

Lebanese Alternative Learning NGO

Child Protection Policy

Policy date: 2017-5-5

Policy statement

Lebanese Alternative Learning, educational NGO, is committed to enhance the learning resources for vulnerable communities.

Violence of any kind against any child is unacceptable, regardless of their gender, sexuality, ethnic grouping, faith, culture or disability.

In line with the UN convention on the Rights of the Child, the Lebanese Alternative Learning is committed to protecting all children from harm in all of its activities. We take seriously our responsibility to safeguard all children with whom we come into contact- both directly and indirectly through our Tabshoura and Wirash programs and our social media channels. We will take positive action to prevent those who intend to harm children from becoming involved with LAL and take a zero tolerance approach to child abuse and exploitation by any of our staff, representatives or partners.

INTRODUCTION

This Child Protection Policy sets minimum standards for LAL staff, representatives and partners in order to best safeguard children with whom LAL has direct or indirect contact. It provides minimum standards for safe recruitment, behavior of those associated with the organisation, communication and traditional and social media, involvement of children in LAL activities and partner organizations. It also sets out roles and responsibilities for monitoring the implementation of the policy and the procedure for reporting concerns.

DEFINITIONS

In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, LAL defines anyone under the age of 18 as a child.

CHILD ABUSE: According to the World Health Organization, “Child abuse” or “maltreatment” constitutes ‘all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.’

CHILD PROTECTION A broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In the current context, it applies particularly to the duty of organisations - and individuals associated with those organisations - towards children in their care.

DIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN: Being in the physical presence of a child or children in the context of the organisation's work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long term.

INDIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN: Having access to information on children in the context of the organisation's work, such as children's names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies.

INFORMED CONSENT: Capacity to freely give consent based on all available information, according to the age and evolving capacities of the child. For example, if you seek consent from a child regarding taking their photograph and using it for publicity purposes, the child is informed as to how the photograph will be used and is given the opportunity to refuse.

STAFF refers to all those on contracts with LAL, including those on fellowship arrangements.

REPRESENTATIVES refer to members of LAL's board

PARTNERS refer to staff and representatives of partner organization with a formal relationship to LAL.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers must reflect LAL'S commitment to safeguard children by ensuring warnings, checks and procedures are in place to screen out anyone who may be unsuitable to work with children.

Successful candidates will be asked to sign a declaration indicating that they have read, understood and will abide by LAL's Child Protection Policy.

BEHAVIOUR TOWARD CHILDREN

LAL staff, representatives and partners must:

1. Always treat children in a manner that is respectful of their rights, integrity and dignity.
2. Consider their best interests and does not expose them to, or place them at risk or, harm.
3. Respond to a child who may have been abused or exploited and report the abuse to the concerned authority.
4. Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns and or allegations of child abuse.
5. Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these.
6. As far as possible, be visible while working with children.
7. Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
8. Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behavior does not go unchallenged.
9. Empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.
10. Maintain high personal and professional standards.

LAL staff, representatives and partners must never

1. Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
2. Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years regardless of the age of majority/consent or custom locally.
3. Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
4. Act in ways that may be abusive in any way or may place a child at risk of abuse.
5. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
6. Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
7. Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do themselves.
8. Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
9. Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment or favor to particular children to the exclusion of others.
10. Spend excessive time alone with children away from others.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. Staff, partners, volunteers and other representatives should at all times avoid actions or behavior which may allow behavior to be misrepresented, constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behavior.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

All LAL communications, both traditional and social media, are based on the principle of respect for the dignity of people concerned.

1. Ensure that images of children, such as photographs and videos, are respectful, that the children are adequately clothed, and that sexually suggestive poses are avoided.
2. Ensure that any image or video does not place the child at risk or render him/her vulnerable to any form of abuse.
3. Use images only with the full understanding and permission of the subjects themselves (parents/guardians/caregivers)
4. Establish and record whether the subjects wish to be named or identified and always act accordingly.
5. Ensure that photographers and filmmakers are supervised by staff or partners during the field visits.

DIGITAL CONTENTS

All digital resources produced by LAL commit to strict guidelines for child protection and ensure that the following is respected:

1. The absence of nudity
2. The absence of explicit or implicit sexual content
3. The absence of explicit or implicit violent content
4. The absence of any material that depicts other potentially harmful content such as gambling, drugs and alcohol.
5. The language used is appropriate
6. LAL's digital content is respectful of gender, sexuality, ethnic grouping, faiths, culture or disability.

Name & Signature

Job title

Place & Date