



Child Safety Protection Policy

1. Our Commitment

We are committed to the protection of all children.

That means protecting children from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual violence,” as it is written in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC, Article 19, 1989).

We are committed to making sure that **all children who come into contact with Global Concerns India (GCI) through any of our activities, are safe.** We are committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety / protection whilst in the care of GCI and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Prevention and response measures are outlined in this policy.

Policy Statement

Global Concerns India is committed to the following:

- the welfare and safety of the child is paramount.
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or identity should be able to participate in (your sport) in a fun and safe environment.
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.

- all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- all our mentors/ volunteers/ visitors who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility and will be provided with guidance and/ or training in good practice and child protection procedures.
- working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children.

Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed. All volunteer staff/ Mentors must regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the management committee.

The policy should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

Good Practices

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities, everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of the mentors/ volunteers/ visitors to make judgements about whether abuse is taking place or not. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in this policy.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

Principles

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g., avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience fun and enjoyable; promote fairness, confront, and deal with bullying.
- treat all children and young people equally and with respect and dignity.
- always put the welfare of the children and young person first
- Always maintain a safe and appropriate distance with all children; it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them.

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children and young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the child/young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the child's/child's parents/young person's consent has been given.
- Involve parents/cares wherever possible, e.g., where young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups must be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, mentors/volunteers etc., work in pairs.
- request written parental consent if children/young persons are required to travel.
- gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of Mentor/Volunteer staff
- ensure that at "away events" adults should not enter a young person's room or invite children/young people to their rooms.
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children/young people.
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children/young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare at any cost. This also means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- secure written parental consent for the organisation to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises.
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking children/young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking children/young people to your home where they will be alone with you.
- sharing a room with a child/young person
- engaging in rough, physical, or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- making sexually suggestive comments to a child/young person, even in fun
- reducing a child/young person to tears as a form of control.
- allow allegations made by a child/young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the child/young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a child/young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/care and the child/young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a child/young person, the child/young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the child/young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional, or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child/young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and Bullying**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a child/young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the child/young person.

- Intentionally or unintentionally **disrupts the healthy development** of children and negatively affects their well-being.
- **Causes psychological and physical harm**, and makes children feel unhappy, unaccepted, or marginalized.
- **Violates the inherent human dignity** of children.

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation, and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

Our Code of Conduct

Global Concerns India (GCI) maintains a zero-tolerance to violence, policy. This includes violence toward the children participating in our programmes, as well as violence toward any GCI staff member, representative, partner, or participant of any age. The CSP and Code of Conduct apply during all assignments, contracts, and visits during working and non-working hours.

Global Concerns India does not permit:

- **Discrimination of any kind.**
- **Showing preferential treatment** to some children to the detriment or exclusion of others.
- **Shouting at or bullying children**, including the use of offensive, abusive, or threatening language.
- **Physically or verbally intimidating children** and or preventing children from expressing their opinions.
- **Hitting or any form of physical abuse of children.**
- **Physically restraining children** during programme activities or at any other time unless the staff member has had appropriate training and another responsible adult is present as a witness.
- **Assisting children with tasks of a personal nature**, which are not part of a job description, and which the children are capable of doing themselves.

- Allowing a child or young person with whom you work **to stay overnight in your house and/or to sleep in the same bed.**
- **Spending time alone** with a child or young person with whom you work. Wherever possible and practical, two adults must be present during workshops and other children's activities. Where this is not possible, staff should seek alternatives such as the presence of adult community members/parents or use of open spaces that are visible to others in the area.
- **Developing physical or sexual relationships with children.**
- **Developing relationships of an inappropriate nature** with children, which could be in any way be abusive or exploitative.
- Displaying general behaviour that is **against good practice or is potentially abusive**, including behaviour through ICT, such as through mobile phones and the internet.
- **Personal relationships between staff members and children GCI works with.**

What Do I Do When Something's Not Right?

If you suspect or witness a breach of the CSP, you have a duty to report this to the GCI programme lead. If the programme lead is the perpetrator of the breach, you must report to the designated alternate or to the President of Global Concerns India. Report within 24 hours of becoming aware of the problem.

Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person.
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously.
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is extremely strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- **inform** the child that you must inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern, and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue.
- **record** all information.
- **report** the incident to the lead Mentor/Volunteer Staff/President of GCI

Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure / concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age, and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times, and any other relevant information.
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising / injuries occurred.
- have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

2.6 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only.

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

What Happens if I Breach the Policy or Do not Report?

All incidents will be investigated fairly and will remain confidential, in order to protect the child involved, and to protect GCI staff or representatives from false accusations.

If you do not comply with the CSP, you will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include dismissal from employment or volunteering, and charges resulting from a criminal investigation.

Traveling to the Field

- Make sure you prepare a clear **Terms of Reference (ToR)** before you travel. If you need to take pictures of children, include that so that programme staff and volunteers are informed and can prepare.
- Make sure you get a **child safety briefing** when you arrive. That way you will know what to watch out for and who to go to with questions.
- Make sure you **follow all instructions given by local colleagues and partner staff** related to child safety and security.
- Make sure children participating in an activity **have been informed of who you are and what are there to do before the activity starts**, whether you are taking pictures or not. If you are taking pictures, make sure children know how they will be used.
- Make sure to ask for **informed consent BEFORE taking portraits of children**. Ask a local staff member or volunteer to help you, especially if you need help with translating to the local language.
- Remember you represent **Global Concerns India** on **social media** too. Child Safety applies to Facebook and Twitter.
- **Do not raise expectations**. Do not discuss, offer, or agree to support children, families, communities, or organisations. Refer any such questions to the local team/GCI board.
- **Do not share any personal contact details**, like your address, phone number, social media details or email address, with children or young people or others involved in GCI projects. Do not “befriend” them in any way, for example on social media.

Images and Stories

Child safety comes first:

- If you are taking pictures of children, **make sure you first get verbal consent from the child BEFORE you begin**.
- **When possible, obtain a signed GCI Consent Form (*printed*) from the child before you start ways. If the child is too young (below 14 years) to provide consent, ask the child’s parent, guardian, or teacher to provide the consent.**
- Always portray children with dignity. Do not make them easy to identify or find. **Try to focus on groups of children rather than individuals.**
- **Prepare for the trip by contacting local staff before you travel.** Discuss the material you want to gather, and discuss how to brief the children and ask for consent. **Learn about good local interview practices.**
- But be respectful of local communities and cultures. **Do not take pictures if people are clearly uncomfortable, or pictures that do not respect the dignity of the people in them.**

- **When interviewing children, do not pressure children to recount damaging experiences.** Stop the interview if children are clearly uncomfortable or too emotional.
- **Do not increase the vulnerability of the child.** Giving a child a central role might make them the focus of unwanted attention. Evaluate if highlighting one child really adds value to the production or publication.
- **Make sure children are clothed appropriately according to their culture or religion.** Do not take photos or shoot footage of naked children.
- **External photographers and filmmakers should always be accompanied by a GCI staff member** when visiting activities.
- Before you publish, check with local staff if the photo or story can be used in combination with a **pseudonym and country location.**
- Does the portrait portray the child from a **perspective of strength?**
- Send examples of your products back to the organization and staff team **so that they can show the children who participated.**

Signature Page

Name:

Designation:

Date:

Please provide your name and contact details, sign, and date below to indicate that you have read and understand our Child Safety Protection policy.

Signature_____