

# 2015

## Child Protection Policy



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## Introduction

The mission of the Mauritius Scout Association is to “ to contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society.” One of the key factors to succeed in achieving this goal is the respect of the rights and interests of our scouts. In its statement on the respect for human rights, the World Scout Committee declared the following:

**“The values promoted by World Scouting are expressed within the Scout Promise and Law. From these values, it is understood that the dignity of the human being and also the best interest of the child be valued in each Scout programme and activity. “**

The purpose of this child protection Policy is:

- Enabling the association to reflect their ethos and position in the work they do;
- Encouraging good practice and promotion of child protection
- Supporting adult leaders, young people and parents;
- Providing consistency in how to respond to the issue of child protection
- Meeting the specific needs of the organization’s target
- Providing a framework on child protection for co-operation with other agencies;

The policy communicates that the MSA is committed to keeping children safe from harm. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children. It purports that clear procedures and guidance aiming at ensuring that there is a prompt response to concerns about a child’s safety or welfare. It shows that the organization is taking its duty of care seriously and is complying with legislations of the country.

Mauritius signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. The main piece of legislation dealing with child protection namely the Child Protection Act was enacted in 1994 and also subsequent amendments such as Act 15 of 1998, Act 34 of 2005 and Act 40 of 2008.

. In this Act the term ‘harm’ is defined as ““ physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or moral injury, neglect, ill-treatment, impairment of health or development, indecent photograph includes an indecent film a copy of an indecent photograph or film..”

, Article 19 of the Convention stipulates that: “States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian (s) or any other person who has the care of the child.” The MSA, as a responsible partner, shall contribute in making Mauritius a more child friendly country.

### **The Policy Statement**

The Mauritius Scout association is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its youth members. Adult leaders should at all times show respect and understanding for their their rights, interests, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of Scouting. We shall contribute in protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

We shall ensure that the four guiding principles in the Convention be respected at all times.

These principles are:

- The right to be protected against all forms of discrimination (Art 2)
- The best interests of children should always prevail in the decision making instances at all levels of the association (Art 3)
- The right to live and develop (Art 6)
- The right to express oneself freely and to be heard (Art 12)
- The right of children to association (Art 13)

### **We achieve this by .....**

- Educating our youth on their rights and responsibilities
- Setting up mechanisms to record complaints from children and parents regarding abuses perpetrated by adult leaders
- Ensuring that all leaders are carefully selected, trained for and supervised in their tasks (ALA form) – certificate of character

- Assessing carefully all risks that young people encounter and taking all necessary steps to minimize and manage them.-
- Giving parents, young people and leaders information about what we do and what can be expected from us
- Establishing appropriate procedures on how leaders may report cases of children who are victims of abuse or who may be abused or likely to be abused
- Involving children in all decision making bodies within and outside the movement so that they may express themselves freely on all matters concerning them and champion the cause of children.

## Annex 1

### CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR ADULT LEADERS

- **DO** put this code into practice at all times.
- **DO** treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- **DO** set an example you would wish others to follow.
- **DO** treat all young people equally - show no favoritism.
- **DO** plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others.
- **DO** follow recommended adult/young people ratios for meetings and activities.
- **DO** respect a young person's right to personal privacy.
- **DO** avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust e.g. a sexual relationship with a youth Member over the age of consent.
- **DO** have separate sleeping accommodation for young people, adults and Young Leaders working with a younger section.
- **DO** allow young people to talk about any concerns they may have.
- **DO** encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviors they do not like.

- **DO** avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behavior e.g. tantrums and crushes.
  - **DO** follow the Association's 'no alcohol' guidance when young people are in your care.
  - **DO** make everyone aware of the Association's child protection procedures - young people, parents/carers, Young Leaders and other helpers.
  - **DO** remember this code even at sensitive moments e.g. when responding to bullying, bereavement or abuse.
  - **DO** keep other Leaders informed of where you are and what you are doing.
  - **DO** remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned.
  - **DO** take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer immediately **DO NOT** trivialize abuse.
  - **DO NOT** form a relationship with a young person that is an abuse of trust.
  - **DO NOT** permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, bullying.
- DO NOT** drink alcohol when you are directly responsible for young people and never allow young people on Scouting activities to drink alcohol.
- **DO NOT** engage in inappropriate behavior or contact - physical, verbal, sexual.
  - **DO NOT** play body contact games with young people.

**REPORTING SYSTEM :**

If you have a concern about a young person's safety and well being:

1. Immediately tell your Group Scout Leader or District Commissioner
2. Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or was told
3. Sign, date and pass your notes to your District Commissioner
4. Ensure that no Scouting situation arises which could cause any further concern.

If a young person tells you about abuse by someone else:

1. Allow the young person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said
2. Offer immediate understanding and reassurance, while passing no judgement
3. Advise that you will try to offer support but that you must pass the information
4. Immediately tell your Group Scout Leader or District Commissioner
5. Write careful notes of what was said; use actual words wherever possible
6. Sign, date and pass your notes to your District Commissioner
7. Ensure that no Scouting situation arises which could cause any further concern

**Note: In an emergency (young person at imminent risk of significant harm) contact police or social service/work department direct. Inform your District Commissioner of the action you have taken.**

If you receive a complaint or allegation about any adult or about yourself:

1. Immediately tell your Group Scout Leader or District Commissioner
2. Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or was told
3. Sign, date and pass your notes to your District Commissioner
4. Try to ensure no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise

**Note: Any Adult in Scouting has the right to report any concerns, or suspicions about another Member in confidence and free from harassment.**

**You must refer; you must not investigate!**