



## **Child Protection**

At Novi, protecting children is central to our mission.

We work with children affected by war, displacement, and trauma. Many are vulnerable. This responsibility requires clear standards, strong accountability, and daily attention to how we act.

Below is our full Child Protection Policy, which all staff, volunteers, and visitors are required to read, agree to, and sign before engaging in any work involving children.

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# **Child Protection Policy**

## **Purpose**

Novi is committed to protecting children from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect in all contexts where we work. This policy establishes clear expectations for behavior and responsibility to ensure children are treated with dignity, respect, and care at all times.

This policy must be read, understood, and signed by all staff, volunteers, contractors, and visitors who may come into contact with children through Novi's work.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to:

- All Novi employees, contractors, and volunteers
- All visitors to Novi programs or project sites
- All third parties acting on behalf of Novi

## **Prior to Engagement**

An official background check from the individual's country of citizenship is required for anyone working or volunteering with Novi, whether or not their role involves direct contact with children.

Novi reserves the right to deny or terminate involvement based on concerns related to child safety.

## **Behavior Protocols**

All children must be treated with dignity and respect in language, attitude, and action.

Novi personnel must:

- Ensure, whenever possible, that interactions with children take place in the presence of another adult
- Avoid situations where they are alone with a child in private or isolated settings
- Never share a bed or sleep overnight in the same room alone with a child, except in a genuine emergency with prior approval where possible
- Never take a child to their home or arrange private stays

Physical contact must always be appropriate, necessary, and culturally sensitive. Touch must never serve the needs of the adult.

Novi personnel must not:

- Engage in any form of inappropriate, sexualized, or exploitative behavior
- Use physical punishment or any form of humiliation
- Show favoritism or provide special treatment that could be perceived as grooming
- Use language or behavior that is demeaning, discriminatory, or abusive

Adults are always responsible for maintaining appropriate boundaries, regardless of a child's behavior.

Staff and volunteers must remain aware of how their actions may be perceived and avoid situations that could place themselves or a child at risk.

## **Discipline and Environment**

Discipline should be carried out by designated caregivers or program staff whenever possible.

Any disciplinary action must:

- Be non-physical
- Preserve the dignity of the child
- Be appropriate to the situation

All Novi personnel are responsible for creating a safe and respectful environment for children.

## **Operating in High-Risk Environments**

Novi works in areas where children may have experienced trauma, displacement, and exploitation.

In these contexts:

- Extra care must be taken to avoid re-traumatization
- Boundaries must be clear and consistently maintained
- Power imbalances must be recognized and handled with care

No cultural or contextual factor justifies harm, exploitation, or abuse of a child.

### **Reporting Concerns or Abuse**

Any suspicion, concern, or allegation of abuse must be reported immediately.

Reports should be made to the Program Coordinator. If the concern involves that individual, it must be escalated to senior leadership.

Under no circumstances should staff or volunteers conduct their own investigation.

All reports will be:

- Taken seriously
- Handled confidentially where possible
- Reviewed and acted upon promptly

If an individual is suspected to pose a risk to children, Novi will take immediate action to protect children, including removing the individual from contact with children.

Where appropriate, lawful, and safe to do so, Novi will report concerns to relevant authorities or child protection agencies.

In contexts where formal reporting systems are not functional or may place individuals at risk, Novi will take alternative measures to prevent further harm, including restricting access and informing appropriate partners.

Novi prohibits retaliation against anyone who raises concerns in good faith.

### **Communications and Use of Images**

All communication involving children must preserve their dignity and safety.

- Informed consent must be obtained where possible
- Children must be appropriately clothed
- Images must not be sexually suggestive or exploitative
- Language must not portray children as powerless or diminish their dignity

All use of images and stories must align with Novi's values and mission.

### **Record of Compliance**

All individuals covered by this policy must confirm that they:

- Have read and understood the policy
- Agree to comply with its requirements
- Understand their responsibility to report concerns
- Confirm they have no history that would place children at risk

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

**Declaration**

I confirm that I have read and understood the Novi Child Protection Policy. I agree to follow its requirements and to act in a manner that protects the safety and dignity of children.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If under 18:

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_