



MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® KALABURAGI

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION:

Margarshis Society®, a non-profit organization is working for the marginalized and neglected children is registered under Societies Act came into existence in the year 2002. The society works for the children without any discrimination of caste, creed or color and brings them to the mainstream of the society by providing them with education, and necessary support. At present, the society is working for 16 years in Kalaburagi, Raichur and Belagavi districts. The society is managed by the Board of Directors with professional zest and concern for Children and is headed by a Chairman and Secretary.

Aims of Margarshis Society

VISION: *Margarshis envisages women and child-friendly environment in sustained society*

MISSION: *To make Kalaburagi as a model district ensuring women and child rights, in difficult condition by sensitizing and empowering community groups and making the civil society, government and allied systems and corporate accountable towards their development*

OBJECTIVES:

- To rescue and restoration of children who are separated from their families.
- To enhance the quality of lives of the children, through non-formal education, psychological support and nurture.
- Research to understand the complex issues connected with rehabilitation.
- Reinforce women and children to self-identity, confidence in their abilities, and affection with family to overcome isolation, through orientation camps.
- Create awareness among the women, children, public, authorities and other organizations regarding the dangers of trafficking, physical and sexual abuse, child marriage and ways of combating and preventing of the same.
- Lobby with Government Departments such as Women and Child Development, Revenue, Education, Labor, Social Welfare, Health and Family Welfare, Police, Railway Authorities and Organizations working with the children to protect the child rights and child issues through forming local committees.



PREAMBLE:

The protection of children is the primary goal of Margadarshi Society®. It is divided into three areas:

- Preventing violations of children's rights;**
- Implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child;**
- Other Relevant Legal instrument to protect children.**

The internal politics of the protection of a child, implemented by Margadarshi Society® can be applied to any childcare structure. It concerns the elaborations of a framework of action for Margadarshi Society® to promote welfare and prevent abuse.

An Internal Child Protection Policy to protect Children:

- Endorses the duties and responsibilities of Margadarshi Society® towards the children it oversees;
- Lists the steps Margadarshi Society must take to protect children against abuse committed within or outside Margadarshi Society®;
- Defines the preventive measures to be implemented to minimize the risk of abuse within Margadarshi Society®;
- Describes the protocol to follow if abuse is suspected or found;
- List the elements contributing to the creation of an increasingly protective and well-treating environment.

The scope of Child Protection Policy in MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®

This policy applies to:

- MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®: To include board members, all staff, consultants, volunteers;
- MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®: To include project partners, partner organizations; paraprofessionals, consultants, interns;
- Associates of MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®: To include all vendors, sponsors, stake holders, volunteers, funding agencies, suppliers of MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®.

Review of the Policy: This Policy will be reviewed every five years by MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®. Upon review, changes in the Policy will be intimated to all organizations and persons who come within the scope of the policy and compliance with these changes would also be mandatory.

Guiding Principles

- Children are citizens and rights-holders; the dignity, liberty, and freedom of every child must be respected.
- The best interests of the child must remain in focus in all matters that affect or concern the child.
- Children have the right to freedom of expression.
- Children have the right to participate in decisions concerning themselves.
- A child's right to privacy and confidentiality must be respected within an overall consciousness and awareness of child protection requirements.
- Zero tolerance of any form of abuse of any child whether direct or indirect.
- Child protection is the responsibility of all.



Objectives

- To ensure the practice of the highest levels of child protection standards in MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® and partner organizations.
- To ensure a well-defined and practiced reporting mechanism for child protection violations and time-bound redressal system
- To ensure the assessment and management of child protection risk in MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® spaces.
- To ensure that there are basic minimum standards of child protection adhered to by all associates of MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® (vendors, suppliers, donors, government, referral agencies)
- To create consciousness and awareness about child protection

Policy Statement

MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®, as an organization is committed to the protection and wellbeing of children. MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® adopts a child protection policy to ensure the practice of the highest standards of child protection amongst its stakeholders. The policy creates a mechanism to report child protection violation and ensure prompt redressal.

This policy calls for mandatory reporting of all child protection violations. All members within the scope of this policy should report as they witness, suspect or come to know of any form of child protection violation.

Definitions:

Child: 'Child' includes all the persons of age from the 0 to 18 years.

However, the issue of feticide implicitly recognizes the right to life of an unborn child. Similarly, a child who is mentally challenged remains a child even after crossing the 18 years of age. The definition of child is therefore flexible and is not restricted to legally drawn age of 18 years and requires to be viewed in context.

Child Protection:

Child Protection is about protecting children from or against any perceived or real danger/risk to their life, their personhood, and childhood. It is about reducing their vulnerability to any kind of harm and in harmful situations. It is also about protecting children against social, psychological and emotional insecurity and distress. It must ensure that no child falls out of the social security and safety net and those who do, receive necessary care and protection to be brought back into the safety net.

Child Protection refers to protection from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. It is integrally linked to every other right of the child. Every child has a right to protection. This not only includes children who are in difficult circumstances and those who have suffered violence, abuse, and exploitation but also those who are not in any of these adverse situations and yet need to be protected to ensure that they remain within the social security and protective net.

Child Abuse: General Definition

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 of dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.



Physical Abuse

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of an interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be a single or repeated incident.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potentials and in the context of the society in which the child dwells. There may also be acts towards the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must reasonably be within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of or rejecting treatment.

Neglect and Negligent Treatment

Neglect is the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

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 which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity is intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.

This may include but is not limited to:

- The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity.
- The exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices.
- The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Exploitation

Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labor and prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, or spiritual, moral or social-emotional development.

Child Protection Violation:

Child Protection Violation in the context of the policy amounts to:

- Any act or behaviour that puts a child at risk of abuse
- Any act of behaviour that could potentially increase the risk of abuse
- A failure to act in a situation where a child is being abused
- Failure to follow the code of conduct or any other prescribed protocol without suitable justification



This policy calls for mandatory reporting of all child protection violations. All members within the scope of this policy should report as they witness, suspect or come to know of any form of child protection violation.

Components of Child Protection Policy:

There are three Components Comprising this Child Protection Policy:

- a. Code of Conduct
- b. Whistle Blower Policy
- c. Operational Guidelines

a. Code of conduct:

MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® is dedicated to protecting the rights of children. It recognizes the need for honesty and integrity and respect for the child to reflect in both in decisions of the organization as well as in the conduct of its personnel. Hence, MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® articulates a code of conduct for its personnel at MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® and MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® project partners.

Personnel should:

- Respect the privacy and dignity of each child;
- Be visible while working with children at the workplace;
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists and facilitates children to interact and express their issues and concerns with staff;
- Respect and encourage children's voices and views;
- Make efforts to ensure children's participation in decisions that affect their lives;
- Inform children about steps of interventions being taken in his or her context;
- Uphold the privacy of the child by not disclosing the identity of the child to anyone who may put the child at risk;
- Uphold the privacy of the child by not disclosing media;
- Educate children about their rights, issues of abuse, neglect, and exploitation;
- Ensure that there are staff members of the same gender as the child/children when escorting the child between locations and when taking care of the child/children at any location;
- Record all decisions of movement of children while sending them service centers or even in repatriation/restoration.

Personnel should not

- Touch, hug, or caress a child;
- Spend time with children alone;
- Stay with a child for an extended period;
- Allow interaction with a child in a closed environment without the supervision of the person-in-charge;
- Sleep alone with any child;
- Take children to the residence of the team members/coordinators/directors for the night;
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do themselves;
- Engage children in personal work or employ children at work or at home;
- Use language or expressions that are found inappropriate to a child;
- Use corporal punishment or tolerate corporal punishment by the staff;
- Make any physical gestures in a manner that appears to be inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Develop any relationship with children which could be assumed as exploitative or abusive;



- Discriminate against children based on color, language, disabilities, or physical feature leading to differential treatment;
- Stigmatize or humiliate a child;
- Act in any manner that put children at risk;
- Give gifts directly to children;
- Patronize any services that employ children;
- Take any photograph that would violate the child's dignity or privacy in any way.

b. Whistle Blower Policy

The Whistle Blower Policy is framed to ensure that there is an appropriate mechanism in place to ensure prompt and fair action in the case of a child protection violation. The Whistle Blower Policy applies to MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®, MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® partners and all MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® associates.

Response Mechanism in case of a child protection violation: Outlined below is a reporting and response framework for any alleged, witnessed, or suspected child protection violation,

At MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®:

- Report the matter directly in writing to the Child Protection Committee of the organization who will address the issue with the Management Team of the organization;
- Report the matter to the team leader/coordinator. The team leader/coordinator must inform the matter to the Child Protection Committee who will address the matter with the Management Team of the organization;
- There should be mandatory reporting of protection violations within the organization - anybody coming across child protection violation must report it;
- The Management Team of the Margadarshi Society® will investigate the matter and take appropriate action, the suspect is to be suspended immediately from the position serving in Margadarshi Society®;
- While the matter is under investigation the individual who is suspected of having committed a child protection violation must be removed from direct contact with children;
- The issue would be addressed and brought to closure within a month of having been reported;
- Any alarming or inappropriate behaviour of a staff member and any action taken against the person must be noted in his/her personal record;
- If the abuse falls under IPC – Indian Penal Code or any Other relevant law, First Information Report be filed with the local police by the Child Protection Committee of MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®

Project Partners of MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®:

- Report the matter to partner organization Director/Manager. The partner organization Director/Manager should inform to Director MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®;
- If the matter involves the Director of Partner Organization/Project Coordinator, then report the matter to the Director MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® directly;
- There should be mandatory reporting of child protection violation within the organization - anybody coming across child protection violation should report it;
- The Management Team at MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® would address the issue and recommend a suitable course of action to the Board of the Partner Organization;



- The course of action would have to be mutually agreed upon by MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® and the partner organization;
- While the matter is under investigation the individual who is suspected of having committed a child protection violation must be removed from direct contact with children;
- The issue would be addressed and brought to closure within a month of having been reported.
- Any alarming or inappropriate behaviour of a staff member and any action taken against the person must be noted in his/her personal record;
- If the abuse falls under IPC or any Other relevant law, First Information Report is filed with the local police by the MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® partner organization.

Associates of MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®

- If an associate is involved in causing the child protection violation, then follow the process as laid out for the MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®.
- If an associate wants to report a child protection violation, the complaint should be made to the Director of MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®. The process as laid out for MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® above would then be followed.
- There should be a mandatory reporting of abuse within the organization. Anybody coming across child protection violation should report it.

Implementation of the Policy:

- The overall implementation of the policy would be the responsibility of the Administration in MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®.
- The Child Protection Committee and Management Team mentioned in the Whistle Blower Policy are constituted as per the Procedure Manual.

c. Operational Guidelines

This child protection policy articulates MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®'s aspiration and commitment to practicing the highest level of child protection in its operations. MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® and its partner organizations take a proactive stance in laying out a set of operational guidelines that would be incorporated into all process and functions of the network. These guidelines have been developed through a consultative process between MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® and the partner organizations of the MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® network and expert input from other organizations and individuals who have already developed and implement child protection policies.

The content of these operational guidelines has a four-part structure as set out below:

- A. Human Resource Management
- B. Protection norms for CHILDLINE Spaces
- C. Participation of Children in CHILDLINE programs
- D. Representation of children in the media

A. Human Resource Management

Recruitment

- There should be a basic assessment of candidate on sensibilities regarding child protection -e.g. show an article, ask for analysis and use a checklist for an interview;
- There should be a thorough reference check to be carried out from past employers or the academic institute attended by the candidate;
- All new recruits would sign an undertaking of accepting the child protection policy and the code of conduct;
- Induction Program within the organization would include orientation on child protection;

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- All new recruits would be provided with a copy of the MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® Child Protection Policy and the MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® CHILD Protection Manual;
- On recruitment, personal files with a photograph of the staff recruited should be maintained.

Performance Management System

- The Performance Management System (PMS) would include credits for child protection sensitivity.
- The Performance Management System (PMS)/Child protection review must allow for peer evaluation for child protection compliance.
- All personal files would contain information on child protection compliance, both positive and negative action and record an action taken in this regard.

Staff Development and Capacity Building

- Orientation on child protection must be given critical focus in all staff development and capacity building programs
- The organization must make attempts to stay abreast the latest trends and issues on child protection and share this knowledge with its personnel across all levels and departments.
- Protection of staff needs to be discussed at length as staff members also face threats and various risks during their work

Human Resource Practices for Partners/Associates of MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®

- For associates of MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® who are individuals, the Recruitment process should be followed
- MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® would not associate itself with organizations that involve tobacco, alcohol, and child labor.
- In the case of organizations that want to associate with MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®, a detailed diligence exercise in addition to financial diligence needs to be undertaken to ensure that the organization's philosophy, mission, processes, and practices are safe for children.

The associate organization would need to:

- have a child protection policy
- not employ child labor
- be intolerant to any form of child exploitation and abuse
- not patronize any service that may be exploitative to children

B. Protection norms for MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® spaces accessible to children

These would include the (MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® Offices, Subcenter and Help Desk)

- All MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® spaces should be accessible to children;
- The Sub Center/Help Desk should be accessible to children on a 24-hour basis and a team member should always be there.
- Space should be well lit and well ventilated
- It is desirable that the child is not left alone with a team member.
- Escorts for children during any interaction that involve travel (local or otherwise) must always be of the same gender
- If in the case of having to keep a child at the MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® premises/sub-center for a night the caring person must be of the same gender as the child
- Center must have provisions for a change of clothes, a meal or snack drinking water
- Privacy should be ensured while the child is changing and a space of 10 x 10 with toilet facilities to be allotted for children.

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- All MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® spaces should be equipped with a first aid kit
- The MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® Child Protection Policy must be displayed in a prominent space in all spaces

C. Participation of children in MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® programs

- Children should not participate in events unless it is relevant to them
- Even if relevant, the program should not be detrimental to the health
- Consent of the child/informed choice is mandatory while participating in programs
- If children are being taken for residential programs written consent must be taken from their families or the institution that they reside in
- The purpose of the participants must be clearly articulated to the child
- Children should play a key role in planning any sort of event that they will participate in
- Tokenistic participation of children should be avoided
- Children must be adequately provided with drinking-water, refreshments, snacks, and meals during programs
- Arrangements for first-aid and quick access to medical facilities should be provided for planning programs with children
- Optimum safety/protection should be provided for Children attending the program e.g. security in cases of open spaces, fire safety norms etc.
- Ensure basic facilities are provided to children attending programs outdoor.
- Ensure provision of safe accommodation arrangements with separate toilets for boys and girls.
- Same gender care persons/escorts must be provided for children going outdoors.
- 1 caretaker for every 30 children to be provided during programs.
- Children cannot be left alone without escorts or care persons at any time during the program.
- There should be a Grievance Committee comprising the organizers and the children. If children have to travel reservations must be made well ahead of to ensure a safe and smooth journey to and from the program
- Feedback must be taken from the children at the end of the program.
- At the end of the program, each child attending the program must either be handed over to a responsible parent or family member, or the institution to which the child belongs

D. Representation of children in media/communication material/publications

Media:

- MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® must protect the dignity, identity, and privacy of the children if it encounters the media.
- MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® needs to ensure to the best of its ability that while highlighting child protection issues, that the media does not disclose the identity and details such as names, address, a photograph of the child, parents, locality, and school
- MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® should ensure informed consent from the child and his or her family before disclosing any story to the media.
- MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® should ensure informed consent from the child and his or her family before disclosing his/her contact details (address/phone number/mobile etc.) to the media.
- If any case is discussed in the media, ensure proper scrutiny and monitoring of the content is done. In case of inappropriate reporting, the team/organization act against the same.
- While disclosing children's stories to the media MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® should ensure that the media covers the story in a responsible and sensitive manner
- Testimonies by children or representation of children in the media to discuss the problem/abuse should be prohibited completely



Communication Material

- While photographing children or using children's images in the production of communication material, MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® should explain to the best of its ability, the context and use of it to the child's image/images.
- In case of the representation of MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® cases in publication ensure names are changed and photographs do not reveal identity.
- Representation of children in MARGADARSHI SOCIETY® material which is detrimental to a child's right and dignity should not be permitted
- The child must give an informed consent before allowing his/her/their images to be used by MARGADARSHI SOCIETY®
- The consent of the child and/or his/her/their family must be taken in writing.

CPP Committee Members: Mr. Anandraj D. – Director,
Mr. Basavaraj Tengli – Board Member,
Mr. Sundar Halgenoor – CHILDLINE Coordinator,
Mrs. Padmavati Desai – Railway Child Help Desk Coordinator,
Mr. Manjunath Kambali – Operations Manager (HR),
Mr. Rahul Malage – Child Rights and You Coordinator,
Mrs. Kasturi Haalu - External Member - Anganwadi Teacher,
Ms. Kavitha Sedamkar – The Hunger Project - Community Organizer,
Mr. Basavaraj Biradar – Community Based Rehabilitation – Coordinator.

To be reviewed next time
Signature of Board President:

Date: 16th December 2018

Signature of Secretary/ Executive Director:

Karada *M. Anand* *J. Sundar* *K. Kasturi*
A. Kavitha *S. Sedamkar*
U. Reddy