

## **POLICY GUIDE**

This Policy Guide applies, without exception, to all Masicorp volunteers, staff, contracted persons and NGO's involved with the Projects supported by Masicorp.

### **OUR MISSION:**

To work with the people of Masiphumelele and key partners, offering opportunities through education and enterprise to help themselves out of poverty towards a sustainable livelihood.

### **HOW WE WORK:**

We expect our Masicorp volunteers and staff to share our enthusiasm in this mission and to always have respect and compassion for the people of Masiphumelele and to always treat residents as equals in the work we undertake.

### **THIS POLICY GUIDE:**

This policy guide has been written with the support of a social worker, established volunteers and beneficiaries of our work in the township. It is provided to assist, support and guide volunteers and all who are involved with Masicorp.

### **Policy Mission:**

To provide our volunteers with the necessary information to ensure they feel confident regarding our various policies and their implementation. To ensure that this is a pleasant experience for the volunteers and the people they work with.

### **POLICY OBJECTIVES:**

To provide our team with the following policies:

1. Code of Conduct Policy
2. Child Protection Policy (responsibility to safeguard children or report anything that is reported to you which is child-abuse related)
3. Social Media Policy.
4. Legal Issues arising from our work
5. Clear guidelines as to procedures to follow should you witness any form of child abuse or anything that is reported to you which is child abuse related.

# 1. CODE OF CONDUCT

## ***OUR WORK STANDARDS:***

We work to the highest possible standards – never “second-best” because we are a small NGO, or because we are volunteers. We want our work for the people of Masiphumelele to be recognised by them as good quality. We need to try to ensure we do not make a promise and fail to deliver. Raising expectations and not fulfilling them is a fast way for trust between us and township people to break down. We ask volunteers to stick with commitments they make and to tell us if they need guidance or assistance to carry out their work.

## ***REFERENCES:***

As volunteers and staff we undertake work that many others rely on, therefore we must take up a personal reference for you. In addition, under SECTION 126 OF THE CHILDREN’S ACT 38 OF 2005, (Regulation 44), volunteers and staff are required to agree to Masicorp making an enquiry to establish whether their name appears in Part B of THE NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER/South African Police Name Clearance Certificate.

## ***OUR VALUES:***

- Utmost **respect** for those we serve and each other;
- **Participation** in our decision making by all those concerned;
- **Empowering** all involved to take ownership of their own development;
- **Fair and equal access** to the opportunities we provide;
- **Integrity and transparency** in all our operations; and
- Long-term **sustainability**.
- **Respect rights and welfare** of all children
- Maintain **highest form of confidentiality** in our engagements with other stakeholders
- Maintain a **non-judgemental and caring attitude**

## ***GOOD HUMAN RELATIONS:*** or how we all rub along with one another!

1. Team Work: Masicorp will do all it can to treat everyone as an individual. Masicorp will do all it can to avoid inappropriate close management of volunteers and to avoid creating hierarchies and structures that encourage “ownership” followed by the inevitable need to defend “positions”. Most volunteers like working with us because it is “with” and not “for us” and they do not want anything that resembles a corporate or public entity.
2. Masicorp is very keen to keep our organisation open, friendly and supportive of volunteers.
3. Masicorp aims to train and develop further the work of our volunteers so that they can provide best practice to the Masiphumelele community.
4. All volunteers report to their Programme Managers.
5. Programme Managers report to the Managing Director.

Enjoying our work and the people we work with is very important to Masicorp – if it is ever not the case for you, please speak-up and tell Penny Ramahloko (063 5993 554) or Pam Ghillino (082 6999 552) who have the experience to help sort a problem.

## 2. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### ***WORKING WITH CHILDREN - CONDUCT & RESPONSIBILITY:***

- You must attend our Child Protection Training and follow this code when working with children
- You must follow the correct procedures when an incident of child abuse arises.
- Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of child/children.
- Be positive and supportive with children and always aim to raise or nurture their self-esteem.
- Recognise and respect the position of trust in which you have been placed.
- Always work in an open environment; avoid isolated and private places when working with or assisting a child.
- When working alone (without another adult volunteer present) with a child/children, never do so in a room with the door closed.
- Never transport a child/children in your car without being accompanied by another adult volunteer.
- If you do transport a child/children, ensure:
  - a. You have a valid driver's license with PDP. Be sure that your insurance covers the insurance of transporting children.
  - b. Always insist children use seatbelts. Never transport a child/children in a bakkie load space, etc.
  - c. Always plan trips ahead of time and obtain parent's permission in advance – see form attached.
  - d. Your vehicle will be checked to make sure that it is roadworthy and safe.
  - e. No drinking of alcohol, smoking, taking narcotics is allowed before or during the trip. Even up to two days before the event as these may still be in your system.
  - f. Do not take a child to their home, all children are collected and dropped off at the same venue.
- Be aware of what is appropriate and inappropriate touching of a child. Use good judgement when making any kind of physical contact with a child; a light touch to the upper arm or top of the head may be appropriate. Hugging, lap-sitting, face to face contact and kissing in any form is not appropriate and must be avoided. (Children can be very tactile and actively seek physical contact with you; this can make this policy guidance difficult to comply with – you must not, however, respond with inappropriate touching).
- No form of any type of relationship can be formed by Masicorp volunteers with the children and young adults which can be deemed inappropriate such as sexual or emotional relationship etc.
- Never use any sort of physical discipline with a child.
- Always uphold a positive attitude/appearance when dealing with children i.e. no shouting, screaming or any verbal abuse, intimidation or any form of harassment is allowed even if you feel provoked.
- If any child requires full blown counselling, please refer to the relevant person such as a Social Worker.
- You should follow this policy guidance at all times when representing Masicorp and in general when dealing with children.
- If you are ever in doubt about a situation, you must consult our Child Protection Officer or a Masicorp Director.
- Contact the Child Protection Officer directly when there has been an incident or a suspected incident of child abuse. Do not go directly to the child's parents or to any authorities. Allow our Child Protection Officer, Babalwa Chikwendu (see below) to help determine the correct course of action.

## ***PRACTICAL GUIDANCE IN THE EVENT OF WITNESSING AN ACT OF CHILD ABUSE OR HAVING SUCH AN INCIDENT DISCLOSED TO THE YOU:***

1. Listen to the child's/children's story, taking mental notes of facts. The easiest way of mentally remembering these facts are based on where, when, who, how. Try and use the words used by the child, not your interpretation of the events or your own words.

Let the child tell the story in their own time and pace - preferable let the child use her own mother tongue language, if possible.

Always display a caring attitude, non-judgemental attitude when dealing with vulnerable children.

Record the facts in point form. Do not record your own emotions or opinions.

Always remain truthful in your recording of any child abuse incident, do not record anything not mentioned by the child. Promote

Stay calm; give the child your attention and focus.

Do not ask leading questions; just allow them to tell you what they need to say in their own words.

2. Stay calm, give the child your attention and focus.  
Ensure to recognise, respect and record the child's feelings for example crying, fidgeting fingers etc.

Recognise the child's feeling by saying things like, "you are sorry that they had experienced this and that you are doing your best to assist them (without making any promises)

Do not show emotions during session such as crying in front of the child even if you feel overwhelmed.

3. Ask politely if the child has reported the incident to anyone before (in case witnesses are required in court)

DO not ask leading questions, just allow them to tell you what they need to say in their own words. Reassure the child that what they have shared with you took courage and they are very brave. Thank them for trusting you.

4. Reassure the child by telling them you have a colleague/friend that you would like to tell, because they help other children who have had the same things happen to them.

Do not make any promises to the child.

The disclosure made to you by the child may not be discussed with anyone, except with the Child Protection Officer or a Masicorp Director. They are responsible, in discussion with you, for the actions that will follow. The best and safe interests of the child are to be respected.

### 3. PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW WHEN WITNESSING CHILD ABUSE



Whatever happens never confront the allegedly perpetrator with your concerns rather report to the appointed person such as the Child Protection Officer or above mentioned people.

The Child Protection Officer will keep the volunteer/ staff member and Masicorp up to date on how the case is progressing.

### 4. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

#### ***FILM & PHOTOGRAPHY:***

- In order to protect the rights of the children in Masiphumelele we request that no films or photographs be taken unless permission is sought from the parents in writing (Use Form 1).
- Photos/film taken must be taken with children who are dressed appropriately. All private areas must be covered and clothes or poses of children must not depict the child in a sexual way.

### ***GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS:***

The use of social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc., enables us to communicate with friends, educational institutions and other entities quickly and easily. Masicorp uses social media to obtain direct feedback and to enhance our relationships with students, universities, our funders and the local community. We also welcome the use of social media by our volunteers and bursary students and recognize its capacity to improve the overall experience of being part of Masicorp.

**BUT.....**the use of social media is not without its risks, because content does not always remain as private as you may think. Beware of reactions on social platforms. For an organisation like Masicorp the negative use of social media by our volunteers can be embarrassing and ultimately could lead to funding being withdrawn and reputations damaged.

We therefore offer the following guidance to you when using social media as a Masicorp volunteer / staff member.

### ***GOOD PRACTICES WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA:***

Always treat people with respect when online - even if you have a disagreement. For social media tools which have adjustable privacy settings (e.g., Facebook), you should always ensure you take all necessary steps to safeguard your privacy, and the privacy of anyone else whose information is visible or accessible. Privacy settings change constantly on Facebook so you still always need to be aware that what you post can become public.

Remember that online communication is far less likely to remain private than a normal conversation. Online conversations do not always remain solely between the participants, but could be viewable by the wider community (e.g., our partner NGO's, other volunteers and staff, Masicorp funders). Communication that may seem innocent or funny can become awkward and even offensive when written online.

Social media content doesn't go away. Keep in mind that whatever you upload, post or tweet could one day be seen by anyone - **including potential employers!**

Never use social media tools to intimidate another person, volunteers or your co-workers. You could find yourself in trouble with the law. Never make racist or sexist comments, or breach the privacy of other people by uploading unauthorised photographs or revealing information about them.

Masicorp also uses social networks - we look forward to seeing you online and interacting with you. However, please consider our guidance to ensure we all have the best experience.

You can find Masicorp on social media at:

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/MASICORP>

**Twitter:** [@MasiTweets](#)

**Masicorp Blog:** <https://masicorp.wordpress.com/>

Queries : Paul Giess Director of Communication & Marketing – [paul@masicorp.org](mailto:paul@masicorp.org)

## 5. **LEGAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT VOLUNTEERS & STAFF WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN:**

### ***A BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT / MISCONDUCT:***

In the event that a volunteer or staff member has failed or has appeared to fail to abide by our Code of Conduct, the following steps will be taken:

- Review meetings will be arranged by two members of the Masicorp Board and a volunteer /staff member not involved in the issue to gather facts and hear the views of the volunteer concerned and those involved who may have information regarding the issue. The outcome of this review will then be given to the Masicorp Board for consideration.
- Depending on the circumstances, the Masicorp Board hold the right to take action as they deem appropriate. This may include one or more of the following: a warning, providing further training/support, request that the volunteer leaves Masicorp and, if warranted, a report to the relevant authorities.

### ***LIABILITY RELEASE:***

We take care to safeguard volunteers who join Masicorp and work with us, but they do so at their own risk; agreeing and signing the attached liability release is a requirement for all volunteers, without exception.

### ***DISCLOSURE & CONFIDENTIALITY:***

Under the SA Children's Amendment Act 41/2007, it is your duty to report any child abuse you are aware of. It is a prosecutable crime if not brought to the attention of those in authority. Also, the Act states: In the event of a child disclosing any form of abuse, the volunteer is to believe the child and listen without prejudice or judgement.

- All incidents or suspected incidents of abuse should be reported as soon as possible to the Child Protection Officer. If the Child Protection Officer is not contactable then follow the list of contacts below. The report should be made on the day of the discovery of the information or immediately the following day.
- If there is a situation where you feel the child may be in immediate danger, contact should be made immediately with the Child Protection Officer. Then follow the list of other contacts below if the Child Protection Officer is not available.
- DO NOT under any circumstances contact the parents, social services, the police or any other authority yourself. Allow the Child Protection Officer to assess the situation and make a decision on an appropriate course of action. It is important to note that we will in every case contact parents when it is the appropriate time but there are occasions when we need to report an incident to the authorities before we engage with parents.

**BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, YOU WILL WAIVE CERTAIN LEGAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO SUE.**

**MASICORP**

**VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & LIABILITY RELEASE**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

I am a volunteer with Masicorp. I acknowledge that I am not an employee, independent contractor, subcontractor or agent of Masicorp. I understand that Masicorp will not provide me with any wages or other compensation, nor any medical insurance, worker’s compensation benefits, or any other benefits of an employee.

I further represent that:

1. I have never been accused or convicted of any offense of sexual misconduct, child abuse, injury to a child or indecency with a child.
2. I have never been convicted of an offense involving violence or physical harm against another person.
3. As of this date, I do not have any criminal charges pending against me.

**LIABILITY RELEASE:**

I understand and acknowledge that risks and dangers are inherent in my participation in the programmes, activities and events of Masicorp. Such risks and dangers may be caused by the negligence of the owners, officers, directors, employees, or agents of Masicorp; the negligence of the participants; the negligence of others; accidents; breaches of contract; the forces of nature; and other causes. They may arise from foreseeable or unforeseeable causes.

In consideration of my being allowed to participate with and volunteer for Masicorp, I – on behalf of myself, my personal representatives and my heirs – hereby irrevocably waive and release Masicorp, each of its constituent entities, and its and their owners, officers, directors, employees, agents and other affiliated persons from any and all liability, claims, damages and actions or losses for bodily injury (including but not limited to injury sustained as a result of medical care provided or authorised by Masicorp, its agents or employees), property damage, wrongful death, loss of services; or otherwise, that I may have now or in the future, arising from or in any way relating to my participation with Masicorp. I also agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Masicorp from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, and judgements from other persons claiming by or through me due to my participation with Masicorp. I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older, and represent that I have my own medical and other insurance coverage to provide me benefits and protection in the event that I am injured or cause liability to others.

In the event of an emergency or my incapacity, I hereby give permission to the medical representative(s) selected by Masicorp to administer first and/or medical aid to me, including transportation to medical facilities

**INDEMNITY DECLARATION**

I have read this Acknowledgement and Liability Release. By signing it, I intend to exempt and relieve Masicorp from any and all liability whatsoever, including, and without limitation, liability from personal injury, property damage, or wrongful death caused by negligence or any other causes.

SIGNATURE: ..... DATE: .....

FULL NAME (Please print)	
E-MAIL	
ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE	



