

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

BELIEF

We operate with the belief that each of us has a responsibility to improve the quality of our children's lives. The welfare of the child is paramount at Helping Hand Foundation and we seek to protect every child from harm. All our volunteers/staff/board members/trustees/benefactors / Donors have a professional duty to ensure the safety and protection of children since every child has a right to a happy, healthy and creative childhood.

This Child Protection Policy stands for its commitment and responsibilities towards safeguarding children and to protect them from all kinds of harm and abuse, keeping the best interest of the child in perspective. It also makes clear that any form of harm and abuse of children is unacceptable and non-negotiable to HHF, and any violation of the policy, whether intentional or unintentional, will invite appropriate disciplinary action and judicial procedures as per this policy, other related policies of the organization and law of the land.

Your adherence to the policy will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect children in your care.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of the policy is to create a fair system through which the welfare of children is protected.

Child Protection involves keeping children safe from the risk of harm caused by abuse (including emotional, physical or sexual abuse). It aims to reduce children's vulnerability by assuring necessary care and protection. The Child Protection Policy is aligned with the rights of all children, ensuring they have the right to protection regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or beliefs.

Child Protection Code of Conduct :

No staff/trustee/officer/benefactors/well-wishers/ Visitor / volunteers/Donors or anyone associated with us shall ever:-

1. Hit or otherwise physically abuse a child.
2. Develop relationships with children, which could be interpreted or deemed as inappropriate.
3. Use language or make suggestions that are inappropriate, offensive or abusive.



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4. Act in any way that intends to embarrass shame, humiliate, or degrade a child
5. Act in ways that may be verbally or physically abusive.
6. Discriminate against a child on the basis of race, economic status, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, political persuasion or any other status.
7. Behave or suggest physically or otherwise in a manner, which is inappropriate or sexually provocative or may be considered to be sexual abuse.
8. Touch, kiss, hug, fondle, or rub a child in any way that may be considered inappropriate, culturally insensitive or may be construed as sexual abuse.
9. Demonstrate any lessons by physically touching a child that may be considered inappropriate, culturally insensitive or construed as sexual abuse.
10. Provide unsolicited assistance to a child, of a personal nature, that a child could do on its own including but not limited to dressing, bathing, and grooming.
11. Take photographs or videos of children in their classrooms without permission of the Program Head.
12. Ignore or enable actions when inappropriate conduct has occurred.

DEFINITIONS

1. ‘Child’ or ‘children’ includes all children and young people under the age of 18 years (including students of vocational training/remedial education under the age of 18yrs) enrolled in our centers or in any of the programs at the Helping Hand Foundation.
2. “Child Protection” is the protection of children from any violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. Within the ambit of this policy, it would mean the measures, activities and safeguards that we would be taking to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm.
3. ‘Child abuse’ or ‘abuse’ shall mean and include intended, unintended and perceived, whether habitual or not, abuse or maltreatment of a child and shall constitute and include all forms of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, 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, trust or power. It includes any act, deed, or word which debases, degrades, or demeans the intrinsic worth and dignity of a child as a human being.
4. ‘Physical abuse’ shall mean and include the intentional/ unintentional inflicting of physical injury upon a child. This may include burning, hitting, punching, shaking, kicking, beating, using potentially harmful substances, or otherwise harming a child intentionally or as a result of over-discipline or physical punishment.

5. 'Emotional abuse' shall mean and include verbal abuse, mental abuse, and psychological maltreatment. It includes acts or the failure to act by any of our adult Member /volunteer/trustee/officers / donors that has caused or could cause serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental trauma. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
6. 'Sexual abuse' shall mean and include inappropriate sexual behavior with a child. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve all forms of physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
7. 'Rights' shall mean and include the rights of the child to freedom of expression, thought and association, the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development, right of the child to education, the rights of the child to rest and leisure, the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development.
8. 'Risks' shall mean and include any potential or probable harm to the child or any danger/ risk of a child suffering child abuse or the violation of his/ her rights.
9. The term 'adult Member' will be used to describe those employed at Helping Hand Foundation or any of its centre's / interventions including those working on a voluntary/unpaid basis for any such hours as allocated including Program support teams, leaders, teachers, helpers, Trustees, Members, Visitors, volunteers, mentors, tutors, alumni officials, consultants, beneficiaries, benefactors, donors or any other individual above 18 years of age visiting the organization or any of its branches, projects, interventions, camps etc... on official or unofficial duty

EXAMPLES

Any misconduct that may pose a threat to the emotional or physical health and safety of the children in class or has a lasting effect on the individual is considered a severe misconduct. The following lists certain examples for reference; however it is not an exhaustive list.

- a Subjecting students to painful body postures like kneeling, frog jumping, etc.
- b Taunting the child – rude remarks which are personal in nature
- c Humiliating the child about his/her ability
- d Physically grabbing students and shaking them up
- e Slapping / spanking/ pinching the child
- f Stuffing the mouth of the child with any object (handkerchief, soap)
- g Hitting child on the knuckles
- h Any inappropriate touch which might be sexual in nature
- i Having inappropriate conversations which might be sexual in nature
- j Refusing the use of transport (view safety of the child)
- k Asking a Child to stand for the entire day, facing a corner and standing
- l Throwing objects at the child – chalk, eraser, books, paper etc
- m Flinging objects across the classroom in anger
- n Placing masking tape on the mouth of a child
- o Any other act of sexual/emotional/physical abuse (mentioned in the above definition)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY – IMPLEMENTATION

Our Responsibility:

We commit to preventative and protective measures that aim to decrease the abuse of children and protect their rights.

Preventative Measures:

1. All Staff/Volunteers will review and sign the Child Protection Policy, through the on boarding process before commencing work for Helping Hand Foundation.

2. We will provide pre-service training to raise awareness about child protection issues as well as the Child Protection Policy.
3. We will seek to raise awareness of children’s rights, throughout the academic year, by providing a variety of forums for all stakeholders.
4. The Chief Functionary or “assigned Adult Member” will ensure due diligence on all new appointments through a reference check regarding their suitability to work with children through signing off on this code of conduct.

Protective Measures:

At Helping Hand Foundation, safety of the child is of utmost priority. In case any incident, the following steps needs to be taken.

The program Leadership along with a member of the committee (details mentioned below) must check if the child is alright and needs help or counseling of any kind while the under mentioned steps are taken.

Steps to be followed when the Program Head finds out about an infraction (isolated or a pattern):

A) Reporting Measures

1. The case is first brought to the notice of the Program Head.
2. The School / Program Leader immediately reports the allegation to the Chief Functionary
3. The School / Program Leader may reserve the right to report the incident to the parent before or after the investigation. The School / Program Leader may involve the Chief Functionary while reporting the incident to the parents.
4. The Chief Functionary will alert other trustees or competent authority that the allegation has been made and proper reporting has been conducted.

B) Setting up the Investigation

1. The adult Member needs to be informed by the Program Head, that an allegation for professional misconduct has been received and is being reviewed.



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2. The adult Member will further be requested to step out of the classroom or work station until an investigation of the incident has been completed. The School / Program Leader may reserve the right to retain the adult Member at the School / Program site or report to the office of Helping Hand Foundation.
3. The board of trustees will conduct the investigation. The School / Program Leader may reserve the right to participate in the interview. However, participation should be limited to the role of an observer in order to support the investigations findings.

NOTE: The investigation must be completed within a 48 hour period

A) The Investigation

1. The investigators must follow the following protocol:-
2. Interview the person making the allegation (if person is different from the alleged victim).
3. Interview the alleged victim.
4. Interview any additional witnesses.
5. Interview the adult Member who is alleged to have committed the act last.

B). Classification of Incident

1. After collecting all of the facts, the investigators may report their findings as follows :-
2. Charges are substantiated.
3. Charges are Unsubstantiated

C)Consequences

If allegations are substantiated, consequences or steps for improvement will be determined by a committee of the following members:-

1. Investigators (Chief Functionary)
2. School / Program Leader
3. Executive Board of Trustees

Since each case is unique, the committee will determine the best course of action based on the facts of the incident, employment history, and reception to growth by the person in question.

If the committee finds that disciplinary action may result in termination, the consequence will be issued regardless of employment classification.

This entire process should be completed within a 72 hour time frame.



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Changes To This Policy:

We reserve the right to modify this policy at any time, so please review it frequently. Changes and clarifications will take effect immediately upon their posting on the website. If we make material changes to this policy, we will notify you here that it has been updated, so that you are aware of what information we collect, how we use it, and under what circumstances, if any, we use and/or disclose it. This Policy is reviewed and updated every three years

“END OF POLICY”

Dt: 01.03.2022

Place: Uttan, Mira Bhayander