

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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# **Child Protection Policy**

## **1. PREAMBLE**

Professional Institute for Development and Socio Environmental Management (*hereinafter referred as PRISM*) is engaged in working with the poor at the grass roots and promotes the wellbeing of all children whose lives are directly impacted through its Projects. Care and concern for Children are the heart of PRISM's ministry.

As a reflection of our commitment and considering the fact that children are often vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, PRISM places highest importance to protection and safety of children in all its dealings. Protection is a right of the child.

PRISM commits to comply with all Partnership standards for child protection designed to safeguard children from all forms of abuse - neglect, mental, sexual and physical abuse. PRISM continually examines the need to reduce the risk to children in all its Programs. Therefore, these Standards for Child Protection are intended to keep children safe from possible abuse and exploitation by staff, sponsors, vendors and volunteers with whom they are in contact. This policy also intends to increase the awareness on child protection in the community and in the family.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) shall be the guiding principle for implementing basic rights for all children below the age of 18 years. The Government of India acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of the child in 1992, and has also ratified the two Optional Protocol in 2007–

- (1) Involvement of children in Armed conflict
- (2) Sale of children, child prostitution & child pornography

“... and committed to its full implementation for the wellbeing of children. There are other laws pertaining to children in India such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000 and the Amendment Act 2006 and The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act), 1986. By the amendment with effect from 10<sup>th</sup> October 2006, it has extended the ban on employment of children below the age of 14 years in the area of:

- 1. Domestic help and in
- 2. Dhabas, restaurants, hotels and the hospitality sectors.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (amended Act of 44 of 1986) also provide guidelines for safety and security of children.

This Policy is in conformity with the above acts and other relevant laws of India, Core

Values, Partnership Policy on Child Protection, Customer Relations Service Standards and Human Resource Policy of PRISM.

## 2. KEY PRINCIPLES

1. **Awareness Raising:** PRISM will promote regular awareness, on child abuse, child participation and protection of children to its Staff, Volunteers affiliated PRISM Community based organizations, Interns, Board and Society Members.
2. **Programme Planning:** PRISM will ensure the best interests of the child is upheld in all its policies, plans, programs interventions and strategies particularly for children in difficult circumstances – orphans or semi orphans, children living with HIV/AIDs, differently abled children, street children etc. Project designs will clearly indicate implementation of child rights, child protection and child participation in all its activities.
3. **Personnel – Screening and Recruiting:** Screening and Recruitment of Staff, Volunteers appointed by the Community Based Organizations, interns, consultants, and Board & Society members. Referral check from recruits procured during the recruitment process. All staff will be regularly trained on child rights, child protection and child participation.
4. **Behavior Protocols and Code of Conduct.** All volunteers, consultants, Board & Society members and visitors will strictly comply with Behavior protocols and Code of Conduct as specified by the organization's commitment to protect children from any form of abuse. It is imperative to follow the "Two adult rule" principle, wherein Visitors to be accompanied by volunteers when visiting children.
5. **Allegation/Incident Management Plan:** Any incident of child abuse in PRISM programs directly implemented or implemented in partnership with other stakeholders in the target community shall be reported and managed in the following manner:
  - 5.1 Community level: Incidents such as child sexual abuse, missing child, child's death (unnatural death) and severe physical abuse of a child, to the extent of grievous injury in the child's body that may take place in the target area involving any of the community members including volunteers, shall be reported to the Senior Program Coordinator (SPC) who is the facilitator of the Child Protection Unit at the Community level and also to the Secretary.
  - 5.2 The SPC and representatives of CPU shall meet the parents or care-giver and the child immediately for obtaining a detailed report on the incident. They shall also be responsible to render support for child's medical treatment in the government hospital and to ensure that the case of the child is registered in the records of the hospital. The CPU members shall

provide moral support to parents and the victim (child) to file the First Information Report (FIR) at the local police station.

- 5.3 If any threat is faced by the parents while filing the FIR then the child and/ or the parents can inform the Child Line (1098) or the Child Welfare Committee.
  - 5.4 The SPC has the responsibility of informing the abuse case immediately to the Secretary and the latter to report to other Governing Body members within 7 hours of the incident and the issue will be dealt sensitively by protecting the confidentiality and image of the child.
  - 5.5 If the perpetrator (abuser) is a volunteer of PRISM, then it should be reported by the other volunteer who has knowledge of the incident or the affected party to the SPC and the Secretary through a phone call followed up by email documentation to ([deyaniruddha@gmail.com](mailto:deyaniruddha@gmail.com) & [rdilip2013@gmail.com](mailto:rdilip2013@gmail.com)). The confidentiality of the reporting person shall be maintained.
  - 5.6 Often a child may be physically injured by the abuse. However, the psychological damage inflicted is far more painful and, ultimately, far more damaging to the child. Abused children must juggle a number of conflicting emotions. The most common psychological reactions are fear, confusion, anger, shame, depression, and lowered self-esteem, any or all of which may cause serious problems later in life if not resolved. Due care need to be paid to these aspects while managing the allegation/incident involving a child.
  - 5.7 The Secretary shall call for an emergency meeting at the Head Office for the purpose of providing appropriate support to the concerned SPC in responding to the victim (child) and the family. The SPC will also be responsible to update the Child Protection Incident database for forwarding the information to the GB Members.
  - 5.8 When such a report is received against a volunteer, a due process enquiry shall be held to ascertain the facts in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Based on the findings of the enquiry, appropriate action will be taken to bring a closure to the matter.
  - 5.9 The Head Office should be kept fully updated on all Child Protection incidents irrespective of who is involved (community, volunteers, consultants, etc.)
6. **Protection of children in Sponsorship Programs:** Childcare Policy and child sponsorship standards as out lined in Sponsorship Customer Service Hand Book will be followed for photographs, files, display of information and correspondence relating to child.
  7. **Visit to PRISM Filed areas:** Sponsor visit to the field areas are informed well in advance and consent of the family and community is obtained. Sponsor will

adhere to the cultural context in terms of dress code and behavior protocols (Refer PRISM Behavior Protocols). PRISM volunteers would accompany the sponsor at all times (Two adult rule principle) when visiting the child, family or community.

8. **Advocacy on Child Protection and child Rights:** PRISM will continue to advocate for the promotion of child Rights through various networks and coalitions with Government and NGOs at the village, GP, Block, District and State level, and influence policy changes.
9. **Communication about children and photographs:** PRISM will ensure that all communication materials on children in the form of pictures/captions are decent, dignified and respectful and will not present children as victims, nor will glamorize poverty at the cost of the child and PRISM communication standards will be followed. Media protocols will be handled very sensitively and effectively as per PRISM Media guidelines.
10. **General Confidentiality of child information:** Utmost care is taken in protecting the files and photographs of sponsored children and confidentiality is maintained. Information about Child Protection incident is shared with people on a “right” and “need to know” basis only especially with regard to media.
11. **Partner Organizations-Agreements:** All agreements with partner organizations shall include a clause referring to Child Protection and the Partner is expected to comply with Child protection behavior protocols.
12. **Contractors & Volunteers agreement:**
  - PRISM Contractors/Vendors make a self-declaration in the MOU stating that children (below 18 years) will not be employed by them for any task.
  - CBOs shall adhere to the Child Protection standards and shall not employ children below 18 years for any task and shall also ensure that all the Volunteers appointed by them agree to and give a self-declaration to comply with the child protection behavior standards.

## **AUTHORIZATION**

*Dilip Kumar Ray*

**Signature of the Secretary**

Date of approval by the Board: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024