



“It shouldn't hurt to be a child.”

Child Protection Policy of NEEDS
www.needsngo.in

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An Overview

NEEDS understand that the organizations those working with children have a moral and legal responsibility to protect children within their care. Thus it is important for NEEDS to have a clear child protection policy in place. The policy should have necessary information about protection issues and standardized procedures to address such issues in order to guide the organization to ensure giving a better protection environment to the children.

A comprehensive policy guideline can help all to response and react appropriately and positive manner to address the issue if arises any point of time.

As an organization working for the rights of children, it is our responsibility to ensure that child rights are respected and by policy and practice they are in place. This policy document would provide a guideline to NEEDS to protect children from any form of deliberate abuse within organizations.

Therefore the child protection policy would help to create a *child safe organization* where children feel safe, can speak out, are listened to and where children and staff are respected and empowered.

Thus CHILD PROTECTION POLICY is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safe guard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to ensure that the organization is taking its duty of care seriously.



Glossary- terms and definitions

Who is a child?

According to UN Convention on the Rights of the child (Article1) a child is every human



being below the age of 18 years.

What is child protection?

Child protection is a broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In the current context, it applies particularly to the duty of organizations and individuals associated with the organizations towards children in their care.

What is child abuse?

'Child abuse' or 'maltreatment' constitutes all forms of physical and /or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents (WHO, 1999)

- Unexplained burns, cuts, bruises or welts in the shape of an object
- Bite marks
- Anti social behavior
- Problems in school
- Fear of adults
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Self destructive or suicidal behavior
- Depression or poor self image

What is Sexual abuse:

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give between a child and adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.

This may include but is not limited to the inducement or coercion of the child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity, the exploitative use a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

How children will identify that s/he is being abused:

Indicators of Sexual abuse

- Fondling, touching or kissing a child's private parts
- Making the child fondle the adults private parts
- Penetration, intercourse, incest, rape, oral sex, anal sex
- Showing sex organs to a child
- Forced observation of sexual acts
- Showing pornographic material
- Forcing the child to undress
- Spying on a child in the bathroom or bedroom

Behavioral Signs of sexual abuse:

- Seductiveness
- Avoidance of things related to sexuality
- Rejection of own genitals or bodies
- Nightmares and bedwetting
- Drastic changes in appetite
- Over compliance or excessive aggression
- Fear of a particular person
- Withdrawal, secretiveness or depression
- Suicidal behavior
- Eating disorders
- Self-injury

Sometimes there are no obvious physical signs of abuse and a physician must examine the child to confirm the abuse.

What makes Physical abuse?

- Beating, whipping, punching, slapping or hitting
- Burning with cigarettes
- Scalding hot objects
- Severe physical punishment

Corporal (physical) punishment is distinguished from physical abuse in that, physical punishment is the use of physical force that results in an injury that results from physical aggression. However, physical punishment easily gets out of control and can become physical abuse.

Using a child in the production of pornography

Forms of Emotional abuse:

- Lack of affection
- Lack of praise or positive reinforcement
- Negative comparisons
- Belittling; telling the child that he or she is “of no good” “worthless”
- Using derogatory terms to describe the child
- Habitual scape- goating or blaming
- Using extreme or bizarre forms of punishment such as confinement to a closet or dark room, tying to a chair for long periods of time

What is Empathy: identification with and understanding of another’s situation, feeling and motives.

Who is a Staff Member: contractual staff, general assignment short or long term on salary, Staff trainee/in probation, Paid Volunteers

Contractual staff: A staff is known to be contractual staff when an agreement is made between NEEDS on one part and the employee on the other part for a specified period. It may be a contract of one year, two years, three years and sometimes even less than a year. Generally it is for eleven months at a time.

General assignment: This type of assignment is for specific activities; both short term and long term with knowledge on certain field and these may be extended from time to time depending on the requirements.

Trainee: In case of fresh appointment, any individual selected through interview process of NEEDS is usually inducted as under probation for a period of 6 (six) months. During the probation period they may be placed in any unit of NEEDS. After the probation period is over, their overall performance is assessed for the placement as regular employee or on contractual basis for specified project period.

Community volunteers (paid): Local community youth volunteers engaged in community leadership initiative programs, paid scholarship for volunteering

Volunteer [un paid]: volunteers work with NEEDS at various community level voluntarily and do not claim for payments of salary or wage

Donors: any individual or agency contributing to the organization’s resources in cash or in kind for a specific period of time. Prior to their contribution there is a planning stage where both the donor and recipient play an active role. There are time individual donors donate without planning, but NEEDS keeps plans for each of the donations NEEDS receives. The recipient is accountable to the donor and they work in partnership.

Interns: as a part of the academic curriculum, students coming from different institutes for a specific period of time with the objective of practical learning through completion of the specific assignment given to them by the organization.

Visitors: an individual or group who visits the organization for a short span of time with the purpose to understand the organization’s work or for queries /inquiries

Policy framework

The Child Protection Policy, hereafter referred to as CPP will encompass all offices, children and staff of all nature, volunteers of all nature of NEEDS, visitors, donors or parents coming in direct or indirect contact with children.

The child protection policy provides a framework of principles, standards and guidelines on which to base individual and organizational practice in relation to areas such as:

1. Recruitment
2. Education and Training on Child protection and protection policy
3. Management structure
4. Behavior guidelines “Code of Conduct” – do and don’t
5. External communication protocol
6. Reporting and reaction protocol- regarding allegations and abuse
7. Ramifications

1. Recruitment:

All employees, trustees, contractors, suppliers, interns and volunteers (paid or unpaid, full time or part time, temporary or long term) having direct or indirect contact with children have to face a thorough and Standardized recruitment and interview process.

HR policy: interview committee/HR department would be oriented on CPP by the CP officer, and CPP would be made as part of HR policy of NEEDS

Announcement of the position vacant:

Child protection statement [NEEDS has a child protection policy] mentioned in advertisement mentioning that all employees of NEEDS would/ need to follow the CPP

Specific responsibilities included in job description

Interview / selection center:

Questions on child protection issues relevant to the role [knowledge about child protection policy, child rights, his/her aptitude about child rights to protection, any child hood incidence which s/he remembers that has relevance to child protection issues

Original evidence of qualification

Reasons of employment gaps, frequent changes of employment or reasons for leaving employment (if sudden)- if applicable

Reference verification:

Two reference checks to be verified either over telephone or in writing.

Reasons of employment gaps, frequent changes of employment or reasons for leaving employment (if sudden)

If the person was working with children, behavior check

On appointment:

Requirement to sign a statement of commitment to the organization's CPP ["I will abide by the organization's child protection policy" this statement is to be mentioned in the contract letter of all new recruits]

NEEDS would maintain the confidentiality of candidates information including police verification reports. If the candidature is canceled, then the information related to police verification or relevant declaration would be destroyed.

Template: I

Declaration of compliance of CPP:

I,hereby declare that I have gone through the NEEDS CPP and agree to comply by its values and code of conducts in toto.

NEEDS would have full authority to take action as per the HR policy of NEEDS for any violation of the policy/ code of conducts, if found during my services with NEEDS.

Signature of the candidate:

Template: II

Declaration of compliance of non conviction:

I,..... hereby declare that I have never been convicted or never had any FIR reported against me for any criminal cases and particularly of violating child protections issues [i.e. child abuse of any form]

To my best of knowledge, I am giving the above statement and is responsible for the same for its truthfulness.

Thank you

Name of the candidate and signature

For Interns and volunteers (unpaid)

In case of interns, letter of reference from the institution and for volunteers a statement of intent as well as two reference checks, to be submitted

Will have to give complete details of their work, objective of doing the work and expected outcome

Will have to sign a statement of commitment to the organization's CPP

Orientation of the organization and its work

Completion of the given assignment within stipulated time

Report to be submitted and if possible presentation to be made at the end of internship

Suppliers and contractors

Should not come in direct contact with children. If required, will have to take written permission from relevant staff. (This statement to be mentioned in the contract letter)

A statement regarding commitment to maintain the quality of goods supplied, to be mentioned in contract letter

2. Education and Training on CP and CPP:

Purpose to have education, training and refresher trainings:

.....
.....

Induction and training

There has to be opportunities within the organization to develop and maintain the necessary skills and understanding to safeguard children.

A full day orientation on child protection issues for all new recruits (staff: contractual staff general assignment trainee and community volunteers (paid) to be given within 1 month of joining with a copy of the policy for reference (refer to annexure 2)

Half day orientation of interns and volunteers (unpaid) on child protection issues within 7 days of joining.

Orientation of all existing staff on child protection policies and procedures within 30 days after the CAP comes into force.

Half day refresher training for personnel every 1 year to remind them of procedures and update on new developments.

Orientation of children on all relevant aspects of CAP within 2/5 days of their arrival and refresher courses every 3 months.

Orientation of donors and visitors on behavior and communication protocols before interaction with children.

One pager on behavior protocols to be displayed on notice boards of all units.

Training and education:

1. Induction training:- new staffs
2. Training on CP – for all
3. Orientation on CPP of NEEDS-for all
4. Special training: how to deal with children, child psychology, positive discipline, understanding abuse, rehab of abused children, such trainings would be decided to be done based on the need as and when arises to be captured from monitoring reports and incident report format
5. Refresher training one in near- however, first refresher training should be done within the completion of 6 months after the CPP is put in place

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Half day refresher training for personnel every 1 year to remind them of procedures and update on new developments.

Orientation of children on all relevant aspects of CP within 2-5 days of their arrival and refresher courses every 3 months, this should include understanding “what is abuse”, good touch or bad touch, code of conduct etc, what type of behavior they expect from staff [what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior], how to protect themselves, and what they should do or how they should react and who to report to. Child should have phone number for contacting person for inside children and for outside children to give child line number

NEEDS would attempt to develop IEC materials by children during their training on child protection issues and document them for easy learn materials for internal and external use.

CPP would be made visible and accessible by all including children

Orientation of donors and visitors on behavior and communication protocols before interaction with children.

One pager on behavior protocols to be displayed on notice boards of all units.

3. Management structure and systems:

Purpose of having a management structure in CPP:

To ensure smooth flow of feedback and line of action in order to have timely and authoritative reactions for positive results

Environment:

NEEDS would ensure a free and open environment out of any threat for discussions related to child protection issues and policy and would invite suggestions for continuous improvement of policy and code of conducts. Existing 360 feedback mechanism of NEEDS also will be applicable to CPP practices.

Management:

A management process would be adopted in order to facilitate the implementation of the child protection policy and procedure.

Clear and open lines of communication currently exist and presented through organizational chart, would be displayed and discussed with every new employees and become the part of induction program

Child protection officer would by reporting directly to the management on child protection issues, NEEDS would modify its organizational chart to this effect

Rising concerns on sensitive matters in relation to children and staff in appropriate forums would be ensured in the threat less environment

Concerns would be listened to responded to in a positive manner

Reports and personal information on children are kept confidential AND DISCLOSED to only those who need to know

Child protection issues are included in regular staff evaluations/appraisals

Responsibility of management to ensure implementation of CPP (through regular interactions with staff and children) and surprise checks of reporting documents

Responsibility of management to ensure that policy is reviewed every 6 months by unit heads and incorporate changes if necessary

JD of CP officer:**Job Objective:**

Ensure application and adherence of child protection policy of NEEDS and facilitate constant improvements policy up gradation and its practices

Key Job Areas:

1. Monitoring of the application of CPP
2. Conducting trainings for all new staffs and refresher courses on CP and CPP as per stated frequency
3. Follow up on the incident reports within policy frame
4. Suggest management for improvements/ changes in policy document / code of conducts as and when felt
5. Ensure training of children on CP and CPP as stated in the policy document

Who is fit for CPO position?

Person who can relate with children and not a guardian figure

Pleasant personality:

If someone in NEEDS already working with children and known to children would be preferred for the position

Have demonstrated positive attitude towards child protection issues

Have ability for maintaining good interpersonal relationship and communication within the team and with children

Have clear and good verbal and written communication skills in local language

Able to devote 25% of his/her job time to protection issues

The Protocol:

Communication protocols

Purpose of having communication protocol:

To protect and respect children's rights, dignity and privacy

To prevent any identification of children by people who may wish to harm them

External communication protocol:

These are protocols to control confidential information regarding children and to prevent the presentation of degrading images of children through publications.

- Show children in a respectful manner
- Do not use sensationalized portrayals
- Avoid language and photographs that could shame children
- Do not make generalizations that do not reflect the nature of the situation
- Avoid discrimination of any kind
- Do not take pictures out of context (explain pictures, add text)
- Be careful not to present children as victims
- Do not use images of children that could be seen as sexual
- Do not give any personal information of children that could lead to their identification
- Ask the child or caregiver if they agree before using any image for publicity
- Allow child or caregiver to speak for themselves rather than have other people to speak on their behalf
- The disclosure of personal information about children is limited for those who need to know
- Keep information about children in secure files

Outsiders:

- who want to use information and pictures of children
- who want to make an interview/photograph/movie
- have to talk to the director or PR manager first
- have to sign an agreement ("media guidelines")

Permission of concerned authority and consent of children (by giving details about purpose and use) to be taken before taking their images.

Images of children not to be taken while they are taking bath or changing clothes. They are to be properly clothed.

Allow children to give their own account without interfering or asking leading questions.

In case of case studies name of child has to be changed as well as no personal information to identify location of child to be given.

There must be accurate representation of the statement made by staff and children.

Never sensationalize and manipulate text and images and emphasis to be given on dignity of child.

No information regarding the organization or any child to be obtained over telephone.

The media will interact only with the organization head or unit heads or designated staff deputed by the heads.

Prior information to be given regarding date of publication/telecast/broadcast.

Any staff violating the protocol may be subject to punishment or termination as per sole discretion of the management guided by HR policy

4. Reporting and Reaction protocols

This is a protocol for reporting and reacting to witnessed, suspected or alleged child abuse and/ or violation of the child protection policy.

Allegation of abuse must be reported to CPO and if CPO him/herself is a abuser then to be reported to management immediately after abuse or concerns of abuse take place.

This has to be done through a reporting format (refer to annexure) which has to be filled up by typing, this specifies about whether the case is a suspect or nature of incident

Dialogue with concerned abused child to understand the depth of allegation and its extent.

In case of an allegation by a named individual from a verifiable source, the accused will not be allowed to come in direct contact with children.

The organization will ensure dialogue with the staff being accused and ensured and ensure ramification of misconduct once it is proved, with proper evidence through other verifiable sources.

If allegation is proved then the individual will be dismissed and legal action might also be taken.

- Written guidelines for staff, interns and volunteers
- Guidelines how to react if you see or suspect child abuse in your organization
- Guidelines how to report on incidents
- To know what to do in case of an incident
- To know how to help children in a good way
- To be able to take responsibility and not wait for others to react
- Clear guidelines can help to avoid panic in case of emergency

- To ensure that sensitive information about the incident is kept confidential

What you should do:

- If you know any information about violation of the code of conduct or any abuse of a child, it is your responsibility to react

If a child tells you about an incident, treat the child with respect and take the child seriously

- Protect the child from further harm
- Take all steps to keep the child safe
- Involve medical or other help if necessary
- Report all concerns to the child protection officer as soon as possible
- Report even if you are not sure about the abuse
- Use the report form to document the incident. You can complete it before or after you have informed the child protection officer.
- For confidentiality reasons,
 - write and sign it alone.
 - sent it only to the child protection officer
 - keep it in a safe place

The Child Protection Officer is then responsible for:

- Ensuring that the child is safe
- Informing the director
- Further Investigation
- Involvement of outside authorities if necessary
- Documentation of the process and decision making

Do and don't: code of conduct:

One pager on **behaviour** protocols of staff

1. Be empathetic rather than sympathetic towards children
2. Act on children's concern/problems immediately
3. Appreciate their good efforts and performances
4. As far as possible work with children in a place within the view of others
5. Never engage, encourage or support abuse, in all any terms
6. Never stigmatize or humiliate children
7. Never use corporal punishment
8. Do not use slang words or abusive language in front of children
9. Never develop sexual relationship with any child
10. Permission of children and relevant staff to be taken before taking their images.
11. Images of children not to be taken while they are taking bath, sleeping or changing clothes. They are to be properly clothed while taking images.
12. In case of case studies name of child has to be changed as well as no personal information to identify location of child to be given
13. Must wear clothes that are appropriate keeping in mind the local context in which the children live
14. Never give information regarding any child sensitive incident or NEEDS' work to media over telephone. In information to Media should be given by Media spoke person designated
15. Inform about purpose and guide children prior to media coverage
16. Ensure confidentiality at the time of disclosing case studies to media

5. Ramification:

Guidelines that clarify consequences for staff who do not follow our child protection policy and procedures

- Decision of ramification is made in cooperation between child protection officer and director
- Authorities such as police or criminal prosecution are involved if necessary
- Do not judge the accused person until you really know that he/she is guilty
- Decision of ramification is made in cooperation between child protection officer and director
- The accused person can be suspended from the organization during investigation (receive full payment)
- If the accusations are true, disciplinary action will be taken (e.g. written warning, dismissal)
- Authorities such as Police or criminal prosecution are involved if necessary

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Monitoring Toolkit

Name of NGO:NEEDS
Date of Monitoring:

CPO Responsible:
Reporting Period:

1. RECRUITMENT

Procedure for Follow-Up	Means of Verification	Was the Procedure Implemented during the reporting period?				Recommendations
		Yes	No	Reason	N/A	

2. EDUCATION/TRAINING

Procedure for Follow-Up	Means of Verification	Was the Procedure Implemented during the reporting period?				Recommendations
		Yes	No	Reason	N/A	

3. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Procedure	Means of	Was the Procedure Implemented	Recommendations
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for Follow-Up	Verification	during the reporting period?				
		Yes	No	Reason	N/A	

4. CODE OF CONDUCT

Procedure for Follow-Up	Means of Verification	Was the Procedure Implemented during the reporting period?				Recommendations
		Yes	No	Reason	N/A	

5. MEDIA/EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Procedure for Follow-Up	Means of Verification	Was the Procedure Implemented during the reporting period?				Recommendations
		Yes	No	Reason	N/A	

6. REPORTING AND RAMIFICATIONS

Procedure for Follow-Up	Means of Verification	Was the Procedure Implemented during the reporting period?				Recommendations
		Yes	No	Reason	N/A	

7. General NGO:

Procedure for Follow-Up	Means of Verification	Was the Procedure Implemented during the reporting period?				Recommendations
		Yes	No	Reason	N/A	

Evaluation tool Kit:

Policy Areas and Good Practices	Evaluation of Current Status		
	Do you have it? Is it done?	Procedure written?	All staff aware of it?
1. Recruitment, Employment and Volunteering			
Advertisements for job vacancies refer to the organization's child protection policy and screening process.			
Guidelines for HR staff to identify suspicious behaviors, suspicious activities, and gaps in employment history.			
One member of the recruitment panel has undergone training or is familiar with issues of child protection.			
Reference checks (by phone, email, fax)			
A job applicant signs a personal declaration that they have no criminal convictions (or provides a police check where available).			
Successful candidate / volunteer sign a statement of commitment to the organization's child protection policy.			
Successful candidate / volunteer sign a statement of commitment to the organization's code of conduct.			
Personal file contains employee's photo identification and contact details are kept up to date.			
A recording system is in place for internal disciplinary processes, investigation and outcomes.			
2. Education/Training:			
Awareness-raising in child protection training as a part of staff orientation (within 3 months of hiring).			
An induction on child protection policies and procedures for staff in clear and simple language (ideally, within 2 weeks of hiring).			
A refresher course on child protection for all staff every 6-12 months.			
Staff members know what to do in different circumstances in relation to child protection issues.			

Policy Areas and Good Practices	Evaluation of Current Status		
	Do you have it? Is it done?	Procedure written?	All staff aware of it?
A resource person and/or resource materials always available for staff to refer to if they have questions in relation to child protection.			
An update of training and education materials every 6-12 months.			
An information pack for the general public and visitors about the organization's child protection policy and procedures.			
Volunteers and part-timers undergo basic training in child protection.			
Orientation given to children on children's rights, how to protect themselves, and where and how to report abuse.			
Information on training materials and process shared with other organizations.			
3. Reporting Mechanisms (for Concerns and Cases) and Referral			
An organizational culture in which you feel that you can talk openly about child abuse concerns.			
Requirement for staff to report child abuse concerns and cases.			
A focal point to whom the staff can report concerns and cases.			
Guidelines in dealing with allegations (steps to be taken, standardized reporting form).			
Management flow-chart for reporting suspected abuse (who is responsible for what actions).			
Tracking system (folder, book, database etc) to follow up cases (which may reveal common trends).			
Arrangements to provide supervision and support to those affected during and following an allegation.			
A process for follow-up with a child, her/his family about a complaint.			
Appropriate agencies to which a child protection focal point can pass on information (and up-to-date contact details).			
4. Access by External Visitors and Communications:			
Communication with the staff (such as between different office locations) before visitors arrive at a project site.			
Communication with the community and children before visitors arrive at a project site.			
Briefing session in which the community and children are informed of the purpose(s) of a visit or interview.			
A way to control visitors' movement (specific points of entry, signs, badges, etc.).			
Screening of correspondence between a child and outsider (such as an agreed sponsor) to prevent the exchange of home addresses or inappropriate language.			

Policy Areas and Good Practices	Evaluation of Current Status		
	Do you have it? Is it done?	Procedure written?	All staff aware of it?
Guidelines on releasing information, internally and externally (such as disclosure of children's personal information limited to those who need to know), to deal with requests for information from donors or visitors.			
Guidelines on media use of children's information - interviews, photographs, voice or video recordings (such as obtaining a consent form, ensuring children are appropriately clothed and accurately portrayed).			
5. Policy and Procedures:			
A child protection policy that incorporates all the other areas.			
A child protection policy that clearly describes the organization's understanding and definitions of abuse.			
A child protection policy that is applied in ways that are culturally sensitive but without condoning acts of maltreatment that are universally described as abusive.			
Procedures that reflect the policy.			
Minimum standards in child protection as requirements for partners with whom you work.			
An organizational culture that ensures children are listened to and respected as individuals.			
Management understands the importance of having a child protection policy.			
A working group for overall responsibility to ensure implementation of a child protection policy.			
Staff members who understand why an organization should have a child protection policy.			
The intention and commitment to develop your own child protection policy and procedures (if you do not have them yet).			
Other organization(s) that can provide technical support to help you to set up your own child protection system.			
Planning to have a consultation with children when developing policy and procedures			
6. Professional Code of Conduct			
Code of conduct towards children that reflects the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as organizational ethics (such as no physical/humiliating punishment,			
No shouting at children, behavior management, guidance on physical contact etc).			
Organizational disciplinary procedures in case the code of conduct is breached.			
Appropriate adult supervision during children's			

Policy Areas and Good Practices	Evaluation of Current Status		
	Do you have it? Is it done?	Procedure written?	All staff aware of it?
activities.			
Prohibition of personal relationships between a worker and a child.			
Guidelines on escorting children (including no traveling alone with children, no traveling at night).			
Requirement for staff to be always responsible for their actions (even though a child/teenager may behave seductively).			
Guidelines on appropriate behavior of children towards other children.			