



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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MIRACLE
FOUNDATION



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Miracle Foundation (TMF) is an established and trusted multi-national nonprofit organization that empowers orphans to reach their full potential. TMF helps ensure that children's rights are fully realized and helps staff provide excellent care.

As a foundational framework for our organization and our Child Protection Policy, The Miracle Foundation works to ensure children live in a loving and secure environment that is in concordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Miracle is committed to safeguarding children from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation.

Vision for Child Protection

To create an environment where children associated with our programs are free from abuse, neglect and exploitation and are empowered to raise their voice against it.

Definitions

CHILD

For the purposes of this document, 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 Organization**, "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."

CHILD PROTECTION

A broad term to describe behaviors, philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In the current context, it applies particularly to the duty of organizations – and individuals associated with those organizations – to protect children in their care.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

The use of physical force causing pain, but not wounds, as a means of discipline (includes spanking, rapping on the head and slapping).

DIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

Being in the physical presence of a child or children in the context of the organization's work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long term.

INDIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

- Having access to information on children in the context of the organization's work, such as children's names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies.
- Providing funding for organizations that work "directly" with children. Albeit indirectly, this nonetheless has an impact on children, and therefore confers upon the donor organization responsibility for child protection issues.

[Please note: this list of examples is not exhaustive.]

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

A framework of principles, standards and guidelines to create a safe and positive environment for children that protects them from intentional and unintentional harm.

INFORMED CONSENT

Capacity to freely give consent based on all available information, according to the age and evolving capacities of the child. For example, if you seek consent from a child regarding taking their photograph and using it for publicity purposes, the child is informed as to how the photograph will be used and is given the opportunity to refuse. If a child is invited to provide input into the development of a child protection policy, they must be made aware of the time it will take, what exactly will be involved, their roles and responsibilities, and only then will they be able to give their "informed consent".

SUPPORTED HOMES

Organizations that have entered into an agreement with and are getting support from The Miracle Foundation.

Guiding Principles

- *Child Centeredness:* The investigation of child abuse will be child centered, i.e. keeping in mind the needs of the child and the priority in terms of his/her growth and development.
- *Child Sensitive Behavior:* Relating to children in a way that accommodates their developmental age, their rights and protects their dignity.
- *Key Reporting Principles:* Reporting immediately, acting swiftly, and responding to the immediate needs of the child.
- *Culture of Child Protection:* All staff will be made aware of the policy and all existing staff will be trained on it. Additionally all children will undergo sessions to raise their level of awareness on child abuse. A culture of child protection will be built through open discussions, feedback and raising awareness. This we expect will contribute to prevention of child abuse and minimize the risk to children.

Four Key Areas of Intervention

- I. Awareness: We will ensure that all staff, children, and others coming in direct contact with children are aware of the definition and signs of child abuse, the risks, and proper reporting procedures.
 - a. Staff Training
 - i. Awareness of Abuse
 - ii. Identification of Abuse (early indicators of neglect and maltreatment)
 - iii. Talking to Children about Abuse
 - iv. Orientation of Child Protection Policy
 - v. Signed Code of Conduct for Working with Children [See Code of Conduct]
 - vi. Responding to Abuse Claims
 - b. Child Training
 - i. Awareness of Abuse
 - ii. Orientation of Child Protection Policy

- iii. Helping Children Be Strong (good touch/bad touch; just say no; stranger danger)
 - iv. Reporting Abuse
2. Prevention: We will ensure through awareness, good practice, and proper infrastructure, that staff and others minimize the risk to children.
 - a. Limiting Access
 - i. All visitors/vendors must sign in/out of a children's home.
 - ii. Barring of male and non-childcare staff from being alone with a child or in an area where others cannot see them.
 - b. Signed Code of Conduct by anyone coming in contact with the children.
 - c. Copies of the Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy are readily available to all staff and volunteers.
 - d. Proper Supervision/Well Lit Areas/Proper Privacy
 3. Reporting: We will ensure that staff and children are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding safety of children.
 - a. Child Reporting Methods
 - i. Child Abuse Hotline appropriate to the locale displayed in a common area and at a child friendly height
 - ii. Other Local Reporting Methods (Child Protection Resources, Police, Hospital) displayed in a common area and at a child friendly height
 - iii. Phone accessible and located in a common place for children's purposes
 - iv. Suggestion boxes placed in a common area where children can confidentially report abuse claims
 - v. Opportunities for a child to tell a trusted adult
 - b. Staff Reporting Protocol
 - i. Immediately after being aware of abuse, write down everything the child has told you or you have seen, facts only.
 - ii. Report any incidences of abuse/abuse claims to the Management Committee, In Charge, or Social Worker.
 - iii. Contact the local Child Welfare Committee and/or local police to register a case, take due cognizance of such occurrences and conduct necessary investigations.
 - iv. Report any infractions of the code of conduct with the In Charge and/or Social Worker.
 4. Responding: We will ensure action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.
 - a. Establish local linkages with police department, child welfare committees, or other qualified organizations.
 - b. Consult with Social Worker and Senior Management whenever abuse claims are made for proper guidance.
 - c. Take necessary actions to prevent abuse from happening in the future (i.e., termination of abuser).
 - d. Support children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of any concerns.
 - e. Ensure children receive proper counseling and resources necessary after abuse occurs.

Where concerns of child abuse arise, The Miracle Foundation will consider its legal obligations to report those concerns to relevant, competent authorities. It is not our job to prove/disprove but to report the abuse claim.



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

There is an imbalance of power in any interaction between adults and children, tilting in favor of adults. As a result, children are susceptible to various forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. The child protection policy consists of guidelines and a framework that will guide the behavior of staff and associates who work with children to provide a safe and positive environment, free from abuse.

Staff will:

- Ensure all visitors, volunteers and vendors have signed in and out of the children's homes.
- Have a female staff member accompany children on travels outside the home.
- As much as possible, work with children in a place in view of others.
- Seek permission of children and staff prior to taking any photos.
- Take seriously any concerns raised by children.
- Act on children's concerns and problems immediately.
- Report any child abuse and protection concerns they have to the In Charge and Social Worker.
- Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations.
- Empower children by discussing their rights, acceptable and unacceptable behavior with adults, and methods to report abuse or concerns confidentially.

_____ Initials

Staff will not:

- Use discipline and teaching techniques that harm the dignity of the child.
- Use corporal punishment (slapping, hitting, or other physical means that inflict pain).
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice, which is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive.
- Use slang words or abusive language in front of the child.
- Bind or tie a child to restrict movement.
- Withhold food or other basic needs from a child
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate or belittle the child.
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Behave in a manner which is physically inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Kiss, hug, fondle, rub or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way.
- Sleep alone in a room with a child.
- Allow any non-care giving staff to be alone with a child in an area where others cannot be seen.
- Take photographs of the children while they are bathing, sleeping, changing, or not wearing proper clothing.

_____ Initials

I have read the above policy and it has been explained to me in detail, and I hereby agree to abide by the rules and regulations stated above. I also understand that my failure to follow these guidelines can result in disciplinary action or immediate termination.

Signature of Employee/Volunteer

Signature of Director

Printed Name of Employee/Volunteer

Printed Name of Director

Date

Date



PUBLICITY, MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING CHILDREN

Purpose:

To outline the guidelines for depiction of children and children's homes on social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.), donor communications, and general media (reporting, broadcasting, publication of news, programs, documentaries, etc.).

Guiding Principle:

The Miracle Foundation's guiding principle is to ensure that the privacy, dignity, and physical/emotional development of children will be protected at all times. The Miracle Foundation takes into consideration long-term consequences, always envisioning how the children themselves might perceive the exposure, both now and in the future.

Publicity, Media & Communications Guidelines:

- ❖ The children's home is only identified using the name of the children's home and the state in which it is located (not the village or other identifying information). For example, say, "This is our Bethel home located in Andhra Pradesh".
- ❖ When you post photos and videos of children in groups, you can share that these photos are taken at our children's home name. For example, "This is a photo of our gardening committee at Anbarasi."
- ❖ When posting individual photos the first name of the child can be disclosed along with the state. For example, "This is Santosh from one of our homes in Tamil Nadu."
- ❖ The last names, background, and city where the children reside should never be disclosed.
- ❖ Share stories that reflect on the children positively, keeping in mind they may see the communications in the future.
- ❖ Obtain permission from the staff and children for all photos.
- ❖ When posting on social media sites using your smart phone, disable the location services by going into the settings and privacy options on your phone.
- ❖ Share photographs and videos taken of the children with The Miracle Foundation via email, CD, USB drive. Please tag us on all pictures you share on social media sites, so we can give these back to the children and share them with other supporters.
- ❖ If you're a professional photographer, please consider giving a copyright of professional photographs to The Miracle Foundation.
- ❖ Any media coverage of children and children's homes will be conducted only under the following parameters:
 - The expressed permission of the children's home Chief Functionary and The Miracle Foundation's Country Head, Founder, or Chief Operating Officer.
 - A signed agreement to change the names and other identifying information of children.
 - A staff member must be present during interviews of children.
 - The purpose of photos, videos and interviews should be explained to the child and their consent obtained.
- ❖ Ensure all communications surrounding children and children's homes abide by local laws.



REFERENCES

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