse (sexual, physical, and emotional) or neglect is not tolerated by Mission to the World (MTW). Anyone who is determined to have committed, been convicted of, or confessed to child abuse or sustained an unrepentant neglect is not eligible for service and, if serving, will have their relationship with MTW terminated.

In order to prevent child abuse, MTW addresses child safety through appropriate screening.

Anyone who is known or determined to have committed abuse of a child under the age of 18 or of a mentally or emotionally handicapped person at any time during his/her adult life is not eligible for service either as a missionary or a volunteer and, if already serving, will have his/her relationship with MTW terminated immediately, with no later opportunity to serve as a missionary

or a volunteer, accompany a missionary for an assignment, or be on MTW properties. MTW will not knowingly allow anyone who has been convicted of child abuse to participate in any ministry, either as a missionary, staff or volunteer.

Anyone who committed child abuse or neglect before the age of 18 will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account such factors as age, seriousness of the offense, acknowledgement of responsibility, and effective treatment.

If MTW is asked for a reference, MTW will generally disclose the reasons for termination when the termination involves abuse. Further, if MTW becomes aware that a former missionary or volunteer of MTW becomes employed by another organization where the individual has access to children, MTW will normally make that organization aware of the reasons for MTW's termination of employment of the individual.

The MTW Child Protection Policy will be utilized in determining appropriate administrative actions for anyone accused of or found to have committed child abuse or neglect.

If a person is found guilty, they will not be allowed to voluntarily resign. In cases where corroborating evidence shows that a person previously employed by MTW committed child abuse while in the employ of MTW, their personnel file will reflect such and they will be considered ineligible for re-hire.

Any missionary whose dependent children have been determined to have committed child abuse or neglect will be asked to follow through with the action plan put in place to resolve the causes and effects of the abuse, taking into account such factors as age, age difference between offender and victim(s), seriousness of the offense(s), acknowledgement of responsibility, and effective treatment. Failure to do so will lead to termination of the missionary's relationship with MTW. Reapplication would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and involve effective treatment and other factors listed above.

When ministry includes working with children, MTW will allow missionaries to serve under another agency only if that agency has a child protection policy conforming to the Best Practice Standards of the Child Safety Protection Network.

Every MTW team, regardless of the location (within the U.S. or foreign) must investigate the child protection laws of their jurisdiction.

Failure to follow the Child Protection Policy or the Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

No portion of this policy can be amended by any individual, nor can any individual grant permission to deviate from the policy, except where mandated by local laws. Any change to this policy must be granted by CMTW.

Continued on next page.

## MTW Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form – **Adult version**

I will not commit abuse upon any child or willingly allow any harm or abuse to occur to a child.

I understand I have a responsibility to report any and all suspicions of child abuse or harm.

I understand that all one-adult-to-one-child situations are to be avoided whenever possible, and I strive to avoid such situations with children other than my own. When unavoidable, I will take steps to eliminate isolation and unnecessary risk.

I will not participate in activities or ongoing communication with any child without the knowledge and consent of his or her parents.

I will not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.

I will not invite any unaccompanied children into my home without the knowledge and consent of their parents, and the presence of another adult.

I will act with caution and discretion when posting photos online that include children, taking into consideration clothing, parental consent and who has access to the photo.

I understand that corporal punishment of any child other than my own is forbidden.

I am responsible for my visitors and am aware that if they engage in any ministry they must follow the procedures and policies applicable to volunteers.

I understand that if any accusation of child abuse is made against me or a family member, we may be required to cease contact with the alleged victim and or other children until an appropriate assessment is made.

I agree to fully cooperate with any child safety assessment by Mission to the World.

I understand that a report may be made to law enforcement and child protection agencies locally and in the United States.

I will remain open to learn and to be instructed as to appropriate ways of complying with this code of conduct.

I agree to comply with MTW's code of conduct as written.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of your church

Please give this signed page to your team leader or to your MTW contact if you are not part of a team.

## MTW Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form – Youth version

I will not commit abuse upon any child or willingly allow any harm or abuse to occur to a child.

I understand I have a responsibility to report any and all suspicions of child abuse or harm to local MTW Missionaries or a team leader.

I understand that all one-adult-to-one-child situations are to be avoided whenever possible. When unavoidable, I will take steps to eliminate isolation and unnecessary risk.

I will not participate in activities or ongoing communication with any child without the knowledge and consent of his or her parents.

I will not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.

I will act with caution and discretion when posting photos online that include children.

I understand that if any accusation of child abuse is made against me or a family member, we may be required to cease contact with the alleged victim and or other children until an appropriate assessment is made.

I agree to fully cooperate with any child safety assessment by Mission to the World.

I understand that a report may be made to law enforcement and child protection agencies locally and in the United States.

I will remain open to learn and to be instructed as to appropriate ways of complying with this code of conduct.

I agree to comply with MTW's code of conduct as written.

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Printed Name

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Signature

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Date

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Name of your church

Please give this signed page to your team leader.