



Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding Children Policy

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1: INTRODUCTION

Child Protection Policy Statement

1.1 Calcutta Rescue Education Projects take very seriously its duty towards all its pupils who have been entrusted to its care and seeks to provide a school environment where all children are safe, secure, valued, respected, and listened to.

1.2 Calcutta Rescue Education Projects believe that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice that protects them.

1.3 **We recognise that:**

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The welfare of the child is paramount.

All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious beliefs have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. This policy applies to all children and young people. Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents and carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

1.4 Purpose of Policy

To provide protection for the children and young people who receive CR services.

To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing or be at risk of harm.

1.5 This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and boards of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone acting on behalf of CR.

1.6 This policy follows the statutory government guidance to safeguard children and keeping children safe in education projects.

1.7 We will review our child protection policy and protocol at least annually to ensure they are still relevant and effective.

2: DEFINITIONS & PRINCIPLES

2.1 A child is any person who has not yet had their eighteenth birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout. We use the definition of a child according to Indian and international law since this comes from Indian law and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989. The United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child is the international framework which sets out the specific rights of children; it is the most widely ratified international human rights instrument which over 190 countries have signed. India signed and ratified the UNCRC in 1992. As a party to the UNCRC India is obliged to protect and promote the rights of all children.

2.2 Government's specific ambition for children is that they will achieve the Every Child

Matters key outcomes:

Be healthy

Stay safe

Enjoy and achieve

Make a positive contribution

Achieve economic well-being.

3: DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

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3.1 The following definitions of abuse are set out in statutory government guidance and provide the framework for responding to risk to children.

3.2 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical abuse

3.3 Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

3.4 Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development and may involve:

Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

3.5 Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

3.6 Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. Sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation. Penetrative sex where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is not usual.

3.7 Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

3.8 Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

4: FURTHER DEFINITIONS



As well as the definitions above, there are circumstances which can be indicative of abuse, or constitute abuse and are in any case, damaging to children.

Domestic (Family) Violence

4.1 Domestic or Family Violence adversely affects children, whether or not it is significant enough to warrant action under Child Protection Procedures.

Bullying

4.2 Bullying is not acceptable behaviour. Staff members witnessing a child being bullied or receiving complaints over bullying have a duty to do whatever is within their power to stop the situation, while avoiding putting themselves or the child in danger.

4.3 Staff should always discuss instances of bullying with a senior manager. This should occur immediately if the situation is beyond their ability to deal with.

Principles underpinning the Child Protection Policy

A number of key principles underpin the provisions of the Child Protection Policy.

Best interests of the child are paramount and shall be the primary consideration in our decision making.

Child centred and a rights-based approach in order to keep children sharply in focus in all our planning and direct work.

Equality of opportunity to ensure that all children have the opportunity to enjoy our activities safely regardless of their gender, ability, race, ethnicity, circumstances or age.

Taking responsibility in order to meet our obligations regarding our duty of care towards children and **taking action** where we believe that a child is at risk or harmed.

Recognising and acknowledging that an element of risk exists, and while we may never be able to totally remove this, we need to do all we can to reduce it or limit its impact.

Honesty and transparency by informing those we work with, including children, about our Child Protection Policy, and the way we work to try and protect children.

Supporting and training those working with CR to recognise and respond to child protection risks and incidences.

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Working with others to protect children. This includes involving law enforcement and specialist child welfare agencies where necessary.

Monitoring the implementation of the Child Protection Policy. The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed every three years.

Recording

4.4 When staff become aware of possible abuse, they must make full written record as soon as possible and always within 24 hours of the situation arising. This may be recorded directly onto a Referral form, or if there is a lot of detail, be recorded in a separate appended document.

4.5 Recording should include as many of the following details as you know:

Index details of the child, and if known, their family, or carers, alleged offenders, witnesses, other involved children. Index details are names, dates of birth, addresses, gender etc.

As much information as possible about the incident of concern i.e. what lead up to it, what was heard or witnessed, staff member's responses, the location of the event, date, time and details of anyone present. Any action taken by the member of staff as a result of the incident.

Other relevant background information.

4.6 When you record:

- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Try to describe what happened fully but succinctly

Referral Time Scales

4.7 Referrals following specific incidents should be made fast.

5. HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD TELLING YOU ABOUT ABUSE

5.1 Sometimes you will be concerned about abuse because of what a child says to you. If this happens you should

- Stay calm and reassuring. Respond with tact and sensitivity and do not make judgements.
- Find a quiet place to talk and allow the child to speak in their own time.
- Listen, possibly confirm details but do not press for information or ask leading questions as this may void any disclosure you receive in a court case or investigation.

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- Make brief notes using the person's own words. Do not interpret what has been said or make assumptions.
- Say that you are glad that the child told you.
- Acknowledge that the child may have angry, sad or even guilty feelings about what happened, but stress that the abuse was not the child's fault.
- If necessary, seek medical help and contact the police or social services.
- Ensure the child that he/she is away from the alleged abuser.
- Follow procedures for reporting allegations and suspicions to the designated
- child protection coordinator.

Do not:

- Promise confidentiality but do discuss with the child who you need to tell.
- Investigate the allegation yourself and do not contact the parents/carers until advised to do so by the local authority/officer in charge of the allegation.
If it will help the child to cope say that the abuser has a problem.
Say that you will do your best to protect and support the child.

6: SUSPICIONS ABOUT MEMBERS OF STAFF

6.1 Introduction

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff or volunteer is dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

6.2 What Is Meant By an Allegation Against A Member of Staff

You should be concerned if you believe that a member of staff has: Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.

7: CONFIDENTIALITY & INFORMATION SHARING

7.1 Information may be shared to protect a child or vulnerable person, or to prevent a crime. Early sharing of information is the key to providing effective early help where there are emerging problems. The *Data Protection Act* is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.

7.2 When working with children, guarantees of absolute confidentiality must not be given. Those working with children should tell them that information will be shared if it is necessary to keep a child or vulnerable adult safe.

7.3 Staff should be open and honest with the child (and their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom the information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

7.4 Staff should seek advice if they are in any doubt.

7.5 Staff should follow the normal rules for safe data storage and transfer.

7.6 Recording should include the decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. It should include what was shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Information should only be shared and handled on a *need-to-know basis*, that is, access to the information must be necessary for the conduct of one's official duties.

8. Child Protection Focal Point

In order to assist with the implementation of the Child Protection Policy CR will nominate someone to act as the **Safeguarding Officer**. The main function is to support the implementation of the Child Protection Policy. Broad areas of responsibility are divided across three key areas: prevention and planning, communication and awareness raising and incident management.

9. Preventative Actions

The most important key to child safety is prevention. It is widely recognised that organisational awareness and good practice can promote positive staff action or behaviour, reduce opportunities for offending and will enable early detection and response.

9.1

Child Protection Code of Conduct

Since ideas about child care vary, all CR school staff who work with children must sign and abide by the child protection code of conduct, which describes the behaviour expected of them and their responsibilities in relation to children they come into contact with.

9.2

Recruitment and Employment

'Safe' recruitment and checks that are undertaken as part of the recruitment process are the organisation's first chance to deter potential offenders. CR will take all reasonable measures to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children. However, the majority of staff who work with CR are well motivated and without them the organisation could not operate.



CR will take the following measures to ensure that only those who do not pose a risk to children are employed or involved in its work:

- All job, contract and service advertisements must state that CR works to protect children and that those seeking work will be assessed regarding their suitability to work with children.
- Before employing any staff, background screening checks must be conducted to ensure their suitability.
- Where staff is engaged in 'regulated activity' (direct work with children), additional care must be taken to ensure that they are suitable. This should include checking identification, qualifications and obtaining references from previous employers.
- Staff should be asked to sign a self declaration statement confirming that they have no convictions for any offence involving any type of harm to a child or children, and should declare anything that may affect their suitability to work with children.
- In exceptional circumstances, it may not be possible to obtain background checks and references. In these situations a careful assessment should be made as to whether it is appropriate for the person to be put in the position of working alone with a child.
- Where allegations are made about staff, careful consideration must take place about the appropriateness of the person continuing to work in CR. This may include suspension during any internal or external investigation and dismissal if the allegation is proved.

9.3

Induction, Training and Support

Once staff has been recruited they need to be adequately trained and supervised to ensure that any risks to children are minimised. All staff are inducted on child protection as it is essential that all staff are aware of their own responsibilities, as well as organisational policy and practice. They should know:

- The child protection policy
- The role of the Child safeguarding officer and how to get in touch
- What they should do in the event of a disclosure
- How to recognise signs of abuse
- What to do if they have concerns about a staff member
- Where to go for advice and support within the organisation

All staff will have access to advice, support and training regarding child protection and the implementation of the Child Protection Policy, via the School Social Worker who deals with cases closely.

Media, communication & information

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CR has a policy regarding the media and the use of images (including photographs and recordings) and stories regarding children. This should be applied in all situations. Specifically relating to child protection, we will:

- Ensure that personal information is kept confidential unless we have the agreement of the child and their parent/guardian, except where it is necessary to pass this to a specialised child welfare or law enforcement agency in relation to a child protection incident.
- Use images of children which are respectful (not degrading, or showing sexual images of children naked or partially clothed). Consent will be taken from parent and child before using individual photos in the media and social networking sites.
- Staff should be informed about the policy of CR in relation to the use of technology (such as computers and mobile phones), and understand that they must not use this technology for the purpose of accessing, producing or distributing any information or violent or sexual images that are harmful for children. This includes adult pornography.

Reporting – Responding to Allegations & Concerns

Child protection is a tricky and complex area. Speaking out when there is child abuse can be difficult. To determine the nature of child abuse it is often hard to acquire concrete evidence. Staff is more likely to be faced with indirect statements from children, non verbal clues and signs which can be inconsistent. When actual disclosures of abuse are made they are often retracted. For this reason, when faced with child abuse, staff are more likely to have feelings of concern; an intuition or suspicion that something is happening but doubt their judgement and/or feel uncomfortable about saying anything or raising the concern as they do not believe they have enough evidence. Because of the often secret and intimidating nature of abuse and the severe impact it can have on children, however, it is essential that people speak out.

It is not the responsibility of staff to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. All staff, however, have a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the Child Safeguarding Officer, a specialist and confidential resource available for staff to talk to about any concerns, no matter how small and insignificant they may seem, and will provide advice and support and decide what action to take.

To ensure that all such situations are handled appropriately and effectively, a reporting mechanism should be there:

1. All allegations and concerns of abuse must be taken seriously, irrespective of the identity of the alleged perpetrator and victims, and regardless of how 'unbelievable' the situation may seem.
2. All staff must report any of the following situations in relation to:
 - any allegation of or concern about actual or suspected situations of abuse involving a child or children known to CR
 - any allegation of or concern about actual or suspected staff misconduct and/or criminal activity involving the abuse of a child or children whether or not they are known to CR
3. No staff member can agree to keep information regarding actual or suspected abuse 'private' as a personal confidence. In general, CR will seek to discuss our concern with the child in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding, and with their parents/guardians, and seek their agreement if making a referral to a specialist agency.



4. Reports must be made, and decisions and actions taken.

CR is not an investigative authority. It is essential that referrals be made to the relevant child welfare and law enforcement agency to ensure that appropriate protection and support is given to the child.

A written record of all abuse cases including any decision made, must be kept with the Child safeguarding officer. This should include details of any referrals made to specialist agencies.

Names of those who are alleged to be a risk to children will also be passed on to law enforcement agencies where it is suspected that a crime may have been committed, for investigation in accordance with relevant legislation.

It is understood that there will be unanticipated situations where staff will have to apply their independent judgment. They should do so in a way that is consistent with the principles of the policy and in consultation, when possible, with the Child safeguarding officer and an available senior manager.

Any difficulties or confusion should be referred to the GC for further assistance and guidance.

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