



CHILD SAFEGUARDING¹ POLICY- NEPAL

1. INTRODUCTION

Mercy Corps is a global non-profit humanitarian and development agency, working amid disasters, conflicts, chronic poverty and instability to help people and communities overcome the massive challenges they face. We work in over 40 countries across Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe. Mercy Corps' mission is to alleviate suffering, poverty and oppression by helping people around the world to build secure, productive and just communities. It comprises Mercy Corps U.S. and Mercy Corps Scotland, their subsidiaries and affiliate Organisations (collectively "Mercy Corps")

Mercy Corps believes that all forms of abuse or exploitation are unacceptable, regardless of who is affected by that abuse and/or exploitation. Other Mercy Corps policies prohibit exploitation or abuse including the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy and Gender Policy, however, there is a need for a focus on safeguarding *children*, due to their vulnerabilities, dependencies and specificities.

As an agency which works with communities suffering and recovering from disaster, conflict or economic collapse, Mercy Corps recognises its responsibility to adopt and abide by this policy to ensure that children with whom Mercy Corps comes into contact are safeguarded from abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. By clearly setting out our commitment to safeguarding children, regardless of their race, sex, ethnicity or religion, this policy also aims to define our accountability to the communities with whom we work, and to ensure we engage with children safely and positively.

1.1 Goal, Objective and Applicability

The **goal** of this policy is to safeguard children from exploitation and abuse due to the delivery of Mercy Corps' work; the **objective** of this policy is to create, maintain and monitor safe and positive environments for children in the delivery of Mercy Corps' work.

Mercy Corps defines a child as anyone under the age of 18.

This policy applies to all Mercy Corps' Boards of Directors, officers, management, employees, seconded employees, interns and volunteers (collectively "Employees"), partners, subgrantees, contractors, outside experts (including attorneys), consultants, agents, representatives and any other individual that acts on Mercy Corps' behalf (collectively "associates"), or any other individuals who come into contact with children – be they Mercy Corps' beneficiaries or not - through Mercy Corps' work.

Mercy Corps' Child Safeguarding policy is based on: the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (and its optional protocols); and Keeping Children Safe² international minimum standards of child safe-guarding³. In our adherence to this policy, Mercy Corps will also adhere to relevant regional and national legislation, where these do not conflict with the rights of a child as enshrined in the abovementioned documents.

2. STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

¹ For the purposes of this policy, the term 'Child Safeguarding' takes an 'internal' approach, and focusses on the harm that can come to children due to Mercy Corps' presence, work or interventions. Child Protection issues are 'external', and refer to harm which children can be exposed to which are unrelated to, and not caused by, Mercy Corps' presence, work or interventions.

² Keeping Children Safe (KCS) is a London-based child safeguarding coalition made up of 28 organisations. KCS has developed international standards for working with children within the context of international relief and/or development programmes and projects.

³ **Minimum standards include:** 1) Written policy; 2) Putting the policy into practice; 3) Preventing harm to children; 4) Written guidelines on behaviour towards children; 5) Meeting the standards in different locations; 6) Equal rights of children to protection; 7) Communicating the 'keep children safe' message; 8) Education and training for keeping children safe; 9) Access to advice and support; 10) Implementation and monitoring of the standards; 11) Working with partners to meet the standards.

The following Standards of Behaviour are the minimum requirements Mercy Corps has of all **Employees and Associates** when they come into contact with children, with the overriding principle of ensuring the best interests of the child at all times.

2.1 When in contact with children all Employees and Associates

- At all times treat children with respect, value their views and take them seriously,
- Strive to understand children within the context in which they live,
- Work with children in a spirit of co-operation and partnership based on mutual trust and respect and in ways that enhance their inherent capacities and capabilities, and develop their potential.

2.2 Employees and Associates must be especially aware of potential abusive situations when working with children and must avoid actions and behaviour which includes:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children.
- Develop sexual relationships with children.
- Develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Bully, humiliate, or emotionally abuse children.
- Act in ways that may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Threaten children with any form of abuse or neglect.
- Engage children in work that is exploitative, dangerous, or prevents participation in education or having a childhood.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Have children with whom they are working stay overnight at their home unsupervised.
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working.
- Do things for children of an intimate personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

2.3 It is important for all Employees and Associates in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and proactively manage these risks.
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks.
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between Employees and Associates so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.
- Avoid situations in which an adult is alone with a child or where no other adult is present.

3. PREVENTION

Mercy Corps **Employees and Associates** should be aware of the circumstances in which the risk of harm or stigma to children is increased and must mitigate these risks. The following include minimum requirements to ensure the safeguarding of children.

3.1 Undertake a Risk Analysis

A child safeguarding risk analysis will be undertaken during programme development or prior to any activity involving children to mitigate any risks. (Refer to Annex B- Template for Risk Analysis).

3.2 Recruitment and Selection

Mercy Corps carries out a range of checks in order to deter unsuitable people who may seek to gain access to children through the activities of Mercy Corps. This is achieved by undertaking the following:

- Candidates will have their employment history checked including a review of any gaps between positions.
- All applicants working on child focused programming or likelihood to come into contact with children will be required to complete a self-declaration of criminal convictions (Refer to Annex C).

- For all applicants a reliable reference check will be obtained. For people working on child focused programming or likelihood to come into contact with children, satisfactory references will be asked about the candidate's experience in working with children and to disclose any concerns that they may have about the candidate's suitability to work with children.
- For applicants working on child focused programming or likelihood to come into contact with children, interview questions will include relevant child safeguarding questions (Refer to Annex D).
- When developing Position Descriptions for people working on child focused programming, or have the likelihood to come into contact with children, the checklist for recruitment and selection will be utilised (Refer to Annex E).

3.3 Child Safeguarding Focal Points

Child safeguarding focal points will be appointed and receive training on child safeguarding and their roles and responsibilities (Refer to Annex F for sample Terms of Reference (TOR)).

3.4 Training

All Mercy Corps Employees and Associates have to complete the e-learning code of conduct training which includes a copy of the global Vulnerable Adults and Child Protection policy.

Child Safeguarding focal points will provide an induction training on child safeguarding to Mercy Corps Employees and Associates.

3.5 Communications Regarding Children

Mercy Corps is committed to ensuring all interviews and images of children are undertaken with sensitivity in order to safeguard the child's right to dignity, identity, confidentiality and privacy. Where possible, children should be prepared for interviews prior to being interviewed.

Pictures of children should always be decent and respectful. Consent to use information obtained in interviews and/or images of children who have been interviewed should be obtained from children themselves (if they are of an age, understanding and possess the maturity to do so) and from their parents and/or guardians. (Refer Annex H- Sample Consent Form for Use of Children in Interviews/Photos).

Pictures, materials and personal information regarding children will be held in a secure area where practicable and every caution will be exercised to ensure its security. Access to these is by way of permission only.

4. RESPONSE AND INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Child abuse is distressing for all concerned and it is often difficult to accept that it may have occurred, to the point that there is denial or that warning signs are dismissed. To ensure the safeguarding of children it is imperative that anyone who suspects or knows of abuse raises their concerns in line with the process below. Mercy Corps will ensure the interests of anyone reporting such concerns are properly protected. All reports made in good faith will be viewed as evidence of the individual's concern for the best interests of the child and of Mercy Corps and will be treated as such, regardless of the outcome of any subsequent investigations.

4.1 Confidentiality

At all times, confidentiality must be maintained. In certain circumstances, any lack of confidentiality may have devastating affects for the lives of children and may also result in serious consequences for adults involved in the process. In responding to issues and concerns regarding possible abuse, staff and others must exercise

extreme vigilance in protecting information and must pass on this information via the reporting process described in this policy *only* to those people who need to be aware of it.

On occasion, it may be that information offered by an individual has to be passed on, against the express wishes of the person concerned, in the interests of protecting a child or other children. This is a particularly difficult issue when the individual concerned is a child disclosing or alleging abuse. For this reason, it is essential to make clear the fact that it may not be possible to keep such information wholly confidential. Ideally this should be done before any such matter arises - for example, by means of a written policy or statement - but certainly as soon as it appears that sensitive information may be disclosed. ***Do not promise to keep secrets.***

It should also be made clear that the decision to pass on information will be discussed with the child concerned and their views sought on the release of information, the process for this, safeguards, and so on, but that it may not be possible to influence any subsequent process. Information on the process, likely sequence of events and possible outcomes should also be discussed with them. (It is also important to ensure the child continues to be informed of what is happening and has opportunities to discuss the process.) Where this issue is a particular concern, staff and others may wish to develop specific local guidance.

4.2 Responding to Disclosure by a Child

Children on occasion may disclose that they are being abused. In such circumstances it is important to respond in a calm, caring and supportive manner. The **child is never to blame** in situations of abuse and should be reassured they have done nothing wrong, either in relation to the abuse itself or in reporting it.

The child needs to know that you are listening and taking seriously the information that is being divulged, and that you will respond positively to ensure their protection. Listen carefully and let the child tell you the information in their own way. It is important to record what is said - at the time if appropriate, or as soon as possible following the disclosure. It may not be appropriate to inquire into the details of the abuse at this stage. In the UK, for example, when a child discloses possible sexual abuse, the statutory Social Services must be contacted so that they can formally interview the child. It is important to listen and respond positively to the child and be supportive without asking direct questions.

The child needs information and an explanation of what will or is likely to happen next. Immediately following disclosure, it is crucial that staff or others report the alleged abuse in line with the Local Procedure, in order to discuss subsequent action and to consider how the support and protection needs of the child may best be met. Consideration needs to be given to who should be informed of the disclosure/allegations, and by whom.

4.3 Reporting and Investigations

Anyone who comes into contact with children might develop concerns about their safety or welfare. Employees and Associates have a responsibility to be aware of any such concerns or suspicions, whether major or minor, and must always discuss them with a senior member of staff as described in the procedure in this document. A fuller picture is likely to emerge which might reduce the level of concern, or on the other hand might lead to the realisation that further action is appropriate. However, not to discuss concerns may mean that a child, and possibly other children, continues to be abused. ***All such concerns must follow the principles outlined below:***

- All reports of child safeguarding concerns must be in a written format (an example form is provided in Annex G) and should be made ***within 24 hours of disclosure or the concern being raised.*** The reports must be shared with in-country Child Safeguarding Focal Point and the Country Director. If the claim is made against the Country Director, then the report must be shared with the Regional Programme Director. The Country Director/Regional Programme Director will then share the report with HR at Headquarters.
- An objective assessment on the need and procedure of whether to involve external people – including the local authorities, local health officers, or appropriate agencies – will be made to ensure that the best interests of the child/children involved are safeguarded.

- Mercy Corps strongly disapproves of and will not tolerate any form of retaliation against Employees and Associates who report, in good faith, information indicating abuse against children. Any Employee who engages in such retaliation will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of the Employee.
- All reported allegations shall be fully investigated to evaluate their accuracy (or otherwise) and appropriate measures taken in the best interests of protecting both the children and Mercy Corps personnel. If required, Mercy Corps will hire Keeping Children Safe to investigate claims. KCS will be contacted by Mercy Corps HQ.
- Each country office is responsible for mapping in the relevant country key child safeguarding agencies to which to report incidents and these should be annexed to the policy.

5. PARTNER/ SUBGRANTEE

Even when Mercy Corps is working with children through subgrantee and partner organisations and, although not necessarily in direct contact with the children concerned, Mercy Corps aims to ensure the safety of children.

Wherever Mercy Corps is working with, funding, or supporting other subgrantee and partner organisations to work directly with children, the provisions of this policy and guidance should be reflected in the Partnerships/Subgranting arrangements with these subgrantee and partner organisations.

For partners/subgrantees working on child focused programming, or where there is a likelihood they will come into contact with children, they will ensure a child safeguarding policy is in place, and where a partner/subgrantee does not have its own child safeguarding policy, they will adopt the principles of Mercy Corps' child safeguarding policy.

Agreement should be reached with subgrantees and/or partners - through discussion and negotiation, or as part of advocacy or capacity-building strategies - on a joint commitment to safeguarding children which is compliant with the principles included in this Policy and which is proportionate to the circumstances. Mercy Corps should be assured that the practice and management arrangements of its subgrantee and/or partners reflect this common commitment to safeguard children and respond to issues of abuse.

With regard to poor practice or abuse within partner and/or subgrantee organisations, it should be made clear to all existing and potential partners and/or subgrantees that Mercy Corps may be unable to continue a partnership/subgrant arrangement in the event that it has serious doubts about the actions and behaviour of the organisation or of any individual or individuals within the organisation, and if these contravene the provisions of this Policy.

Concerns regarding possible abuse by partners should be treated as a child safeguarding matter and raised in accordance with the process set out in this Policy.

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Child safeguarding will be communicated as 'everybody's responsibility'.

Emphasis will be placed on managerial responsibility to ensure that protection measures are in place.

The Child Safeguarding policy will be included in the orientation agenda for all new team members by HR/Administration.

Every workplace will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse concerns to the child protection officer.

Mercy Corps will make every effort to communicate our child safeguarding policy to communities we work in, and ensure they are aware of the role of the Child Safeguarding Focal Point, who they must report claims to alongside Mercy Corps' other key policies.

Report to the Mercy Corps board as required.

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required.

ANNEXES

Annex A: Definition of Terms

TYPE	PHYSICAL OBSERVATIONS IN A CHILD	BEHAVIOURAL OBSERVATIONS OF A CHILD
Physical abuse	Bruising, burns and scalds, bite marks, fractures, swelling, serious injuries with no explanation or conflicting explanations, untreated injuries.	Unusually fearful of adults, unnaturally compliant to parents, refusal to discuss injuries, fear of medical help, aggression towards others, covers up with clothing
Sexual	Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth, sexually transmitted disease, unexpected pregnancy, especially in very young girls, soreness in genital area, anus or mouth, unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain.	Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age, sexualised behaviour in young children, sexually provocative behaviour/promiscuity, hinting at sexual activity, inexplicable falling off school performance, sudden apparent changes in personality, lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness, socially withdrawn, overly compliant behaviour, acting out, aggressive behaviour, poor trust in significant adults, regressive behaviour, onset of wetting day or night, insecure and clinging behaviour, arriving early at school, leaving late, running away from home, suicide attempts, self-mutilations, self-disgust, eating disorders, hysteria attacks in adolescents.
Neglect	Poor personal hygiene, poor state of clothing, dressed inappropriately for the season or the weather (exposure symptoms might include recurrent colds, pneumonia, sunburn, frostbite, etc), is inadequately supervised or left in the care of an inappropriate care giver, untreated medical problems, is malnourished (this may be seen as being undersized, having low weight and a sallow complexion, lacking body tone, and being constantly tired), drug or alcohol abuse.	Constant hunger, constant tiredness, frequent lateness or non-attendance at school, destructive tendencies, low self-esteem, neurotic behaviour, no social relationships, running away, compulsive stealing or scavenging
Emotional	Highly anxious, showing delayed speech, low self-	Physical, mental and emotional development lags, acceptance

	<p>esteem, self-harming behaviour, drug or alcohol abuse.</p>	<p>of punishment which appears excessive, over-reaction to mistakes, continual self-deprecation, sudden speech disorders, fear of new situations, inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations, neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair-twisting, thumb sucking), self-harming or mutilation, fear of parents being contacted, extremes of passivity or aggression, drug/solvent abuse, running away, compulsive stealing/scavenging.</p>
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Note: Most forms of abuse have a combination of the above indicators and observations and sometimes cannot be put in a specific category.

In order to keep children safe from harm, we ask that all persons declare the following:

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence⁴ (please tick)?

YES NO

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s)

FULL NAME (PRINT): _____

Any surname previously known by:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

PLACE OF BIRTH: _____

DECLARATION

I understand that, if it is found that I have withheld information or included any false or misleading information above, I will be removed from my post whether paid or voluntary, without notice. I understand that the information will be kept securely by the organisation.

I hereby declare the information I have provided is accurate.

Signed: _____ Date:

⁴ Include local definition

Annex D- Sample interview questions

The following is taken from guidance developed by Terre des Hommes for use in interviewing. The examples of questions should not be seen as the only questions to ask, rather they should be seen as ideas for areas of questioning during interviews. What should be noted is that often it is not what is said during questioning on child protection, but more the reactions to the questions. Take note of how questions are answered and any non-verbal responses.

Where possible, make it standard practice to:

1. Ask questions about extended unemployment breaks on résumés.
2. Ask questions about people's motivation to work in youth organisations or youth or child focused projects.
3. Ask questions about their relationship with referees – this has often revealed that the referee only has a small amount of knowledge about the person.
4. Ensure reference checks are done and contact at least two people.
5. If the referees are not suitable, get more.
6. Always check and/or secure referees from children's organisations.
7. Check with other referees or managers in an organisation given by the candidate. Often the better person to check, along with the referee given, is the senior manager or director.
8. Ask referees about the suitability of the candidate to have direct contact with children. Another good question is – “Does the referee know of any issues or incidents involving the candidate and his/her contact with children?”
9. Make notes of the referee's comments and place them on the personal file of the candidate.
10. Keep the resume (bio-data) of the person in their personal file, if recruited, along with any notes made during the interview.
11. Have international staff and a national staff member at each interview to allow for each person to contribute their feelings about the candidate's suitability to have access to children.

Some suggested questions about child safeguarding:

1. Do you like working with children? Or, do you feel comfortable working directly with children? - Beware of people who overly use the word love when referring to their relationship with children. Listen carefully to the candidates' response to this question – avoid a 'yes' or 'no' response and encourage candidates to explain why they like being with children.
2. Can you give an example of your work with children?
3. Have you been in trouble with the police at all? This could reveal some of the non-verbal indicators listed above.
4. Have you worked/volunteered in an organisation with children before? If yes, why did you leave? Who is a reference from the organisation we can contact?

Trust your gut instincts about how a person makes you feel and their responses to questions. Always make sure you ask questions about child protection, regardless of the gender and how you feel about the person. Don't forget that child abuse is not only about sexual abuse. It could be the case that some female candidates are overly harsh in their disciplining of children and have a history of this. Furthermore, child sex abusers are not all male.

Annex E- Checklist for recruitment and selection

Adapted from Nolan, P (2004) *The role of HR in Child Protection, People in Aid*

<p>1. When you are designing the job, analyse the role and think about the issues of child protection and risk in that job:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What contact with children will the job involve? • Will the employee have unsupervised access to children, or hold a position of trust? • What other sort of contact may the person have with children (eg, via email, telephone, letter, internet)?
<p>2. Develop clear job descriptions, terms of reference/role briefs for all posts, including where short-term contracts, consultants are being recruited.</p>
<p>3. Make sure that the selection criteria outlines the relevant experience needed if the post involves direct work with children.</p>
<p>4. Make sure that the commitment to keeping children safe is included in details of any post sent to prospective job candidates.</p>
<p>5. Develop application forms that ask for consent to gain information on a person's past convictions/pending disciplinary proceedings.</p>
<p>6. Ask for documentation to confirm identity and proof of relevant qualifications.</p>
<p>7. Make sure you have a well-planned interview process – make sure the interviewers have the relevant experience and knowledge about child protection and best practice.</p>
<p>8. Include some specific questions in the interview that draw out people's attitudes and values in relation to the protection of children. Can they give examples of where they have acted to protect a child, what they have learnt from this, what impact it has had on their current practice?</p>
<p>9. Take up to three references, including some from previous employees or others who have knowledge of the candidate's experience and suitability to work with children.</p>
<p>10. Verify the identity of referees.</p>
<p>11. Conduct as many background checks as possible.</p>
<p>12. Consider the use of probationary periods of employment to ensure suitability once in post.</p>

Annex F- Sample Terms of Reference

CHILD SAFEGUARDING FOCAL POINT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Overview

At each appropriate level or setting there should be a named person/s who people can talk to about child safeguarding matters. Everyone should know how to contact them. Other people in the organisation can then go to them if they have concerns about child safeguarding or abuse. It is often helpful if the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Points are not senior managers, but someone with experience and confidence in handling similar issues or access to training and support so they can develop the role.

The role of the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point is to:

- act as a focal point to receive information about child safeguarding concerns;
- seek guidance from senior management on appropriate response ;
- consult with local agencies whenever necessary;
- Support senior management to make a formal referral to a statutory agency (e.g., police) or other organization, if appropriate;
- ensure that all information is recorded on an incident record of concern form.

A Detailed Explanation of the Role of the Child Safeguarding Focal Point

It is the job of the Child Safeguarding Focal Point to receive concerns that a child or children may have been or are being abused or otherwise harmed. The Focal Point is responsible for coordinating the disclosure or concern from start to finish.

Procedure:

1. Receive information about a concern or allegation.
2. Create a Child Safeguarding case file.
3. Take possession of all original records/information and place in case file.
4. Explain the child safeguarding procedure to the complainant and, if applicable, to his/ her parent(s).
5. Support the manager to make a child protection referral to the Statutory Services where appropriate.
6. Place a written record of these consultations in the case file.
7. Contact the emergency services if a child is deemed to be at immediate risk.
8. Follow the advice of the statutory services.
9. Request in writing a receipt from the statutory services, where possible, of the Child Safeguarding referral and request to be kept informed of their progress.
10. Conduct, or seek support for, an internal investigation if the concern refers to staff/ board or volunteer, ensuring that action taken on potential criminal cases is coordinated and agreed with statutory services
11. Provide, or seek, support (e.g., counselling) for the staff person or volunteer against whom the complaint is made.

How to Respond

- **Receive:** Listen, believe
- **Reassure:** No promises, not child's/claimant's fault
- **React:** Non-intrusive, open questions. Remain calm.
- **Record:** Contemporaneous notes (Observable/ verifiable facts)
- **Remember:** The Child Safeguarding Procedures

Annex G- Written Reporting Format

TO: THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING FOCAL POINT AND COUNTRY DIRECTOR (CD) (IF THE CD IS IMPLICATED, PLEASE SEND TO REGIONAL PROGRAMME DIRECTOR)

THE INFORMATION IN THIS FORM IS CONFIDENTIAL. IT SHOULD BE USED TO REPORT CONCERNS IN ACCORDANCE WITH MERCY CORPS' CHILDSAFEGUARDING POLICY. IT SHOULD ONLY BE SENT TO THOSE LISTED ABOVE.

You should attempt to fill in as much of the form as possible. Leave blank those areas for which you have no knowledge. If you are raising a general concern about behaviour that you have observed then please make this clear. Distinguish between what you know personally or observed and what was told to you by someone else (ie hearsay).

PART ONE –ABOUT YOU

Your name: _____ your position with Mercy Corps: _____

Contact details:

How do you know or know of this child? _____

PART TWO –ABOUT THE CHILD (If there is more than one child involved, add additional rows for each child)

Child's details (name, gender, ethnicity, nationality, faith, birthdate/age)

Child's address (e.g. who does the child live with?):

Where is the child now? Is s/he in a place of safety? _____

Are there any immediate medical or safety issues? _____

Does the child have a disability or learning difficulty? _____

Are there cultural issues to be aware of? _____

If there's more than one child involved add their details (add on additional pages if necessary):

PART THREE: YOUR CONCERN

Who is the alleged perpetrator? (Please tick)

- Category 1: Staff or Representative of Mercy Corps
- Category 2: Staff of another organisation
- Category 3: Someone in the community

Nature of concern/allegation (include the following: Who disclosed the abuse? What were the circumstances? What is alleged to have happened?):

Date(s), time(s) and location(s) of incident(s):

Add whether the abuse was observed or suspected by you or someone else

Exactly what the child has said (in his/her own words) and what you said to the child in response. (NB Do not lead the child – record actual details. This is only relevant if a child discloses information directly to you):

Name: _____
Signed: _____

Organisation: _____
Date: _____

Name of the person who the form has been sent to:
Date the report was sent to the person above:

Annex H- Sample Consent Form for Use of Children in Interviews/Photos).

Consent Form to Interview and use Images of Children

Part A: Consent by a child under 18 with necessary age, maturity and understanding (refer to guidelines on obtaining consent, below)

1. I agree to Mercy Corps: (tick agreed)

- Speaking to me and recording my words at ----- (choice of venue)
 Taking my photograph
 Making video or any other recording

2. I agree for Mercy Corps to use:

- My story Photographs of me My health condition (for example HIV+)

3. I understand that my photo and/or information will be used for:

- Educational promotional other (specify) -----

Name*: ----- Signature or thumb-print: -----
 Location: ----- Age: ----- Date: -----

Part B: Consent by parent/ carer

- I confirm that I agree for Mercy Corps to carry out the above
 I have authority to sign this form on their behalf (if unsigned above)
 I confirm that the child has also agreed to this

Name*: _____ Signature or thumbprint: _____
 Relationship to child: _____ Date: _____

Part C: Signature of the Interpreter

The Interpreter will translate the contents of this form in the appropriate language of the child / guardian and confirm the following:

- The child/guardian is/are literate and was/were able to sign the consent form (or, if illiterate, the consent has been recorded on an audio-cassette).

The Interpreter will confirm this below:

- I have translated the contents of this form into a language understood by the child and/or guardian
 I believe that the contents of the forms have been fully understood by the child/guardian.

Name: _____ Signed: _____
 Organisation: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Guidelines on obtaining consent

Generally children of 7 years and up should be able to provide consent. However, good practice dictates that if they are below 14 years of age, we should also obtain consent from parents/carers.

Age of child	Child's consent	Consent of parents/guardians
Under 7	No	Yes
Between 7 and 14 (?)	Yes, only if the child can fully understand the matter to which they are saying "yes".	Yes, as a matter of course
Above 14	As above	Not necessary if child's consent has been obtained