



Loving Arms Charitable
Corporation
228 Chartwell Rd
Oakville ON L6J 3Z8
www.lovingarms.ca

LOVING ARMS Child/ Youth Protection Policy

1. Child Protection

LOVING ARMS is a not-for-profit charitable organization which operates from a Christian perspective. LOVING ARMS is dedicated to working with children, families and communities in Guatemala to overcome extreme poverty. LOVING ARMS serves those in need regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

LOVING ARMS is committed to protecting children from abuse, and takes every reasonable precaution to protect the children and families we serve. We believe that child protection is everyone's responsibility. Child abusers are often difficult to identify. Abusers can be male or female, can be of any social, cultural or economic group, and of any age.

LOVING ARMS therefore has the following policy and procedure in place to minimize the risk of abuse, and responds to accusations of abuse in a manner that respects all involved. Non-compliance with these requirements will be taken seriously and could result in the termination of the volunteer trip and/or disassociation for the non-compliant individuals(s).

Loving Arms defines 'youth' and 'child' to be anyone under the age of eighteen. Therefore, the use of the word "child" for the purposes of this document, means either child or youth.

Loving Arms will endeavor to eliminate or prevent abuse to a child or children by any Loving Arms volunteer or worker under its control.

2. Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse is generally defined as a non-accidental physical or mental injury or mistreatment caused by the acts or omissions of a child's parent, caretaker, an older child or anyone else who comes in contact with the child. Child abuse may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Physical Abuse: Non-accidental physical injury to a child.
- Physical Neglect: Failure by a child's caretaker to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or supervision.
- Emotional Maltreatment: Belittling or rejecting a child; failure to provide a positive emotional atmosphere.
- Sexual Abuse: Sexual exploitation of a child that is done for the sexual gratification of the offender or another person.



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3. Visiting Sponsored Children

3.1 All requests to visit sponsored children must be submitted to the President prior to the commencement of the volunteer trip. Travel to individual homes is sometimes expensive, time consuming, or not easily arranged, depending on the location of the village or home.

LOVING ARMS encourages all meetings to be at the Centre of Hope, a Church or Community Centre, or to be arranged by the Guatemalan Director. Visits during monthly food distribution are recommended as they are far easier to arrange. For issues of safety and work programming, it is not possible to accommodate unscheduled visits.

3.2 All visitors to the home of a sponsored child must:

- be accompanied by the LOVING ARMS President, the Guatemalan Director or their Designate;
- dress in culturally appropriate ways (see Loving Arms Code of Conduct); and
- be sensitive to cultural differences.

4. Volunteer Requirements

All volunteers must:

- have a Criminal Records Check for Vulnerable Sector
- sign a document stating they have read and agree to comply with the Behaviour Protocols, Code of Conduct and other documents approved by LOVING ARMS.

5. Protocols for Working with Children

5.1. LOVING ARMS Personnel Identification

All LOVING ARMS volunteers/workers, when serving, are to wear a Loving Arms T-shirt or nametag that clearly identifies them to parents, children and others.



5.2 Washroom Guidelines

LOVING ARMS volunteers/workers are not to be alone with children in an unsupervised washroom and are never to enter into a cubicle with a child and shut the door.

5.3. One-on-One Policy

LOVING ARMS volunteers/workers working with children may conduct one-on-one or small group meetings so long as the following conditions are met:

- The door must remain open or the meeting must take place in a room with an unobstructed view.
- All such meetings must take place on the grounds where LOVING ARMS operates or in a place that has been preapproved by the President and/or Director.

5.4. Inappropriate Displays of Affection

Recognizing that the innocence of children must be protected, LOVING ARMS volunteers/workers will be made aware that the following actions are deemed inappropriate and will not be permitted.

- Do not kiss a child or coax a child to kiss you.
- Do not engage in extended hugging.
- Do not hold a child's face when talking to or disciplining the child.
- Do not touch a child in any area that would be covered if the child were wearing a bathing suit.
- Do not exhibit over-exuberant affection.
- Do not take a child to your home/hotel or encourage meetings outside the program activity.
- Do not slap, hit or physically abuse any child.
- Do not give children alcohol, cigarettes or drugs.
- Do not psychologically or verbally abuse any child.
- Do not expose anyone to sexual materials or abuse anyone through non-contact sexual activity. Be cautious in sending verbal, non-verbal, or written messages that could be misinterpreted by a child or by adults.



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5.5. Appropriate Displays of Affection

LOVING ARMS volunteers/workers will be made aware that the following are examples of more appropriate touching:

- One-arm hugs
- Shoulder-to-shoulder hugs
- A touch on the back or shoulder

5.6 Other Rules for Interacting with Children

- Avoid prolonged physical contact with a child.
- Be cognizant of conduct that could be misinterpreted, for example: horseplay, tickling, or extended backrubs.
- Stop any interaction with a child if a child says stop, or if the child appears uncomfortable with the interaction.
- Act responsible: Adults are always responsible for their behaviour with a child, even if the child is acting seductively.
- Treat all children and their families with respect and dignity.
- Listen to children.

5.7 Planning for Safety

All LOVING ARMS volunteers/workers must ensure a safe environment in their planning and evaluating of all activities. Physical activities and sports are promoted through the programs. Safety precautions are to be communicated to the children. It is recommended that personnel take precautions when participating in or playing games and sports that could injure the children.

5.8. Dating

LOVING ARMS volunteers/workers working with youth may not pursue a dating relationship with a youth.

5.9 Rules for Photos and Reports about Children

The following minimum standards must be observed to ensure that human dignity and the right to personal privacy are respected when volunteers/workers are taking photos and videos of those with whom LOVING ARMS works, especially children.



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When Loving Arms wishes to take photos or videos or to write a report, they always obtain prior permission at a community meeting, and explain how the photos or videos will be used.

Be extremely sensitive to a person's vulnerability at times of trauma or grief, and always assess how a photo, video or report will impact the safety, dignity and well-being of the person concerned.

Do not portray people as helpless victims. Balance human needs with positive language about what people are doing to help them.

6. Occasional Observers or Special Event/Short-Term Volunteers

Occasional observers who join a group of children will have their attendance recorded. Occasional observers will not be wearing Loving Arms T-shirts but must be clearly identified with nametags. Occasional Observers, and Special Event or Short-term volunteers, if they have not been screened and approved, will not be placed in a position of trust with children and are to be supervised at all times.

7. Reporting Abuse

Loving ARMS volunteers/workers shall report to the President or the Director of the Guatemala team any concern or any suspected incident of any type of abuse (emotional, physical, sexual). The incident should not be discussed with anyone else. It is important to handle these situations seriously and respectfully. If the suspected abuse happened on-site, or in connection with a LOVING ARMS program or event, or an allegation is made against a Loving Arms volunteer/worker, the President or the Director of the Guatemala team should also inform the Board. Given the liability potential the Board should decide to consult with a lawyer and the insurance company of Loving Arms.

In situations where there is an allegation against Loving Arms' personnel, there will be an immediate suspension of duty, pending outcome of an investigation.

Only a representative designated by the President will have authority to make public statements, and only with prior legal counsel.

The Loving Arms Incident Report Form must be filled out as soon as possible after the event.



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8. Compliance

All volunteers are expected to comply with the guidelines above.

Print Name:

Signed: _____

Date:

Parent(s) Print Name:

Signed: _____

Date:
