

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OF AGYVS, MUZAFFARPUR, BIHAR, INDIA

Our mission is to encourage and enable children and young people to promote the holistic health, well-being and development of themselves, their families and their communities. We believe in children's active participation and in respecting their freedom of expression and communication. We believe that child protection is crucial to ensuring that children under 18 years of age have the rights, confidence and environment in which they can make choices, express their views and communicate effectively with other children and adults. Children cannot become empowered change agents to improve their lives and that of their families and communities if they are not safeguarded from abuse, discrimination and harm of any kind, be it physical, sexual, emotional or neglect.

1. Definitions

Child

For the purposes of this policy, a "child" is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child Abuse

• According to the **World Health Organisation**, "Child abuse" or "maltreatment" constitutes '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.

AGYVS similarly specify "cruelty to children" or "child abuse" as 'behaviour that causes significant harm to a child. It also includes when someone knowingly fails to prevent serious harm to a child. All forms of cruelty are damaging – it can be harder to recover from the emotional impact than from the physical effects.

• These definitions therefore point to **four types of cruelty:**

o **Physical abuse:** including hurting or injuring a child, inflicting pain, poisoning, drowning, or smothering.

o **Sexual abuse:** including direct or indirect sexual exploitation or corruption of children by involving them (or threatening to involve them) in inappropriate sexual activities.

o **Emotional abuse:** repeatedly rejecting children, humiliating them or denying their worth and rights as human beings.

o **Neglect:** the persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education, and medical attention.

• A child who is being abused may experience more than one type of cruelty.

• Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are also abusive and can harm a child, both physically and emotionally.

Policy

A statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organisation is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously.

2. Child-to-Child's core child protection principles and values

• **The legal basis** – AGYVS Child Protection believes in making provision and participation of all children without discrimination to ensure their survival and development to the maximum extent possible.

- **The moral basis** – AGYVS believes that NGOs working for children’s rights have an absolute duty to protect this already vulnerable group from abuse, mistreatment, and exploitation from within organisations intended for their benefit.

- **An end to silence:** Silence breeds abuse and exploitation of children. AGYVS therefore believes in:
 - o creating an environment where issues of child protection are discussed openly and are understood between children and adults;

- o promoting open lines of communication both internally and externally within and between organisations to improve awareness and implementation of child protection policies and practices;

- o creating a framework to deal openly, consistently and fairly with allegations concerning both direct and indirect abuse.

- **Children’s participation** – a space and a voice: Creating a space where children feel able and willing to speak out about abuse, free from abusers, empowers them to become actors in their own protection without further discrimination or shame. AGYVS believes that helping children to find a voice is an essential step to helping them to claim their individual rights. Children will only benefit from this policy if they are aware of their rights and are given the proper environment in which to exercise them.

- **Taking it further:** Child protection is not just about reading and signing a piece of paper: the policy sets out guidelines and standards that must be put into practice. These include, amongst other measures: recruitment procedures, review of management structures, creation of a space for children to speak out, staff training, and development of transparent protocols. ‘Above all, it must be emembered that it is the children, not the standards, that are sacrosanct; and although abuse must never be tolerated, the standards are no more than a tool in the service of promoting the welfare of children.

3. AGYVS Protection Policy

Staff and Personnel

As a condition of working with our organisation, all trustees, employees, officers, staff, are required to undergo the following:

The disclosure of personal information about children, including legal cases, will be limited to those employees, contractors, trustees, officers, interns and volunteers who need to know. The Board will have the overall responsibility to oversee and ensure the policy’s implementation.

Training and Education

In conjunction with Children, opportunities for staff to learn about, recognise and respond to child abuse will also be available to all representatives.

Behaviour Protocols

Any staff member who has direct contact with children will be fully informed of AGYVS Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct includes guidance on appropriate behaviour of adults towards children and of children towards children.

Communications about Children

All publications and the website that include images and text related to children will not contain the following:

- Manipulated or sensationalised text and/or images.
- Discriminatory and degrading language.
- Images in which children are inappropriately clothed.

Reporting Incidents

All witnessed, suspected or alleged violations of the Child Protection Policy will be immediately reported to the designated in charged person, who will record and act on these in a confidential manner in accordance with the standardised process. AGYVS will take appropriate action to protect

the child/children in question from further harm and others in the organisation during and following an incident or allegation.

Ramifications of Misconduct

We will immediately suspend any employee, or volunteer who is alleged to have violated the Child Protection Policy of the organization.

