



Bethlehem Bible College

Policies and Principles

For Child Protection

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Bethlehem Bible College, hereafter referred to as BethBC; recognizes that it has a responsibility to ensure that it upholds good practice and draws on good principles of working with and meeting the needs of children they work with and/or support.

BethBC has as well a moral and legal responsibility to guarantee a safe environment for the children they work with, serve, and/or support. The rights of children to protection from abuse are captured in many international conventions and national laws and this policy is in line with recognized standards.

In promoting the rights of children, BethBC recognizes its responsibility to protect them from all forms of harm, including abuse, exploitation, violence, and bad practice. BethBC also seeks to ensure that these children are treated with dignity and respect at all times and empowered to take an active role in the decisions that affect them.

This policy is intended to promote good practice in working with children, ensuring the quality of our work, whilst also ensuring that the College safeguards children.

BethBC staff and volunteers should enjoy their work at BethBC, confident in the knowledge of the existence of clear guidelines and, if required, access to good support and advice. Therefore, this policy serves to safeguard individuals representing BethBC and ultimately the College itself.

BethBC believes in the human rights-based principles for the protection of children, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as the Palestinian Child's Law (PCL), and is keen to create an environment that enhances and maintains the child's rights, besides preventing children from all forms of violence, abuse, maltreatment, exploitation, discrimination, and/or neglect.

BethBC also condemns any form of child abuse, inside or outside the College whether by its staff or volunteers, and bears full responsibility for any violation should that occur.

A. The list of Principals and Policies includes:

First: Terminology and Concepts

1. **Child:** a human being below the age of 18 years of age.
2. **The child's rights:** all the rights set forth in the CRC and the PCL.
3. **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. This definition includes four types of cruelty which cause harm to children:
 - Physical abuse – including hurting or injuring, inflicting pain, poisoning, drowning, or smothering.

- Sexual abuse – including direct or indirect sexual exploitation or corruption by involving them (or threatening to involve them) in inappropriate sexual activities.
- Emotional abuse – including repeatedly rejecting, humiliating, or denying their worth and rights as human beings.
- Neglect – the persistent lack of appropriate care including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education, and medical attention.

An additional type of abuse is:

- Cyber abuse – bullying, intimidation, and abuse that takes place through the Internet.
4. **Negligence:** the failure of the child’s caregiver in providing for their developmental needs in health, education, nutrition, emotional development, housing, and safe daily life conditions, thereby causing harm to the child physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, or ethically.
 5. **Exploitation:** pushing, luring, or obliging the child to carry out acts and activities that do not harmonize with his/her physical, mental, emotional, or ethical development, or thereby exposing the safety, survival, or growth of the child to danger.
 6. **Discrimination:** any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, gender, language, religion, or political opinion which aims at deactivating or hindering the recognition or enjoyment of their human rights, or practicing these rights on the basis of equality.

Second: References to These Principles and Policies

1. The CRC.
2. The PCL.

Third: Staff and Volunteers Working in and Serving at BethBC Should Not Engage in the Following Practices:

1. Hitting, physically assaulting, or physically abusing children.
2. Developing relationships with children that might - in any case - be considered as exploitation or abuse.
3. Acting in ways that might be offensive or might expose the child to the danger of abuse.
4. Using terms or making suggestions or advice that are inappropriate, insulting, or harmful to the child.
5. Acting physically in a way that is inappropriate or sexually provocative for children.
6. Behaving in ways that intend to cause shame, humiliation, disdain, or underestimation for the child, or commit any form of emotional exploitation.

7. Discriminating against any child, or showing preferential treatment for a particular child and excluding other children.
8. Engaging in any behavior or action that may constitute or is possible to constitute malpractice toward the child.

Fourth: All Staff and Volunteers Within BethBC and Those Who Communicate with Children are Required to:

1. Be familiar with and aware of the responsibilities they may encounter while working with children, and be able to avoid or deal with these responsibilities.
2. Ensure the highest level of child protection standards during the implementation of activities.
3. Plan and organize the work and workplace in order to reduce the dangers.
4. Empower children, acquaint them with their rights, help them demand for their rights, and introduce them to what is acceptable and what they can do in case they face a problem related to the carried-out activities.
5. When coordinating with other organizations and exchanging information, the focus should be on the child's protection as first priority, and the child's best interests should be the basis for all decisions made.
6. The employee has the right to refuse to carry out any activity in an environment that may result in causing harm to children.

Fifth: Values and Beliefs to Which We are Committed

1. Children- like all other human beings- are created in the image of God, and therefore ought to be respected.
2. All types of child abuse are a violation of the child's rights.
3. All children have equal rights to protection from neglect, maltreatment, exploitation, and discrimination.
4. The conditions of all children shall be improved through the promotion of their rights as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Child's Rights which includes the right to be free from maltreatment and exploitation.
5. Child abuse is unacceptable, unjustified and is to be refused.
6. We commit to work jointly with other organizations for the sake of protecting children.
7. When working with partners, they also have the responsibility to be committed to and meet the minimum standards of child protection in their projects and programs.

Sixth: The Means We Use to Protect Children from Abuse

1. Guaranteeing the highest possible level of child protection standards in order to create an environment that is free from abuse, violence, neglect, and discrimination.
2. Working with organizations that are operating, according to their available resources, to promote the concept of this child protection policy and the relevant procedures.
3. Raising the awareness of the staff and volunteers with respect to the problem of child abuse and the dangers to which they are exposed, as well as the importance of their commitment to the contents of the CRC and the PCL.
4. Guaranteeing that staff and volunteers mitigate the risks to which children might be exposed, and that they are aware of the steps that ought to be taken when there are concerns about the children's safety.
5. Making sure to take the necessary measures to support and protect children when there is, or there is the possibility of, the existence of any type of child abuse.
6. We are committed to protect children through creating awareness among our staff and preventing any violation of children's rights within BethBC. Additionally, all staff and volunteers working at BethBC are required to report any case of neglect, abuse, and/or violation as soon as possible to the College's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who should document and respond immediately to take appropriate actions against the perpetrator of the abuse, and to guarantee the interests and rights of the child.

This list of principles and policies is considered an integral part of the manual of policies and procedures of BethBC and any violation of this document will be considered a breach of the regulations of the College.

BethBC adopts this document (Policies and Principles for Child Protection), and is committed to reviewing and developing it every two years by means of its SLT and Board of Trustees to make sure that this policy is consistent with best practices.

B. Guidance on Practical Application

1. All BethBC staff and volunteers will maintain the safety and protection of children from harm as an essential element of working with children, always considering the protection of children from danger, maintaining their safety, and securing a safe environment during any activities carried out by BethBC.
2. All staff and volunteers of BethBC will receive sufficient guidance and training on the subject of child protection, and be informed about the Policies and Principles of Child Protection adopted by BethBC. Each staff member will be provided with a copy of the document to read, and will be required to sign this declaration to reflect the recognition of receiving and understanding it and agreeing upon its implementation.
3. We are committed to maintain the confidentiality and personal privacy of the child and his/her family and protecting them when providing any reports or information that may be issued by BethBC; as the safety of the child and his/her best interest ought to be the primary consideration.

4. All staff and volunteers working at BethBC will adhere to:

- Treating all children with respect.
- Never underestimating or exaggerating in dealing with children.
- Following the Policies and Principles for Child Protection adopted by BethBC.
- Respecting the child's right to personal privacy.
- Never behaving physically in an inappropriate or sexually provocative way and taking into consideration the relevant cultural sensitivity.
- Never assaulting children physically in any way.
- Never using terms or expressions that might harm children mentally or emotionally.
- Never discriminating among children because of their color, culture, age, gender, religion, disability, or political affiliation.

C. Protection Policies and Procedures Followed in the Event of Abuse

In these procedures, the primary concern is protecting the child, as the best interests of the child and his/her rights are basic in all the decisions made at BethBC.

The Policies and Principles for Child Protection document, as well as the other bylaws of BethBC, are considered the legal and ethical reference on the basis of which any children's rights violator (whether he/she is an employee or a volunteer) is called to account.

1. The staff and volunteers shall be committed to report any case of abuse as soon as possible (within 24 hours of occurrence), and submit a written report to the SLT.
2. In the event of abuse occurring, or reporting about abuse by an employee or a volunteer, the SLT shall be informed in writing. The SLT will consequently form an internal investigation committee to take the appropriate action, taking into consideration the specifics of each case.
3. The person who is believed to be a violator will be given the right to defend or explain themselves.
4. The investigation committee will determine the necessary measures and the cases that require obtaining legal, medical, or other assistance.
5. In case of the availability of clear indicators and evidence that prove involvement in an incident of abuse, the violator will be stopped from working on a temporary basis until a final decision is made, depending on the type of abuse and its implications.
6. If the claim is proved invalid, the claimant bears full responsibility and will be subject to disciplinary actions as contained in item 7 below. However, this should not discourage anyone in following up any suspicions of violation of the children's rights.

7. Upon confirmation of the involvement of the person in any form of abuse, the disciplinary or punitive actions will include:

- 1** Specialized awareness and professional supervision.
- 2** Oral alert.
- 3** Written alert
- 4** Warning.
- 5** Ultimatum.
- 6** Dispensing with the services of the employee or volunteer.
- 7** Making a formal complaint against him/her to the judicial authorities.
- 8** If the defendant's innocence is proved, then it becomes BethBC's duty and the right of the employee to undertake procedures of rehabilitation with the claimant in a way determined by the SLT.
- 9** In case the perpetrator is neither an employee nor a volunteer at BethBC, the authorized parties related to children and Childhood Protection Network should be informed in order to take the necessary actions to protect the assaulted child, so the child's best interests shall be the fundamental criteria that will guide the decisions of BethBC's SLT in this regard.

Pledge and Commitment

I, the undersigned -----, being an employee/volunteer at BethBC, having read and reviewed the document of BethBC Policies and Principles for Child Protection; and having been given ample opportunity to discuss the document, I confess in front of the undersigned witness who is present, that I am aware of all the components of the policies, principles and procedures for child protection of BethBC which I have signed.

I do agree and pledge to commit to all items contained therein and respect them while I am involved in all the activities, whether inside or outside BethBC.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Witness: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

This policy will be reviewed every two years:

Approved by Bethlehem Bible College Board on: _____