



## Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

**PURPOSE:** Healthy Niños Honduras (hereinafter referred to as HNH) is committed to upholding the rights, freedoms and security of children and vulnerable adults at all times. While assisting Honduras Communities through providing volunteers who participate with HNH's mission team(s), the first priority of HNH is the safety and protection of the children and vulnerable people they work alongside with. HNH is committed to ensuring that the children and vulnerable adults are not exposed to abuse, exploitation, violence or neglect.

All responsible mission team volunteers need to understand the importance of having effective policies and processes in place to protect the interests and welfare of the Honduras Communities and individuals that HNH's operations and functions interact with. We know risks exist in relation to how we interact with children and vulnerable adults and we're focused on ensuring that those risks are mitigated through the effective implementation of this policy.

**SCOPE:** The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy is HNH's organizational wide policy and statement of intent. It applies to all HNH members and HNH operations, the actions of HNH's volunteers and the operations of any partner organization. It is written with the acknowledgment that every volunteer and every member of the HNH organization has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children and vulnerable adults.

**DEFINITIONS:** For purposes of this policy, a child is considered to be any person who is under 16 years of age. A vulnerable adult is considered to be someone who may be in need of additional support for reasons of disability, illness or socio-economic conditions. Also, it refers to any individual or group of individuals who are the recipient of placement services (Nutrition Center). Exploitation refers to any act of treating a person unfairly in order to gain some kind of benefit.

**BEST INTERESTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL:** All decisions and actions concerning a child or vulnerable adult will take the best interest of the individual as the most important consideration. It will be the policy of HNH that decisions or actions regarding any child,

vulnerable adult, or groups of either shall ensure that the positive impact of the decision or action will outweigh any negative impact.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION:** HNH is committed to enforcing a policy of non-discrimination at all times. All children and vulnerable adults who have any interactions with HNH members and HNH volunteers will be treated with respect and equal consideration.

The guidelines set out in this policy aim to protect both children and vulnerable adults from abuse, and also HNH members and HNH volunteers from false accusations of abuse.

It is the policy of HNH to:

- Respect the rights and dignity of the children, vulnerable adults, families and communities with whom HNH works, and always act according to the best interests of the community.
- Demonstrate a commitment to actively preventing the abuse of children and vulnerable adults.
- Take appropriate action to prevent abusers from becoming involved with HNH, and enforce necessary measures against any associate(s) of HNH who commits abuse.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Program Directors – The HNH Board appointed a representative in each country in which HNH operates to be responsible for ensuring that *the Child and Vulnerable Prevention Policy* is distributed and understood by all associates of HNH and the operations and functions. The assigned Program Directors are responsible for advising and informing all local staff and volunteers of the Policy and are responsible for the effective implementation of this policy in the countries of HNH program operations and functions.
2. Board of Directors – The HNH Board will appoint and supervise the HNH Executive Director who will be responsible for the implementation of this policy. The HNH Executive Director will ensure that its content and procedures that support its implementation are fit for purpose. The HNH Executive Director will ensure partners understand, support the policy and adhere to them at all times. The HNH Executive Director will also ensure this policy is communicated appropriately to and with volunteers and other relevant HNH program participants.
3. Volunteers – All such HNH participants will be made aware of this policy and the Code of Conduct within it throughout their engagement with HNH and any failure to meet the requirements of the policy is considered a breach of HNH's Terms and Conditions of Service.

## **HNH VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, SCREENING AND ORIENTATION:**

- All HNH volunteers will be informed of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.
- HNH reserves the right to terminate a volunteer's program participation if a background check or reference check reveals that the volunteer is not suitable to work with children or vulnerable adults, for any reason.
- The Program Directors shall ensure that all new volunteers acknowledge receipt and understanding of this policy, and such acknowledgement will be kept on file.

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR HNH VOLUNTEERS:** This Code of Conduct provides guidelines deemed to be appropriate and proper behavior for HNH volunteers when interacting with children and vulnerable adults. These guidelines are primarily designed to protect the individuals that volunteers work with, but are also intended to protect HNH volunteers from false accusations of inappropriate behavior or abuse. (Reference to placement site means the Mission House, Nutrition Center and communities being visited.)

- No child or vulnerable adult is to be taken outside the boundaries of the placement site, without making prior arrangements with the placement staff.
- HNH volunteers are not permitted to share a bed or room with any children or vulnerable adult while participating on an HNH program.
- No presents are to be brought for placement participants without prior approval from the placement staff.
- Photography and videography of children or vulnerable adults is only permitted with permission from the placement staff and photos/videos should not be taken in a way intended to belittle or degrade any placement participant.
- HNH volunteers should not act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or vulnerable adults or perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- HNH volunteers must display appropriate language, actions and relationships with children and vulnerable adults at all times.
- HNH volunteers must take extreme care when interacting physically with placement participants. Under no circumstance should any physical contact be, or have the appearance of being sexual in any way.
- HNH volunteers must not exert inappropriate physical force when dealing with children or vulnerable adults. This includes pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping or any other action that could cause fear intimidation or distress.
- HNH volunteers must not discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favor particular individuals to the exclusion of others.

- HNH volunteers are responsible for their actions and reactions to children and vulnerable adults at all times. Volunteers are always considered to be responsible for their actions regardless of how a child or vulnerable adult behaves towards them.
- Where possible and practical, HNH volunteers should implement the ‘two person’ rule, whereby two or more responsible adults supervise all activities with children and vulnerable adults.
- Inappropriate conduct towards children and vulnerable adults including failure to follow the behavior standards stated above is grounds for discipline including dismissal from the HNH program. Extreme breaches of policy may result in law enforcement notification and legal action.

NOTE: This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle underlying this policy is that volunteers and staff should avoid actions or behaviors which may constitute poor practice or potential abuse and exploitation.