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# **Child Protection Policy**

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**Chandradip Development Society –CDS**  
**Munir Bug, Nazir Mahallah, Hospital Road**  
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**Policy statement:**

Chandradip Development Society -CDS is a non-government, voluntary organization that was founded to provide a range of services to poor, distressed & deprived people especially women, youth and children who are socially excluded in urban and rural areas of Barisal division. CDS's work with women, youth and children complies with the United Nations Child Rights Convention; Human rights Declaration & CEDAW. 'States Parties shall protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse'' (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 19). CDS is committed to protecting children from harm and ensuring children's right to protection under Article 19 of the UNCRC is fully realized. CDS, as a Right based Organization, involved in development activities and humanitarian cause is committed to empowering children and their wellbeing. Through our programs we will prevent the exploitation of children in the form of labor, sex, abuse and other hazards that are deemed ills of the society. We take our responsibilities seriously to promote child safe practices and protect children from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form. In addition, we will take positive action to prevent those who abuse children from becoming involved with CDS and take strict measures against any CDS Staff, CDS Associates, CDS Visitors or CDS Managers who abuse a child. Our decisions and actions in response to Child protection concerns and breaches of this policy will be guided by the principle of 'the best interests of the child.' This policy sets out common values, principles, and beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken in meeting our commitment to protect children. The policy was adopted by the CDS Executive Member's Meeting January 2016.

**(A) Definitions under the Child Protection Policy:**

1. Child: A child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years (UNCRC Article 1).
2. Child abuse: Child abuse is defined as 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 well being, dignity and prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.
3. Child Protection: Child protection is defined in this policy as the responsibilities and preventative and responsive measures and activities that CDS undertakes to protect children ensuring that no Child is subject to Child abuse as a result of their association with us, their contact with CDS Staff, CDS Associates and CDS Visitors and/or their participation in any CDS activity, including our projects and programs. More to the point, it incorporates our responsibility to ensure that where there are concerns over a Child's welfare or where a Child has been subject to Child abuse, actions are taken to address this; concerns are reported and responded to appropriately and in line with the relevant local procedures; and incidents are analyzed so as to ensure continued learning and growth in the field of organizational child protection.
4. CDS Staff: CDS Staff refers to individuals who receive a regular salary for work in any part of CDS.

5. CDS Associates: CDS Associates refers to a range of paid and non paid individuals who have committed to work with or support of CDS. It includes, among others, members of boards, volunteers, including community volunteers, sponsors; researchers; donors, consultants and contractors; staff and local governments (when operating in partnership agreement with CDS).

6. CDS Visitors: CDS Visitors refers to a range of persons who are visiting our programs and may come into contact with children through CDS, including journalists, media, researchers, and celebrities.

7. CDS Managers: CDS Managers refers to CDS Staffs who have responsibility for line managing or supervising the work of CDS Staff or CDS Associates.

**(B) CDS Child Protection Policy applicable to:** The Child Protection Policy applicable to all regular and temporary employees, project or program partners, consultants, contractors, agents, advisors, associates, visitors, volunteers, interns, donors and other stakeholders who have contact with children through projects and programs involving CDS. It is planned that this policy will set a minimum standard for all CDS Staff, Associates and field Offices and contributories. Where required by law or local practices, CDS may enhance the standards as set out in this policy. This commitment will be evidenced through signing the policy.

**(C) Our commitment to protect children:**

**Our values, principles and beliefs:** This policy is informed by a set of principles that are derived from the UNCRC and include:

- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- All children abuse involves the abuse of children's rights.
- Each child has a fundamental right to life, survival and development;
- Representatives and employees of CDS, who have access to sensitive information about children, are to be aware of CDS's child protection policies and standards.
- We will not discriminate against the child. The child will be treated with respect irrespective of gender, nationality or ethnic origin, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual preference and gender identity, family, socio-economic and cultural background, or any history of conflict with the law.
- The exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior with children is prohibited.
- We must behave in an appropriate and culturally sensitive way. We must not hit, physically assault or inappropriately touch children; not use foul language; make suggestion or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive; may not behave in a manner that is sexually proactive, act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- CDS's employees and representatives will not place themselves in compromising or venerable positions and should take care not to discriminate against, show different treatment towards, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others.
- In communications about children we must use images and languages that are respectful and culturally appropriate.

- All children should be encouraged to fulfill their potential, and inequality and discrimination should be challenged.
- The situation of all children must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
- We have a commitment to protecting children with/ for whom we work ;
- When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for children in their programmes.
- Children will be assured the right to express their views freely ;
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.
- CDS has particular responsibilities to children who come into contact with us. No child must come to harm as a result of their engagement with CDS as a sponsored child, a participant in a CDS program or as part of any advocacy campaign.
- These particular responsibilities extend to those individuals or organizations that are associated with CDS. Therefore, everyone working for or with CDS must be aware of and adhere to the provisions of this policy.

#### **(D) What we will do**

We will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse through the following means:

**Awareness:** we will ensure that all staff and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.

**Prevention:** we will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimize the risks to children.

**Reporting:** we will ensure that staff and others are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.

**Responding:** we will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

In order that the above standards of reporting and responding are met, Executive committee members, Executive director & Directors of CDS will also ensure that they:

- take seriously any concerns raised
- take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns
- support children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns
- act appropriately and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation
- are guided through the child protection process by the principle of ‘best interests of the child’
- listen to and takes seriously the views and wishes of children
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

### **(E) Means of ensuring our commitments:**

- All staff of CDS will sign up to and abide by the attached code of conduct
- All Associates/partners will sign and abide by the code of conduct
- All staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of the child protection policy
- Recruitment procedures will include checks on suitability for working with young people
- Induction will include briefing on child protection issues
- Every workplace will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse and every member of staff will have contact details for reporting.
- Systems will be established by every Member to investigate possible abuse once reported and to deal with it
- Training, learning opportunities and support will be provided by CDS members as appropriate to ensure commitments are met.

### **(F) Code of conduct**

The codes of conduct detailed below are mandatory for those who fall within the scope of the policy. All CDS's staff must sign up to and abide by this Code of Conduct.

#### **Staff and others must:**

- Never hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
- Never develop physical/sexual relationships with children;
- Never abuse and/or exploit a Child or act/ behave in any way that places a child at risk of harm or abuse.
- Never develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Never use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Never behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Never have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised.
- Never sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- Never do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Never condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal or unsafe
- Never act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Never discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others.
- This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behavior which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behavior.

**(G) Responsibility for all staff and others in contact with children:**

Everyone who works with and engages with CDS's has a responsibility to ensure that children are protected. Mentioned below are the important responsibilities to:

- Sexual activity with children is prohibited regardless of the age of maturity or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of child is not a defense.
- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
- Report any Child abuse and Child protection concerns they have in accordance with applicable local office procedures and this policy.
- Respond to a Child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with applicable local office procedures and this policy.
- Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations of Child abuse.
- Contribute to building an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights.
- Always treat children in a manner which is respectful of their rights, integrity and dignity, considers their best interests and does not expose them to, or place them at risk of, harm. For example: when taking images/pictures during visits, interacting with children or generating stories of children, ensure that this is done in a manner consistent with the appropriate CDS policies and procedures.
- Never ask for or accept personal contact details (this includes email, phone numbers, social media contacts, address, webcam, skype etc) from any Child or family associated or formerly associated with CDS's work or share their own personal contact details with such individuals.
- plan and organize the work and the workplace so as to minimize risks
- As far as possible, be visible in working with children
- ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- Never disclose, or support the disclosure of, information that identifies sponsored families or children, through any medium, unless that disclosure is in accordance with standard CDS policies and procedures and/or has the explicit consent of CDS. Media include paper, photographs and social media.
- Never make any contact with a Child or family members associated with CDS's work that is not supervised by a (or another) member of CDS Staff. Such contact may include but is not limited to visits and any form of communication via social media, emails and letters.
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behavior does not go unchallenged
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns
- Empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

### **Supervisor's Responsibilities**

- Ensure that all persons within the scope of their supervisory responsibilities who are subject to this policy have read and understand its contents.
- Engage in periodic training of staff as to their responsibilities with respect to abiding by and implementing the policy.
- Maintain a culture of openness to enable the discussion of any issues or concern, and ensure accountability of staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behavior does not go unchallenged.
- Monitor the workplace to ensure adherence to the policy, recognition of potentially abusive behavior, and initiation of appropriate investigative action.
- Should be a role model to all staff
- Handle complaints expediently and with objectivity, sensitivity and fairness.

### **Agent's Responsibility: Reporting, Investigation and Response**

- Anyone concerned or informed of concerns about the safety of a child must inform his or her supervisor, the person in charge, or main contact of CDS with his or her concerns. If the concern involves such person, the concern must be reported to the next most appropriate person on site as expediently as possible. Anyone having concerns or suspicion regarding sexual abuse by someone in another agency must report such concerns to CDS as soon as possible.
- CDS staff must take all appropriate and reasonable steps to protect the child involved and keep all parties involved apart during investigation. It is essential to avoid delay if inaction may place the child at further risk. In case of abuse all possible assistance must be provided to the child.
- The next step in the process is to inform the appropriate authority in order to decide and conduct the appropriate action. Written documentation should be maintained throughout the process.
- An employee or representative who has been brought under investigation for abusing or endangering children may be temporarily suspended. He or she may have no access to the children during the course of investigation. The employee will be informed of charges made against him or her and will be given an opportunity to respond.
- Subject to applicable local law and custom, CDS reserves the right in the event an employee is discharged for proven abuse, to disclosure such information if requested by a prospective employer.

### **In general it is inappropriate to:**

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- Take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.

**(H) Personal Conduct outside Work:**

CDS does not dictate the belief and value systems by which CDS Staff, CDS Associates, CDS Visitors and CDS Managers conduct their personal lives. However, actions taken by them out of working hours that are seen to contradict this policy will be considered a violation of this policy. CDS Staff and others mentioned above are required to bear in mind the principles of the Child Protection Policy and make stronger their awareness of how their behavior may be perceived both at work and outside work.

**(I) Implementation, Monitoring, Disciplinary action and sanctions**

The Executive Committee of CDS is ultimately accountable for this policy. The Executive Director along with Directors working with CDS is responsible for its implementation.

The monitoring of adherence to this policy is made through the mandatory tracking of the Child Protection Policy Implementation Standards and CDS's Code of Conduct by all parts of CDS.

Inappropriate behavior towards children, including failure to follow the specific code of conduct, responsibilities and general requirements of this policy are grounds for discipline. Breaches of this policy and failure to comply with these responsibilities may incur the following sanctions:

- For CDS Staffs - disciplinary action leading to possible dismissal.
- For CDS Partners or Associates or CDS Visitors - up to and including termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements with CDS.
- Where relevant - appropriate legal or other such actions.

Where concerns exist about the conduct of CDS Staff, CDS Associates, CDS Visitors in relation to Child protection and/or where there has been a breach of the Child Protection Policy, this will be investigated under this policy by consideration of referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country in which they work; and/or by CDS in accordance with disciplinary procedures. This may result in disciplinary action for CDS's staffs. Be aware that if a legitimate concern about suspected Child abuse is raised, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate sanctions will be applied in cases of false and malicious accusations of Child abuse.

This policy has been reviewed and is recommended for approval by:

Jahanara Begum Shapna (signed): \_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director  
Chandradip Development Society -CDS

This policy has been reviewed and is approved by:

Khadiza Begum (signed): \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair Person  
Chandradip Development Society -CDS