



KOKAN NGO INDIA
(KOKAN KALA VA SHIKSHAN VIKAS SANSTHA)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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1. Introduction

Kokan Kala Va Shikshan Vikas Sanstha (Kokan NGO India) (the “**Organization**”) The Organization aims to work at achievement of all Sustainable Goals and other rights of the children as enshrined in United Nation Convention on Rights of the Child, the Constitution of India, other National and International laws.

2. Vision & Mission

Organization aims to serve the child protection ecosystem in India by supporting grassroots action and activists, identifying and scaling out sustainable solutions, investing in bold innovation, leveraging technology, and promoting strategic partnership and coordinated efforts at all levels.

3. Applicability

This Child Protection Policy (“**this Policy**”) is applicable to all employees/staff on rolls of Organization, volunteers, trustees, members of the Board of Trustees, members of any of the committees of Organization and other partner entities with whom Organization engages for work (“**Associates**”). They shall strive to maintain the sanctity of; and work towards achieving Organization’s Vision, Mission and Values.

For the purpose of this Policy, a child is an individual who has not attained the age of 18 years.

4. Purpose

1. Organization has zero tolerance towards any act which hinders the physical, mental, spiritual wellbeing of a child, or is exploitative, or abusive towards a child in any manner;
2. The Child Rights prescribes a set of high standards that must be adhered to in securing the best interest of the child. Also, various provisions in the Constitution of India and other special laws provide for the protection and overall wellbeing of the child;
3. This Child Protection Policy provides overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection; while ensuring that our actions protect the children in every way and ensure that the children are not in any manner victimized.



5. Scope

The Child Protection Policy is applicable to the following:

1. All Associates associated with; or working for Organization;
2. Any person/volunteer/entity/corporate/community working with and/or engaged with Organization or any person/s participating in an event or program being organized by Organization

6. Principles of Child protection

Organization shall, while implementing the provisions of this Policy be guided by the following fundamental principles:

1. **Principle of zero tolerance** to child exploitation and abuse;
2. **Principle of best interest:** All decisions regarding the child shall be based on the primary consideration that they are in the best interest of the child and to help the child to develop full potential;
3. **Principle of equality and non-discrimination:** There shall be no discrimination against a child on any grounds including sex, caste, ethnicity, place of birth, disability and equality of access, opportunity and treatment;
4. **Principle of dignity and worth:** This principle reflects the fundamental human right that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Respect of dignity includes not being humiliated, personal identity, boundaries and space being respected, not being labeled and stigmatized, being offered information and choices and not being blamed for their acts;
5. **Principle of participation:** Every child shall have a right to be heard and to participate in all processes and decisions affecting his/her interest and the child's views shall be taken into consideration with due regard to the age and maturity of the child;
6. **Principle of Institutional Care as a measure of last resort:** A child shall be placed in institutional care as a step of last resort after making a reasonable inquiry;
7. **Principle of presumption of innocence:** Any child shall be presumed to be innocent of any mala fide or criminal intent up to the age of eighteen years;
8. **Principle of non-waiver of rights:** No waiver of any right of the child is permissible or valid, whether sought by the child or person acting on behalf of the child, or a Board or any Committee, and any non-exercise of a fundamental right shall not amount to waiver;
9. **Principle of positive measures:** All resources are to be mobilised including those of family and community, for promoting the well-being, facilitating development of identity and providing an inclusive and enabling environment;



7. Policy Guidelines & Implementation

7.1 Working with children in Programs

Organization ensures that children are given utmost priority while being part of its programmes. Children's need, care, rehabilitation and protection are utmost priority for Organization.

Child centric community development programmes are launched to ensure child empowerment through their participation in the decision-making process at the community level. These programmes and interventions aim to ensure that each child is well nourished and remains healthy.

Children education, empowerment and health is given prime importance in child centric programmes.

7.2 Travel with children

Organization shall ensure the following protocols must be implemented for any travel that involves children:

1. An adult shall accompany the child for every excursion outside school/home or other safe environment;
2. Orientation of an adult to the special needs of the children will be conducted in advance;
3. Due to the special needs of the girls, female care taker should be made available and accompany girls;
4. Written Parent (or guardian, child care entity) consent should be taken before travel as per **Annexure A - 1**;
5. In case of longer stay of children for meeting/conferences/trainings/ educational activities, an affidavit from the parent/guardian/ child care entity or a written consent in presence of 2 legitimate witnesses will be taken;
6. If a child does not have parents/legal guardian/ child care entity, police authorities (nearest) would be intimated about his/her longer stay.

7.3 Use of Children in Media

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive, impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice;
2. Organization shall facilitate the sensitization of media/communication team to ensure adherence to the best interest of the child in all reporting of cases of child abuse and to respect the dignity and privacy of the child while doing so;



3. Journalists and media persons will acknowledge that freedom of speech can be maintained while taking into account the rights of children;
4. Right to privacy of the child shall be maintained at all times;
5. Fact checking done in conjunction with stories about children will be done in such a way that children will not suffer repercussions for voicing their opinions;
6. Organization's Social Media Policy shall be adhered to for all matters concerning the sharing of information, opinions and content related to children or Organization's work;
7. Before taking or using any photos or videos of a child, consent shall be taken from the parents/legal guardian/ child care entity of a child as per Annexure A-1

8. Code of Conduct

Organization aspires to hold the highest ethical and moral standards in the professional space and personal life of all Associates. The Organization aspires to provide for an environment of holistic development, freedom of exchange of ideas, thoughts, constant personal and professional growth. The Associates must ensure strict compliance with the below:

8.1 Do's

1. Contribute to an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights;
2. Give due respect to the children irrespective of their gender, age, ethnicity, situation, abilities and any other factor;
3. Take cognizance of special needs of the child if any;
4. Provide equal opportunities to all children especially vulnerable and exploited children;
5. Ensure that parents/ child care entity of the child are entitled to receive information regarding the support provided to the child in question, unless such information may threaten the child's interest. Associates and collaborators of the Organization who offer direct and indirect help are prohibited from releasing any information about the child gained in the course of their professional activity.
6. Respond to any child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with the law;
7. In case of any doubt in respect of possible sexual abuse, be alert and act immediately. Do report apprehension of any offence under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offence Act, 2016 ("POCSO") in accordance with the complaint and redressal mechanisms available under the applicable law;
8. Immediately report apprehension of any abuse against a child in accordance with the complaint and redressal mechanisms available under the applicable law;
9. Mandatorily cooperate in any investigation of concerns and allegations relating to well-being of a child;



10. Maintain confidentiality, in so far as possible, in respect of the investigation of any allegation and ensure that information is shared strictly on a 'need to know' basis.

8.2 Don'ts:

1. Abuse and/or exploit a child or act/behave in any way that places a child at risk of harm;
2. Embarrass, humiliate, belittle or demean children or display any behavior bearing signs of emotional, physical or sexual abuse;
3. Come into inappropriate physical contact with the child, violating the child's dignity; permissible physical contact is naturally associated with play, hygiene assistance, ensuring safety or the need to soothe the child;
4. Serve children alcohol, medications or other psychoactive substances;
5. Smoke, or consume alcohol in presence of children or their vicinity, or on any operation where children are involved/participating;
6. Condone or participate in illegal activities involving a child;
7. Establish or intend to establish any kind of sexual relationship with the child below the age of 18 (whether a beneficiary of Organization or not) and any young adult who is a beneficiary of Organization;
8. Exhibit sexually provoking behavior;
9. Host a rescued or vulnerable child in his/her own private home, unless directed by a statutory authority;
10. Accompany the child during travel in the absence of a caregiver without prior approval from the caregiver (except when such approval is in direct contravention to the best interests of the child);
11. Sleep in the same room with children during any field excursion, rescue-operation or otherwise;
12. Subject a child to media exposure without obtaining expressed consent from child care entity;
13. Befriend and/or cultivate informal/unprofessional relationships with any children or young adults who are beneficiaries of Organization over social media platforms or otherwise;
14. Use any child for attainment of one's personal/professional goals.

8.3 Commitment

All organizational contracts and vendor agreements shall include a statement affirming the parties' commitment to upholding the principles of child protection as articulated in this Policy.

As a general rule, Organization Associates shall ensure that their actions or omissions do not interfere with the physical, social, mental, or moral well-being of any child.



Organization and its Associates are required to take all necessary precautions to uphold and implement the rights and protections granted to children under applicable national and international laws, conventions, and charters. Full adherence to these child protection standards is mandatory.

9. Duty to Report

9.1 External Complaints

Individuals outside the Organization, including but not limited to beneficiaries, partners, service providers, contractors, or members of the public, are encouraged to report any suspected or known violations of this Policy. External complaints may be submitted through the following channels:

- a) An official Organization reporting email (admin@kokanngo.org)
- b) By mail to the Organization's main office, addressed to the Human Resources Department or Compliance Officer.

All external reports will be treated confidentially to the extent possible and will be taken seriously, in line with the Organization's commitment to ethical conduct and accountability. Retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith will not be tolerated.

9.2 Internal Complaints

Organization employees, members of Committee, Board of Trustees, trainees, volunteers and network partners shall report suspected or known violation to this Policy within 24 hours of the occurrence or upon knowledge of violation. These concerns may be reported to:

- a) their direct supervisor; or
- b) a Human Resource representative; or
- c) any member of the Management Committee

These concerns shall be treated with the utmost seriousness and may constitute a breach of the Organization's Code of Conduct.

10. Confidentiality

10.1 The welfare of the child is paramount. Privacy and confidentiality should be respected where possible unless doing this leaves a child at risk of harm then the child's safety prevails. 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.



10. 2 Wherever possible and practicable, prior to recording or collecting any sensitive personal data, Organization shall obtain oral or written consent from legal guardian of the child, young adult or person from whom such sensitive personal data is being collected. Further, wherever possible, the persons associated with Organization shall clearly explain to the concerned child's legal guardian or person the manner in which the sensitive personal data would be collected (i.e. written, audio recording, video recording), stored, and when and under what circumstances such information shall be shared, and the intended receivers of such data.

11. Violations of this Policy

An Associate who violates this Policy, regardless of whether financial loss to the Organization results or not, may receive appropriate disciplinary action up to, and including termination. This shall be in addition to other rights and remedies available under the applicable laws.

12. Modification and Review of Policy

The Organization reserves the right to modify and/or review the provisions of this Policy from time to time, in order to comply with applicable legal requirements or internal policies, to the extent necessary.



Annexure A – 1

I, _____ of _____, declare and affirm that I am the parent/legal guardian/ child care entity of the following child:

1. Name of the child: : _____
2. Age of the child : _____
3. Native Place (Address) : _____
4. Present Address of the child: _____
5. Purpose of child's travel : _____
6. Details of the person accompanying child during travel : _____
7. Purpose of taking child's photos and videos: _____

I consent to:

Travel of my child : ☐

Taking photos and videos of my child in compliance with applicable laws : ☐

In case of any concerns/questions regarding this document, I may be contacted at:

Guardian's Name

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____