

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



REACH'S NGO

Protect Child Rights

Rural Education & Child
Health Society of India

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Muddebihal

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**REACH's (Rural Education & Child Health Society)
Muddebihal**

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION OF ORGANIZATION

Rural Education & Child Health Society (India) from the past 25 years is empowering rural poor through education and economic development measures. Our main focus on protection of Child & their rights, Prevention of Child Marriage , women empowering & Sustainability of Person with Disability, providing education support through sign language.

2. VISION & MISSION STATEMENT:

Vision:

The vision of REACH's organization is Empowering women and children to lead happy and healthy life .

Mission :

Holistic development through integration of activities in order to ensure sustainable progress among the rural and urban poor; facilitating empowerment of the deprived and the poor in the process of social development through sustainable improvement in the livelihoods and socio – economic status and self-reliance of the under-privileged sections of society.

The vision of REACH'S organization is to create a safe, supportive and responsive society that upholds the protection rights and dignity of every child in India. This is to be achieved by establishing effective prevention and early intervention measures, strengthening treatment support services and building partnerships. We do this by engaging with all sectors of society upon whom the well being of children depends, in initiatives that will bring about these changes.

3. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT:

3.1 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) -

“Aims to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse.”

3.1.1 Definition of Child according to CRC:

“ A child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”.

3.1.2 “Child Protection -

“ Child protection refers to strategies and structures aimed at protecting children from abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence”.

3.1.3 Child protection system -

“A child protection system aims to address all forms of abuse, exploitation and neglect in a co-ordinated manner.”

3.1.4 Purpose of the Policy

The aim of the policy and procedures is to regulate how we work as an organisation so that the children with which we come into contact (either directly or indirectly) are safeguarded and have their wellbeing promoted, and that our actions, while implementing programmes or institutional activities, do not cause any harm to children.

3.1.5 Child Protection Policy Aims

- To provide activities for children and young people to help them develop from childhood into adulthood and to provide support for them.
- To enable the children to express themselves.
- To assist the children in integrating into the community.
- To help children/young people appreciate the diversity of their cultures.

3.1 REACH’S organization is committed to the rights and welfare of children in India and opposes all forms of child abuse, especially child sexual abuse and exploitation.

3.2 REACH’S organization is committed to upholding the law on child rights and welfare, as outlined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and various legal statutes of the prevailing law in India

UN Article 19 -

No one should hurt you in any way. Adults should make sure that you are protected from abuse, violence and neglect. Even your parents have no right to hurt you.

UN Article 34

You have the right to be protected from sexual abuse. This means that nobody can do anything to your body that you do not want them to do, such as touching you or taking pictures of you or making you say things that you don't want to say.

3.3 REACH’S organization believes that all children have a right to protection from abuse irrespective of race, social background, age, gender, skin color, disability, religion, caste or beliefs.

3.4 REACH’S organization believe that child abuse and exploitation is not acceptable in any form. Keeping silent and inaction is also wrong, if it is known that a child is being abused or exploited.

3.5 REACH’S organization believes in the importance of child protection, so that not only are children protected from abuse by REACH’S Trustees,

staff, donors, and volunteers, but also that preventative measures can be made to protect the REACH'S staff, and the REACH'S own integrity.

- 3.6** REACH'S organization believes that children have the right to participation through any form of expression (in accordance with their evolving capacities) and be heard. Therefore where possible children will also be included as stakeholders and in research and other relevant reports/evaluations.

4 TYPES ABUSE :

The different forms of child abuse are described by:

- 4.1.1 **Physical Abuse:** Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury, or suffering, to a child, including deliberate or non-accidental hitting, beating, shaking, throwing, burning, drowning, suffocating or poisoning, drugging, any form of corporal punishment.
- 4.1.2 **Mental/Emotional Abuse:** Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioral development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. May involve conveying to the child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate and cause children to feel frightened, in danger and corrupted.
- 4.1.3 **Physical and emotional Abuse :** may occur even when a parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child. It may however have been the result of physical or emotional over discipline or punishment which is inappropriate to the age of the child.
- 4.1.4 **Neglect:** The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including severe weather conditions and starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

The various aspects of neglect can be further detailed as below: The failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Neglect can be physical, educational, or emotional. Physical neglect can include not providing adequate food or clothing, appropriate medical care, supervision, or proper weather protection (heat or cold). It may include abandonment. Educational neglect includes failure to provide appropriate schooling or special educational needs, allowing excessive trancies. Psychological neglect includes the lack of any emotional support and love, never attending to the child, spousal abuse, drug and alcohol abuse including allowing the child to participate in drug and alcohol use.

- 4.1.5 **Sexual Abuse:** Actual or likely exploitation of a child, representing the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate social taboos or family rules, such as but not limited to touching a child's genitals, forcing a child to watch or take part in pornography or coercing the child to have sex. It is considered abuse whether or not the child consents. Sexual the abuser is often an adult but can be a child as well.

Child Sexual Abuse Includes

- An adult exposing his/her genitals to a child or persuading the child to do the same
- An adult touching/ fondling a child's genitals or making the child touch the adult's genitalia.
- An adult involving a child in pornography which includes exposing a child to pornographic material
- An adult having oral, vaginal or anal intercourse with a child
- Any verbal or other sexual suggestion made to a child by adult
- An adult persuading children to engage in sexual activity

Above points are some examples but sexual abuse is not limited to these points. To be considered child abuse these acts have to be committed by a person responsible for the care of a child or related to the child. If a stranger commits these acts, it would be considered sexual assault. It is considered abuse whether or not the child consents. Sexual exploitation is the exchanging of money or other economic favors in return for sex.

5 BEHAVIOURAL PROTOCOLS:

5.1 REACH'S organization expects all its partner organizations (Trustees, staff, volunteers, patrons, and visitors) to give respect and dignity to all children associated with the work of REACH'S as well as children within the personal lives of those individuals connected to REACH'S.

5.2 REACH'S Trustees, staff, volunteers and visitors with direct contact with projects and children must sign a statement to say that they have read the policy, will respect and abide by it and understand that action will be taken in cases where behavior is not in accordance to the policy. This will lead to disciplinary action and possible job loss for staff or dismissal of committee members or volunteers who break these protocols.

5.3 Permission will be required from authorized persons REACH'S, for volunteers and external visitors to take photographs or video footage of children. Authorization should be sought from the Director/Committee and strict regulations will be implemented on the nature of how photographs are taken. These photographs and/or video will not be used for any other purpose outside REACH'S without prior permission. It is advisable to take the consent of the children and share the pictures with them to the extent possible.

5.4 Trustees, staff, volunteers and visitors must never be alone with children who are not their own offspring in a private place that cannot be readily seen by other responsible adults.

5.5 Where possible and practical, the 'two - adult' rule, wherein two or more adults supervise all activities where minors or children are involved and are present at all times, should be followed. If this is not possible,

REACH'S staff members are encouraged to look for alternatives such as being accompanied by community members on visits to children.

- 5.6** REACH'S Trustees, staff, volunteers and visitors will not discipline a child in a way that is against the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This effectively means no tolerance to any form of violence against the child.
- 5.7** REACH'S Trustees, staff, volunteers and visitors need to be aware that they may work with children who, because of the circumstances and abuses they have experienced, may use a relationship to obtain "special attention". The adult is always considered responsible even if a child behaves seductively. Adults should avoid being placed in a compromising or vulnerable position.
- 5.8** Inappropriate behavior toward children, including failure to follow REACH'S Behavior Protocols or sexual abuse of a child is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment, volunteer/internship or board /advisory council membership.
- 5.9** REACH'S Trustees, staff, volunteers and visitors must be concerned about perception and appearance in their language, actions and relationships with minors and children. REACH'S Trustees, staff, volunteers and visitors should maintain a high standard of behavior/character in presence of children. (Example: should not use any unacceptable language in the presence of a child)
- 5.10** REACH'S Trustees, staff, volunteers and visitors dress appropriately and culturally sensitive when they visit children, families, communities and programs or work with children.
- 5.11** Inexperienced REACH'S staff and volunteers should not try to handle children with complicating problems. (Example: children who have been sexually abused). These children should be directed to a REACH'S team or professionals with the consultation of the responsible officers.
- 5.12** REACH'S Trustees, staff and volunteers should seek to live up to the KIDS Mission Statement and Core Values in all relationship with others in any circumstances.

6 AWARENESS RAISING

- 6.1** This section sets out how awareness will be raised regarding the Child Protection Policy. We will share our policy and procedures with others, and be open to feedback regarding its application and relevance.
- 6.2** Staff and standing volunteers, as well as partners, communities, families, children and other stakeholders and all those working with/for REACH's should be made aware of the Child Protection Policy, and how to report a concern. This should be done in ways that are appropriate and accessible given the context.

6.3 A copy of the REACH's Child Protection Policy - including local adaptations - should be translated and made available in local languages. Depending on the context, this should be provided in a variety of suitable formats, and could include posters using pictures.

6.4 Special consideration must be given on how to raise awareness with children about the policy and ways in which they can help keep themselves safer. This could include developing with children a child friendly version of the policy.

7 RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

7.1 REACH'S Trustees, staff, volunteers and visitors will be carefully and properly screened during their recruitment period, including obtaining a police check where possible or necessary.

7.2 REACH'S Trustees, staff and volunteers will be carefully and properly screened during their recruitment period which includes signing to agree to the Child Protection Policy and stating that there have been no previous convictions for abuse against children, violent behavior or improper and unlawful conduct.

7.3 REACH'S organization will ensure that all the references of approved local candidates for work are checked, preferably by telephone, and recorded in the staff files before the new staff member is invited to take the position. This will include a verbal and written request to the referee of whether they have any concerns as to why the candidate should be employed to work with children.

7.4 REACH'S staff, volunteers and visitors agree to **inform the Trustees** immediately if new information arises that casts doubt on the team member's trustworthiness with children. Such information would be treated as confidential and disclosed to the individual team member for appropriate action.

7.5 Individuals who are hired as independent contractors are notified of REACH'S Policy and Required Standards for Child Protection and are made aware that they are expected to follow behavior protocols set out below.

7.6 In the best interests of children, organizations must not hire anyone with a prior conviction for child abuse, pedophilia or related offences. In the event that local law prohibits this broad hiring rule, no person with a conviction for child abuse, pedophilia or related offences may be hired into any position which includes direct access to children REACH'S organization reserves the right not to hire an applicant if the background check reveals that the person is not suitable to work with children.

8 RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS OF STAFF OFFENCES

8.1 REACH'S Trustees, staff, volunteers and visitors will be encouraged to be open in discussing the potential of abuse within the organization, including during the child protection training.

8.2 Where an allegation has been made that any of REACH'S Trustees, staff, volunteer or visitors has abused a child, REACH'S will take the appropriate action to deal with the situation.

- 8.2.1 Where there is an allegation, first inform the Director. If the Director is the subject of the allegation, a Committee (or board of directors) member must be informed.
- 8.2.2 The allegation will be kept confidential, with only those directly involved having the appropriate information.
- 8.2.3 All details will be entered on the REACH'S Allegation form and filed confidentially.
- 8.2.4 REACH'S Trustees, staff, volunteers and visitors found to be widening the circle of confidentiality will have disciplinary action taken against them according to the rules of the sending agency. Committee members and staff will receive a written warning.
- 8.2.5 Any investigations will be kept confidential and take place under external advice and counsel.
- 8.2.6 Relationships with child welfare and legal organizations should be encouraged for accountability and support in times following an allegation.
- 8.2.7 Both child and alleged perpetrator will be treated with respect from the start of the process to the end.
- 8.2.8 REACH'S organization will not dismiss a child's accusation of abuse without appropriate investigation, no matter who the alleged perpetrator is.
- 8.2.9 REACH'S organization will confer with other organizations in a case where the child involved requires extra protection.
- 8.2.10 Records will be made of all facts related to the investigation and allegation, and these will be carefully and confidentially filed by the Committee.
- 8.2.11 If a foreigner is involved, the relevant Embassy will be informed.
- 8.2.12 REACH'S organization will designate someone to deal with the media and the police if necessary. Consideration will be made beforehand by the Committee about how the police and media will be informed/involved.

9 RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS OF NON-STAFF, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, FAMILY, ETC. OFFENCES

9.1 In order to facilitate the reporting, investigation and follow-through of all cases, REACH'S will set up formal or informal support systems of related professionals and authority within their community. That is, relationships will be maintained with local police, government or non-government social services, doctors, lawyers, social workers, REACH'S and teachers. All individuals should be encouraged to attend the REACH'S child protection training sessions, as both participants as well as providers of information related to their community and particular service.

9.2 Whenever a staff of REACH'S has a reasonable cause to believe that a child, regardless of whether served by , REACH'S is being abused, that staff must report within 48 hours to the redressal officer who will report immediately to local authority utilizing the same Allegation.

- 9.3** Procedures from all points of 5.2 will be followed, assuring the safety of the alleged victim and all children within the community.

10 . COMMUNICATION ABOUT/TO CHILDREN

- 10.1 REACH'S organization recognizes that the world-wide web is increasingly being used by those seeking to abuse children, and that photographs are doctored to create further abuse of children. Therefore, REACH'S will only post pictures of groups of children on its website, and individuals.(only when consent of parents) It will never display pictures of children in brothels or in vulnerable situations.
- 10.2 Where photographs of children are used, REACH'S will take special care to protect children's identities and specific geographic location in all materials.
- 10.3 Disclosure of information about past or present abuse of children and any of the persons involved should be limited to only the people who need to know.
- 10.4 Communications about children should use pictures that are decent and respectful, not presenting them as victims. Children should be adequately clothed and poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive should be avoided. Language that implies a relationship of power should also be avoided.
- 10.5 Individuals or organizations requesting the use of REACH'S resources such as videos or photographs should be required to sign an agreement with the appropriate REACH'S entity as to the proper use of such materials. The agreement should include a statement that any use of such materials for purposes other than what is agreed upon could subject the borrowing individual or organization to legal action. Furthermore, failure to adhere to the agreed upon use of the material will result in the immediate termination of REACH'S permission to use the subject materials and/or require immediate return of all materials provided by REACH'S as well as any copies of such materials.
- 10.6 Private correspondence with individual children by volunteers is discouraged. When reasonable ground exists, all correspondence with a child by the REACH'S volunteers is reviewed for inappropriate or suggestive comments, requests or obscenities. In the event of inappropriate correspondence being discovered, REACH'S reserves the right to sever the volunteer relationship.

11 . PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS/VENDERS – AGREEMENTS

- 11.1 In Agreements-Our partner organization /Venders work between us to follow our CPP guidelines when dealing with children, because children are "supremely important assets "in the nation.

- 11.1 Contractors/Vendors make a self declaration stating that children (below 18 years) will not be employed by them for any task. This is one of the clauses in the MOU in dealings with the Contractors/Vendors

12 TRAINING, EVALUATION & MONITORING

- 12.1 REACH'S organization will be committed to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of child protection procedures and behavior protocols. Annual staff evaluations will include the items of active listening, activities and behavior that empower clients, assertiveness when advocating for a client, and basic knowledge on child protection issues.
- 12.2 Once a year there will be an opportunity for all members, staff and volunteers to partake in a self appraisal and peer appraisal to monitor the behavior of each.
- 12.3 Should there be any concerns, these should be raised with the Trustees.

13. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CPC

- 13.1 CPC shall meet once in three months and whenever a violation is reported.
- 13.2 The quarterly meeting should have on its agenda review of the previous quarter, any threats/risks discovered during that period and additional measures to be taken to strengthen child protection measures in the institution
- 13.3 CPC shall focus only on the complaints/suggestions received on child safety violations/abuse and not on any administrative issues.
- 13.4 CPC shall discuss the concerns, record the same and give appropriate recommendations to the management for further action.
- 13.5 CPC shall ensure the concerns are addressed and closed within a specified time.
- 13.6 CPC shall maintain all registers, files and folders and documents related to child safety and protection.
- 13.7 CPC shall seek external expert help as and when required.
- 13.8 The tenure of the CPC shall be two academic year. Vacancies if any should be filled within one month of vacancy or start of academic year, whichever is earlier.
- 13.9 CPC will follow all guidelines prescribed by in this CPP.
- 13.10 The CPC shall conduct 'open houses' every six months within an academic year to get the collective feedback from children, parents, CBO's, board & others about CPP & its

13.2 The CPC will undertake following steps when cases of violation are reported such as ;

- 13.2.1 CPC will convene as soon as an incident is reported with periodic follow-up until closure of case. The detailed review procedures are given in Section 5.
- 13.2.2 The CPC and the school's Management shall cooperate with the police, judiciary and local administration in investigation of the reported

incident, to the extent applicable by law, while keeping in mind the safety, security, right to privacy and confidentiality in the best interest of the child.

- 13.2.3 The CPC shall also assess and address the impact of the incident on other children, adults working there and on the school as a whole.
- 13.2.4 The CPC shall perform a lessons-learned analysis to understand the factors that contributed to the abuse and recommend, in its wisdom, refresher training for the institution (adults, students, children, Board/management team, service providers).

14 THE REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This policy and any allegations or issues of child abuse taken out under this procedure will be reviewed as part of the annual business planning process.

15 DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

We declare that:

- 15.2 We have read and understand the REACH'S Child Protection Policy .
- 15.3 We will work within the procedure as laid out in the REACH'S Child Protection Policy.
- 15.4 We will always respect all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity;
- 15.5 We have not been accused or convicted of any offence involving physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.
- 15.6 We understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse of children while engaged in REACH'S activities, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities.

Approved By

Designation: President

Designation: Director/Secretary

Signature :

Signature :

Name

Name :

Annexure 2:

The following offences / behaviours are punishable by law and it is the duty of every adult citizen to abide by these laws:

Offences/Behaviours	Laws
Sexual assault, sexual harassment, use of child for pornographic purpose	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012
Production, dissemination and use of child sexual abuse materials	The Information Technology Act, 2000
Disclosing identity of the child victim to anyone other than appropriate authority	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, JJ Act 2015
Sale and procurement of children for any purpose including illegal adoption, trafficking of children for sexual exploitation, use of children by militant groups, giving children intoxicating liquor, narcotic drug or tobacco products or psychotropic substances, offences against disabled children, trafficking of children for sexual exploitation/exploitative labour/other reasons and, kidnapping	JJ Act 2015; Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956; Human trafficking (section 370 & 370A IPC), after creation of specific section in IPC by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013
Corporal punishment in child care institutions	JJ Act, 2015
Corporal Punishment in schools	Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009
Adopting a child without due procedure through CARINGS and child welfare committees/ promoting or facilitating such illegal adoption	JJ Act, 2015
Employment of children below 14 years in any occupation or industry	Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016
Employment of children 15-18 years in hazardous occupation or industries	Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016
Marrying a child/ promoting or solemnizing child marriage	Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
Pre-natal diagnostic techniques for determination of the sex of the fetus leading to female feticide	(PCPNDT) Act 1994

**REACH'S (RURAL EDUCATION & CHILD HEALTH SOCIETY)
MUDDEBIHAL**



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS DETAILS

Sl. No	Name of the Member	Designation	Working as	Contact Number	Signature
1	Mrs. Shailaja.Kumar	Readdress Officer	Project officer REACH NGO Bagalkot	9148235205	
2	Mr. S.S Angadi	Secretary	Government Collage Principal	9880893459	
3	Mrs. Shreedevi.Patil	Member (Senior staff)	Community Organizer	9141999737	
4	Miss. Harsha.B.Shelake	Member	Operation Manager	9538751098	
5	Mr. Basavaraj.Kavital	Member (Field Staff)	Project Coordinator	9902601630	
6	Mrs. Renuka. Talawar	Member (Senior staff)	Community Organizer	9591605816	

K.Budeppa

Secretary
Reach's Muddebihal