

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

See Attachment: [Code of Conduct](#)

Objective

Seeding Success cares about the safety and wellbeing of all children and is committed to taking the necessary actions to support child protection. We recognize our fundamental duty to care for the children with whom we engage. This Policy is our commitment to protecting children from any form of abuse or neglect. Seeding Success has a zero tolerance policy for child abuse in any form. People working for or affiliated with Seeding Success must always treat children decently and respectfully. This policy aims to prevent, respond to and resolve any potential child abuse during children's interaction with Seeding Success or Seeding Success employees by:

- Communicating and enforcing a zero tolerance policy for child abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence
- Promoting a common understanding of child protection issues within the Seeding Success context
- Facilitating best practice development across the areas where we engage with children Strengthening our child protection governance, documentation and accountability

We understand that protecting children is our most important responsibility, and that our services and support provide no positive purpose if we do not ensure their safety. In EVERY case, the report of physical or sexual abuse or neglect, or suspected physical or sexual abuse or neglect, will be treated with absolute priority, and Seeding Success will do everything in its power to ensure the successful prosecution of the perpetrator to the fullest extent of the law.

In accordance with the [State of Tennessee](#), everyone in Tennessee is a mandated reporter under state law. Any person with reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected must, under the law, immediately report to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services or to local law enforcement. The reporter can remain anonymous. Thus, all adults associated with Seeding Success have a duty to report. This policy provides guidelines and establishes procedures for employees, board members, volunteers, consultants, or anyone conducting or involved (defined as "Individuals") with youth on behalf of or in concert with Seeding Success.

Definition of child protection

“Child protection” is a broad term used to describe policies, standards, guidelines and procedures aimed at safeguarding children. It aims to prevent, respond to and report the exploitation, neglect, abuse and violence experienced by children in all settings.

Scope of the child protection policy

Seeding Success strives to provide a positive experience for all children, and they must be treated with dignity and respect, no matter where we operate. In accordance with the State of Tennessee, a child is classified as an individual below the age of 18. This policy covers all children we engage with directly and indirectly. It also includes any young people below the age of 18 who work or cooperate with Seeding Success or our partners.

The key focus areas are:

1. Physical abuse or ill-treatment – e.g. hitting or shaking a child
2. Emotional abuse or ill-treatment – e.g. conveying to a child that they are worthless or inadequate
3. Neglect – e.g. inadequate care or supervision, leaving a child in a dangerous situation.
4. Sexual abuse – sexual activity (intentional sexual acts that produce sexual arousal and/or gratification for the perpetrator or sexual behaviors/situations in which there is a sexual component) with a child below 18 years, whether or not the child gives consent.
5. Commercial or other exploitation – e.g. conducting marketing that misleads children Online protection – e.g. inadequate data protection, online bullying or exposure to inappropriate content or contact

Compliance

The Administrative Director (AD), Paris Ducker (paris@seeding-success.org), ensures the organization is acting in accordance with any requirements outlined in the policy. The AD audits each outside entity to make sure they are following the policy guidelines, ensures that any reports/incidents are handled appropriately and in a timely manner, and responds to requests for information from internal and external clients.

Other duties of the AD include but are not limited to:

- Conducting orientation and training of internal new hires
- Ensuring that background checks are conducted internally and externally
- Notifying the Chief Executive Officer of any incident reports after the responsible reporting individual has contacted the appropriate authorities (*Department of Children's Services, local law enforcement, Juvenile Court*).

Orientation and Training of Internal New Hires

All internal new hires will be provided with training during their new hire orientation within one month of hire, but always prior to working directly with children.

Orientation/Training will cover:

- Employee's legal obligations with regard to reporting incidents of child sexual molestation and abuse
- The proper care and response by an adult/individual for a victimized child in situations regarding suspected abuse or a disclosure
- The process for reporting to the proper authorities and notification of Administrative Director and Seeding Success.
- Understanding what signs to look for in a child who may have been abused

Background Checks

All Seeding Success "Individuals", inclusive of any new applicant screening for employment or volunteer positions with the organization, will be subject to national and state-level criminal background checks on an annual basis. All background checks resulting in a positive finding of physical or sexual abuse or neglect will result in that individual being permanently banned from working or volunteering in the organization.

a. Seeding Success "Individuals" are defined as follows:

- All employees of Seeding Success
- Any volunteer working directly with children on behalf of Seeding Success
- All board members of Seeding Success
- All interns or others who may conduct youth programming on behalf of Seeding Success
- Any Individual who may be affiliated with a Seeding Success sponsored activity in any capacity and who is in regular contact with young people

b. Background checks will be conducted by an approved Background Check Provider.

Checks will include, at a minimum:

- National Criminal File
- National Sex Offender Registry
- Social Security Number Verification
- County and municipal hand checks, where deemed necessary

Incident Reports

A. Individuals must immediately report any and all incidents, suspected incidents, or allegations of molestation or abuse in accordance with the governing state law.

Individuals will immediately report any and all incidents, suspected incidents, or allegations of molestation or abuse to the proper *reporting authorities and the Administrative Director (AD). It is not the responsibility of the individual to decide if an incident is valid, truthful, or worth reporting. This determination will be made by local authorities.

***Reporting Authorities**

Reporting to Child Protective Services

TN Child Abuse Hotline	(877) 237-0044
<i>This is toll-free and is answered 24/7</i>	
Childhelp USA	(800) 422-4453
<i>National Reporting</i>	
Mississippi	(800) 222-8000
Arkansas	(800) 482-5964

Reporting to the Police

Bartlett	385-5555
Collierville	583-3207
Germantown	754-7222
Memphis	528-2222
Millington	872-3333
Shelby County	379-7620

B. Individuals must agree to immediately report any incident or allegation of child abuse to local child welfare agencies and/or law enforcement, regardless of the inclusion or absence of this mandate within their governing state laws. Additionally, individuals must agree to immediately report any incident or allegation of child abuse to their appointed Compliance Officer and supervisor.

C. The AD will have a form that MUST be filled in the event an incident is reported or occurs. The report will be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer and all appropriate authorities will be contacted. This form should be completed and submitted to the AD immediately and no more than 24 hours after the incident occurs or is brought to the attention of the Individual.

D. All those participating in a Seeding Success sponsored event must sign a copy of this policy along with a waiver that will be provided to them prior to the event. Individuals will not be given permission to participate in any event where children are present without signing the policy and waiver.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and agree to abide by the Seeding Success Child Protection Policy, including the [Code of Conduct](#).

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: ____/____/____