



Fernthai  
Volunteer Foundation  
CHILD PROTECTION  
POLICY STATEMENT





## Fernthai Volunteer Foundation Child Protection Policy Statement:

We have a duty of care to safeguard all children we support. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled and disadvantaged children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be addressed.

**Fernthai Volunteer Foundation** is a Child Safe and Child Friendly Organisation, we have adopted a Child Protection Policy (CPP) as sanctioned by Childwise, Australia and in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Definitions: *Throughout this document:*

**FTVT** Refers to **Fernthai Volunteer Foundation**

'Child' refers to any young person in the care, supervision or contact of an employee or volunteer of **FTVT** under the age of 18, as defined by the United Nations' Convention of the Rights of the Child

The appropriate **FTVT** official is deemed to be the **FTVT** Onsite Coordinator or a **FTVT** employee or director

### Child Protection Policy

Children around the world are at risk from exploitation, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, neglect and other forms of inappropriate interactions perpetrated by adults and older children. Children are especially at risk in global south as they adapt to rapid changes, movements of people, a lack of robustness in the legal process and booming inbound tourism industry.

### **FTVT are committed to protecting children from any form of exploitation or abuse.**

We are especially aware of the constant risks and remains vigilant to threats arising towards children. All employees will be trained in child protection issues such as awareness, identification and where to seek additional help and volunteers will be informed of relevant child protection issues prior to their placement with us. In addition we have adopted the following Child Protection Policy that must be read and signed by all persons employed by or offering their services as sub contractors and or voluntary services to us. The signing and observation of the policy form an integral part of any contract of employment or written or verbal agreement between **FTVT** and our volunteers.

### **Article 19 of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC):**

- 1 States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
- 2 Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programs to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

(<http://www.unicef.org>)

### **Setting the Standards, the United Kingdom's guidelines on child protection for International Non-Government Organizations' (NGOs), Standard 1 states:**

Any International NGO should have a child protection policy if its direct or indirect beneficiaries include individuals under the age of 18. (<http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Topics/Child%20Protection%20Policy.pdf>)

To conform to the UNCRC and the *Setting the Standard* guidelines, **FTVT** has endorsed this Child Protection Policy.

## **Aims of the Child Protection Policy**

We are committed to the protection of all the children it works for. The welfare of the child is paramount. The major aims of the **FTVF** Child Protection Policy are to convey that:

All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, **have the right to protection from abuse and exploitation.**

We are committed to ensuring children are provided with a safe and protective environment at all **FTVF** locations.

All staff and volunteers are equipped to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

All staff and volunteers working with **FTVF** have a responsibility to uphold the Child Protection Policy and report any concerns to:

*The **FTVF** Onsite Coordinator or a **FTVF** Director*

and ensure the concerns are reported to the appropriate authorities.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, appropriately and formally recorded.

## **FTVF Child Protection Policy statement**

**FTVF** has a duty of care to safeguard all children it supports. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled and disadvantaged children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be addressed.

## **Introduction**

Child exploitation and abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to explore and understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgment about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, at school and on the street. Those who exploit children include parents and other family members, community members, teachers, tourists and volunteers/staff with different support organizations. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. A volunteer, worker or teacher within **FTVF** will have regular contact with children and is an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases involving child protection issues or of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

## **Forms of child exploitation/abuse**

Exploitation of children and young people can take place in many forms. These include:

**Sexual Abuse:** Forcing or coercing a child into: any sexual act including physical contact of penetrative or non penetrative (such as oral sex) nature; partaking or watching of pornographic material/sexual acts; encouraging children to behave in a sexually inappropriate way.

**Physical Abuse:** Includes any act that physically harms a child including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.

**Emotional Abuse:** Any negative emotional ill treatment of a child causing them to feel inadequate, unloved, unworthy, frightened or in danger. This can include verbal abuse, imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations on the child or restricting their participation in age appropriate activities/normal social interaction.

**Neglect:** Is the persistent failure/denial to meet a child's physical and psychological needs. This can take the form of failing to provide food and water, shelter, supervision and medical care and/or failing to protect a child from physical, sexual or emotional harm or danger. In the global south, poverty is persistent and all consuming, rendering many families unable to provide many of these necessities to their children. This inability is not deliberate and of course is different in nature to deliberate neglect. Then **FTVF**, along with many NGOs are working towards improving the living standard for all the children we support. Staff and volunteers with **FTVF** must ensure all their actions are directed towards this aim, and must ensure that they themselves do not perpetrate any neglectful acts while children are in their care. If a staff member or volunteer is particularly concerned for certain children they must speak with the **FTVF** coordinator or director.

**Remember:** Abuse and exploitation of children can be perpetrated by many different people: Tourists and volunteers/staff of various organizations working with children; Parents and other Family Members; Community members, teachers etc...

Some common signs and symptoms of child abuse and possible signs of concern regarding adult behaviour can be found in Appendix 1.

### **Recruitment of FTVT staff and volunteers**

**FTVT** recognizes that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

### **Pre-volunteering/employment checks will include the following:**

All volunteers/staff must read, demonstrate that they understand and sign the **FTVT** Child Protection Policy in front of the **FTVT** official prior to commencing work.

**All volunteers/staff must declare any past child protection breaches/criminal record.**

Appropriate references/referees must be given if/when requested by **FTVT**.

All volunteers / staff must answer any appropriate questions asked by officials of **FTVT**. Information gathered will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.

The Evidence of identity (passport for international volunteers) must be shown to the nominated **FTVT** official, who will take a photocopy/scan of the passport and your entry visa (for international volunteers) prior to commencing the volunteer or employee placement.

### **Interview and induction regarding child protection issues All FTVT employees and volunteers are required to undergo a brief meeting with the relevant FTVT official prior to commencing work during which:**

The **FTVT** Child Protection Policy will be read and signed (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures) in front of the onsite coordinator.

The identity is confirmed (and copies of passport and Thai entry visa will be made).

The job requirements and responsibilities will be clarified.

Child protection procedures are reviewed.

### **Child Protection Responsibility for FTVT volunteers and staff. In addition to pre-volunteering/employment checks, volunteers and staff of FTVT should:**

Analyze their own practice against established good practice, and ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.

Ask for advice/help from the relevant **FTVT** representative if they are unsure of any aspects of child protection.

Recognize their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.

Respond to concerns expressed by a child.

Work safely and effectively with children.

### **Good practice guidelines for all staff and volunteers**

All personnel of **FTVT** should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behavior in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

#### **Good practice means:**

Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations with children.

Treating all children and young people equally with respect and dignity.

Always putting the welfare of each child first.

Maintaining a safe, appropriate and respectful distance with children.

Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making and communication.

Striving to make all contact with children fun, enjoyable and fair.

Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support or play is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines in this document.

Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people and appropriate dress.

Giving enthusiastic and constructive communication, play and feedback.

Recognizing the developmental needs and capacity of children – avoiding any instructions beyond their capability.

Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

### **Practices never sanctioned by FTVT**

**The following are never sanctioned. Under no circumstances must you:**

Engage in any inappropriate conduct with children.

Be alone with less than three children at any time.

Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including over the top horseplay.

Spend time alone with children away from others.

Escort less than three children at a time in any vehicle (unless in an emergency situation).

Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.

Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.

Make sexually suggestive comments to a child.

Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.

Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

Invite or allow children to enter your accommodation.

### **Incidents that must be reported/recorded**

**If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate FTVT representative and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child and principals of the schools are informed if appropriate:**

If you accidentally hurt a child.

If he/she seems unusually distressed in any manner.

If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done with the result that the situation could be construed to be in contravention of this Child Protection Policy.

**If you suspect any form of child exploitation is occurring, regardless of the suspected perpetrator.**

### Abuse and exploitation

There is evidence that some people may use opportunities where they are in close contact with children as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage. All staff and volunteers with **FTVT** should seek prior permission from the relevant **FTVT** representative if they intend to take photos/video at the school and the resulting images or video must be made available for review by the relevant representative on request.

### Inappropriate activity

Sensitivity is encouraged with regard to taking individual or close up photos or video of any children, both with respect to the intrusiveness of the action and the duration. Shorter duration volunteers especially should remember that while this may be a unique opportunity for them to record images it is unhelpful for the children to be photographed time and again on a regular basis.

Staff and volunteers should be vigilant while at any **FTVT** project and any concerns should to be reported to the relevant representative.

### Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working/volunteering with **FTVT** to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. **The responsibility extends only to acting on any reasonable concerns and communicating these to the relevant authority.**

### Whistleblower Protection

**FTVT** assures all staff and volunteers that it will fully support anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that abuse or exploitation is or may be taking place.

### Accused person protection

**FTVT** assures all staff and volunteers that all details of any accusation will be kept strictly confidential and relayed only on a need to know basis to the relevant authorities. Further, that whilst respecting the need to protect children, full regard for the rights of the individual and the possibility of error in the reporting of concerns will be assured.

### If a disclosure is made to you, the following procedure should be followed:

Remain calm and try to assume a non-judgmental attitude.

Do not question children directly/further beyond that which they have (or third party has) told you.

Do not make any promises but do tell the child or third party what your responsibility is and what you will do.

Even if encouraged by the child or third party to 'not tell anyone' you have a duty to report concerns to the relevant authority. You must explain to the informer what your responsibility is and what you have to do, as stated in this policy.

Make detailed notes about any allegation/suspicion and;

Report your concerns as soon as possible to the relevant representative who will then contact the appropriate authorities or;

Contact the authorities yourself if concerns need immediate/ alternative attention or you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue with the **FTVT** representative.

Fill out the **FTVT** Incident Reporting Form as soon as possible.

Seek a formal debriefing for yourself through the **FTVT** representative.

### Information needed by the authorities and the police about suspected abuse:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made as close to the time of the disclosure/concern (see Appendix 3), which should include the following if known:

The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.

The child's home address and telephone number.

Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.

The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioral changes.

Details of witnesses to the incidents.

The child's account, if it was given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.

Have the parents been contacted?

If so, what has been said?

Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?

Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

Where possible referral to the police or ChildSafe services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

**Where there is a misconduct complaint against or a disregard for the FTVT Child Protection Policy by anyone working within the organization the following actions may take place:**

Immediate removal of the suspected person from the relevant **FTVT** premises pending further investigation

A report to the appropriate authorities

A criminal investigation and prosecution with the support of **FTVT**

**Confidentiality**

Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned regardless of the outcome of the situation. Information will be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

**Criminal Record Declaration**

**AS STATED IN THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY, BECAUSE OF THE SENSITIVE NATURE OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO DISCLOSE DETAILS OF ANY CRIMINAL RECORD. ONLY RELEVANT CONVICTIONS AND OTHER INFORMATION WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT SO DISCLOSURE NEED NOT NECESSARILY BE A BAR TO VOLUNTEERING OR WORKING WITH FTVT. YOU MUST ALSO DECLARE THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OF FTVT AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY AND UPHOLD THE POLICY THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF YOUR PLACEMENT.**

Have you ever been convicted of an offence by the courts or cautioned, reprimanded or given a final warning by the police?

Yes No (Please tick)

If yes, please give details of offences, penalties and dates:

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Have you ever been convicted of an offence by the courts or cautioned, reprimanded or given a final warning by the police?

Yes No (Please tick)

If yes, please give details of offences, penalties and dates:

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Is your name on **any** country's prohibited persons list as being a person considered unfit to work with children and young people?

Yes No (Please tick)

If yes, please give details:

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I confirm that I have read the **FTVT** Child Protection Policy and understand what is expected of me. I confirm that if I am unsure of information within the policy I will discuss this issue with the relevant **FTVT** representative.  
I agree to the **FTVT** performing a Standard or Enhanced Criminal Record Check in my country of origin/residence or any other country in which I have remained for SIX [6] months or longer.  
I confirm that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete.

Signed ..... Date.....

Print Name: ..... **FTVT** volunteer

Please note that the information given on this form will be kept securely and will remain strictly confidential.  
Witnessed by:

Signed ..... Date.....

Print Name: ..... **FTVT** representative

**Appendix 1.**

Signs and Symptoms of child abuse - victim (Summarized from the NSW Interagency Guidelines for Child Protection Intervention 2006, see [http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/DOCS/STANDARD/PC\\_100966.htm](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/DOCS/STANDARD/PC_100966.htm))

Besides a child or third party outwardly alleging that abuse or exploitation is occurring, the following is a guide for some common signs and symptoms of child abuse. Although these signs do not necessarily mean that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognize that something is wrong.

**Note: A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.**

<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	<b>Physical Abuse</b>
Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age	Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases	Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia	Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging	Refusal to undress for gym
Regressing to younger behavior patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys	Bald patches
Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating	Chronic running away
Being isolated or withdrawn	Fear of medical help or examination
Inability to concentrate	Self-destructive tendencies
Lack of trust or fear of someone they know	Aggression towards others
Become worried about clothing being removed	Fear of physical contact –shrinking back if touched
Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures	Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism	Fear of suspected abuser being contacted
Unexplained gifts or money	
<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	<b>Neglect</b>
Physical, mental and emotional development lags	Constant hunger
Sudden speech disorders	Poor personal hygiene
Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')	Constant tiredness
Overreaction to mistakes	Poor state of clothing
Extreme fear of any new situation	Emaciation
Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')	Untreated medical problems
Neurotic behavior (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)	No social relationships
Extremes of passivity or aggression	Compulsive scavenging
	Destructive tendencies

## Appendix 2:

Possible signs of concern regarding adult behavior

(Summarized from Child Welfare Scheme's Child Protection Policy, see <http://www.childwelfarescheme.org/news/sudhar/CPolicy05.pdf>)

A person in whose presence a child becomes unusually distressed or agitated

A member of staff, volunteer, parent, teacher etc... asks a child to lie about anything (especially if it is about meeting that child)

A member of staff, volunteer, parent, teacher etc... asks another to lie about a situation involving a child

Any person who fails to uphold and abide by the **FTVT** Child Protection

Policy Private meeting (i.e. outside of **FTVT** premises) between a child and a member of staff, volunteer, teacher etc...

Explanation of an injured child offered by a member of staff, volunteer, parent, teacher etc... is not consistent with the injury

**Appendix 3:  
Child Protection Reporting Form**

If you suspect that a child may be at risk of any form of abuse or exploitation; or an incident has occurred involving/witnessed by you, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge in addition to reporting the matter to the appropriate **FTVT** representative.

This report is to be used as a tool to develop unbiased, information. For confidentiality reasons, the report should be written and signed only by the witness (in the case of more than one witness, multiple forms should be individually completed) and handed directly and only to the appropriate **FTVT** representative.

**1. Please indicate what you are reporting:**

- I have concerns that abuse may be occurring (complete sections 2 and 3)
- I have received an allegation of abuse by another (complete sections 2 and 3)
- A child has told me that they are being abused (complete sections 2 and 3)
- I was involved in an incident with a child (complete sections 2 and 4)
- I was witness to an incident with a child (complete sections 2 and 4)

**2. Important information:**

Your name:.....

Your contact details:.....

Job title:.....

Name and gender of the child concerned:.....

Capacity in which the child is known to you:.....

Any other useful information regarding the child (e.g. date of birth, address, description if name is unknown):  
.....  
.....  
.....

Is the child aware of this referral?  
Yes No (Please tick)  
If no, please give details:.....  
.....

Are the child's parents or guardians aware of this referral?  
Yes No (Please tick)  
If no, please give details:.....  
.....

**3. Concerns/reports abuse may be occurring**

Was the abuse observed, suspected or alleged by a child or third person (and if so, who)?  
.....



