# Child Protection Policy for NSANSA VILLAGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MISSION

NSANSA is a ministry caring for children from the streets and the compound communities in Lusaka, Zambia and is committed to the care and protection of these children. Any person wanting to work, volunteer, or visit NSANSA must read the following policy and agree to it.

**STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT:**
NSANSA is committed to the welfare of children and youth in Zambia and surrounding areas. NSANSA students, staff, and leaders are expected to engage in positive supportive relationships with children, young adults, and mature adults in all aspects of our mission. NSANSA opposes all forms of child exploitation through child labour and human trafficking, as well as any form of child abuse.

We as NSANSA believe that all children have value, worth, and dignity as they are made in the image of God. Thus, we believe that all children should be treated with respect and cared for in ways that honor God.

We as NSANSA believe that all children have a right to protection from abuse irrespective of race, social background, age, gender, skin colour, disability, religion, nationality, or beliefs, according to the Child Rights Convention of the UN.

We as NSANSA believe that child abuse and exploitation is wrong. Also, staying silent is wrong when a child is being abused or exploited.

We as NSANSA believe that children have the right to speak and be heard. Therefore, as much as possible, children will also be included as stakeholders and in baseline surveys.

**The different forms of child abuse are described below:**

- **Physical abuse**: Any punishments and physical abuse to children like beating, including with a stick or other implement, poisoning, shaking, and smothering, or forcing the child to work in an unsafe way/ environment. These are things that deliberately affect the physical well-being of children in a negative way.

- **Mental/Emotional abuse:** Any gestures, words and behaviors that deliberately affect a child's mental or emotional well-being in a negative way. For example: by making them afraid, anxious, annoyed, humiliated, or discouraged.

- **Neglect**: Any actions that deliberately neglect to provide the four essential rights of children (right to live, right to learn, right to participate, and the right to speak).

- **Sexual Abuse**: Any actions with sexual intent towards children, any touch that would violate the dignity of children, forcing them to watch or take part in pornography, forcing them to participate in/or observe any form of sexual act, or coercing the child to have sex. This includes any form of prostitution and child trafficking for sexual purposes.

- **Spiritual abuse:** This occurs when a spiritual leader, or someone in a position of spiritual power or authority (whether organization, institution, church, or family) misuses their power or authority, and the trust placed in them, with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating, or dominating a child. Spiritual abuse is always about the misuse of power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice, in order to meet the needs of the abuser (or enhance his or her position) at the expense of the needs of the child. Spiritual abuse results in spiritual harm to a child and can be linked to other abuse, such as physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

**BEHAVIORAL PROTOCOLS FOR NSANSA:**

Each individual is expected to treat all children associated with the work of NSANSA with respect and dignity, as well as ensuring those outside of our ministry uphold the same values (e.g. encouraging families not to neglect the needs of the child, as well as affirming them when they do meet a need).

Each individual must sign a statement to say that they have read the policy, will respect it, and understand that action will be taken in cases of violation of this policy.

Each individual must never be alone with a child (who are not of their own family) in a private place (both inside and/or outside) that cannot be seen by other responsible adults; must never have private conversation with a child without the presence of the staff members; no private or secrete communication with any child is allowed. Even when having an individual conversation with a child, others must be within visual contact and must be in the presence of a caregiver. This protects both the adult from false accusation and the child from abuse. In the case where individual counselling is appropriate, the adult must inform another adult/supervisor in advance that this will happen and where. NSANSA and associates should not invite a child to their home alone and should not visit a child at their home if the child is at home alone. All exceptions, such as babysitting or emergencies, must be reported to the project leaders beforehand.

When disciplining a child, it will be done in a non-violent and non-humiliating manner (i.e. hitting, slapping, beating, and no verbal abuse such as shouting, swearing or use of demeaning language).

Written permission must be obtained from a caregiver before taking a child from the community.

Staff, student, short-term volunteers, visitors, and supporters will not touch a child in an inappropriate way or expose them to inappropriate materials such as pornographic videos and literature. (A general guideline for touching inappropriately is not to touch children in areas that would normally be covered by shorts and t-shirt, but also includes kissing and tickling in an inappropriate way.)

Pictures/videos of individual children with their name are not to be posted on any social network website (Facebook, YouTube etc.). Pictures of groups of children might be used for personal newsletters and/or personal communication.

Adults will always be responsible for their behavior and cannot blame the child, even if the child 'provokes' or acts in a 'seductive' way.

If protocols are broken, the person involved will be disciplined and may lose their position and responsibilities.

**RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING:**
All staff, visitors, and short-term volunteers will be screened according to local standards, with a minimum of two reference checks from former leaders or pastor during their recruitment period, including a police check where possible.

All staff, visitors, and short-term volunteers will be asked to sign the Child Protection Policy of NSANSA stating whether they have had previous convictions for abuse against children, violent behavior, or improper conduct.

NSANSA will not employ any children under 13 years old, in accordance with the Labor Law. No children between 13 and 15 years old may work for more than 2 hours per day. No children between 15 and 18 years old for more than 5 hours a day.

**RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS:**
When allegations has been made that a staff, volunteer, or visitor of NSANSA has abused a child, NSANSA leaders will take the appropriate action to deal with the situation. Allegations must be communicated to the Field Director immediately.

The allegations will be kept confidential, with only those directly involved with the appropriate information. Anyone from NSANSA found to be widening the circle of confidentiality (telling others about the abuse) will have disciplinary action taken against them.

NSANSA will appoint a small committee of people who would handle allegations and follow through on the whole process.

Both victim and alleged perpetrator (the person that may have abused the child) will be treated with respect from the start of the process to the end.

NSANSA will not dismiss a child's accusation of abuse without appropriate investigation. The child will be listened to and notes of the conversation taken down. A child is believed until proven otherwise.

Records should be made of all facts related to the investigation and these should be carefully and confidentially filed. Disclosure of information about past or present abuse of children and any of the persons involved should be limited to only the people who need to know.

At the expense of NSANSA, the victim will receive professional counselling for as long as is needed and feasible.

The law should not be side-stepped. In the case of serious offence, there may be the need to inform the legal authorities. Pastoral care may be given to the offender, but not outside the framework of the law.

The perpetrator, if proven guilty, should be dismissed from NSANSA without the possibility of reinstatement. During the investigation, the perpetrator will be removed from their responsibilities, and further enclosure to the proper entities will be put in place.

**DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT FOR THOSE WORKING WITH NSANSA:**
*To be signed by all NSANSA staff, visitors, short- and long-term volunteers, etc. A copy will be kept on file at the NSANSA office.*

**I declare that:**

1. I have read and understand the NSANSA Child Protection Policy.
2. I will work within the procedure as laid out in the NSANSA Child Protection Policy.
3. I have not been accused or convicted of any offence involving physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.
4. I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse of children while engaged in NSANSA activities, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities and I am aware that the consequences for me could be severe, including fines and/or imprisonment.
5. I agree to abide to this policy and to make all my effort to protect the children from abuse.