



## RIGHTS INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT- RISE

### RISE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Functional Area:	Child Protection Policy Unit
Implementer:	Management
Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Date of approval:	January, 2013
Date of next review:	Annually
Language:	English
Applicable to:	All RISE Staff, RISE Associates and RISE Visitors;
Related policies:	National Code of Conduct Whistle Blowing Policy
Procedures:	Sponsor Visits to the Field Reporting and Responding to Child Protection issues in RISE
Focus	RISE's Child Protection Policy Implementation Standards Child Protection Policy, Global Implementation Strategy 2013 To 2017

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### “IN THE BEST INTEREST OF CHILDREN”.

As a national child centred not for profit organisation whose work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), RISE is committed to ensuring the fulfilment of children’s rights including their rights to protection. RISE is committed to protecting children from harm and ensuring children’s right to protecting under Article 19 of the UNCRC is fully realised. We take seriously our responsibility to promote child safe practices and protect children from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form. In addition, we will take positive action to prevent those who abuse children from becoming involved with RISE and take stringent measures against any RISE Staff, RISE Associates, RISE Visitors or RISE Managers who abuse a child. Our decisions and actions in response to Child protection concerns and breaches of this policy will be guided by the principle of “the best interest of the child”.

### DEFINITIONS UNDER THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. In line with the **UNCRC**, for the purposes of this policy, **a child** is defined as any person under the of 18 years (UNCRC Article 1)
2. **Child abuse** is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, abusive language, 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 abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages their well-being, dignity and prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.
3. **Child protection** is defined in this policy as the responsibilities and preventive and responsive measures and activities that RISE undertakes to protect children ensuring that no Child is subject to Child abuse as a result of their association with us, their contact with RISE Staff, RISE Associates and RISE Visitors and/or their participation in any RISE activity, including our projects and programs. In addition, it incorporates our responsibility to ensure that where there are concerns over a child`s welfare or where a Child has been subject to Child abuse, actions are taken to address this; concerns are reported and responded to appropriately and in line with the relevant global and local procedures; and incidents are analysed so as to ensure continued learning and growth in the field of organisational child protection.
4. **RISE Staff** refers to individuals who receive a regular salary for work in any part of RISE including all Country Offices, Regional Offices and International Headquarters and RISE National Organisations.

5. **RISE Associates** refers to a range of paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support RISE. It includes, among others, members of boards, volunteers, including community volunteers, interns; sponsors; researchers; donors, consultants and contractors; staff and/or representatives of partner organisations and local governments (when operating in partnership agreement with RISE)
6. **RISE Visitors** refers to a range of persons who are visiting our programs and may come into contact with children through RISE, including journalists, media, researchers and celebrities.
7. **RISE Managers** refers to RISE Staff who have responsibility for line managing or supervising the work of RISE or RISE Associates.

## **B. SCOPE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

The Child Protection Policy applies to all RISE staff, RISE Associates, RISE Visitors and RISE Managers who must comply with its requirements and understand the sanctions that may be applied for breaches of the policy. It is intended that this policy will set a minimum global standard for all RISE staff, RISE Associates and RISE Visitors; RISE, Country Offices and subsidiaries as well as National Organisations. Where required by law or local practices, RISE, Country Offices and subsidiaries as well as National Organisations may enhance the standards as set out in this policy. This commitment will be evidenced through signing the policy.

## **C. PRINCIPLES**

This policy is informed by a set of principles that are derived from the UNCRC and include:

1. All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
2. Each child has a fundamental right to life, survival and development. RISE child centered community development approach provides a basis for ensuring the realisation of children's rights to be protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation.
3. All children should be encouraged to fulfil their potential, inequality and discrimination should be challenged.
4. Children will be assured the right to express their views freely and this will be given "due weight" in accordance with their age and level of maturity. We will not discriminate against the child. The child will be treated with respect irrespective of gender, nationality or ethnic origin, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual preference and gender identity, family, socio-economic and cultural background or any history of conflict with the law.
5. Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.
6. RISE has particular responsibilities to children who come into contact with us. No child must come to harm as a result of their engagement with RISE as a sponsored child, a participant in a RISE program or as part of any RISE fundraising or advocacy campaign.

7. These particular responsibilities extend to those individuals or organisations which are associated with RISE. Therefore, everyone working for or associated with RISE work must be aware of and adhere to the provisions of this policy.

#### **D. RISE VISION FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

RISE creates safe environments for children in all aspects of its work whether fundraising or program implementation, where children are respected, protected and empowered as their capacities evolve to contribute actively to the development of Child protection measures within RISE.

This policy aims to ensure that RISE Staff, RISE Associates, RISE Visitors and RISE Managers, as appropriate to their engagement with RISE, are skilled, confident, understand, accept and are well supported in meeting their Child protection responsibilities and engage positively with children and communities in ways that enhance the achievement of RISE overall program goals and commitments.

#### **E. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THOSE COVERED BY THE SCOPE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Everyone who works with and engages with RISE has a responsibility to ensure that children are protected. The responsibilities detailed below are mandatory for those who fall within the scope of the policy.

#### **RISE STAFF, RISE ASSOCIATES, RISE VISITORS AND RISE MANAGERS MUST:**

1. Never abuse and/or exploit a Child or act/ behave in any way that places a child at risk of harm.
2. Report any Child abuse and Child protection concerns they have in accordance with applicable local office procedures and this policy. RISE Staff may also use RISE Whistle Blowing policy in this event.
3. Respond to a Child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with applicable local office procedures and this policy.
4. Cooperate fully and confidentiality in any investigation of concerns or allegations of Child abuse.
5. Contribute to building an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights.
6. Always treat children in a manner which is respectful of their rights, integrity and dignity, considers their best interests and does not expose them to, or place them at risk of harm. For example: when taking images/pictures during visits, interacting with children or generating stories of children, ensure that this is done in a manner consistent with the appropriate RISE policies and procedures.

7. Never ask for or accept personal contact details (this includes email, phone numbers, social media contacts, address, webcam, skype etc.) from any Child or family associated or formerly associated with RISE's work or share their own personal contact details with such individuals. (For FAAD Staff and partner organisations, the exception is where this has been **explicitly authorised** for business purposes in a manner which is in line with local RISE policies and procedures, has the consent of the Child's parents or guardian and is supervised by the relevant line or supervising manager).
8. Never disclose, or support the disclosure of, information that identifies sponsored families or children, through any medium, unless that disclosure is in accordance with standard RISE policies and procedures and/or has the explicit consent of RISE. Media include paper, photographs and social media.
9. Never make any contact with a Child or family members associated with RISE's work that is not supervised by a (or another) member of RISE Staff. Such contact may include but is not limited to visits and any form of communication via social media, emails and letters.

#### **RISE STAFF MUST:**

10. Comply with the behaviours detailed in RISE Global Code of Conduct.
11. Only arrange visits by sponsors to meet with sponsored children in a protected space as chose by the RISE Country Office. This may include in their homes with the consent of the Child's family and on the advice of the Country Office Staff who always accompany the visit.
12. Only provide the personal contact details of sponsors to former sponsored children aged 18 or over (not the other what around) to enable them to make direct contact after the Child's graduation from the sponsorship scheme with the prior approval of the sponsor, the former sponsored child and a favourable risk assessment collated and approved by the Country Office.

#### **RISE MANAGERS**

13. All RISE Managers must ensure that, whilst engaged with RISE, RISE Associates sign up to either RISE's Code of Conduct or to guidance on appropriate behaviour towards children that is appropriate to their engagement with RISE and is developed by a RISE Manager using the Code of Conduct as a guide.
14. The Executive Director of RISE must ensure that each RISE entity has in place local procedures that are consistent with this Child Protection Policy and with the document Reporting and Responding to Child Protection Issues in RISE to respond to possible incidents of Child abuse. Local procedures should be developed with the assistance of legal advisers in accordance with the Malawi law. It should also be ensured that this policy and local

procedures are made available in local languages and in child-friendly formats.

15. All RISE Managers must ensure that RISE Staff who have reported Child protection concerns or are accused of Child abuse are given appropriate care, support and protection in dealing with all aspects of the case including any safety concerns and potential reprisals which may arise from the incident or from the reporting of such concerns.

## **F. PERSONAL CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK OR ASSOCIATION WITH RISE**

RISE does not dictate and value systems by which RISE Staff, RISE Associates, RISE Visitors and RISE Managers conduct their personal lives. However, actions taken by them out of working hours that are seen to contradict this policy will be considered a violation of this policy.

RISE Staff, RISE Associates, RISE Visitors and RISE Managers are required to bear in mind the principles of the Child Protection Policy and heighten their awareness of how their behaviour may be perceived both at work and outside work.

## **G. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND SANCTIONS**

The Board of Trustees of RISE are ultimately accountable for this policy. The Executive Director of RISE is responsible for its implementation.

The monitoring of adherence to this policy is made through the mandatory tracking of the Child protection Policy Implementation Standards and RISE's Code of Conduct by all departments of RISE.

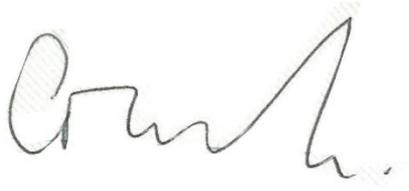
Breaches of this policy and failure to comply with these responsibilities may incur the following sanctions:

- For RISE Staff or RISE Managers-disciplinary action leading to possible dismissal.
- For RISE Associates or RISE Visitors and including termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreement with RISE.
- Where relevant - appropriate legal or other such actions may be taken.

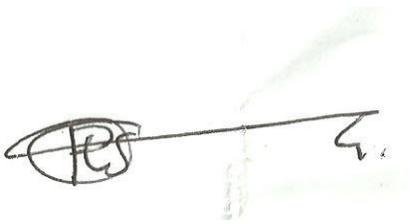
Where concerns exist about the conduct of RISE Staff, RISE Associates, RISE Visitors and RISE Managers in relation to Child protection and/or where there has been a breach of the Child Protection Policy, this will be investigated under this policy by consideration of referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the laws of Malawi and/or by RISE in accordance with disciplinary procedures. This may result in disciplinary action or dismissal for RISE Staff or RISE Managers.

Be aware that if legitimate concern about suspected Child abuse is raised, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate sanctions will be applied in cases of false and malicious accusations of Child abuse.

THIS POLICY HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND ENDORSED AND IS APPROVED BY:



BOARD OF TRUSTEE CHAIRPERSON (SIGNED):



BOARD OF TRUSTEE VICE BOARD CHAIR

(SIGNED):