**FEED MY LAMBS CHILDREN MINISTRY**

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**Background**

Feed My Lambs Children Ministry is a Christian organization launched in July 2006 with the main goal of bringing the gospel to boys and girls in Kenya and Uganda and equipping local Children's workers to do the same. FML is committed to reaching children with the gospel through different ministries including child evangelism, correspondence courses, e-mail courses on child protection, teacher training as well as practical ministry which aims to help Churches, Schools and Children's centers with practical work which is required. Child evangelism is the main aim of "Feed My Lambs" and an opportunity to teach the boys and girls and share with them the gospel and their need of salvation. To support this ministry, children events or rallies are organized as well as printing and distribution of literature for the children.

FML is committed to the protection of children and dedicated to ensuring that its workers, volunteers, visitors and contractors, have children’s best interests at the heart of their involvement with the organization. The organization has therefore developed a Child Protection Policy to guide our workers and other stakeholders in their daily interaction with children in any work we engage in to ensure that the children are protected from abuse and to protect the workers and stakeholders from wrongful allegations of abuse. The policy sets out common principles and behavior protocols that the organization will adopt in order to meet our commitment to protect children. Non-compliance with any of the elements in this policy will be taken seriously by the organization.

**Definitions under this Policy**

***Child*** -Any person under the age of 18 years (0-18 years)

***Child Abuse***- is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.

***Child Protection***-the responsibilities, measures and activities that the organization undertakes to safeguard children from both intentional and unintentional harm.

**Behavior Protocols and FML**

FML workers, volunteers, visitors and contractors must observe the following behavior protocols at all times:

**Interacting with Children**

1. Treat all children and their families with respect and dignity
2. NEVER ABUSE AND/OR EXPLOIT a child or act/behave in any way that places a child at risk of harm. This includes abuses that are perpetrated online in the social media sites like Facebook, twitter; instagram among others. It also includes sexual or emotional abuses and physical abuses that might result as a consequence of dealing with disruptive behavior of children when teaching them e.g.  Smacking or hitting a child.
3. Never be alone with a child, always ensure that another adult is present when conducting activities with children
4. Stop any interaction with a child if a child says stop, or if the child appears uncomfortable with the interaction.
5. Do not take a child to your home or encourage meetings outside the scope of the programme activity.
6. Adults should dress in a dignified manner whenever interacting with children
7. All FML workers will undergo basic child protection and child evangelism training which will be offered either online or face to face.
8. FML workers, volunteers and visitors must never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games with children, including horseplay
9. Never allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
10. FML workers and visitors will be encouraged to pray for and with the children
11. All the FML workers and volunteers are encouraged to be consistent and work together as a team to advance the gospel to the boys and girls and enhance protection of children.
12. FML workers ,volunteers and visitors must never allow or engage in inappropriate touching of children in any form
13. There may be contact during sports/games, but remember your size and strength and restrict your involvement for the safety of children
14. Physical contact of a comforting and reassuring nature is a valid way of expressing your concerns and care.  However, it is only appropriate if it is meeting the need of the child.
15. FML workers must never do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves
16. It may be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or children with disabilities.  These tasks should only be carried out with the understanding and consent of parents/caregivers.  In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents should be informed, as soon as reasonably possible.

**Responding to Child protection Concerns**

1. Raise all child protection concerns, issues and problems as soon as possible with FML director or the child protection focal point person.
2. Respond to a child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with applicable procedures
3. Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns and allegations
4. Never let allegations a child makes to go without being addressed and recorded
5. Contribute to an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights.

**Photos and Stories of Children**

1. Always ask permission from children (or in the case of young children, their parents or guardians) before taking images (e.g. photographs, videos) of them. Explain how they will be used and respect their decision to say no to an image being taken.
2. Ensure that any images taken of children are respectful (For example: children should have adequate clothing that covers up the sexual organs. Images of children in sexually suggestive poses or that in any way impact negatively on their dignity or privacy are not acceptable).
3. Stories and images of children should be based on the child’s best interest.
4. FML will require written permission from the individual concerned or their guardians when a photo, video or story clearly identifies and provides substantial information about a particular child or places a person in a situation that could be damaging to their dignity, safety or reputation. For example, information about HIV status, involvement in prostitution or armed conflict.
5. Be extremely sensitive to a person’s vulnerability at times of trauma or grief, and always assess how a photo, video or story will impact on the safety, dignity and well-being of the person concerned.
6. Do not portray people as helpless victims. Balance human needs with positive language about what people are doing to help themselves.
7. Photos and stories must not use real names of children or real locations, especially when communicating sensitive information (For example, HIV status or sexual abuse).
8. Be aware that where concerns exist about the conduct of an FML worker, volunteer or associate in relation to child protection and/or where there has been a breach of the child protection policy, this will be investigated under this policy either: by considering referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of Kenya; and/or by FML in accordance with set procedures.
9. Be aware that FML will sever all relations with any worker, volunteer, associate or visitor who is proven to have committed child abuse.

**Electronic Child Safety Standards and Procedures**

1. Anyone storing photos, videos or information about children must use every effort to prevent unauthorized access or inappropriate use.
2. Child personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child within a country should not be used on websites or in any other form of communication about a child.
3. Efforts must be made to copyright and watermark all photos of children on websites and anyone displaying photos must use all technology available to prevent unauthorized downloading or copying.

**Visiting FML Projects**

All visitors to FML projects must:

1. Always be accompanied by an FML worker/ volunteer at all times during the visit
2. Be sensitive to cultural differences
3. Visitors may not stay overnight with children, whether in a staff member or volunteer’s home or elsewhere.
4. Visitors should show respect to the children they meet. They should avoid flirting, unwelcome flattery, or making suggestive comments.
5. All field visitors, volunteers, contractors and FML workers MUST HAVE a police background clearance
6. All field visitors, volunteers, contractors and FML workers must sign a document stating they have read and agreed to comply with the behavior protocols in this policy

**Personal Conduct outside Work**

We are committed to ensuring that our workers and volunteers apply high standards of behavior towards children within both their professional and their private lives. FML does not intend to dictate the belief and value systems by which its workers and volunteers conduct their personal lives. However, unlawful or other conduct which jeopardizes FML reputation or position whether during or after business hours will not be permitted. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to: any unlawful activity related to sexual abuse; sexual harassment; physically/verbally abusive behavior; alcoholism, public disorderly conduct and online child abuse in the social media.