

OCI Foundation International

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CHILD SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT REPORTING AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING (March 2025)

This document captures the OCI Foundation's approach to child safeguarding incident reporting and complaints handling. It covers all locations of operation for the OCI Foundation, including Australia, Nigeria and the United Kingdom.

The measures in place are child-focused and aligned with privacy principles, promoting safety and dignity. According to the Australian Institute of Family Studies and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years.

Background

- OCI Foundation deems the exploitation and abuse of children unacceptable and takes concerns and reports of child abuse extremely seriously.
- It is mandatory for all members and associates of the OCI Foundation to report concerns or allegations of child abuse.
- The OCI Foundation demonstrates its firm commitment to this Policy Document in multiple ways. These include:
 - The establishment of clear procedures as contained in the sections below.
 - A robust recruitment and regular training practice for staff and associates.
 - A constant oversight by the leadership to ensure that all operations of the OCI Foundation adhere to the stated principles and watch out for risky behaviours and complaints.

Who should report?

- All OCI Foundation members and associates.

What should be reported?

- Any allegation or disclosure from a child, beneficiary, the general public, member or associate of the OCI Foundation regarding the safety or potential abuse and exploitation of a child.
- Any concerns relating to the behaviour of an OCI foundation member or our associate that breaches the organisation's Code of Conduct for working with children.
- Inappropriate use or display suggestive of child pornography by a member or associate of the OCI Foundation.
- Staff: Any staff or associate of the OCI Foundation who is suspicious and might indicate sexual exploitation or trafficking.

When to report?

Child abuse concerns should be raised immediately.

Reporting Procedure: Who to report to and how?

- Child abuse reports should be made to the OCI Foundation's CEO or any Manager or senior officer.
- Serious suspicions (like child sex tourism, child sex trafficking and child pornography) should be reported to the relevant authorities in the country you operate in. In Australia, this would be 1800 333 000. In the UK, it is 0370 496 7622. In Nigeria, it is 08002255627874.
- Reports can also be sent to info@ocifoundation.org or via this online link: [HERE](#).

What will happen next?

- a) The OCI Foundation treats all reported concerns promptly and with all seriousness. Our approach is designed to be fair, with the principles of natural justice consistently upheld.
- b) The CEO will consult the board. A decision will be taken after the allegations are discussed, with the next steps being to either:
 - Interview the person(s) who made the allegations, or other witnesses may be necessary to gather more information for decision-making.
 - Report to local police and or child protection authority.
 - Report to the Australian Federal Police in Australia (1800 333 000).
 - Report to the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in Nigeria (08002255627874).
 - Report to the local police if in the UK (or call this number 0370 496 7622).
 - Concerns are handled internally if they are not criminal.
 - No further action can be taken if warranted.
- c) All reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and expediently.
- d) All reports are deemed to be made in good faith and are considered in the best interests of the child, regardless of the outcome of any investigation.
- e) The interests of anyone reporting a potential child abuse or neglect case will be protected.
- f) Any employee who intentionally makes false and malicious allegations will be subject to disciplinary action.
- g) The rights, safety and welfare of the child are of prime importance. Every effort will be made to protect these throughout any investigation.
- h) Children and community members with whom the OCI Foundation works will be provided with information about how to report any child protection concerns.
- i) If the complaint is against the CEO, contact the following numbers of the alternative chairs in Australia (0427322627), Nigeria (08033328272) and the United Kingdom (07877 134853).

Complaints Handling: Responding to disclosure by a child

- a) Any child reporting abuse must be taken seriously. When a child or young person reports abuse, they may feel scared, guilty, ashamed, angry and powerless. The person being reported may also experience a range of emotions, including anger, disgust, sadness, outrage, and possibly disbelief.
- b) It is essential to remain calm and in control after receiving such a report. Aim to reassure the child or young person of their safety and prompt action.
- c) Actions to protect the child should be immediate once an allegation is made. This is important to protect the child from further potential abuse or victimisation.
- d) Distance the potential victim from the alleged perpetrator. This may include the standing down of a staff member or volunteer, usually with full financial benefits, to maintain salary until investigations are complete and to ensure justice.
- e) Confidentiality must be maintained regarding the names of all individuals involved. Only those directly involved with the investigations may be privy to the process.

Staff training on child safeguarding policies

- This will include mandatory induction training and three-yearly refresher courses.
- Training will cover child safeguarding policy itself, reporting obligations, organisational codes of conduct, record keeping, how to recognise and respond to potential harm and supporting disclosures, among others.

Protecting all parties when complaints are made

- Support and counselling will be offered to all parties involved, including other children and young people.
- Measures are in place to ensure confidentiality and non-retaliation for all parties involved in any complaint process.
- There will also be support for all parties during and after investigations.
- The OCI Foundation will have Continuous Improvement processes.

Sanctions in cases of violations

Where this guideline is breached, the following sanctions will be explored and possibly implemented by the OCI Foundation against the defaulting staff:

- a) Prompt Reporting and thorough Investigations.
- b) Organisational and Employment-Related Sanctions, including suspension, termination or removal from assigned roles.
- c) Legal Sanctions, including working with the relevant authorities to initiate criminal or civil penalties.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy is subject to review in March 2028, three years after its implementation.

This can be sooner if legislation or other events warrant so.