

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE CHILD PROTECTION DRIVE

Q1: Who is a child?

A: The 1992 constitution of Ghana and the Children's Act of Ghana, Act 560(1998 - Section 1) defines a child as a person below the age of eighteen (18) years

Q2: What is Child Protection?

A: It refers to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect of children

Q3: What is The Child Protection Social Drive?

A: it is a coordinated and collective plan designed to reduce the acceptance of social practices that have negative consequences on the protection of children. The plan is to create a large following of people who are able to promote the change of behaviours favorable to protect children and adolescents.

Q4: What is the goal of The Child Protection Social Drive?

A: Its ultimate aim is to reduce violence against children due to social and behavioural change by reducing the acceptance of social practices including harmful practices which have negative consequences on children.

Q5: What is the Social Drive ultimate duty?

A: Promote the wellbeing of children, prevent abuse, and Protect children from harm are the Social drive ultimate call to action.

Bullying

Q6: What is Bullying?

A: Bullying is the deliberate use of aggression and power to cause physical pain or emotional distress.

Q7: Who are involved in bullying?

A: Bullying usually involves more than two people: the bully, the victim and the observers. The observers usually fall under these categories:

- Reinforcers: Those who cheer the bully or reinforces the bully's ideas about being stronger and more powerful than the victim.
- Assistants: Those who help the bully.
- The bystanders: those who usually do nothing but watch.

Q8: What are the forms of Bullying?

A: Bullying takes many forms and can include: physical assault, teasing, making threats and name calling. It can be verbal or physical, use unpleasant and humiliating or threatening gestures, or use social coercion such as cyber bullying and social exclusion, or any combination of these.

Q9: Why are people bullied?

A: They are bullied because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Others reasons include disability, economic status or where is an imbalance of power

Q10: Who can be a victim of bullying?

A: Anyone can be bullied but mostly, women and children are affected.

Q11: Does bullying have any side effects on the victim?

A: YES, bullying has side effects because it reduces the confidence and self-esteem of the victim. Physical bullying can also result in serious injuries. In some instances, victims who are children drop out of school and this affects their education.

Q12: What is Sexual Abuse or Harassment?

A: Sexual Harassment is defined as ‘Uninvited and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that tends to create a hostile or offensive environment; often perpetrated in a context of imbalance of power’;

Sexual Abuse defined as ‘undesired sexual behavior by one person upon another, It can involve a victim below the age of sexual consent or incapable of sexual consent. The use of a child, or other individuals younger than the age of consent, for sexual stimulation is referred to as child sexual abuse or statutory rape. When force is immediate, of short duration, or infrequent, it is called sexual assault.

Q13: What are the negative effects of sexual abuse/ harassment?

A: Boys and Girls who are sexually harassed or abused often become withdrawn and have difficulty participating in class. This can lead to depression, low self-esteem and drop out of school. Below are some effects of sexual abuse or harassment on children.

- **Psychological problems:** Fears, panic attacks, sleeping problems, irritability, outbursts of anger and sudden shock reactions when being touched. Little confidence, and self-respect and respect for one's own body. Behavior that harms the body: addiction to alcohol and other substances, depression, etc.
- **Social problems:** Have little confidence in other people. Fear of loss of control in relationships.
- **Sexual problems:** Having difficulties in engaging in healthy sexual relationships later in life
- **Physical problems:** Physical injury and chronic pain may occur as result

All this affects psychological and emotional wellbeing, social life, physical health, capacity to attend school, work, etc.

Q14: How can we prevent sexual abuse/sexual harassment?

A: We can prevent sexual harassment and abuse by ensuring that every child knows about it and how to prevent it. Also, discuss with your children about sexual harassment and abuse and how to report an uncomfortable situation.

Boys and girls themselves to be aware on what the risks are, and have the required knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe, know how and where to report and seek help and feel comfortable to do so.

Families, communities and schools should support and protect Children from sexual harassment and abuse. They should report such acts to relevant authorities such as; social welfare, DOVVSU-police, school authorities, health workers, CHRAJ or reputable CSOs/NGOs among others. We must ensure that laws that are implemented and hold perpetrators accountable.

Verbal Abuse

Q15: What is Verbal abuse?

A: It is a form of abuse without physical contact, but involves the use words and insults or derogatory remarks about a person.

Q16: What are the effects of verbal abuse on the child?

The child's self-esteem and confidence would be reduced and it has adverse effects on the child's mental and emotional development.

Corporal Punishment

Q17: What is Corporal Punishment?

A: Is any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light.

Q18: What does physical force involve?

A: It involves hitting (smacking, slapping, spanking) children with an implement (whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon etc.). It also involves for example, kicking, shaking, or throwing children, pinching, burning, scalding or forced ingestion.

Q19: How can corporal punishment be avoided?

A: By using alternatives forms of discipline that seek to build the child and not humiliate, inflict harm to the child.

Q20. What is Positive Discipline?

It is an approach to teaching which focuses on helping children to succeed and on long-term solutions that develop children's own self-discipline and their life-long learning. Positive discipline is about setting limits and following through with your child. This is in contrast to punishment (negative discipline) like canning, hitting or insulting a child which makes children fear and leads to poor self esteem

Q21: How can positive discipline be practiced?

A: By showing respect and listening to the child, reward good behaviour and remind a child that you love them. It can also be practiced through consistent communication and reinforcement of your expectations, rules and limits as well as teaching non-violence, empathy, self-respect, human rights, and respect for others.

Emotional Abuse

Q21: What is Emotional Abuse?

A: It is the cruel and degrading and are punishments that involve belittling, humiliating, scaring, threatening or ridiculing the child.

Human Trafficking

Q22: What is Human Trafficking?

A: Human Trafficking means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, trading or receipt of persons within and across national borders by giving or receiving payments and benefits to achieve consent. It however does not matter if children give consent or not. In the case of children, it is still considered a crime

Q23: Why are people trafficked?

A: People are trafficked to be recruited into prostitution, forced labour, slavery and servitude, and for the removal of organs.

Q24: Why is trafficking wrong?

A: Trafficking is wrong because people are taken advantage of and their rights are being violated.

Q25: Where can I report cases of human trafficking?

A: Report all cases of trafficking including anybody who has knowledge of trafficking to make a complaint to the Police, CHRAJ, Department of Social Welfare, Legal Aid Board and any reputable civil society organization.

Child Labour

Q26: What is Child Labour?

A: It is any activity undertaken by a child that negatively affects his/her education, health and general development.

Q28: When can the child work?

The Child can work after school, during holidays and weekends

Q29.: What type of work can the child do?

The child can do light work such as helping with house chaos and family businesses that are not hazardous and does not prevent the child from going to school, doing their homework and playing.

Q30: At what age can the child be legally employed?

At age 15 the child can legally be employed to do non-hazardous work under adult supervision

Child Marriage

Q31: What is Child Marriage?

A: Marriage or informal union in which one or both of parties involved are below the age of 18.

Q32: Is Child Marriage legal in Ghana?

A: No, child marriage is illegal in Ghana- both the 1992 Constitution and the 1998 Children's Act set the legal age for marriage at 18 for both girls and boys.

Q33: What are the causes of child marriage?

A: Child marriage persists in Ghana fuelled by poverty, teen-age pregnancy, limited educational and livelihoods opportunities for girls.

Family Based Care

Q34: What is Family Based Care?

A: Family Based Care is where the child lives in a family environment but is cared for by someone who is not a biological parent but could be a relative, close family friend or foster parent.

Q35: Is there any family based care in Ghana?

A: Yes, the main family based care options are kinship care where a relative cares for the child. The State is also promoting formal foster care where care is provided by a government approved foster parent, usually not a relative of the child.

Q36: Is there any other alternative care?

A: Residential care (commonly called orphanages, but also includes shelters, places of safety, children's homes, children's villages) is another type of alternative care. But family based care is the preferred alternative care for children because it helps to ensure that children grow up in a stable, safe and caring family.

Q37: Why should residential care be used as a last resort?

Eighty years of research has shown the negative impact of institutionalisation on children's health, development and life chances including physical stunting; poor social and psychological development; lower IQs and levels of brain activity; and poor self-confidence, lack of empathy, aggression, tendency to self-harm and delayed language development. Residential care may be considered as a temporary alternative care solution for some children in emergency situations and only as a last resort if no immediate placement in the community is found.

Q38: Is adoption a good option?

Yes, adoption is one option. When, despite or in the absence of assistance from the State, a child's family is unavailable, unable or unwilling to care for her/him, then appropriate and stable family-based permanent placement solutions, like kinship care or adoption should be sought to enable the child to grow up in a loving, caring and supportive environment. A word of caution. In Ghana, where the majority of children are not orphans, and where the majority of parents fully expect their children to return from institutions to the family, it is crucial to have checks and balances in place that establish clearly the family options for each child with a focus on the best interests of the child as the primary consideration before adoption is considered.

Q39: Who is responsible for the children whose family is unable to provide adequate care?

A: The State.

Physical Abuse

Q40: What is physical abuse?

A: It is any intentional act causing injury to another person by way of bodily contact.

Q41: Any examples of physical abuse?

A: Scratching, biting, pushing, shoving, slapping, kicking, choking, strangling, throwing things, using weapons or objects that could hurt you, among others.

Q42: What are the causes of physical abuse?

A: Bad experienced of parents during their childhood.

Stress on the part of parents or any perpetrators of physical abuse.

Lack of awareness and understanding of developmentally appropriate expectations.

Q43: What are the effects of physical abuse?

A: Short term effects include cuts, bruises, broken bones etc. Long term effects happen as the victim grows older; Chronic pain disorder, hypertension, sexually transmitted diseases (in the case where sexual abuse was part of the physical abuse)

Q44: What should you do if you have been physically abused?

A: You need to seek for help if you or anyone you know has experienced any form of physical abuse. There are several services that can offer support. Report cases of physical abuse to the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit or the police

Gender Equality

Q45: What is Gender Equality?

A: It is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society including economic participation and decision making

Q46: How is Gender Equality measured?

A: It is measured by looking at the representation of men and women in a range of roles

Q47: Why is Gender Equality important?

A:

- i. It improves labour environment within the firm
- ii. It makes communication between management and workers better
- iii. It increases productivity
- iv. It checks in reducing maternal related discrimination.