



Xtreme Youth Projects
Safeguarding Policy

Creating safe environment for children

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1 About Us

We are the organisation that uphold and promote principles of community youth empowerment through the implementation of Skills development initiatives, Performing Arts programmes, entrepreneurship and life skills training. This policy has been developed to ensure that there are guidelines and measures to protect Xtreme Youth Projects Members, children, volunteers, affiliates from any form of abuse.

We Xtreme Youth Projects members believe that this policy should protect those who are dependent on adults for their protection and well-being or who have a claim to such protection. This includes children who may be vulnerable to exploitation because of disability, economic dependence or socio-economic constraints.

2 Introduction

The Xtreme Youth Projects aspires to improving the quality of life by building secure and safer communities through the recognition and realisation of community safety as a common good. The Organisation is dedicated in developing, informing and promoting innovative evidence-based crime prevention focussed on groups identified as being vulnerable to victimisation or offending.

The Xtreme Youth Projects does this by:

1. Conducting rigorous dialog into issues of relevance to child protection.
2. Facilitating the implementation of crime prevention projects.
3. Providing basic skills and awareness to staff, members, volunteers, affiliates in crime prevention and children safety
4. Advocating and lobbying for a crime prevention agenda that supports youth development

This policy is informed and guided by the following:

1. Child Justice Act, 75 of 2008
2. Children's Act, No 38 of 2005
3. The Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 1998
4. Child Care Amendment Act (Act 96 of 1996)
5. The Criminal Procedures Act no 51 of 1977
6. The South African Constitution
7. Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act of 2007
8. The Film and Publication Act No 65 of 1996

3 Nature and Purpose of this Policy

1. Xtreme Youth Projects conducts basic awareness on issues related to children and child safety.
2. This often entails asking sensitive questions to children on issues making them particularly vulnerable so that we can understand their position.
3. We recognise the importance of protecting children and for this reason all members, volunteers, affiliates and trainers are trained to ensure that any engagement with children and child are governed by strict ethical principles that ensure that no harm and also protect the staff and contractors from false accusations.

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4. Xtreme Youth Projects also provides direct services in the form of early crime prevention programmes and interventions. This necessarily entails working with children on issues related child safety.
5. We recognise the importance of protecting children and for this reason all programme staff are trained to ensure that any engagement with children and child are governed by strict ethical principles that ensure that no harm comes to those who participate in our community programmes and also protect the our staff, Affiliates, volunteers and contractors from false accusations.

4 The scope of the Policy

Target audience

All children regardless of gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual identity and any disability have a right to participate in all Xtreme Youth Projects events free from all forms of abuse or sexual exploitation.

All affiliates, members, trainers, participating volunteers, parents of children, contractors', administrators and anyone employed members of Xtreme Youth Projects must know and observe this policy.

Access and Distribution

If target audience, affiliates, members of public and stakeholders (sponsors) want to have access to this policy they should contact Xtreme Youth Projects office via email:

info@xtremeyouth.org.za or xtremeyouthprojects@gmail.com

5 The right of Children

The rights of a child as stated in section 28 of the Bill of Rights

Every child has the right:

- to a name and a nationality from birth;
- to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment;
- to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services;
- to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation;
- to be protected from exploitative labour practices;
- not to be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that are inappropriate for a person of that child's age; or place at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development

The Children's Bill, 4 August 2003

- Chapter 8, section 105 of the Act requires that any child abuse or reasonable suspicion of child abuse be reported.
- The Child Protection Officer may then involve other agencies, such as social services and other child protection organisations such as Childline.
- Xtreme Youth Projects will conduct internal investigations, but will co-operate with the proper authorities. This will include the Child Protection Unit of the South African Police Service.

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- Xtreme Youth Projects will provide the necessary support to its members and to the community. The section entitled Procedures sets out the procedures to be followed in the event of abuse being reported.

6 What constitutes Child Abuse

Physical abuse: this includes hurting or injuring a child, and incorporates inflicting pain, drowning, intentional drugging (drugs or alcohol) or smothering (suffocating), where there is knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual abuse: is the sexual exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult. Any child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) including organized networks.

Emotional abuse: occurs when the behaviour of words of a person has a negative effect on the emotional development (intelligence, memory, perception, attention, language and moral development) of the child.

Verbal abuse: includes communication by words (i.e. derogatory name calling by adults or other children, negative criticism, yelling as a form of discipline), vocal tones, racial taunts.

An environmental risk can occur when: the physical environment in which the child finds itself can be hazardous to the physical safety of the child, whether through negligence or intent; or control measures for access to children's venues are compromised.

Physical neglect: this occurs when a child's essential physical needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development.

Kidnapping: a child is the unlawful and intentional removing or stealing of a child without permission or consent of his/her rightful parent or institution.

7 Definitions

1. Staff: all Xtreme Youth Projects employees, full and part-time, trainers and programme volunteers that have any contact with child or access to facilities
2. Contractors: all individuals working for Xtreme Youth Projects on contract or in terms of a Memorandum of Understanding for a particular project.
3. Child: all individuals participating in our projects who are under the age of 18 years.
4. Affiliates are our partners, stakeholders, sponsors, government officials, etc.

8 Principles and Guidelines for Child Protection

1. No interviews will be conducted unless the consent has been obtained from the parent/legal guardian as well as a signed assent from the child.

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2. No programme interventions will be conducted unless the consent has been obtained from the parent/legal guardian as well as a signed assent from the child.
3. No photographs or images will be captured unless the consent has been obtained from the parent/legal guardian as well as a signed assent from the child.
4. Only parents and legal guardians can provide consent and children can only provide assent.
5. The identity of all children to remain anonymous.
6. Treat all children with respect regardless of differences of religion, age, culture, gender, ability and economic conditions.
7. Allow children to have a say in decisions that affect them and listen earnestly to their concerns.
8. Engage in appropriate behaviour and use language that is not intended to shame or humiliate children in any way.
9. Take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe and comfortable to answer questions when being interviewed and when participating in programmes and interventions.
10. No child should ever be placed at risk of harm in any way.

9 Preventative Measures

9.1 Recruitment and Selection of Staff

1. Xtreme Youth Projects follows stringent recruitment processes to ensure that all staff who are recruited understands and commits to the Xtreme Youth Projects Policies and Procedures.
2. Reference checks are done on all potential recruitment of which at least one written reference from a previous employer is kept on file.
3. Before commencing employment, all staff are required to attend an induction programme where the Xtreme Youth Projects policies, procedures and guidelines are discussed in detail to ensure there are no misunderstandings.
4. Staff are required to sign confidentiality agreements for each project, which further safeguards the integrity and confidentiality of the child.

9.2 Screening

All potential Xtreme Youth Projects staff will be screened in accordance with this safeguarding policy. All Xtreme Youth Projects staff and volunteers who work directly with children will be screened against both the National Child Protection Register AND the Sexual Offences Register.

9.3 Written Application

1. All potential staff must complete and sign a written membership application form that will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions.
2. The application form will be maintained in a secure, confidential personnel file at the Xtreme Youth Projects administrative office.

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9.4 Personal Interview

1. A personal interview will be conducted with the applicant by management staff or our Board members to discuss the position and the applicant's talents, qualifications and abilities.
2. Multiple and/or group interviews may be conducted as appropriate.

9.5 Reference Checks

1. All applicants must provide at least two (2) contactable references.
2. References may be a community leader or professional and be presented in written form or by providing phone contact information.
3. All references will be confirmed by management staff and documented in the applicant's personnel file.
4. At least one reference will be from a personal contact if available.

9.6 Criminal Background Check

1. Criminal background checks maybe be conducted for all potential staff after they've completed an application.
2. A potential staff will be checked against National Register for Sex Offenders (NRSO) of South Africa if committed any offence against children
3. Background checks will comply with applicable regulations governing programmes.
4. Applicants will not be considered for positions when checks show evidence of convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to the mission and Vision of Xtreme Youth Projects.
5. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form may also terminate an individual's application.

10 Staff Training

1. All Xtreme Youth Projects staff who may come in contact with children will receive induction training.
2. The Volunteers are subjected to a three to 2-day intensive training workshop at the commencement of any event or project activity. Child protection must be a priority all Xtreme Youth Projects members, volunteers and supervisors.

11 Training and Education

1. All Xtreme Youth Projects staff will receive an orientation that includes:
 - a. Review and receipt of the Xtreme Youth Projects Values, Code of Conduct - an original signed copy will be kept in the individual's personnel file.
 - b. Review of policies related to safety, transportation, prevention and reporting of child abuse and emergency procedures - within the first week of their activation
 - c. Training in recognizing early signs of suspected child abuse - within three months of project activation.
 - d. Training in the prevention of "Bullying" - within three months of activation

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2. Xtreme Youth Projects safeguarding policy volunteers will review this policy as part of their initial orientation.
3. Staff training on children safety and orientations will be updated and refreshed each year.
4. Documentation of all training will be maintained in each individual's personnel file.
5. The Xtreme Youth Projects will offer educational information and resources for the community, parents and child through workshops, programmes, and the use of printed and/or audio-visual resources.
6. At these training sessions, participants are introduced to all aspects of the research, information relating to acceptable behaviours and appropriate boundaries when dealing with children.
7. Staff are also equipped with the necessary containment skills to be able to respond appropriately when situations arise in field.
8. During the course of the projects, staff, trainers, volunteers, affiliates should also know what steps should be taken to report any abuse or maltreatment of children that are disclosed to them during the course of their interviews with the children.

12 Reporting

1. All Xtreme Youth Projects volunteers must have a reporting box for children to insert a written report in private, should they lack the confidence to report the matter verbally.
2. All Xtreme Youth Projects volunteers must regularly inform all children about the following:
 - a. The importance of reporting abuse or neglect to a responsible adult
 - b. The process to follow when making a report of abuse or neglect to Xtreme Youth Projects management staff
 - c. What children can do if they report abuse or neglect to a Xtreme Youth Projects management staff and no action is taken.
3. All Xtreme Youth Projects management offices and programme venues must display a list of emergency contact numbers for children to use if they need to report abuse or neglect.
4. For purposes of this policy, "abuse", in relation to a child, means any form of harm or ill-treatment deliberately inflicted on a child, and includes–
 - a. Assaulting a child or inflicting any other form of deliberate injury to a child
 - b. Sexually abusing a child or allowing a child to be sexually abused
 - c. Bullying by another child
 - d. A labour practice that exploits a child
 - e. Exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm the child psychologically or emotionally
5. Xtreme Youth Management team are skilled to perform and address any performance-related issues that may have a negative impact on children, such as, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Staff basic project facilitation skills
 - b. Staff basic communication skills
 - c. Staff interpersonal skills
 - d. Staff basic counselling skills
6. Any irresponsible and unprofessional behaviour must be reported within 24 hours to the Xtreme Youth project Management team. "Irresponsible and unprofessional behaviour" is defined as follows:
 - a. Any conduct or speech that might potentially cause emotional, physical or psychological harm to a child and in doing so, violates any rights the child may have in terms of the South African constitution, the Children's Act and the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act.

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- b. Any conduct or speech that breaches the South African Council for Social Service Professions Code of Conduct where the staff member in question is a social worker or a social auxiliary worker.
- 7. The safety of children is always our priority and therefore strict action is taken when concerns, witnessed or suspected disregard of the Child Protection Policy is reported.
- 8. The process below must be followed by all internal Xtreme Youth Projects management staff.
- 9. All staff, Trainers, volunteers and affiliates must report any suspected child abuse or neglect to their Xtreme youth management staff. Thereafter, the same process as outlined below will be followed.

STEP 1:

- 1. All Xtreme Youth Projects staff must report known or suspected child abuse immediately or as soon as practically possible, taking note of the following:
 - a. Child's name, address and telephone number.
 - b. Parents or guardians name and telephone numbers.
 - c. Reasons for concern and any relevant statements made by the child.
- 2. If an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at or during Xtreme Youth Projects community activities the following procedure shall be followed:
 - a. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified
 - b. The appropriate authorities will be notified, consistent with applicable legislation
 - c. The alleged perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be suspended from the Xtreme Youth Projects pending an investigation
- 3. Staff will follow an internal chain of command for the reporting of abuse, making all reports to the Xtreme Youth Projects Management team.
- 4. Staff may report directly to the Xtreme Youth Projects Board of Directors, if their projects supervisor does not handle any report immediately.

STEP 2:

- 1. Inform the designated Xtreme Youth Projects management team in writing of the incident within 24 hours of the incident coming to light.
- 2. Xtreme Youth Projects Board of Directors and Managers are responsible for assessing the validity of the complaints within 72 hours.

STEP 3:

- 1. The designated management team should contact a Social Worker from a Child protection organization such as a Child Welfare Society or the Department of Social Development, or the Child Protection Officer of the South African Police Services.
- 2. The following should be noted:
 - a. The name of the person making the call;
 - b. The name of the intake worker receiving the call;
 - c. The date and time of the call; and
 - d. The action proposed by the person to whom the abuse has been reported.

STEP 4:

- 1. The social worker (and the police in some cases) will interview the child as soon as possible.
- 2. All Xtreme Youth Projects staff must cooperate with this process, as and when requested by the relevant authorities.
- 3. If response up is slow and in particularly if the child remains at risk, the referring person should follow up until the child is safe.

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STEP 6:

1. Once the official investigation has been completed, Xtreme Youth Projects may pursue internal disciplinary proceedings, as and when necessary.
2. A detailed report must be submitted of findings pertaining to any investigations.
3. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a management team will be formed to investigate the circumstances of the incident.
4. The team should act only in consultation with an attorney
5. Any person who is has found guilty of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position within Xtreme Youth Projects.

13 Information and Communication Technology

1. Any child making use of Xtreme Youth Projects ICT equipment must be supervised by a senior Xtreme Youth Projects staff member at all times.
2. If children are making use of Xtreme Youth Projects ICT equipment, the equipment must be child-friendly. For example, if children are accessing the internet on a Xtreme Youth Projects computer, the computer must be set up as follows:
 - (a) A separate user account is created for use by children
 - (b) The settings of the user account must have Parental Controls that block sites and content unsuitable for children.
 - (c) See the following instructions on how to set up such an account.
[<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-za/windows/set-parental-controls>]
3. Use of ICT to generate, access or be in possession of child pornography is illegal and should be reported in accordance with national laws
4. "Pornography" is defined as follows:
5. **'pornography'** means any image, however created, or any description of a person, real or simulated, who is 18 years or older, of an explicit or sexual nature that is intended to stimulate erotic feelings, including any such image or description of such person-
 - (a) Engaged in an act that constitutes a sexual offence;
 - (b) Engaged in an act of sexual penetration;
 - (c) Engaged in an act of sexual violation;
 - (d) Engaged in an act of self-masturbation;
 - (e) Displaying the genital organs of such person in a state of arousal or stimulation;
 - (f) Unduly displaying the genital organs or anus of such person;
 - (g) Displaying any form of stimulation of a sexual nature of the female breasts;
 - (h) Engaged in sexually suggestive or lewd acts;
 - (i) Engaged in or as the subject of sadistic or masochistic acts of a sexual nature;
 - (j) Engaged in any conduct or activity characteristically associated with sexual intercourse; or
 - (k) Showing or describing the body, or parts of the body, of that person in a manner or in circumstances which, within the context, violate or offend the sexual integrity or dignity of that person or any other person or is capable of being used for the purposes of violating or offending the sexual integrity or dignity of that person or any other person.
6. Staff found in possession of child pornography will be suspended pending a formal investigation
7. Pictures, materials and personal information regarding children is kept in a secure place.

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14 Supervision

1. Supervision of child, programmes, facilities and staff will be designed to protect child and staff at all times.
2. Practices to ensure a safe and caring environment will include:
3. Xtreme Youth Projects management staff may make unannounced visits at least two times per quarter to every programme.
4. A minimum of two senior staff should be assigned to each programme, operating site and vehicle.
5. Xtreme Youth Projects Staff members will never be alone with an individual child where they are not observable by others.
6. Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room. All storage, maintenance and utility area doors will be secured when not in use.
7. All sites of operation will have access to a telephone or cellphone on location during operating hours.
8. Child will never be left unsupervised; including bathrooms, locker rooms, or showers.
 - a. Written restroom use practices will be in place for all child programmes.
 - b. Facilities will be well lighted indoors and out.
 - c. Guests, service and contractors will sign-in to all facilities.
 - d. Staff will never release child to anyone other than the authorised parent(s), guardian(s), or an individual authorised by parents in writing or verified by phone.
9. Xtreme Youth Projects staff will check for signs of physical injury or emotional abnormality each time a child reports to programme.
10. Xtreme Youth Projects staff will utilize constructive methods for maintaining group control and managing child behaviour.
11. Xtreme youth staff will not disrobe a child other than outer garments without the presence of another staff member.
12. Xtreme Youth Projects staff will avoid changing clothes in front of child.

15 Contact with Child

1. It is understood that caring quality staff will develop positive relationships with child while involved in Xtreme Youth Projects activities.
2. The following practices will be followed to ensure the protection of both child and staff outside of Xtreme Youth Projects or activities.
3. Staff will not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for child outside of Xtreme Youth Projects and activities, including baby-sitting or private instructions. Staff with prior or family relationships to child may be relieved of this restriction with prior documented Executive approval.
4. Staff will not communicate with child outside of Xtreme Youth Projects activities via written, electronic or other means without parent/guardian concern or management approval.
5. Xtreme Youth Projects staff must appear and behave in a manner that is consistent with the values of the organisation at all times while on or off duty; including electronic, written and verbal communications.

16 Communications

1. Xtreme Youth Projects will promote positive values and child protection strategies in its programmes, facilities, with parents and in the community.

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2. Parents will receive regular written information about the programmes content and schedules; feedback regarding their child's participation in programme including behaviour and general health; and an introduction to the programme staff.
3. Parents will be allowed to observe programmes at any time as appropriate
4. Parents and the community will be made aware of the Xtreme Youth Projects child protection efforts through regular written and/or electronic communication including: the staff code of conduct, abuse prevention training for staff and child, how to report suspicious behaviour and that staff is not allowed to contact child outside of programmes.
5. The Xtreme Youth Projects will designate a spokesperson to the media and community in the event of any incident concerning abuse or neglect.

17 Dissemination of the policy

1. Xtreme Youth Projects is committed to ensuring that all relevant parties are informed about its policy and understand the importance of keeping children safe.
2. Xtreme Youth Projects Child safeguarding policy is:
 - a. Circulated and discussed with all current and future Xtreme Youth Projects employees, trainers, affiliates and contractors.
 - b. Circulated and discussed with all existing and potential funders.
 - c. Circulated and discussed with all current and future board members.
 - d. Circulated and discussed with the communities with whom Xtreme Youth Projects collaborates.

18 Policy Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed and updated as needed by the Xtreme Youth Projects Board of Directors or its designee on an annual basis.

19 Policy Approval

The following members of Xtreme Youth Projects reviewed and approved the Safeguarding Policy:

#	Full Name	Position	Date	Signature
1				
2				

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