



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

As per Indian Law, child protection involves keeping children safe from the risk of harm caused by neglect or abuse (including mental, physical or sexual abuse). It aims to reduce children's vulnerability by providing them with the necessary care, protection and support required for them to survive, develop and thrive. Child protection is integrally linked to the rights of a child. All children, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse, regardless of class, caste, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

Research has demonstrated that abuse has serious long term effects on children and can severely impede social and cognitive development. India is facing a crisis, with some estimates suggesting that over two thirds of India's children fall victim to physical abuse alone. Saath Gramin Trust has a responsibility to create awareness about this problem and support the team in tackling its causes. Saath encourages its team members to understand the effects of child abuse and will support them in becoming leaders who role model safe, appropriate and positive interactions with children at all times that advocate the protection of all children.

All staff and Team members have a professional duty to ensure the safety and protection of all children who come into contact with SGT. The following groups have specific responsibilities as follows:

Governance / Administrative Resources

- Are the custodian of the policy and guardian of the processes to ensure all staff and Team members are aware, informed and supported in understanding and meeting the expectations laid out in this document.
- Are responsible for ensuring that all new staff, team members and volunteers understand the policy through their induction.
- Ensure all sustain awareness of the policy and methods to increase the safety of children in the care of Saath.
- Coordinate the investigation of any breaches of the policy in a timely, fair and accurate manner in accordance with other conduct related Team members and staff policies.

All Staff And Team Members

- Have a responsibility to be fully aware and informed of this policy handbook and adhere to it at all times even if other teachers or parents are not aligned with this policy.
- Have a duty of care to report any incidents that arise relating to child safety and ensure they are documented and/or appropriately investigated. Failing to report this will be considered as a gross misconduct.



Volunteers

Must undergo their Induction training and agree to the terms and policies of Saath Gramin Trust. (Ref : Annexure 1)

The Director/Team Leaders

Will be responsible for raising awareness of the key issues surrounding child and Team members' safety. Will not be responsible for investigating any breaches of the policy.

Preventive Measures

- SGT shall ensure that staff/team members and consultants are aware of this policy and have access to it.
- SGT will do background and reference checks on Team members and staff suitability to work with children.
- Through awareness and training, staff/Team members will be educated about the different risks to children.
- Staff/Team members shall raise awareness about women and children's rights within their work areas and communities.
- SGT will encourage a workplace of transparency, openness and accountability, where children, staff and team members know about children's rights and both challenge and report to the Director for any breaches to child protection.

Responsibilities

To ensure the Safety and Protection for all women and children, SGT may:

- Equip and train staff to informally check with women and children about their perceived and actual comfort levels in the work areas.
- Require all Team members and staff, at the start of the year, to commit to the standards and expectations set out in this policy and the Code of Conduct below.

SGT Child Protection Code of Conduct

No Team members /staff /team member/consultant shall ever:

- Hit or otherwise physically abuse a women or a child
- Develop relationships with women and children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Act in any way that intends to embarrass, shame, humiliate, or degrade a woman or a child
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a woman or child at risk of abuse



- Discriminate against a woman or a child on the basis of race, economic status, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, political persuasion or any other status
- Behave or suggest physically, or otherwise in a manner, which is inappropriate or sexually provocative or may be considered to be sexual abuse
- Kiss, hug, fondle, rub, or touch a woman or a child in any way that may be considered inappropriate or culturally insensitive, and which may or may not be construed as sexual abuse
- Demonstrate any lessons by physically touching a woman or a child, that maybe considered inappropriate or culturally insensitive and which may or may not be construed as sexual abuse
- Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other
- Ignore or not take any action where (i) inappropriate actions are inflicted by adults / children on other adults / children in person and/or (ii) offensive material (including violence/abuse/pornography) in any form of media (including in any magazines/newspapers/personal computers) is found in possession of any staff/Team members or in use by SGT.
- Promise to keep secrets that may harm the child