

# Child Protection Policy of Agrajattra

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**AGRAJATTRA** অগ্রযাত্রা

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## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Introduction**

This child protection policy represents AGRAJATTRA process and mechanism to deal with any forms of child abuse and exploitation. It is a set of complete method that everyone who involved with the organizations what to do if they are concerned about a child's wellbeing. This policy expressive AGRAJATTRA's zero tolerance approach to child abuse. AGRAJATTRA's Child Protection Policy affirms its fundamental belief that children have the right to be protected and free from abuse and exploitation.

### **Policy Statement**

Agrajattra is committed to practice which protects children from any harm. Staff and volunteers in this organization believe and recognize our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

### **Goal**

It shall be the goal of the to provide a safe environment for the Physical and emotional well being of all children participating in different activities, including participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs. The organization's goal is to inform workers and enforce policies to ensure that all children are safe and well protected while attending scheduled activities.

### **Definition of "children"**

The term "child" or "children" shall include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

### **Selection and broadcast Process**

- I. It is the main theme of organization as to satisfactorily monitor the applications of persons desiring to work with children participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs.
- II. Volunteers or employee must be members of the organization. Under certain circumstances, executive Committee may authorize an exception to this rule for a specific planned event.
- III. This policy are applicable to
  - a) All Present Employees, Executive Committee members, Volunteers, Contracted advisers/consultants of Agrajattra.
  - b) Researchers, evaluators, auditors or other service providers, visitor, donor, journalist shortly anyone who directly or indirectly involved with Agrajattra.

**This policy is based on the following principles:**

- The welfare of the child is supreme;
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All staff (paid/unpaid) have a responsibility to report concerns to the Designated Person with responsibility for child protection.
- Staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

**We will aim to safeguard children by:**

- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and careers, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support, supervision and training.
- We make an effort to protect children from Worst Form of Child Labor (WFCL), from human Trafficking, from HIV/AIDS.
- We always try to make awareness about the access to fundamental rights.
- We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice regularly.

**This policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:**

- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against staff and volunteers
- Recruitment and inspection of Staff and volunteers
- Supervision of organizational activities

**1. Definitions of abuse**

These definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard for Children {Child Act 1974, Ministry of women and child welfare, United nation (UN) The **Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**, and all national/ international law/Act}. But organizational child policy will be reform at any time due to any change of national child protection policy.

## **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or care pretends the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described as factitious illness, fabricated or induced illness in children after the person who first identified this situation.

Physical abuse, as well as being the result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through error or the failure to act to protect.

## **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the determined emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe they are worthless or unloved, insufficient or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of the other person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may also involve causing children to feel frequently frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or inviting a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

## **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide sufficient food, shelter and clothing, leaving a young child home alone or the failure to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### Note

Recent guidance notes other sources of stress for children and families, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, the mental illness of a parent or carer, or drug and alcohol misuse. These may have a negative impact on a child's health and development and may be noticed by Agrajatra caring for a child. If it is felt that a child's well-being is adversely affected by any of these areas, the same procedures should be followed.

## **2. Recognizing and Responding to Abuse**

### Physical signs of abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or games
- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Cigarette burns, Bite marks, Broken bones, scalds.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect-under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains

### **Changes in behavior which can also indicate physical abuse:**

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behavior or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example, wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Depression, Withdrawn behavior, Running away from home

## **Emotional signs of abuse**

- A failure to increase or grow particularly if a child puts on weight in other circumstances e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care
- Sudden speech disorders
- Persistent tiredness
- Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

## **Changes in behavior which can indicate emotional abuse include:**

- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Being unable to play
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour

## **Sexual Abuse**

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal area
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

## **Changes in behavior which can also indicate sexual abuse include:**

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behavior e.g. becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares, Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level, Sexual drawings or language, Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse, acting in a sexually explicit way with adults
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)

## **Neglect**

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- Constantly dirty or smelly
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions

### **Changes in behavior which can also indicate neglect include:**

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

### **Agrajatra responsibilities if suspect that abuse may have occurred**

1. Must report the concerns immediately.

The role of the designated person is to:

- Obtain information from staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns and to record this information.
- Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further information as appropriate.
- They should also consult with a statutory child protection agency such as the local social services department.
- The designated person should make a referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police without delay.

2. Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

3. It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If for any reason organization believes that the nominated persons have not responded appropriately to concerns then it is up organization to contact the child protection agencies directly.

### Allegation of physical injury or neglect

1. Contact Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or concerns about the safety of the child.
2. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The designated person will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
3. In other circumstances speak with the parent/career/guardian and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor will then initiate further action if necessary.
4. If appropriate the parent/career will be encouraged to seek help from Social Services. If the parent/care/guardian fails to act the designated person should in case of real concern contact social services for advice.
5. Where the designated person is unsure whether to refer a case to Social Services then advice from the Area Child Protection Committee will be sought.

### Allegations of sexual abuse

1. Contact the Social Service duty social worker for children and families directly. The designated person will not speak to the parent (or anyone else)
2. If the designated person is unsure whether or not to follow the above guidance then advice from the Area Child protection Committee will be sought.
3. Under no circumstances is the designated person attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the designated person is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to Social Services whose task it is to investigate the matter under section 47 of the Children Act.
4. Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse should normally be reported to the designated person, their absence should not delay referral to Social Services.

### The method

1. Make notes as soon as possible (ideally within 1 hour of being told) organization should write down exactly what the child has said and what said in reply and what was happening immediately before being told (i.e. the activity being delivered) organization record the dates, times. All hand written notes should be kept securely.
2. Organization will report with the selected person as soon as possible.
3. Organization will under no circumstances discuss suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated above.
4. After a child has disclosed abuse the designated persons should carefully consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to potentially abusive situation. On



these rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services to discuss putting safety measures into effect.

### **Allegations against a member of staff**

We will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

### **Action if there are concerns**

#### **1. Concerns about poor practice:**

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; this will be dealt with as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the selected Person or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the president or sometime Executive committee who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not the organization should initiate disciplinary proceedings.

#### **2. Concerns about suspected abuse**

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Designated Person, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Designated person will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
- The parents or careers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- If the selected Person is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Executive committee who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

### **3. Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

- The selected Person will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the organization will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the organization must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout

#### **Administrative preparations for the management of Agrajatra**

We will aim to protect children from abuse and our team members from false allegations by adopting the following guidelines:

- We will keep a register of all children attending our activities.
- We will keep a register of all team members (both paid staff members and volunteers)
- Registers will include arrival and departure times and the names of others in the building at the time.
- We will keep a record of all sessions including monitoring and evaluation records.
- Our team members will record any unusual events on the accident/incident form.
- Written consent from a parent or guardian will be obtained for every child attending our activities.
- Where possible our team members should not be alone with a child, although we recognize that there may be times when this may be necessary or helpful
- Team members should escort children of the same sex to the toilet but are not expected to be involved with toileting, unless the child has a special need that has been brought to our attention by the parent/guardian.
- We recognize that physical touch between adults and children can be healthy and acceptable in public places. However our team members will be discouraged from this in circumstances where an adult or children are left alone.
- All team members should treat all children with dignity and respect in both attitude language and actions.

#### **Support and Training**

Agrajatra is committed to the provision of child protection training for all our team members.