

CHARTER FOR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

We commit ourselves to addressing violence against children in all its forms and we resolve to work with others towards eliminating violence against children.

1. All children are entitled to equal respect for their inherent human dignity.

Working actively towards a culture of respect for all children is a key towards ending violence against children. We will, in cooperation with others foster respect for all children.

2. All children are entitled to grow up in family and all other settings free from corporal punishment and all other forms of violence and humiliating treatment.

Children are entitled to more not less protection from violence than adults, including protection from physical, spiritual, emotional, verbal, sexual, psychological and gender-based violence. We will use every opportunity to work with others to create awareness about the negative effects of violence against children. Preventing violence against children and urging governments to pass legislation to end legalised violence against children, including corporal punishment, will be a priority.

3. All children have the right to speak out and be listened to.

The knowledge, ideas, gifts, competence, life experiences and perspectives of children should be respected, encouraged and listened to in both family and community life. We will demonstrate full respect and regard for the dignity of children by facilitating children's participation and involvement in issues of concern to them.

4. All adults have the responsibility to enable children to feel safe enough to speak out when they feel hurt or threatened.

All adults who are in contact with children should have an understanding of the needs of children and of different stages of child development. Adults should be aware of the best ways of creating an environment where children feel safe to express themselves. Adults should also develop skills for communicating with children at different life stages. We will facilitate training to promote these actions.

5. All children are entitled to positive, non-violent relationships with the adults who care for them

In our work and contact with children we will strive to build relationships between adults and children which are positive and life-enhancing. Adults can teach children by their own example and demonstrate ways of resolving conflict without the use of hitting or any other form of violence, however supposedly 'reasonable'. Adults are the

protectors, guides and supporters of children and as such responsible for their quality of life.

6. The protection of children from violence is the responsibility of the whole community

Children should be active equal participants with adults in solving problems of violence in community whether it is adult to child, child to child or adult to adult violence. We will encourage children to use their capacity to make a positive contribution in keeping with their age and development.

7. All children are entitled to learn about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in a way that is appropriate to their age and development

We will use every opportunity to support initiatives to enable children to become fully conversant with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and to raise adults' awareness and understanding of the Convention.

8. All children are entitled to the highest standard of care and protection from those who work with them

All adults working with children in our religious communities will receive high standards of training, support, resources and clear lines of accountability for working with children. Adults are responsible for creating networks for the prevention of violence against children.

9. Children who have endured any form of violence are entitled to emotional, physical, spiritual and psychological support from people qualified to help them

Our religious communities will, whenever possible, work with qualified people to bring support, compassion, spiritual help and healing to children who have endured forms of violence.

10. All children are entitled to learn non-violent ways to resolve conflict

We commit ourselves to providing positive guidance in resolving conflict that leads to compassion, justice and fairness and respect for the human rights of others.