

# SEARCH SWAYAM SEVA ABHIRUDDHI SAMSTHE® NAVANAGAR, BAGALKOT

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 Protection and care of children is one of the fundamental objectives of the Search Organisation Bagalkot. The best interest of the child is the foundation upon which the SEARCH has established the Child Protection Policy which is to be enforced and implemented under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 in the SEARCH of Bagalkot.

1.2 All Homes/Institutions under the mandate of the DWCD have ZERO TOLERANCE to any abuse. The Child Protection Policy (hereinafter Protection Policy) aims to establish mechanisms for the protection of all children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with law from any type of abuse, exploitation or neglect and ensure immediate and stringent action in case of any instances of abuse of children in the Homes/Institutions and take remedial measures.

1.3 The Protection Policy is applicable to the management and staff members of all Search Organisation.

### **2 Definitions**

2.1 Child: A person below the age of eighteen years.

2.2 Child Protection: Preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children.

2.3 Best Interest of Child: The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

2.4 Child Participation: Every child has the right to freedom of expression, freedom of association and access to information and to be proactive in their community.

2.5 Child Abuse: 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, trust or power.

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



2.5.2 Sexual Abuse: Any kind of physical, mental or verbal abuse, where a person uses a child for his/her sexual gratification. Child sexual abuse is committed by a person who is in a position of trust/power vis-à-vis the child. It is any sexual behaviour directed at a dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents.

2.5.3 Emotional Abuse: Verbal abuse, mental abuse, and psychological maltreatment. It includes acts or the failure to act by parents or caretakers that have caused or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental trauma

Staff: All members of the management board or employees(whether full-time, part time or short term contracts) of the Institution/Home.

2.10 External Personnel: Any visitors in at the Homes/Intutions who are not employed directly or indirectly.

### **3. Guiding Principles of the Child Protection Policy**

The Protection Policy is guided by the existing legal frameworks of child protection in search The Protection Policy predominately draws its following guiding principles from the Search Organisation. Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act, 2012, Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 in the SEARCH of Bagalkot

**3.1 Protection:** Safety and security of all children is integral to their well-being and children are to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, violence

**3.2 Best Interest of the Child:** Best interest of the child is the primary concern in all decisions and actions affecting children, whether taken by board of committee of our organisation to ensure their personality development

**3.3 Confidentiality:** Children's right to privacy and confidentiality should be protected in cases of abuse

**3.4 Non-Stigmatisation and Non-Discrimination:** Each child irrespective of circumstances, as well as socio-economic, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds should be treated equally and in a dignified manner .

**3.5 Participation:** Children's views, especially those of girls, children from disadvantaged groups and marginalised communities, are to be heard in all matters affecting them, and their views should be given due consideration in accordance with their age, maturity and evolving capacities

**3.6 Child entered planning and implementation:** Planning and implementation of Protection Policy and service delivery should be child entered at all levels, so as to ensure that the best interest of the child is protected



**3.7 Technical excellence, code of conduct:** Services for children at all levels and by all providers should be provided by skilled and professional staff, including a cadre of social workers, psychologists, caregivers, members of statutory bodies and lawyers, adhering to an ethical and professional code of conduct

**3.8 Good governance, accountability and responsibility:** An efficient and effective child protection system requires transparent management and decision making, accountable and responsible individuals and institutions and performance reports at all service levels and all service providers made public

#### **4 Child Protection Policy Frame work**

**4.1 What is the Child Protection Policy** Child Protection Policy is the principal guiding document to safeguard the rights of children, especially their right to protection and participation. to create an enabling, protective and child friendly setting equivalent to one which a family can create. It directs the caregivers to ensure prevention of child abuse, protection of its children from any occurrence of child abuse and reporting incidences and providing minimum standard of care

#### **4.2 Who does it apply to?**

4.2.1 All staff employed by the Search Organisation

4.2.2 Outsourced agencies that come in contact with the children.

4.2.3 External people visiting the organisation contact with children.

4.2.4 Child safeguarding measures for Staff Recruitment and Orientation of newly appointed staff.

4.2.4 Code of Conduct for staff and visitors/outsideers to protect the children from occurrence of child abuse through prevention

#### **4.2.5 Quality Standards for Homes including the following:**

a. Training of children and staff on child protection and child protection policy

b. Infrastructural necessities such as installation of CCTV Cameras, Children's Suggestion Boxes and child friendly physical infrastructure

c. Direct line to 1098 only for children

d. Appropriate care measures for children under 6 years of age

4.3.5 Child Protection Committees wherein constitution of Child Abuse Management Committee and Children's Committee is mandatory

4.3.6 Reporting Mechanism for children and staff



#### 4.3.7 Monitoring of policy implementation:

### **PREVENTION**

5. Staff Recruitment and Orientation for children shall undertake child safeguarding measures while appointing new staff and orient them on the Protection Policy.

#### **Child Safeguarding Measures for Human Resources Recruitment**

5.1.1 The organization(s) shall ensure that all persons holding contractual or regular staff position, submit a self-declaration /affidavit stating that the person does not hold any criminal records.

5.1.2 The organization shall seek reference from previous employer while considering the candidate for appointment.

5.1.3 The organization shall process a police verification of all newly appointed staff upon recruitment.

#### **5.2 Child Protection Policy Orientation of Newly Appointed Staff**

5.2.1 All new staff members shall receive an orientation of the Protection Policy along with a written brief from the Director employee within 2 days of joining.

5.2.2 All new staff members shall receive training on the Protection Policy within the probation period and no later than 6 months from the date of joining.

5.2.4 A written record of the child protection policy orientation sessions and trainings shall be maintained in a register by the Officer in Charge/Superintendent of the Homes/Institution.

### **Code of Conduct**

All staff members, external personnel and visitors shall follow the prescribed Code of Conduct to safeguard the child from any incidence of abuse.

#### **6.1 Code of Conduct for the STAFF of all Homes/Institutions:**

- ❖ The staff should be affectionate, caring and understanding of the requirements and needs of the child.
- ❖ The staff should be responsive in case any special need of the child arises such as health issues or emotional support.
- ❖ The staff should have a sense of accountability, in order to deter any poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.



- ❖ The child should be encouraged to talk to the Welfare Officers and/or the Superintendent, or the supervisors in their Home/Institution without any apprehension.
- ❖ Immediately report any suspicious behavior/suspected occurrence of abuse to the Management Committee (refer to Chapter 8 for structure and functions of the committee). It is a criminal offence to conceal or abet incidents of child abuse, and is mandatory to report such offences

### **6.2 It is NOT appropriate for staff to:**

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others.
- Physically assault or physically abuse the child.
- Use language that is discriminatory, abusive or hurtful to the child.
- Engage children in any work that is beyond their assigned task in the Homes/Institutions orp that impedes their physical and mental development.
- Develop relationships with the child that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Store obscene / pornographic material (photographs, video clips) on their mobile phones and showing to children.
- Browse, publish or transmit material in any form which depicts children engaged in sexually explicit act or conduct.
- Create text or digital images and/or collects, seeks, browses, downloads, advertises, promotes, exchanges or distributes material in any electronic form depicting children in obscene or indecent or sexually explicit manner
- Show or talk of content that is sexual in nature or take photographs of children.
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Sleep with a child in the same bed. If the need occurs to sleep in the same room, permissionp must be taken where the reason is clearly stated and a separate bed be used for sleeping. Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves which includes toilet training and bathing.
- Condone and/or participate in behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- If the child is abused in school and discloses to institution staff, immediately an FIR should be lodged. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 ss
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrates any form of emotional abuse, discriminate against, show differential treatment towards, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

### **6.3 Code of Conduct for visitors:**



- i. Permission for visits is mandatory from the Officer in Charge/Superintendent and visits should be made in the presence of officers not below the rank of a Welfare Officer.
- ii. The norms of the Home/Institution are to be compulsorily followed by the visitors.
- iii. iii. Visitors can only interact with children in presence of a staff member and not without the consent of the child and Officer in Charge/Superintendent.
- iv. iv. No photography/Videography will be allowed.
- v. v. Visitors must be discouraged from giving gifts directly to children.

## 7 Quality Standards for Homes

As per the Protection Policy, quality standards for the children's shall be adopted by all the search organisation in addition to the Minimum Standards for the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

### 7.1 Infrastructural Compliance:

7.1.1 Installation of Children's Suggestion Boxes to be installed in the organisation in such an area that is closer to child's residential facility. The Child Protection Committee shall be responsible for installation of Children's Suggestion Boxes and providing support to the Children's Committee in monitoring its appropriate use.

7.1.2 Installation of CCTV Cameras To be installed in common areas where frequent interface between children, staff and visitors occurs. However, the CCTV camera installation shall not undermine the right to privacy, dignity and self-respect of the child.

7.1.3 Display a Board on the Do's and Don'ts and Pictorial Display of Prevention of Child Abuse Installation of display boards on Do's and Don'ts shall be fixed up in prominent areas in the organisation. The Do's and Don'ts shall be written in Kannada and English languages and in a child friendly manner.

7.1.4 Display Boards of the Members of Management Committee and the Children's Committee Display boards with information of the members of the Management Committee and Children's Committee shall be fixed up in common rooms and/or dormitories where the child has an access.

7.1.5 Information Board of Important Contact Names and Numbers Information boards with contact information of important stakeholders (as listed in Annexure II) shall be put up in children's common rooms and/or dormitories in the Homes/Institutions.



7.1.6 Well-lit Corridors/Bathrooms and Halls with Power Back Up Institution/Home must have corridors, bathrooms and halls that are well lit. Provisions are to be made for power back up in the Homes/Institutions.

7.1.7 Direct line to 1098 only for children Provisions for a 'one way phone with direct line to 1098' should be made available either in the dormitory or near the bathroom, in an area which is easily accessible to children.

## **7.2 Appropriate care measures for children under 6 years of age:**

7.2.1 The house mother /matron/ aaya should accompany the child while bathing to ensure his/her safety and to give assistance if required.

7.2.2 Children should be under constant supervision of the in-charge.

7.2.3 Children should be provided with appropriate time to rest and relax (which may include a short nap after lunch) under supervision.

## **8 Child Protection Committees**

Our Organisation shall constitute the following Child Protection Committees (CPCs):

1. The Management Committee

2. The Children's Committee These Committees may be the same Committees as those formed in accordance with the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 known as Management Committees and Children's Committees with additional functions of the above mentioned Committees.

### **8.1 Management Committee**

8.1.1 The Committee shall consist of adults with at least one representative from the Children's Committee.

8.1.2 This Committee shall have the Officer-in-charge two from the board as the Child Protection Focal Person responsible for reporting and following up, the case of child abuse with the local police, Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee and Director/ Chief Functionary of the concerned NGO.

8.1.3 This Committee shall be constituted of every six months.

8.1.4 The Committee shall ensure installation and the appropriate use of Children's Suggestion Boxes in our organisation

8.1.5 The Committee shall have monthly meetings to review the actions taken on reported cases of child abuse and suggestions from the Children's Suggestion Box.



8.1.6 The quorum for conducting the emergency meetings shall be five members, including two members of Children's Committees, Chairperson of the Management Committee, Member of Child Welfare Committee or the Juvenile Justice Board as the case may be and the Officer-in Charge of the institution

8.1.7 In the event of a serious allegation or complaint 23 against the Officer-in-Charge/Institutions, s/he shall not be part of the emergency meeting and another available member of the Management Committee shall be included in his

## **8.2 Children's Committee**

8.2.1 Children's Committee shall be constituted by only those children who are residing in Institutions.

8.2.2 The Committee shall appoint one representative for the Management Committee.

8.2.3 The same representative shall be the Child Protection Focal Person for the committee to report the cases of child abuse to the Child Protection Focal Person of the Management Committee, i.e. the Superintendent/Officer in Charge of the Institution.

8.2.4 This Committee shall be reconstituted every six months.

8.2.5 In case of any allegations against the Superintendent/Officer in Charge, report shall be made to any another member of the Management Committee by the Children's Committee.

## **9 Reporting**

### **9.1 Reporting Procedure for Staff and Children**

9.1.1 Any information on suspected case or incidence of child abuse shall be immediately reported to the Welfare Officer, Superintendent/Officer in charge or Child Protection Focal Person of either of the Committees (Management Committee or Children's Committee).

9.1.2 If the initial report is verbal, the Reporting Form must be filled up by the Welfare Officer immediately.

9.1.3 The Reporting Form shall be submitted to the Superintendent no later than 6 hours from the incidence/knowledge of abuse

### **9.2 Action to be taken by the Superintendent/Officer in Charge**

9.2.1 In case of sexual abuse, the Superintendent/Officer in charge of the Institutions shall lodge a complaint/FIR with the police station in the jurisdiction of the institution without any loss of time.

9.2.2 A copy of the Reporting form shall be submitted to the police while filing the FIR.



9.2.3 Along with the reporting requirements, Management Committee shall commence an inquiry within 12 hours of receipt of information.

9.2.4 The Superintendent/Officer-in-Charge must immediately depute a counsellor for the affected child in order to enable the child to deal with the trauma.

9.2.5 The Superintendent/Officer in Charge shall inform the CWC Chairperson and Director/Chief Functionary of the organisation immediately on telephone or in person.

9.2.6 Following this, a written report shall be submitted to the Director, Chief Functionary of the NGO/organisation within 6 hours of receipt of information by fax and e-mail.

9.2.7 The Superintendent/Officer in Charge shall provide complete cooperation to the police authority/SDM office/Court staff/CWC on any other statutory authority for purpose of inquiry/investigation.

9.2.8 In the event of a serious allegation or complaint against the Superintendent/Officer-in-Charge of the Homes/Institutions, the higher authorities must immediately remove him from the post and substitute the position.

***Dos and Don'ts for the STAFF of all Homes/Institutions:***

- ✓ The staff should be affectionate, caring and understanding of the requirements and needs of the children.
- ✓ The staff should be responsive in case any special need of the child arises such as health issues, emotional support.
- ✓ The staff should instill a sense of accountability, in order to deter poor practice or abusive behaviour.
- ✓ The children should be encouraged to reach out to the staff freely and without fear.
- ✓ Immediately report any suspicious behavior/suspected occurrence of abuse to the Management Committee (refer to Chapter 8 for structure and function of the committee).
- ✓ Remember that it is a criminal offence to conceal or abet incidents of child abuse and mandatory to report such offences



***It is NOT appropriate for staff to:***

Spend excessive time alone with children away from others.

- ✗ Physically assault or physically abuse children.
- ✗ Use language that is discriminatory, abusive or hurtful to the child.
- ✗ Engage children in any work that is beyond their assigned task in the Homes/Institutions or that impedes their physical and mental development.
- ✗ Develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- ✗ Store obscene material (photographs, video clips) on their mobile phones and show it to children.
- ✗ Browse, publish or transmit material in any form which depicts children engaged in sexually explicit act or conduct.
- ✗ Create text or digital images and/or collect, seeks, browses, downloads, advertises, promotes, exchanges or distributes material in any electronic form depicting children in obscene or indecent or sexually explicit manner<sup>26</sup>.
- ✗ Show or talk of content that is sexual in nature or take photographs of children.
- ✗ Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- ✗ Do not sleep with a child in the same bed, if need occurs to sleep in the same room.
- ✗ Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves which includes toilet training and bathing.
- ✗ Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- ✗ Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse, discriminate against, show differential treatment towards, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

***Code of Conduct for visitors:***

The visits should be made with the prior permission of the Officer in Charge/Superintendent and should be in presence of the officers not below the rank of Welfare Officers.

1. The norms of the Home/Institution are to be followed by the visitors
2. Visitors/outsideers can only interact with children in presence of a staff member and not



without consent of the child and Officer in Charge/Superintendent.

3. No photography/Videography will be allowed.
4. Visitors must be discouraged from giving gifts directly to children.
5. Provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2000 and Delhi Juvenile Justice Care and Protection of Children Rule, 2009 should be followed.

This policy has been reviewed and is recommended for approval by

M. Venkatesh