



Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Child abuse happens in all societies throughout the world. The child abusers can be anyone, including those who work with and care for children.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

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

As part of our commitment to keeping children safe, this Child Protection Policy outlines the obligations of all Safe Haven associates and the organization, to ensure that the children we work with are protected from any form of abuse.

Definitions

A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years.

Child abuse means physical, emotional or sexual abuse deliberately caused to a child.

Child Protection Policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organisation is taking its duty of care seriously.

Emotional abuse includes embarrassing, humiliating, scaring or otherwise using inappropriate language to a child.

Neglect includes situations where Safe Haven associates identify risks in the course of their work. Safe Haven recognizes that meeting children's basic needs for safety, food, shelter and medical care can be difficult amongst the families we work with due to poverty. However, Safe Haven will try to educate families, work together to find solutions and provide or create access to essential health resources wherever possible.

Physical abuse includes any physical contact that causes pain or fear.

Sexual abuse includes sexual touching, oral sex and intercourse, as well as making or showing pornography, making sexual statements about or to children, and touching a child's genitals without a medical purpose and clear supervision.

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Statement of Commitment

As an organization committed to supporting children, Safe Haven's highest priority is the safety and well-being of the children under its care. Safe Haven is committed to implementing this child protection policy in all circumstances, to ensure the children are not exposed to abuse, exploitation, violence or neglect. This policy conforms to the general principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child as follows:

Best Interests of the Child: The best interests of the child will be Safe Haven's primary consideration. All decisions and actions concerning a child will serve the best interests of the child. When weighing alternatives Safe Haven will seek to ensure that the final decision or action arrived at will be that in which the child receives the maximum benefit possible. Safe Haven will at all times consider the impact a decision or action will have on the child and ensure the positive impacts outweigh any negative impacts.

Non-Discrimination: Safe Haven will maintain a policy of non-discrimination at all times and all children will be treated equally and with respect. Safe Haven recognizes that children we work with are particularly vulnerable to discrimination due to their disabilities. Safe Haven will use child-centered language and inclusive practices wherever possible.

Participation and Self-Determination: Safe Haven abides by the principle that a child has the right to have his or her views taken into account in major decisions affecting their life. Taking into consideration their age and developmental stage, children will be given the opportunity to express their ideas and views and be heard on matters affecting them wherever possible. Safe Haven will give serious consideration to the child's wishes in all cases where it is possible to do so throughout the decision-making process. The wishes of their legal guardians will also be considered where appropriate, or where children's age or developmental status mean they are unable to express their own ideas or views.

All children have the right to self-determination and Safe Haven will aim to understand children's ideas and views through communication that is appropriate to their age and developmental stage, and adapted to meet their communication needs wherever possible. Safe Haven supports families to create safer and friendly home environments where children can develop and grow in a healthy way.

The guidelines in this Child Protection Policy protect both the child from abuse and adult from false accusation.

Safe Haven will:

- Respect the rights and dignity of the children, families and communities with whom we work, and always act according to the best interest of children.
- Demonstrate commitment to actively preventing child abuse.
- Take positive action to prevent child abusers becoming involved with Safe Haven in any way and takes stringent measures against any Safe Haven associate who commits child abuse.

Safe Haven Medical Outreach Program

To ensure the above commitment, Safe Haven is committed to upholding

- The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
- The Cambodian current and future laws and tools on child rights.
- Positive traditional practice.

1. WHO THIS POLICY APPLIES TO AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

This policy applies to all associates of Safe Haven: employees and volunteers, prospective employees and volunteers, board members, donors, consultants, contractors (including regular drivers), partner organization members and visitors. The term Safe Haven associates will be used.

The Safe Haven Child Protection Officer (CPO) is responsible to ensure that the Child Protection Policy is dispatched and understood by all Safe Haven associates and that they all acknowledge their receipt of and responsibilities under the policy. Unless otherwise defined by the Director, the CPO is the Safe Haven Social Worker.

Safe Haven will ensure the Child Protection Policy remains relevant and effective. Safe Haven will consistently monitor all risks pertaining to the children we work with, review the Child Protection Policy on an annual basis, and make any necessary changes to the Child Protection Policy as new considerations arise in the course of our work.

Safe Haven will advise and assist all Safe Haven associates in the implementation of the policy. The Safe Haven Child Protection Officer and/or Director will be responsible for the effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy.

2. VISITORS

Visitors to Safe Haven must be approved in advance on a case-by-case basis. They are only allowed for a specific purpose that benefits the children and/or the organization (such as potential donors, consulting health professionals or professional photographers).

Visitors must:

- Provide a copy of their ID, as well as a police check from their home country (where possible), their resume and details of two referees.
- Sign in and wear a Safe Haven visitor's pass at all times.
- Follow the Child Protection Policy as well as all guidelines provided by Safe Haven staff, and act in a respectful and culturally-appropriate manner.

Safe Haven staff must closely monitor all visitors at all times. No visitor can be left alone, with or without children, when on a Safe Haven home visit or in the Safe Haven office. Photography is not permitted, unless prior approval has been granted.

Safe Haven Medical Outreach Program

3. RECRUITMENT, SCREENING AND ORIENTATION

Safe Haven recognizes that good recruitment, screening and orientation practices help keep children safe

- All prospective Safe Haven associates will be informed of Safe Haven's Child Protection Policy at the start of any recruiting process.
- Advertisements for job vacancies will make clear that Safe Haven is committed to child protection and that prospective employees' commitment to child protection must be a condition of employment.
- Screening of applicants will include a written application. Applicants will be required to provide a copy of identification (passport/ID card), details of referees (especially related to paid or volunteer work with children) and a criminal record check or a police check for any conviction related to child abuse or other relevant offences (where possible). Expatriates will be subject to the same background checks as possible and permissible by law in their home countries.
- Safe Haven may conduct interviews in person, by phone or by Skype. The interviewer will use a questionnaire form to document and record all important information, which will be kept in their personnel files for the successful applicant.
- Safe Haven will conduct detailed reference checks with past employers, by phone (wherever possible) or email. Safe Haven will also conduct an online search of prospective staff for the purpose of gathering any relevant information related to their suitability for child-related employment.
- The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed during new staff orientation. The CPO shall ensure all new personnel acknowledge in writing their receipt and understanding of the policy, with signed copies of their acknowledgement kept in the personnel files.
- Safe Haven reserves the right to terminate a contract if reference checks, background checks or other information available in the future reveals that the person is not suitable to work with children or for any reason that may put children at risk, during the application process, or after appointment.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAFE HAVEN ASSOCIATES

The Safe Haven code of conduct gives guidelines deemed to be appropriate and proper behavior for Safe Haven associates when interacting with Children in the care of Safe Haven. They are primarily designed to protect children but are also intended to protect associates from false accusations of inappropriate behavior or abuse.

1. Safe Haven associates must display appropriate language, actions and relationships with children at all times. Under no circumstance should any physical contact be or have the appearance of being sexual in any way. Safe Haven associates are always responsible for their own behavior.
2. No Safe Haven associate should ever be alone with a Safe Haven child, except in a medical emergency.

Safe Haven Medical Outreach Program

3. No child should be taken on a motorbike, tuk-tuk, or car without their guardian's permission unless there is a medical emergency. Wherever possible, guardians would be with their children, and if guardian is not available for some reason, two staff should be present. No child should go to any Safe Haven associate's home, guesthouse, hotel or accommodation outside of program care. Remember – "no one-on-one" (one staff and one child) unless a medical emergency.
4. No Safe Haven associate should socialize one-on-one with the children outside of Safe Haven duties, or take them on a social outing outside of work hours.
5. No gifts should be given directly to children or families, but should be donated to Safe Haven for Safe Haven staff to determine the best use.
6. No Safe Haven associate should engage in any physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect of Safe Haven children. (See definitions in Section 2 above.)
7. Because hands-on treatment (including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and nursing) can sometimes cause fear, pain or the appearance of inappropriate or sexual touching, Safe Haven associates should always honestly explain any treatment and make efforts to calm the child and guardian. Respecting the child and guardian's feelings and explaining the purpose of treatment helps them to feel less vulnerable, more likely to cooperate and more in control of the situation.
8. Failure to follow this code of conduct may lead to disciplinary action, reporting to appropriate authorities including the police, and/or dismissal from Safe Haven.

Safe Haven Outreach Program, as part of our ongoing commitment to the overall health and well-being of the children, is dedicated to raising awareness and education. As such, we will provide all those associated with Safe Haven with information regarding the Child Protection Policy and work with the families and communities to help them recognize and respond to concerns about child abuse.

5. AWARENESS-RAISING AND EDUCATION

1. Safe Haven is obliged to make all of its associates aware of the issue of child protection and the Child Protection Policy.
2. All Safe Haven associates and local communities should be provided with opportunities to learn about how to safeguard children, to recognize and respond to concerns about child abuse.
3. When and where possible, children will be educated in self-protection from physical and sexual abuse. Children will be taught that they have a right to do something 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. Safe Haven recognizes that this is dependent on children's age and developmental stage, and will also educate parents and families and model appropriate behavior to protect their children from physical and sexual abuse.
4. Safe Haven will initiate an open culture, encouraging opportunities for staff to raise concerns, to question, to discuss, to provide feedback, and learn about child protection issues. This will be done during staff meetings, through training and on other occasions.

Safe Haven Medical Outreach Program

Regular staff supervision will take place where this issue will be addressed and issues discussed in an open and supportive manner.

5. Appropriate literature such as help-line posters, leaflets on how to report an incident and child-safe information will be made available to Safe Haven associates. Regular training, networking and awareness raising regarding child protection will take place. Child Protection will be discussed regularly at meetings and forums.

6. COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT CHILDREN.

Safe Haven communicates messages about children with various parties. Forms of communication include:

- Promotional and fundraising communications with the public, donors and the media;
 - Sharing medical information with partner organizations;
 - Communicating information with children and families.
1. Safe Haven can confirm with referral sources that we have made contact with the family, but not share other information without clear benefit to the child and permission from the family.
 2. Safe Haven staff will always explain to families why we want to take photos and how we might use them, and document this permission.
 3. Safe Haven associates should always show children in positive way (reaching milestones, with parent or staff), appropriately dressed and not in vulnerable state or position
 4. Decisions about which photos to use publicly are made by the Director and/or Development staff. Staff cannot share photos with anyone outside of Safe Haven unless they are sharing a photo that Safe Haven has already printed or posted online.
 5. Safe Haven does not share actual names of children publicly. Names should always be changed for publicity purposes, and it should be indicated that names have been changed.
 6. All communications regarding Safe Haven children will ensure that the protection, privacy, dignity and best interests of the child are paramount.

7. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING ABUSE OR SUSPECTED ABUSE

Safe Haven takes child abuse very seriously. Child abuse in any form, including physical, emotional or sexual abuse, is a serious offence that would threaten the wellbeing and reputation of the child, the accused Safe Haven associates, and Safe Haven itself. Any infringements of this type will be prosecuted to the full extent of law. Child abusers are not likely to remain in an environment where workers are trained to identify and report suspicious behavior. For these reasons, all personnel are responsible for reporting suspected child abuse or exploitation of any kind.

Safe Haven Medical Outreach Program

Any concerns about possible child abuse by a Safe Haven Associate must be reported immediately (within 24 hours) to the Safe Haven social worker. The social worker will inform the director as soon as possible.

The social worker is responsible for gathering information from the person reporting and anyone else who may have knowledge of the suspected abuse (including the child and/or family members) and calling the appropriate authorities for further investigation if appropriate.

If it is impossible or inappropriate to report concerns to the social worker, staff should discuss their concerns with another staff member and decide together which organization to report to.

The emergency contact numbers for investigating organizations will be posted in the office.

Anyone suspected of any abuse will be suspended from all Safe Haven duties while the investigation is made. If they are paid staff, they will be suspended with pay.

Depending on the result of the investigation, one or more of the following may result:

1. Verbal warning
2. Written warning
3. Dismissal from Safe Haven
4. Reporting to the police.

The rights and welfare of children is of prime importance to Safe Haven, and therefore any investigation will aim to respect the privacy and safety of the child and to make the investigation as child-friendly as possible.

Response to Internal Investigation Findings

1. At the conclusion of the investigation, the associate, the child and/or his or 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.
2. In the event an allegation is proven to be untrue, or even fabricated, appropriate steps will be taken for follow-up with the person who has been accused, the child, and the person who reported the incident. Efforts will be made to provide assistance to an associate accused of abuse with children, including counseling or other appropriate forms of support.
3. If 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.
4. If the investigation concludes that child abuse has occurred which is not subject to criminal prosecution, staff will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
5. If the investigation concludes that abuse has occurred which is subject to criminal prosecution according to national laws, all findings 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 enforcement authorities

Safe Haven Medical Outreach Program

will also be informed with due regard given to the potential for extraterritorial proceedings by the expatriate's country of origin.

6. In the event an associate is discharged for proven child abuse, Safe Haven will disclose such information as requested by police, a prospective employer, etc. Such disclosures will be made in accordance with applicable law and/or customs.
7. The media may become involved when a concern or allegation is raised within Safe Haven. Only the Director will liaise with the media.

I have read the complete Safe Haven Child Protection Policy. I fully understand and agree to follow all procedures contained within.

If at any time I fail to follow the guidelines set forth by the Safe Haven Child Protection Policy I understand that my employment / association may be terminated by the Director and appropriate action will be taken.

Signature

____/____/____

Date

Printed Name

Email

Role/reason for visiting Safe Haven:

- Provide assessment and/or training for staff
- Partner organization staff
- Introduction/Referral
- Photographer
- Funder/Evaluator
- Other: _____

If responding by email please state acceptance of terms of Child Protection Policy. You will receive a hard copy to sign once you arrive.