



**SOCIETY FOR AGRICULTURE HEALTH
ENVIRONMENT LITERACY INNOVATIONS
(SAHELI)**

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Hassanpur, Bidyadharpur P.O. Basta, Balasore,
Odisha-756029 Ph: 91-8249924302 sahelibasta@gmail.com | saheliodisha.org



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (CPP)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Child Protection Policy (CPP) of SAHELI envisages the values of dignity, harmony and quality of life for a joyful and protected space for all children in the hostel and in the partner communities. The CPP of SAHELI would take definite actions to achieve and maintain the values of child protection without any discrimination among children and partner communities.

The initiatives of SAHELI related to working with children and promoting their rights are underpinned in the United Nations Convention on the Rights (UNCRC) of the Child. The intention of SAHELI is to work with the children for their holistic development. The policy has been developed in accordance with the UNCRC, which India ratified in 1992; the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and the Amendment Act, 2006; and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006; the Protection of Children from Sexual offences Act, 2012; and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 also provide guidelines for the safety and security of children.

2. PURPOSE OF THE CPP

SAHELI aims to create 'child safe' environment, both internally and externally, where children are respected, protected, empowered and active in their own protection, and where all the staff are skilled, confident and well supported in meeting their development responsibilities.

3. SCOPE OF THE CPP

The Child Protection Policy applies to everyone working for or associated with SAHELI. The Policy encompasses the entire SAHELI organization, its partners and associates without any limitation:

- **Staff at all Levels** – All regular/contractual staff including interns, volunteers and animators.
- **Partners** – All partner organizations with whom SAHELI currently working and any such organisation SAHELI will work with in future work. Partner organizations include all institutions where some funding is channelized through SAHELI. SAHELI will consciously motivate the groups and organizations under operational communities to adopt and practice the CPP. There will be a mandatory inclusion of a clause on child protection in each and every partnership agreement. Each partner should maintain certain minimum standards on child protection, failing which the agreement will be cancelled.
- **Associates** – The CPP will be applicable to all consultants, resource partners, evaluators and visitors during the period of their association with SAHELI.



4. DEFINITIONS AND TYPES OF ABUSE

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “Child maltreatment, sometimes referred to as child abuse and neglect, includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, development or dignity.” And within this broad definition, five subtypes can be distinguished – physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect and negligent treatment; emotional abuse; and exploitation.

Child: According to Article 1 of the UNCRC, a child means “every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.”

Holistic Development: Article 21 of the Indian Constitution which guarantees the “Right to Life” may be interpreted to include a wholesome life which focuses on holistic development of the child.

Child Abuse: Child Abuse is defined as “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or harm, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse”. It includes any action that result in actual or potential harm to a child. Article 19 of the UNCRC specifies the need to “take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child”.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidences from such persons.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally supportive environment so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potentials and in the context of 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, psychological, moral or social development. Such acts include movements, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile and rejecting treatments.

Neglect and Negligent Treatment: Neglect is the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres - health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of available resources. Such neglect causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the children’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as possible.

Sexual Abuse: Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity which 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 of the region or social taboos of the society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an 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.

Child Protection: Child Protection is defined as the responsibilities, measures and activities that SAHELI undertakes to safeguard children from both intentional and unintentional harm. Article 39 (f) of the Directive Principles in the Indian Constitution highlights the “Right to equal opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and guaranteed protection of childhood and youth against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.”

5. PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES

All staff must:

1. Positively contribute to creating an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their issues, concerns and rights.
2. Ask for permission from a child before taking their photographs and respect their decision to refuse to being photographed.
3. Ensure that all images of children (which are taken with their consent) are respectful and are not negatively impacting their dignity and rights.
4. Be knowledgeable of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which India ratified in 1992; the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and the Amendment Act, 2006; the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act), 1986; the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006; the Protection of Children from Sexual offences Act, 2012; and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.
5. Practice and adhere to the policy not only in the workplace but also in their personal life.
6. Maintain confidentiality about the children
7. Be firm but gentle in the approach while handling children
8. Provide children with activities that bring forth leadership in a positive way, let children know that you care, trust and respect them

All Staff must not:

1. Disclose the identity of any child, if he or she is from a section of the society which is socially accepted as abusive and untouchable.
2. Abuse and/exploit a child or act/ behave in any way that puts a child at risk of any harm.
3. Fail to report any incidences of child abuse or concerns related to their protection in the purview of the work of operation. Failure to report such incidences will invite disciplinary action against the concerned staff.
4. Deny responding to a child who have been abused or exploited or under the threat of being abused or exploited.
5. Invite any children from the operational communities to their residence without prior approval from the competent authority. Even with the approval from the authority, children should be invited along with their guardians only. But under no circumstances is any child from the operational community allowed to stay overnight at the residence of any staff, volunteer, intern or animator (who is not from that



- community). In exceptional and emergency situations permission needs to be sought from the competent authority.
6. Employ, under no circumstances, a child as a domestic help in any of the offices of SAHELI or at the residences of SAHELI personnel (staff, volunteer, animator, interns etc.).
 7. Touch any child in their private parts or any touch which is uncomfortable to the child.
 8. Use offensive language
 9. Take them out of designated area without permission from the authorities
 10. Touch unwarrantedly or unwantedly a child or young person personally or with objects (e.g. pencil or ruler, key).
 11. Award corporal punishment (physical discipline, smacking etc.)
 12. Initiate or permit or request inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person (e.g. massage, kisses, tickle games) or facilitate situations which unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a child or young person
 13. Allow children and young people access to a staff member's personal internet locations (eg social networking sites)
 14. Visit children and young people's homes or their social gatherings

Visitors, business partners, while working with SAHELI:

1. Seek permission from children before taking their pictures
2. Seek permission from authority before interviewing a single child
3. Ensure the protection and privacy of the children, photographs or editorials are prohibited to be published either in print or online, internet communication without the Consent of the organisation
4. Gifts are prohibited to be given to the only one child
5. Children should not be taken to any private place alone
6. Personal contacts should not be provided to the children
7. Inappropriate behaviour towards children, including hugging, kissing is against the behaviour protocol

6. CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

SAHELI will develop a Case Management System, by name, Internal Complaints Committee for Child Protection (IC-CP), which will be within the legal system and actors within this case management system shall be from within SAHELI. This arrangement for case management will have a procedure for disclosure, reporting and dealing with Child Protection Concerns: definite as well as well defined manner for reporting, investigation, sanctions etc. and protection and rehabilitation measures for affected children. This case management system must cover: (1) incidents such as child sexual abuse, missing child, child's death (unnatural death) and severe physical abuse of a child, to the extent of grievous injury on the child's body that may take place in the target area involving any of the community members including volunteers, community officers shall be reported to the person leading IC-CP; (2) similar instances within the schools and hostel in which the children of the target communities of SAHELI attend; and (3) similar instances within the office premises.



In case of any inquiry taking place, it must be ensured that the investigation will be treated with care, concern and absolute confidentiality. The Director should be kept fully updated on all Child Protection incidents irrespective of who is involved (community, volunteers, staff). In the event of a staff being involved, the leader of the IC – CP shall inform the details to the Legal and Human Resource Department for appropriate action.

Any person proved guilty by the court of law on any incidence of child abuse and or exploitation is not eligible to continue his/her service with SAHELI or being associated with SAHELI in any form as consultant, visitor, resource partner or even supplier. Partner organizations and community groups associated with SAHELI will be encouraged and supported to develop their child protection policy. But in the area of their program implementation, if any incidence of child abuse or exploitation takes place which have not been adequately and appropriately addressed by the partner organization with the intension of suppression, the partnership agreement will automatically become null and void.

7. CONCLUSION

This policy has been adopted by the Governing Board of SAHELI with an intention to promote holistic development of children. This will help SAHELI as a guide to promote the rights of children within the broader framework of human right.



"Guard Their Today, Grow Their Tomorrow."

(This Child Protection Policy document was presented debated and adopted in the meeting of the Governing Board of SAHELI held on 14-03-2025)

**Dalia Antony
President**

**Sonali Sahu
Secretary**

**Shaju V. Joseph
Treasurer**