

## Vulamasango Child and Youth Care Centre Weekends out and Holidays Policy

This document aims to tabulate the rules and protocol to be observed when a child leaves the CYCC for either a weekend or holiday. This document is based on all regulations of the South African Children's Act to ensure that the rights and the wellbeing of the child come first.

### Definitions

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Weekend:</b> | This shall be from Friday evening after all afterschool activities have been finished until Sunday 4pm.   |
| <b>Holiday:</b> | This shall be during the four school holidays, i.e. at the end of each South African School Calendar end of term.   |
| <b>CYCC:</b>    | Child and Youth Care Centre   |
| <b>DCC:</b>     | Director Child Care: responsible for the pedagogical section of Vulamasango CYCC  |
| <b>OVC:</b>     | Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (the housing component of the Vulamasango CYCC)  |
| <b>Child:</b>   | Resident under the care of Vulamasango OVC of any age   |
| <b>Family:</b>  | Is the host family for the child when the child is outside the OVC. This may in some cases be the biological family of the child or a friend or relative at whose house the child feels safe. The biological family shall be given first thought but the child's best interest shall always come first. |
| <b>ESW:</b>     | Social Worker assigned by the Social Services Department  |
| <b>ISW:</b>     | Social Worker working for Vulamasango as part of staff  |
| <b>IDP:</b>     | Individual Development Plan. The Pedagogical Committee and the ESW structure this when the child is placed in the OVC.  |

### Procedure

Every child shall be allowed to leave the OVC during holidays for visits longer than a day. The family with which the child will be staying has to be known to the organisation, as the responsibility of the wellbeing of the child would be placed partially on them. The organisation still has the ultimate say in how the child is raised and must be included in all decision making around the child. The OVC runs twenty-four-seven, with caregivers available to work with the children. This reduces the need for children to be out of the premises on weekends. In the case that a child would like to leave for the weekend or the family requests the child to visit, the following procedure has to be followed.

### Application Procedure

1. For holidays, the family or individual must submit a request directly to the Director Child Care telephonically or physically at least 1 month before the day.
2. For weekends, the family may arrange telephonically during office hours with the DCC no later than end of business on Tuesday of the same week.
3. The family has to receive a letter of recommendation from the social worker to allow them to host their child back in the same place. In its absence Vulamasango will ensure due process is followed to ensure the safety of the child.
4. No other member of staff in any capacity may release any child to anyone including family without the go ahead of the Director Child Care or CEO in her absence.
5. The family or the ESW must submit all details of the family to be visited to Vulamasango on time to allow time for screening. The screening of names shall be as stipulated in the Vulamasango Health Policy.

**Vulamasango Child and Youth Care Centre**  
**Weekends out and Holidays Policy**



P.O. Box 177  
Observatory 7935 / South Africa  
Tel. / Fax: +27 (0)21-371 52 46  
Mobile: +27 (0)84-415 35 50  
info@vulamasango.org  
www.vulamasango.org

6. The people taking responsibility for the child must avail themselves to the Director Child Care and submit all required information.
7. When a child leaves the farm the family must supply their address, contact information and inform the DCC with any changes to this.
8. Each time taking a child, the family must sign the *OVC Holiday Placement* form to indicate the period of stay.
9. The host family must check and sign the checklist when receiving and when returning the child to the OVC.
10. The DCC shall compile reports on all outings of children with the aid of the Housemother. These shall form part of the child file and be used as points of reference in child discussion meetings.

**Rejection of a request from a Child or Family**

1. A child may not be allowed to leave if staying the holidays at the OVC is part of or is the punishment for something done.
2. The child expresses a desire to stay at the CYCC for the holiday
3. The family/child rejects the request by the other for the holiday out
4. The Director Child Care feels it is in the best interest of the child to stay at the OVC
5. Rules were unobserved by either party on the last holiday

**Acceptance of a request from a Child or Family for holidays**

1. A child may be allowed to leave the OVC if all requisitions are made in time and through the proper channels.
2. If the child has showed good behaviour through the term
3. The family has submitted all the required information to the Director Child Care
4. If the development of the child would not be compromised by the child leaving the premises.
5. If the child has no school work due on Monday that requires the use of internet or research that could only be done at the OVC
6. The child is not behind on their school work

**Exclusions**

1. The family may not transport the child outside the city/province without prior agreements with the organisation through the Director Child Care and recommendation from Social Worker.
2. No child will be allowed to be out of the OVC for the entire school holiday at the end of the first, second and third school term respectively.
3. The program for the child's holiday must be included in the requisition. This is in case of all rituals or customs that the family might deem necessary as this may impact the child and the organisation still has to work with the child around these subjects before or after the act.
4. All reunification processes will be made through the Director Child Care to ensure that the child is handled in the best manner possible.
5. The family may not exchange any of the belongings of the child with other children in the family. The child is required to bring back all items taken out when going on holiday as indicated on the checklist.
6. The family may buy gifts for the child. These items must be declared to the organisation through the checklist so that the housemother is aware of the child's new belongings. All electronic gifts and items of high value (R800/€50 – which ever is lower) must be declared before being presented to the child to the Director Child Care telephonically.
7. All calendar programs, which are imperative to the organisation and to the wellbeing of the child, shall never be overlooked unless it is deemed to fall under exceptions.
8. No child shall be excused from school activities for holidays or a weekend out unless the reasoning falls within the exceptions

**Vulamasango Child and Youth Care Centre**  
**Weekends out and Holidays Policy**



P.O. Box 177  
Observatory 7935 / South Africa  
Tel. / Fax: +27 (0)21 371 52 46  
Mobile: +27 (0)84 415 35 50  
info@vulamasango.org  
www.vulamasango.org

9. Under no circumstances shall anyone including the child excuse the child from school but the Director Child Care, Vulamasango Management or someone delegated by either.

### **Donors and Sponsors**

This paragraph is aimed at standardising the relations between all Vulamasango funders and donors. The first priority for the organisation is always the best interest of the child, as entrusted by the Children's Act. The following is therefore applicable to all funders and donors of Vulamasango CYCC, without prejudice.

- All funders and donors are allowed to see all children who stay at the Vulamasango OVC during the everyday programs ran through the Vulamasango After School Care, Baby Day Care and EduCare respectively. No children shall be taken out of the OVC.
- All child visitations must be communicated with the CEO, which shall in turn inform the DCC. This is to ensure that firstly the children can have visitors as per the respective child's IDP and secondly to ensure that the child will actually be at the OVC at the desired time of visitation.
- It is acceptable for children to receive gifts for special days like birthdays and Christmas or in celebration of special events. These must be communicated to the DCC/CEO ahead of time and before being declared to the child. Any electrical gifts including cell phones must be discussed with the Director Child Care before being discussed and given to the child
- The value of gifts shall not exceed €50 (equivalent in Rands).
- Failure to meet the set requirements of application and any falsification of information may result in the person(s) not being granted any further child visitation in future.
- Sponsors/ donors / funders may not have direct communication to children/ youths in the project. This includes social pages like Facebook/ WhatsApp/ FaceTime or any other social media.
- Vulamasango shall not be held responsible for the loss or damage of gifts given to child and shall therefore not be held liable for payments to either fix it or replace the items.

### **Exceptions**

These are the exceptions under which a child may leave the OVC outside the above mentioned.

1. **Death in the family or of someone important to the child:** The organisation may also allow the child for day visits if there is no proper accommodation available for the child.
2. **Hospitalisation:** Children will be allowed to have time out to visit family in hospital. It is imperative that this is communicated with either the housemother or the DCC before being discussed with the child. This like with all other programs has to be declared to the Director Child Care as in all occurrences the child's best interest have to come first.
3. **Cultural activities/Ceremonies:** A child may be given a weekend out or longer in these cases. These will always be treated as highly priority activities. It is however just as important the organisation is made aware of such events well in advance.
4. **Religious events:** In cases where the child has important religious events he/she shall be given proper time to observe them. All children and youths' right to freedom of religion shall be protected. This has to be declared in the placement of the child to ensure the child does not leave the premises under false pretence and that their freedoms are protect.
5. **Frequency of Visitation:** Children from grade 7 and under may not leave the OVC more than once a month. Youths in high school will be evaluated and be judged on merit and any other circumstances including school calendar, ASC activities and general behaviour.

**Vulamasango Child and Youth Care Centre**  
**Weekends out and Holidays Policy**



P.O. Box 177  
Observatory 7935 / South Africa  
Tel. / Fax: +27 (0)21-371 52 46  
Mobile: +27 (0)84-415 35 50  
info@vulamasango.org  
www.vulamasango.org

6. **School events:** Time out can be adapted to accommodate specific school activities and special needs even when the child is on a period without any weekends. This may only be under special circumstance and only through the Director Child Care and CEO.
7. **Final Decision:** The wishes of the child pertaining to their weekend or holiday shall always be given utmost consideration. Unless with valid reason, a child may not be forced to go to visit or spend a weekend with family if they do not want to. The DCC/ housemother has to have a meeting with the child to understand their reasoning and to explain the importance of the visit, should it fall part of their respective IDP.
8. **Early returning to OVC:** Should the child wish to return to the OVC before the weekend or holiday is over, they may do so. Every child shall have all the emergency contact numbers for the organisation. The organisation shall then deal with the reasoning after the child has been returned home, to the OVC. This will be taken into consideration on the next application.
9. **Inception of Visitations and Holidays:** No child may leave the OVC in their first term of placement. The first visit from the family must be on the premises and be under supervision of an assigned member of staff. A report should then be filled with the assistance of the DCC/ISW.
10. **Temporary placements:** Children in temporary safe care may not leave the OVC unless this forms part of their individual IDP or requested by their respective ESW. The child will also be judged on merit and should the organisation feel the child is not ready, they may contest this through the ESW and ultimately the DSD.

#### **Communication**

1. Children 12 years and younger may not have cell phones
2. All cell phones shall be handed to the housemother before bedtime on school nights.
3. The organisation may take the cell phone away from the child for a stipulated period should it be seen to interfere with their progress academically or socially.
4. Loss of cell phones shall be upon the child. Vulamasango shall not be responsible for the replacement
5. Host families must see to the safety of the children and their belongings as far as possible. This includes cell phones and all accessories.
6. Any information that may upset the child must be reported to the social worker or Director Child Care or through the office to any available member of the Management Committee who is part of the Pedagogical Committee during work hours. In case of emergency the cell phones of relevant members of staff may be used to ensure timely passing of information.
7. Children may not receive long social calls through the office but may be allowed from time to time to receive a call should it be a convenient time for both the organisation and child.
8. Any person sending abusive material to children will be reported. This includes but is not limited to abusive language, threats to the child of any kind, pornographic material and any material that may be alluded to be paedophilia.

Vulamasango undertakes full responsibility of the child as far as prescribed by the South African Children's Act 38 of 2005. A child placed within the Vulamasango OVC is therefore at home when at Vulamasango and the family from which the child comes is no longer the parenting body of the child. All decisions about the child leaving the OVC lie with the DCC and ultimately with the management of Vulamasango with allowance to the recommendations from the ESW.

In cases where the family wishes to appeal a decision by the DCC he/she shall do so by informing her directly, or any member of the Management Committee and the matter would then be referred to the rest of the Pedagogical Team which includes the Director Child Care, Child Care workers (involved), Project Manager and the CEO.