

# Child Protection Policy 2018-19



## MONROVIA FOOTBALL ACADEMY

*“Work Hard. Be a Leader. Dream BIG.”*

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# MONROVIA FOOTBALL ACADEMY

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2018-19

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### Overview

Monrovia Football Academy (“MFA”) recognizes its responsibilities for child protection and is committed to doing everything within its power to uphold the highest levels of protection for our Student-Athletes.

### Definitions

#### Academy

Monrovia Football Academy in Monrovia, Liberia. The Academy is any place where Student-Athletes are under a Staff Member’s care, on MFA-owned property, at MFA-sponsored events, or participating in MFA programs.

#### Student-Athlete

A person who is enrolled at Monrovia Football Academy. Student-Athletes can be of any age, as long as they fulfill the programmatic requirements for enrollment.

#### Staff Member

An individual that has a working relationship at MFA, or is under contract with MFA. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Directors
- Administrators
- Program Coordinators
- Teachers
- Coaches
- Medics
- Cooks
- Employees
- Consultants
- Contractors
- Interns
- Volunteers

#### Visitor

Any person who is on MFA property but is not a Staff Member or Student-Athlete. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Donors/Supporters
- MFA Board Members
- MFA Ambassadors
- Families and friends of MFA Staff or Student-Athletes
- Town members
- MFA Student-Athletes who are on campus during non-school hours
- Representatives of other agencies
- Football fans

## Child Abuse

All forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child. Child abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages their wellbeing, dignity and prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood (Plan International, 2015).

## The Policy

Our policy applies to all Staff Members and Visitors who are working for or visiting the Academy. The four main elements to our policy are to:

1. Ensure we complete comprehensive background assessments to ensure that every Staff Member is suitable to work with children.
2. Raise awareness of child protection issues and equip our Student-Athletes with the skills needed to keep them safe.
3. Ensure Student-Athletes are provided a safe space to learn and develop.
4. Develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, including suspected cases, of Child Abuse.

We recognize that, because of their day-to-day contact with our Student-Athletes, Staff Members are well placed to observe the outward signs of Child Abuse. Therefore we shall strive to:

1. Establish and maintain an environment where Student-Athletes feel safe and secure, are encouraged to voice their concerns, and are listened to.
2. Ensure that every Student-Athlete knows and feels comfortable that there is a Staff Member at the school with whom they can freely discuss their worries.
3. Include opportunities through a holistic education model for Student-Athletes to develop skills needed to recognize and stay safe from Child Abuse.

We will follow procedures to:

1. Ensure every Staff Member is fully aware of our child protection policy. Staff Members will sign that they have read and understood the policy.
2. Investigate allegations (against Staff Members or Visitors) and notify appropriate authorities.
3. Ensure parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the Academy and its Staff Members for child protection by including the Academy's obligations towards child protection in the parent/student handbook.
4. Develop relationships with other agencies, both national and international.
5. Keep up-to-date records of all concerns regarding Student-Athlete safety even if it is not reported to another agency.
6. Ensure that records are kept in a secure, locked location, separate from Student-Athlete files.
7. Follow procedures when there is an allegation made against a Staff Member.
8. Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

When at the Academy, Student-Athletes may exhibit behavior that is challenging, but we are committed to supporting every single Student-Athlete through:

1. The provision of individual counseling with a senior Staff Member.
2. Home visits conducted by a senior Staff Member.
3. An Academy environment that promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives Student-Athletes a sense of being valued.
4. A curriculum that supports the whole Student-Athlete.
5. Liaison with other agencies that can help to support the Student-Athlete, such as the Ministry of Gender.

The Responsibilities outlined below are mandatory for all Staff Members or anyone else who falls within the scope of this policy:

1. Never abuse and/or exploit a Student-Athlete or act/ behave in any way that places a Student-Athlete at risk of harm.
2. Ensure interactions with a Student-Athlete take place in highly visible areas with others present. A Staff Member should never be alone in a room with a Student-Athlete with the door closed unless your job description specifically allows for such interactions (i.e. social worker).
3. Report any Child Abuse concerns to a supervisor.
4. Respond to a Student-Athlete who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with this Policy.
5. Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations of Child Abuse.
6. Contribute to building an environment where Student-Athletes are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights.
7. Always treat Student-Athletes in a manner that is respectful of their rights, integrity, and dignity. Always treat Student-Athletes in a manner that is in their best interests and does not expose them to, or place them at risk of, harm.
8. Never ask for or accept personal contact details (this includes email, phone numbers, social media contacts, address, webcam, skype etc.) from any Student-Athlete or family associated or formerly associated with the Academy, or share their own personal contact details with such individuals unless otherwise authorized.
9. Never disclose, or support the disclosure of, personal information of any Student-Athlete through any medium, unless that disclosure is in accordance with standard Academy policies and procedures and/or has the explicit consent of the Academy. Media include paper, photographs and social media.
10. Never make any contact with a Student-Athlete or family member associated with the Academy's work that is not supervised by a (or another) Staff Member. Such contact may include but is not limited to visits and any form of communication via social media, emails and letters.

### **Personal Conduct Outside of Work**

While Monrovia Football Academy cannot dictate a staff, contractor or volunteer's behavior outside of work and in their personal lives, actions taken that contradict the child protection policy will be considered a violation of the policy and appropriate action will be taken.

### **A Special Note Regarding Human Trafficking and Exploitation**

No Staff Member shall conspire directly or indirectly to facilitate the movement of a Student-Athlete overseas for any football opportunity without the express cooperation of the Student-Athlete's family, and the support and approval of senior Staff Members.

### **Breach of the Policy**

Should any breach of policy be reported, management will follow the procedures outlined in the MFA Employee Handbook, which may include immediate suspension or termination.

### **EMPLOYEE RECEIPT AND ACCEPTANCE**

I hereby acknowledge receipt of Monrovia Football Academy's 2018-19 Child Protection Policy. I understand that it is my continuing responsibility to read, understand, and abide by its contents.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_