

Guiding Them Until They Can

Child Protection Policy

Tomorrow's Foundation



From the Desk of Secretary

I feel privileged to present the latest version of Tomorrow's Foundation Child Protection Policy on behalf of TF Family. The primary stakeholders for TF are the children. We state, again and again, our commitment to Child Rights and Child Protection. We have tried our best to come up with systems and procedures which would ensure that while working for the welfare of children the rights of the children are protected.

This is our first attempt to put down our Child Protection Policy in black and white. Improving the policies and procedures in this document and the implementation of the same would be a continuous process. It is envisaged that, for first two years, we would revise this document every six months.

I sincerely hope that all stakeholders would join hands to make Tomorrow's Foundation a model organization committed to the welfare of children.

Thanks and regards.

On behalf of TF Family

Kalpana Sen Barat
(SECRETARY)
Tomorrow's Foundation

Tomorrow's Foundation Overview

Tomorrow's Foundation seeks to work with the deprived children from the streets, slums and red light areas in the most extreme and vulnerable zones of urban and rural areas. We are engaged in education and child protection through simple care and apt training to help them secure their basic rights.

We act to improve the quality of life of the deprived children and adolescents through education, skill building and personal development to help them recognize their self-worth and grow up into self respecting independent individuals.

Tomorrow's Foundation currently has programs that deal with non-formal education, pre-vocational and vocational training, open school/university education, computer literacy, special education, cultural education, adult education, health care initiatives, hostel placement, and community development. Visit the website at tomorrowfoundation.org to see more about these programs in detail.

We know that the children in our programs are vulnerable to abuse/exploitation by the children themselves and also from the adults. Tomorrow's Foundation strongly believes that, while working in so many areas of deprivation, it is its responsibility to be equipped to protect all of the children that are part of its programs. Thus, the Child Protection Policy has been created to provide a framework of principles, standards and guidelines for anyone who is working with the children in any capacity.

This Child Protection Policy is Tomorrow's Foundation's commitment to the safety and protection of children in their programs. This document is important because it makes clear protocol as well as an awareness of the potential harm that can be caused to the children. With the implementation of this Child Protection Policy, Tomorrow's Foundation hopes to create a child safe organization where children feel safe, can speak out and are listened to and where children and staff are respected and empowered.

Glossary

Who is a child?

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 1) a child is every human being below the age of 18 years.

What is child protection?

Child protection is a broad term to describe 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 organisations - and individuals associated with the organisations - towards children in their care.

What is child abuse?

'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.'(WHO, 1999)

Physical abuse:

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents (WHO, 1999).

Signs of physical abuse:

- Unexplained burns, cuts, bruises or welts in the shape of an object
- Bite marks
- Anti social behavior
- Problems in school
- Fear of adults
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Self destructive or suicidal behavior
- Depression or poor self image.

Sexual abuse:

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent or, that violates the laws or special taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Signs of sexual abuse:

- Seductiveness
- Avoidance of things related to sexuality or rejection of own genitals or bodies
- Nightmares and bedwetting
- Drastic changes in appetite
- Over compliance or excessive aggression
- Fear of a particular person
- Withdrawal, secretiveness or depression
- Suicidal behavior
- Eating disorders
- Self-injury

Sometimes there are no obvious physical signs of sexual abuse, and a physical must examine the child to confirm the abuse.

Emotional abuse:

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potential, and in the context the society in which the child dwells. There may also be acts towards the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Acts includes restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scape-goating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment. (WHO 1999)

Signs of emotional abuse:

- Apathy
- Depression
- Hostility
- Lack of concentration
- Eating disorders.

How a child will identify that he is being abused:

Physical abuse:

- Beating, whipping, punching, slapping or hitting
- Burning with cigarettes
- Scalding hot objects
- Severe physical punishment

Corporal (physical) punishment is distinguished from physical abuse in that physical punishment is the use of physical force with the intent of inflicting bodily pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control. Physical abuse is an injury that results from physical aggression. However, physical punishment easily gets out of control and can become physical abuse.

Sexual abuse:

- Fondling, touching, or kissing a child's private parts
- Making the child fondle the adults' private parts
- Penetration, intercourse, incest, rape, oral sex, anal sex
- Showing sex organs to a child
- Forced observation of sexual acts
- Showing pornographic material
- Forcing the child to undress
- Spying on a child in the bathroom or bedroom
- Using a child in the production of pornography

Emotional abuse:

- Lack of affection
- Lack of praise or positive reinforcement
- Negative comparisons to others
- Belittling; telling the child that he or she is "of no good", "worthless".
- Using derogatory terms to describe the child
- Habitual "scape-goating" or blaming
- Using extreme or bizarre forms of punishment such as confinement to a closet or dark room, tying to a chair for long periods of time

Note: These are standard definitions used by various reputed organisations all over the world.

1. Behavior Protocols

These protocols were created so that TF can function to keep all its children safe. It also allows for all staff/interns/volunteers to have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.

1.1 Appropriate behaviour of staff toward children

- Respect the dignity of every child
- Accept the child as he/she is
- Observe attitude of children with patience and understand them on the basis on their familial or social background
- Be empathetic not sympathetic toward children
- Children's views are to be taken seriously with objectivity
- Act immediately on children's concerns or problems
- Use positive reinforcement and focus on the good qualities each child possesses to develop their potential and enhance their inherent capabilities
- Work with children in the view of others and always avoid being alone in a closed space with a child (exceptions are made for pre-determined counselling sessions)
- Equal attention is to be provided to children irrespective of their sex, caste, or religion
- Never engage, encourage, or support abuse in any and all terms
- Never stigmatize or humiliate children
- Never use corporal punishment
- Never develop sexual relationships with any child
- Never behave in sexually provocative ways
- Never sleep alone along with an individual child
- Never embrace a teenage girl to praise or show affection
- Never use slang, abusive and/or sexual provocative language in front of children
- Never provoke malpractice or addiction
- Never do things for children of a personal nature which they are capable of doing themselves (i.e.: washing, undressing, using toilets, etc.)
- Staff must never engage children in their personal work
- Appropriate clothing must be worn keeping in mind the local context in which the children live
- Boys and girls will be provided with the choice of working with a male or female staff where gender may be a consideration (i.e.: counselling, health/medical care, etc.)
- Permission of the children to be taken in presence of at least one staff before taking images or case studies
- Never take images of boys or girls while they are sleeping, undressing, or bathing
- When case studies are taken, real names and locations have to be avoided
- Never provide media with personal information of any child

- Prepare and guide children before any media coverage or funding/donor visit
- No child is ever to be taken with a staff/intern/volunteer for an outing individually

1.2 Appropriate behavior of children

- Respect all staff, parents, and visitors
- Never use abusive/slang language towards staff or other children
- Never physically assault or sexually abuse another child or staff member
- Never tease or threaten another child
- Never spread rumors about another child
- Never force another child to give away his/her personal belongings

1.3 Appropriate behavior of visitors

- Written permission to be taken from the authority regarding purpose of visit before interacting with the children
- Physical contact with the children must be age appropriate
- Interaction with the children is only allowed in presence of relevant staff
- Consent of the children and proper authority are to be received before taking images
- Images of children may never be taken during bathing, dressing, or sleeping
- Must not give treat or take any child out on any kind of excursion. If it is done in a group then prior intimation in terms of letter of permission is required
- Case histories or personal records of any child without permission of concerned staff and the child is prohibited
- Never use offensive/slang language before the children
- Must behave in a culturally appropriate manner
- Must wear culturally appropriate clothes given the local context

1.4 Appropriate behavior of interns/volunteers (unpaid)

- Accept and respect the children, their parents, family members, and living conditions
- Must use decent and understanding language while communicating with children.
- Must wear clothes that are appropriate to the local context where the children live
- Empathize rather than sympathize with the children
- Never stigmatize or humiliate children
- Must not get into the personal details of children without the knowledge of staff and also without the permission of the child
- Never take any child anywhere independently
- Never use vulgar or abusive language in the presence of any child
- Must possess a child friendly attitude (i.e.: avoid using slang or negative language)
- Consent of the children and concerned authority to be taken before taking images of any of the children
- Before interacting with children, appropriate staff is to be present

- Recognize the children by his or her name and do not use derogative names or nicknames
- Before publishing any report of document on the organization, especially regarding the children, drafts are to be approved by the organization
- Interns and volunteers are required to give a written statement that they will not use any personal information of the children after they complete their terms with the organization

1.5 Appropriate behavior of donors

- TF should be notified in advance of any donor agency visits
- Gifts are never to be offered directly to children
- Must not give treat to any individual child or take any child out on any kind of excursion. If it is done in a group then prior intimation in terms of letter of permission will be required and relevant staff must accompany.
- Consent of the children and authority is necessary before images can be taken
- Images should never be taken when children are dressing, bathing, sleeping, etc.
- Interaction with children is only allowed at designated times and in the presence of appropriate staff
- With case studies, no personal information or true identity should be disclosed
- Must wear clothes that are appropriate in the local context
- Never use abusive language or behave in a sexually provocative manner in the presence of children or staff
- Recognize the children by his or her name and do not use derogative names or nicknames

1.6 Appropriate behavior in cells

School Cell

- Maintenance of school building is essential and will be monitored on a weekly basis (i.e.: electrical facilities)
- Requirement of separate toilets with proper facilities
- School premises must be kept neat and clean
- Safe drinking water and food are to be ensured
- Equal and quality attention is to be provided to every student
- Class teachers should have individual information of every child
- Requirement of First Aid maintenance
- Medical cards of every child are to be available at the facility and necessary information is to be maintained (i.e.: blood group or special physical needs)
- TF will educate about and protect the children from sexually transmitted diseases, early marriage, or unwanted pregnancy
- Child friendly atmosphere is required
- Intoxication of any kind is prohibited of all teachers and children
- Never practice corporal punishment
- Sexually provocative behavior is strictly prohibited
- Teachers are role models who are followed by the children and should always keeps this in mind and be on their best behavior

Shelter Home

- License is to be displayed fully at all times
- One (1) male and one (1) female full-time supervisor are to be on the premises at all times
- No male will be allowed in the female home without permission and no female will be allowed in the male home without permission
- Local police station is to be informed during admission of a student and at the time of their departure
- Separate facilities for men and women are required at all times.

1.7 Communication Protocols

Communication protocols are necessary to prevent confidential information from being released to inappropriate parties. It is also to protect the children from having demeaning photographs of them released. Permission of concerned authority and consent of children is to be taken before the use of images.

1.7.1 Images of children are not to be taken while they are bathing or changing clothes. Children should always be in appropriate clothing.

1.7.2 Leading questions and interfering accounts are strictly prohibited. Students should be free to express their own opinions and accounts with no coaching.

1.7.3 While developing case studies, the name of the child and location should be changed

1.7.4 Emphasis should always be given to the dignity of children and images should never be manipulated

1.7.5 The media will interact only with the organization head, unit heads, or designated staff designated by the heads.

1.7.6 Prior information to be given regarding date of publication, telecast, or broadcast

1.8 Reporting and Reaction Protocols

This is the protocol for reporting and reacting to witnessed, suspected, or alleged child abuse and/or violation of the *Child Protection Policy*.

1.8.1 Allegation of abuse must be reported to team leader or supervisor immediately after abuse or concern of abuse take place. To be completed through reporting format (*annexure 1.3*)

1.8.2 TF will form a committee to deal with the case and understand the depth of allegation and the extent of the abuse to the child

1.8.3 TF will take full responsibility that the accused and child do not come into direct contact

1.8.4 TF will discuss the penalties against the accused and ensure ramification of misconduct with proper evidence through other verifiable sources

1.8.5 If allegation is proved then the individual will be dismissed and legal action must be taken

*Annexure 1.1***Statement of Commitment to Tomorrow's Foundation
Child Protection Policy**

I hereby acknowledge that I have thoroughly read and understand Tomorrow's Foundation Child Protection Policy (CPP). For the time that I am affiliated with Tomorrow's Foundation, I agree to abide by everything placed before me in the Child Protection Policy.

Signed:

Date:

Current or Proposed Position:

*Annexure 1.2***Behavior Protocols for all Staff/Interns/Volunteers**

1. Be Empathetic rather than sympathetic towards children
2. Act on children's concerns immediately
3. Use positive reinforcement and acknowledge good efforts and performance
4. Work with children in the view of others (Never be alone with children)
5. Never engage, encourage, or support abuse
6. Never stigmatize or humiliate children
7. Never use corporal punishment
8. Do not use abuses or slang in front of the children
9. Never develop sexual relations with a child or act in a sexually provocative manner
10. Permission of children and relevant staff is to be obtained before photos can be taken
11. Images of children are not to be taken while they are bathing, sleeping, or changing clothes
12. With case studies, name of child needs to be changed as well as no personal information or location of the child is to be given.
13. Must wear clothes that are appropriate keeping in mind the local context in which the children live
14. Inform about purpose and guide children prior to media coverage
15. Ensure confidentiality at the time of disclosing case studies to media

*Annexure 1.3***Tomorrow's Foundation Reporting of Alleged Abuse****Today's Date:****Reporting Person**

1. Reporting person's name:
2. Reporting person's current designation:
3. Reporting person's current cell or project:

Child's Information

1. Name of alleged victim:
2. Sex:
3. Age:
4. Location of center:

Incident Information

1. Date, time, and place of offense:
2. Name of alleged offender:
3. Designation of alleged offender:
4. Nature of alleged abuse:
5. Was the reporting person a first-hand witness? YES NO
6. If no, date when the information came to the attention of the staff?
7. If yes, what was the immediate action taken?
8. Name of witness, if any:

Note: *Confidential document*

Some Do's & Don'ts Related to This Policy

DO'S:

1. Ensure participation of children in:
Decision-making planning
Implementation
Evaluation
2. Consult children
3. Listen to children
4. Respect children
5. Maintain confidentiality
6. Ensure an environment that is comfortable and free, which encourages a child to talk to you on all issues.
7. Have a professional approach

DON'TS

1. Do not abuse or tolerate abuse of any kind:
physical (violence)
emotional (verbal)
sexual
economic exploitation (where an adult personally benefits in any form from the child)
use of a child to do personal service/labour such as wash clothes or cook food, look after one's children etc.

While dealing with a child (a group of children) if the situation becomes unbearable, just walk away and return after 10 minutes or seek assistance.

2. Do not discuss personal issues in front of children.
3. Do not use uncivil, objectionable language even in informal conversation among yourselves.
4. Do not use children to score a point/malign someone.
5. Not to be biased. Do not give undue importance to any single child.

6. Do not introduce or promote practices relating to social interaction and religion based on your own personal preferences, beliefs or values.
7. Not to encourage or motivate any child/young person/group to take any action that will be detrimental to the organisation and its image for your personal vendetta.
8. Not to encourage or motivate any child/young person/group to participate in any action that will lead to communal and caste division and or to indulge in communal, caste violence.
9. Do not misuse your association with children for personal gains within the organisation and outside.
10. Communications between adults and children on issues must not confuse or create a sense of insecurity.
11. Adult's behavior/actions/words should not create a negative impression of the concerned person(s) and the organisation per se.
12. Procedure for reporting: In case of any abuse observed outside the organisation it must be reported immediately. The staff must report to her/his supervisor for immediate action and in a serious abuse it should be reported to the Administrator and Director. In case of abuse observed internally the concerned staff must bring it to the notice of the supervisor for action and in a serious matter the Supervisor should bring it to the notice of the Administrator and Director. Charges that are serious but not criminal in nature which needs an enquiry an enquiry team internally will be constituted to look into the charge. The alleged accused will be given the opportunity to select one of the members of the enquiry team so that the enquiry is transparent and fair. In very serious charge of suspected Sexual Abuse or Trafficking of Children an independent enquiry committee will be constituted.

THANK YOU