



CHILD
PROTECTION
POLICY

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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POLICY & INTRODUCTION STATEMENT

Many children in Cambodia are orphaned, abandoned, or do not receive adequate guidance and protection against harm. The Cambodian Kids Foundation (CKF) works with children living and working in often dangerous environments such as slum building areas and remote rural locations.

Whilst the children we work with are in a protective environment, they still face risk from outside visitors. It is in this context that the Cambodian Kids Foundation has developed a child protection policy that we require all staff and volunteers to adhere to, in order to protect children against abuse and exploitation.

We are committed to supporting efforts made by the Royal Government of Cambodia, who in 1992 ratified the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child to protect children.

THE 1989 UN CONVENTION ON RIGHTS OF THE CHILD STATES THAT:

- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation
- Everyone has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children
- The duty bearers are accountable to eradicate child abuse.

Under the Cambodian Kids Foundation Protection and Education and Community Development programs; staff, volunteers and visitors have direct contact with children.



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Based on the above global principals, CKF is obliged and committed to ensuring that children involved with its programs/activities are protected from any forms of abuse and that any incidents of abuse are dealt with in an appropriate manner as detailed in this protection policy.

DEFINITIONS

A Child: Refers to any human being below the age of eighteen years old.

Child Abuse: Refers to all forms of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect that results in actual or potential harm of a child.

Physical Abuse: Involves physical harm to the child including hitting, smacking, caning, violently restraining, shaking or any other acts that inflict physical pain or injury.

Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or encouraging children to take part in penetrative or non-penetrative sexual acts, the prostitution of children, the production of child pornography or forcing or encouraging children to view pornography.

Emotional Abuse: Involves any behaviour or acts that emotionally harm children or impede their emotional development. This includes the exploitation or corruption of children, conveying to them that they are worthless, frequently frightening them and shaming them. All forms of abuse can exist independently of other forms of abuse.

Neglect: Refers to the persistent failure to meet the basic human needs of children including adequate food, clothing, shelter, safety, education or the failure to meet the emotional needs of the child.

A Child Protection Policy: A statement of intent implemented by an organisation the demonstrates a commitment to protecting children from all forms of harm. It clearly lays out the organisation's responsibilities and the steps that can be taken to safeguard children from harm.

SCOPE OF APPLICATION OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy applies to all persons associated with Cambodian Kids Foundation including: Volunteers, employees, consultants, contractors, partner NGOs, organisation members and visitors.



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PURPOSE OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Cambodian Kids Foundation has protection procedures in place to prevent and deal with child abuse by any CKF associate.

POLICY

Our belief is that no child, whether directly involved in Cambodian Kids Foundation programs or not, will be harmed by an employee, contractor or volunteer, or allowed through inaction to be harmed.

OUR COMMITMENT

- Cambodian Kids Foundation will respect the rights and dignity of children, families and communities with whom we work, and always act according to the best interests of the child.
- Cambodian Kids Foundation are committed to actively preventing child abuse
- Cambodian Kids Foundation takes affirmative action to prevent child abusers from becoming involved with any of our activities and takes stringent measures against any of our associates who commits child abuse.
- Cambodian Kids Foundation is committed to upholding the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Cambodian Kids Foundation will do its utmost to ensure that this policy is strictly upheld through taking the following precautions:

NEVER:

- Use behaviour towards children which could be interpreted as being abusive
- Physically assault a child
- Knowingly fail to respond to abuse against a child
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Have a child/children with whom they are working with stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working with
- Spend excessive time alone with children in any way away from others



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- Do things for children of a personal nature that children can do for themselves such as dressing or bathing
- Fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way
- Develop a sexual relationship with a child
- Condone or participate in behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment to, or favours particular children to exclusion of others
- Shame or humiliate or any other acts that cause emotional discomfort to children
- Hire children as house help or provide shelter for children in their home in inappropriate circumstances
- Staff/volunteers will not come to work drug or alcohol affected. Any staff/volunteers found to be supplying drugs or alcohol to young people will be instantly dismissed, with the possibility of legal action
- Staff/volunteers will behave in a way that positively represents the organisation and will provide appropriate role modelling for young people at all times, both in and out of working hours.

ALWAYS:

- Be aware of situations that may put children at risk and take precautions to avoid them
- Empower children by making them aware of their rights, involving them in decision-making and identifying people they can go to if they need help
- Be a good listener to children, respect their dignity and assure them that they can bring their problems to you
- Know the signs of physical, emotional and medical abuse
- Report incidents or suspected incidents of abuse and follow up to ensure that action has been taken
- Communicate with children in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development.

RECRUITMENT & SCREENING OF VOLUNTEERS

All prospective CKF volunteers will be informed of Cambodian Kids Foundation Child Protection Policy at the start of any recruiting process.

Screening of volunteer applicants will include an application, personal interviews and reference checks, including verbal referee checks. During the interview process, applicants should be asked about previous work with children.



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Criminal record checks and Working With Children Checks will be requested of all volunteers over the age of eighteen, people attending Mission: Cambodia (aka Mishcam) trips who are over eighteen will also have to submit a Working With Children Check & Police Check.

Any applicant that has disclosed a criminal conviction during the application process may be refused acceptance on the volunteer program, or be subject to extensive background checks. Candidates should not be rejected solely on the basis of a criminal conviction or disciplinary record, without examination of the circumstance.

All newly recruited staff members or volunteers will be presented with a copy of Cambodian Kids Foundation Child Protection Policy and will be expected to sign their agreement with its stipulations.

AWARENESS RAISING & EDUCATION

Cambodian Kids Foundation is obliged to issue all CKF staff and volunteers with a child protection policy and assure that they are knowledgeable about its contents.

All staff and volunteers will sign a statement of agreement with the child protection policy, either in the form of an online education course and/or a physical signed agreement. All permanent staff are required to review and agree to the policy annually.

All CKF associates and local communities should be provided with opportunities to learn about how to safeguard children, and to recognise and report concerns about child abuse.

Wherever possible, children should be educated in self-protection from physical and sexual abuse.

Children should be taught that they have a right to take action if an adult or another young person behaves or talks to them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable or in danger, and to trust and act on their instincts.



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COMMUNICATIONS (IMAGERY & TEXT) ABOUT CHILDREN

CKF associates must bear in mind that protecting and ensuring the best interests of the individual child is more important than the opportunity for marketing or advocacy on the child rights and children's issues.

In all communications and advocacy activities involving children, the protection, privacy, dignity and best interests of the child shall always be paramount.

Children should be asked their permission before their photos are taken unless in exceptional circumstances.

Children will be represented accurately and with dignity in text and images without sensationalising or manipulating content.

Degrading, victimising or shaming images will be avoided.

The informed consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians should always be obtained before a recording, photograph or image is taken of him/her, and its intended use(s) explained. Where possible, the children and family should be shown the finished product before it is used and/or published.

Children should be adequately clothed in photographs or images taken of them, and should not be in a pose that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive.

VISITORS

Any visitors to Cambodian Kids Foundation projects that will have contact with children will be briefed about this child protection policy and expected to comply with its contents.

Cambodian Kids Foundation staff have an obligation to ensure that all visitors comply with the stipulations in this policy if they come into contact with the children.

Child sponsors must be accompanied by an adult member of staff at all times if visiting their sponsored child. They are not permitted to take the child on outside recreational trips unless a parent or adult member of staff accompanies them.



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All correspondence (letter, email, photograph) between children and visitors of Cambodian Kids Foundation must be overseen and monitored by CKF staff.

All visitors must behave according to the staff code of conduct in this policy.

Visitors must report any concerns that they have of child abuse to a staff member immediately.

RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE

The guidelines are designed to ensure that in the case of child abuse, appropriate action is taken to minimise the harm to the child and protect the child. It is the duty and responsibility of any adult, even those not working directly with children, to report any suspicions of abuse immediately.

HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD'S DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE:

- Stop and listen to the child.
- Never judge a child or make them feel shame for what they are telling you.
- Always believe the child is telling the truth.
- Do not ask a child leading questions or questions that are clearly causing discomfort or ask the same question repeatedly.
- Do not appear shocked or panicked or try to get help when the child is talking to you.
- Assure the child that you believe them and they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Try to get as accurate information as possible and record it in writing after you have finished talking to the child.
- Let the child know that you will have to tell someone but only those that need to know and that it is for their protection.

THINGS TO SAY:

"I believe you"

"You did the right thing telling me"

"It is not your fault"

"I am going to help you"



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NEVER SAY:

“I can’t believe it, I’m shocked”

“Are you sure that happened?”

“I won’t tell anyone”

“You should have told someone before”

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Child abuse report form

If you suspect or have received a report of abuse, you must immediately fill out an incident reporting form (see appendix 2).

It is mandatory for all Cambodian Kids Foundation associates to report concerns or allegations of child abuse and exploitation of any kind.

The completed report form must be submitted to a member of staff who will then submit it to the director of the relevant project. Reports are to be treated in strict confidence.

Reports that are made maliciously or not in good faith will warrant strict disciplinary action.

The process leading to decision-making should be well documented and all facts or written allegations and responses kept on file.

RESPONSE TO INTERNAL INVESTIGATION FINDING

All internal investigation which respects the privacy, confidentiality and rights of the child as a priority will be initiated by the Child Protection Officer within 48 hours after receiving the report. The investigation will be conducted by a committee selected for this purpose by the Foundation Director in consultation with the Management Team.

The investigation must be conducted with care and concern, particularly as a child may fear punishment. A staff member accused of child abuse will be respected for his or her privacy, confidentiality and legal rights.



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At the conclusion of the investigation, the CKF associate, child and his/her family as appropriate should be informed of concerns or allegation, the results of the investigation and what corrective action, if any, will be taken.

If the abuse is proven by the investigation, every effort will be made to assist the child in coping with any physical or emotional trauma he or she may be experiencing. This may include medical treatment, psychological counselling or any other of assistance deemed necessary and appropriate.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If the investigation concludes that abuse has occurred which is not subject to criminal prosecution, staff, volunteer, contractor will be subject to disciplinary action within CKF, up to and including dismissal and/or end contract.

If the investigation concludes that abuse has occurred which is subject to criminal prosecution according to national laws, all finding will be reported to the relevant national police authorities and full cooperation afforded them during an external investigation. If the accused is an expatriate, the relevant law document authorities will also be informed with due regard given to the potential for extraterritorial proceedings by the expatriate's country of region.

CONTACTS

There is a 24-hour Police Hotline to report abuse (023 720 555).

The Cambodian Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation is the Government Ministry responsible for the welfare of minors.

MoSalvy

No 788B Monivong Boulevard

Phnom Penh 12305

Ph: 023 726 095

www.mosalvy.gov.kh

There are a number of local and international NGOs involved in child welfare in Cambodia.

Mith Samlanh

#215, Street 13 (next to the National Museum) Phnom Penh

Tel: 023 426 748 (8 am to 12 noon / 1:30 pm to 5 pm)



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Tel: 012 296 609 (all the time)

www.streetfriends.org

Krousar Thmey:

4, Street 257, Phnom Penh

023 366 184

Friends-International

#230, Group 8 (next to the central market), Siem Reap

Mondul 1 village, Svay Dangkum Commune

Tel: 063 761 096 (7 am to 11 noon / 1:30 pm to 5 pm)

www.friends-international.org



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APPENDIX I

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY ACCEPTANCE AGREEMENT

I _____ have read the Cambodian Kids Foundation Child Protection Policy and fully understand and accept its contents. I agree to comply fully with the terms and conditions outlined in this document.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____



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APPENDIX 2

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Project Name: _____ Date: _____

Submitted by: _____

Time & Date the incident took place:

Where did the incident take place?

Nature of incident (Attach additional pages if needed)

Name of CKF staff or students involved: (attach phone numbers if possible)

Other people involved: (attach phone numbers if possible)

Witnesses to the incident: (attach phone numbers if possible)

Was police intervention required, or will it be? YES / NO