



Reaching out with love

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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SECTION 1: CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. VISION

"Empower people to find their purpose, enjoy their rights and live with dignity."

MISSION

Freeing children from all forms of exploitation by ENGAGING and SUSTAINING in education, which empowers them to change mindsets and make good life choices that promote intergenerational transformations.

2. PURPOSE

Our vision is to build a **"Child Safe Organization"**. The purpose of this policy is -

- To state clear procedures, code of conduct, expectations from each member and organization associated with the Vision Rescue.
- To build a child friendly & child-safe organization that helps each team member associated with Vision Rescue to follow it, and to provide nurturing environment for child's overall development.

We will work towards this by developing and implementing policies and procedures, to the best of our ability, to ensure the respect and wellbeing of children who come into contact with Vision Rescue. The implementation of this policy and the guidelines outlined below should be based on a spirit of positive commitment at all times to the best interests of the child.

OBJECTIVES:

- To create an environment where issues of child protection are discussed openly and are understood between children and adults.
- To promote open lines of communication both internally and externally within and between organizations and individuals to improve awareness and implementation of child protection policies and practices.
- To create a framework to deal transparently, consistently and fairly with allegations concerning abuse.

3. VISION RESCUE'S STATEMENT OF THE COMMITMENT

Vision Rescue is committed to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm through **direct contact** or **indirect contact** with the child by or through each individual associated with Vision Rescue, who deals with children in their care at the Beacon Learning Center and/or allied services at areas of operations, both inside or outside the community.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vision Rescue's Child Protection Policy is firmly based on the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Taken holistically, the UNCRC provides a comprehensive framework for the protection, provision and participation of all children without discrimination to ensure their survival and development to the maximum extent possible. Also refer to Appendix 6:

Govt. Child Protection Mechanisms

A non-negotiable duty: Vision Rescue believes that organizations and individuals working for children's rights have an absolute duty to protect this group from abuse, mistreatment, and exploitation, even if it is from within organizations intended for the benefit of Children. This duty is imperative and non-negotiable. Without adequate standards and mechanisms of protection in place, an organization is not only failing in its primary duty of care, but may also be negligently or recklessly fostering an environment of abuse.

An end to silence: Silence raises abuse and exploitation of Children. Child sex abusers will seek out organizations with weak communication structures and increase where secrecy and shame conquer. Furthermore, without proper policies and clear procedures in place, organizations and individuals are extremely vulnerable to false allegations of child abuse.

5. SCOPE

Those who fall within the scope below are required to read, sign and adhere to the **Vision Rescue Child Protection Policy and CPP Code of Conduct (Appendix 1)**

This policy applies to all Vision Rescue stakeholders, defined as:

- All Vision Rescue Staff
- All Vision Rescue Board Members and Trustee's
- All Vision Rescue Contract Workers

- All Vision Rescue Consultants

Those who fall within the scope below are required to read, sign and adhere to the **Vision Rescue CPP Code of Conduct** (Appendix 1).

- All Vision Rescue Guests and Visitors including past, present, and prospective Donors and Donor Organizations, Partner Organizations and Vendors,
- All Vision Rescue Volunteers, paid and unpaid, including but not limited to Interns and Community Champions.

It is crucial that all those within the scope uphold the highest standards of professional and ethical behaviour, reflecting the principles of the organization. Those within the scope are expected to not only abide by, but also promote the policies, guidelines, principles and practice of child's safeguarding in a child's rights context.

6. DEFINITIONS

Child

For the purposes of this policy, a "child" is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child abuse

- According to the **World Health Organization**, "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.'
- "cruelty to children" or "child abuse" as 'behavior that causes significant harm to a child. It also includes when someone knowingly fails to prevent serious harm to a child. All forms of cruelty are damaging – it can be harder to recover from the emotional impact than from the physical effects.'
- These definitions therefore point to **four types of abuse**:
 - **Physical abuse**: including hurting or injuring a child, inflicting pain, poisoning, drowning, or smothering.

- o **Sexual abuse:** including direct or indirect sexual exploitation or corruption of children by involving them (or threatening to involve them) in inappropriate sexual activities Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or older child, uses their power or authority over the child or takes advantage of the child's trust to involve them in sexual activity. This sexual activity does not just mean sexual intercourse; it means any sexual activity including flashing, fondling, masturbating and oral sex.
 - o **Emotional abuse:** repeatedly rejecting children, humiliating them or denying their worth and rights as human beings. Emotional abuse tends to be a chronic behavioral pattern directed at the child/young person whereby their self-esteem and social competence is undermined or eroded over time.
 - o **Neglect:** the persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education, and medical attention. This can occur through direct and deliberate action or by omission or deliberate inaction to care for the child/young person.
- A child who is being abused may experience more than one type of cruelty.
 - Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are also abusive and can harm a child, both physically and emotionally'.

Child Protection

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 organizations and individuals associated with those organizations towards children in their care. Child protection' is a term used by many organizations for the work and programs they undertake in the community or broader social environment. This may lead to confusion when discussing the child protection responsibilities and issues involved in managing an organization. This policy is about **organizational** child protection – i.e. building a 'child-safe organization.'

Child Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a relatively new term which is broader than 'child protection' as it also includes prevention. Safeguarding has been defined as:

All agencies working with children, young people and their families taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimized; and

Where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, all agencies taking appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.

Direct contact with children

Being in the physical presence of a child or children in the context of the organization's work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long term. This could also involve delivering talks to schools, churches and youth groups. Overseas this could involve project / site visits and attending conferences at which children are also present. [N.B. this list of examples is not exhaustive.

Indirect contact with children

1. Having access to information on children in the context of the organization's work, such as children's names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies.
2. Providing information to partner organizations that work 'directly' with children.
Although indirectly, this nonetheless has an impact on children, and therefore confers to the organization's child protection issues. This list of examples is not exhaustive.

Child Protection Policy

'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 Vision Rescue a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organization is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously.'

Volunteer (Paid / Unpaid)

This Includes interns, champions, representatives, and volunteers from college, corporates, and organizations or from individual applications through referrals etc for executing the work,

which are paid and unpaid as per commitments. Collectively referred to as 'Volunteers' in this Policy.

Volunteers are often deployed temporarily, and hence the managers of such volunteers must stress the importance of child protection issues during initial induction training, and assess the actions of these volunteers, as part of the organization's general management and monitoring procedures, to ensure the policy provisions are understood and followed correctly.

Guests or Visitors

This includes individuals or colleges or corporates or journalists or researchers or friends and families of Vision Rescue stake holders or anyone who is not rendering any services to or on behalf of Vision Rescue, but intends to just visit the projects. They will be made aware of Vision Rescue's Child Protection Policy by being issued a copy of the shorter version of the Policy, which needs to duly filled, signed and submitted before any such visits.

7. INVOLVING CHILDREN

At Vision Rescue, we believe that children will benefit from this policy only if Children are actively involved in it. Vision Rescue will make children aware of their rights and will give the proper environment to practice their rights.

Vision Rescue is committed to creating a space where -

1. Children feel able and willing to speak out with confidence about their emotions, feelings, family, friends, ambitions, career, life, etc including about hurts, abuse/s (if any).
2. Children are empowered to become actors in their own protection without further discrimination or shame.
3. Children are enabled:
 - a. To receive information,
 - b. To ask questions,
 - c. To make choices, and
 - d. To make decisions.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

Vision Rescue is committed to continuing to identify and monitor risks relating to children during the program implementation. The risk assessment template will be updated accordingly, and risks will be managed efficiently.

There will be a specific management process adopted in order to facilitate implementation of the child protection policy and procedures. The structure shall include:

- Vision Rescue will have open lines of communication where understanding abuse and listening and responding to concerns are the main priority. Vision Rescue will create an atmosphere of support and encouragement for those who feel it necessary to report concerns, as child protection is a difficult issue to confront. It will promote a positive environment for giving and receiving feedback.
- In a context of positive and overall organizational support for child protection, a designated Child Protection Officer will be appointed, who will be responsible for the implementation of the child protection policy. This role will reflect the nature and structure of the organization and the person shall have sufficient seniority and support to carry out the role.
- The responsibilities of the designated Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer will include:
 - Promoting awareness and implementation of the policy throughout the organization.
 - Monitoring implementation of the policy and reporting on developments at each Vision Rescue Team Meetings.
 - The development of child protection training resources as required.
 - Ensuring regular trainings and refresher courses are provided to stake holders.
 - Maintaining knowledge of best practice and statutory requirements.
 - Ensuring Child protection will be a standing agenda item in annual reviews and self-assessments, and it will include an opportunity to discuss child protection issues with other members of the team.
- The disclosure of personal information about children, including legal cases, will be limited to who need to know, as per the discretion of Vision Rescue's designated Child Protection Officer.

- Vision Rescue commits to raising awareness of child protection issues with its stakeholders, including clients/vendors/partners, etc. Vision Rescue will therefore incorporate child protection discussions into all projects undertaken with respective stake holders, and commits to upholding a professional approach toward child protection issues and demonstrating awareness of matters of abuse.

9. CHILD SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING:

When Vision Rescue recruits any staff, contractors or consultants, full time or part time, temporary or long-term, who will be having direct or indirect contact with children, there will be a **thorough and standardized recruitment process** which shall include:

- Advertisements for vacancies that clearly state that a child protection policy, including screening procedures, is in place.
- A candidate specification that accompanies each job description, against which applicants are judged, to ensure that the best candidate for the job is selected.
- The requirement for the potential associate to read, understand and accept compliance with Vision Rescue's Child Protection Policy and guidelines as part of the terms and conditions of association with Vision Rescue. This process will include signing the appropriate Statement of Commitment as a condition of association.
- The requirement for the potential associate to sign a personal declaration stating any criminal convictions or not, including those considered '*spent*'.
- The requirement for minimum of two references check (professional and character references) excluding family members and those who have known the applicant personally for less than 2-year sthat can be verified by telephone.
- An interview process which includes:
 - One member of the recruitment panel will have undergone recruitment training specifically focused on the issues of child protection.
 - Specific, standardized questions at interview on child protection and the candidate's commitment to, and respect for, child protection policies and procedures as well as the candidate's motivation for working with children.
 - Attentiveness to anything suspicious in employment history, including gaps, and the use of telephone references to clarify any areas of concern.
- When Vision Rescue accepts interns or volunteers, whether paid or unpaid, full time or part time, temporary or long-term through sending agencies, it is imperative that

sending agencies have to ensure that candidates have undergone comprehensive child-safe screening measures. This includes but is not limited to background checks, reference verifications, and the provision of relevant certifications attesting to their suitability for working with children.

10. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Vision Rescue is committed to continually equip and train all stakeholders in regards to children. Vision Rescue's permanent staff and consultants will foster an environment that encourages opportunities to question and learn about child protection issues. There will be opportunities within Vision Rescue to develop and maintain the necessary skills and understanding to safeguard children.

Vision Rescue understands the need for capacity building on issues of child protection and appreciates the constraints and conditions under which organizations operate. Vision Rescue is committed to undertake such capacity building in partnership with others.

Vision Rescue commits to provide:

- A copy of Child Protection policy will be provided to each stakeholder during signing a partnership agreement, or before starting the work.
- An induction process for all staffs, interns and volunteers which includes -
 - familiarization with the Child Protection Policy and procedures;
 - opportunities to learn about the nature of abuse, the effects of abuse and how to recognize and respond to concerns about child abuse;
 - information and support on who to contact in the event of any concerns about child protection issues.
- New staffs, consultant, interns and volunteers should receive child protection training within 3 months of taking up their position.
- Existing staffs/volunteers should receive child protection training within a designated time period as scheduled in the below table.

Child Protection Training Schedule:

Sr. No	Training Month	Training week	Participants
1	April	4 th Week	VR Staff
2	October	4 th Week	VR staff
3	Jan/Aug	2 nd week	Community Champions / Education Reps / Paid Volunteers (Interns)
4	April / May / June	1 st week	Partners, Vendors, Stakeholder

11. REVISION OF THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or whenever there is a major change in the organization or in relevant legislation, to guarantee the best available policies for child protection. The management, staff, representatives of children, representatives of stakeholders will be involved in completing the review process.

12. COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- Vision Rescue does not believe in preying on the poverty conditions that children face in order to shock/guilt viewers into supporting our cause. We believe in upholding the inherent dignity of every child and family in our care. In our content and images, this dignity is upheld by only showcasing images or video clips of beneficiaries that are respectful of their personhood, and in such a manner that places value and worth on them. Images of sadness, explicit poverty, partial or complete nudity, are never to be published. Whatever photos we publish should show the subject in a decent, dignified manner, no matter how dire the story of the person, or how intense our depiction of the situation is.
- Usage of the term “slum” vs “slum community”: Due to overwhelmingly negative press both nationally and internationally about slums in India, the word ‘slum’ has come to have strong negative connotations as a people group associated with the hotbed of criminal activity. To offset this, and to present a more respectful representation of those who live in such areas, Vision Rescue always uses the term “slum community”

rather than just 'slum'. We never say 'slum child' or 'slum kid', rather - 'children who live in slum communities'

- Usage of the term “illegal squatters” vs “unauthorised settlements”: A majority of slum communities in India are non-notified by the government. These locations and people groups are commonly labelled “illegal squatters” as the land they reside on isn’t legally theirs. While this is understandable, it is not an accurate representation of all those living in slum communities. While many are “illegal squatters”, some do have legal rights to the land they live on, and a majority live in such communities not voluntarily but because systemic inequality leaves them with few alternate options. Vision Rescue prefers to call such non-notified slum communities as “unauthorised settlements”, not ‘illegal squatters’.
- Access to print and electronic personal information about children should be restricted to the minimum number of people who need to know within Vision Rescue.
- Personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child within the city and in the community and cause them to be put at risk, including but not limited to risk of stigma and/or harm should not be used in any communication for general or public purposes.
- Every child has a right to be accurately represented through both words and images. Text and images included in any print, broadcast or electronic materials such as brochures, publications, reports, videos or websites, sufficient information should be provided where possible as to their social, cultural and economic environment to depict an accurate and balanced depiction of the child, maintaining child’s identity and dignity.
- In images and videos, children should be appropriately clothed and not depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually provocative.
- Always ask permission from the child / children themselves before taking photographs or moving images except under exceptional circumstances, based on the child / children’s best interests, where this might not be possible or desirable.
- Vision Rescue respects the rights of every child including their rights to protection, privacy and to have their opinions heard and participate in decisions affecting them, and are committed to protecting children's privacy by ensuring that our communication channels are secure and confidential, aligning with the guidelines outlined in our child protection and communications policy

- When taking photos or recording stories of a child, at a minimum informed verbal consent must be gained from a parent or guardian.

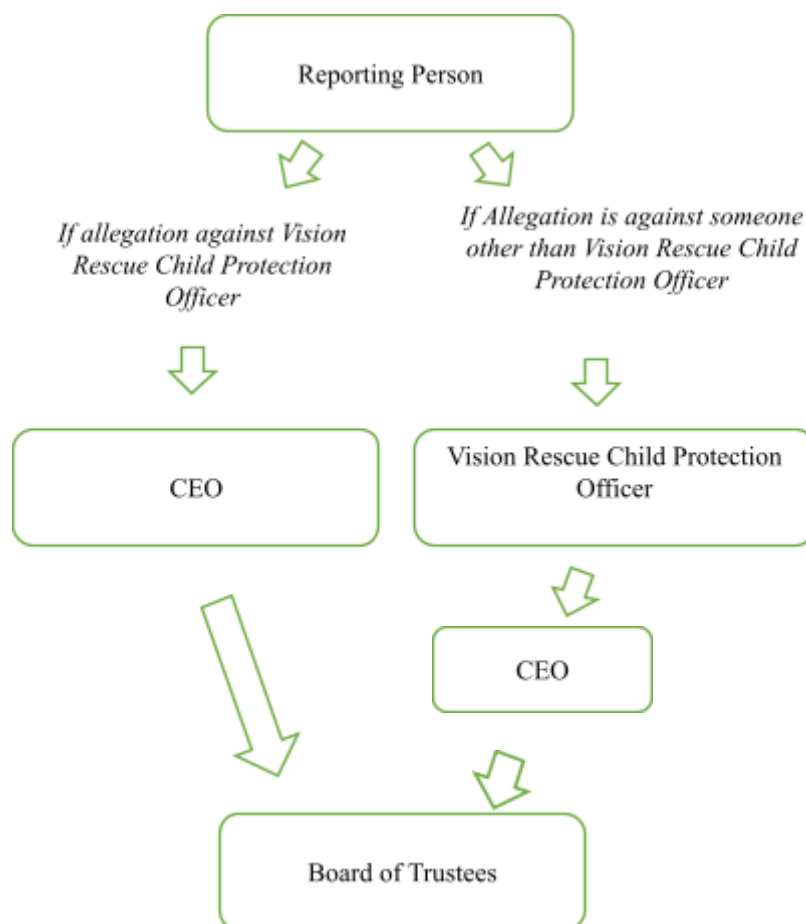
Written consent (Appendix 5) is required if:

- ☐ Photographing children in the context of culturally or politically sensitive or high-stigma issues.
 - ☐ The photo or story clearly identifies and provides substantial information about a child.
 - ☐ The individual is the sole focus of a story.
 - ☐ Taking images or film of individuals in clinical settings or private settings.
- As far as possible, people [including children] should be able to give their own accounts rather than have people speak on their behalf, and people's [including children's] ability to take responsibility and action for themselves should be highlighted.
- Avoid:
 - ☐ Language and images that could possibly degrade, victimize or shame children;
 - ☐ Making generalizations which not accurately reflect the nature of the situation;
 - ☐ Discrimination of any kind or any form of social classification (especially of the derogatory kind);
 - ☐ Taking pictures out of context (e.g. pictures should be accompanied by an explanatory caption where possible).
- Partner organization can use the photographs and videos of the children appropriately by signing a proper agreement with Vision Rescue. Any use of such materials for purposes other than what is agreed upon could subject the borrowing individual or organization to legal action. Furthermore, failure to adhere to the agreed use of the material will result in the immediate termination of the organization's permission to use the subject materials and/or require immediate return of all materials (including any copies made) provided by Vision Rescue.

SECTION 2: CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING PROCEDURES

This is a process for reporting and reacting to witnessed, suspected or alleged child abuse and/or violation of the Child Protection Policy which is made available to, and understood by, all staff, consultants, contractors, interns and volunteers. If Vision Rescue is working on a project which involves sustained, direct contact with children then the children themselves will be made aware, in a language and age-appropriate way that they understand about what to do if they feel uncomfortable and want to report something.

REPORTING STRUCTURE IN VISION RESCUE



REPORTING PROCEDURES

WHAT NEEDS TO BE REPORTED

Vision Rescue expects that all stakeholders will report the following:

1. Any belief or suspicion of child abuse or exploitation:

- One must report any incident, belief or suspicion of child abuse, exploitation or risk of potential harm.
- One must report if anyone in the organisation or in partner organisation, who are in direct contact of a child are accused of, charged with or arrested for child abuse or exploitation if child.

2. Noncompliance or failure to protect the child:

- One should report if any staff or stakeholder mentioned in the scope is failed to protect the child or failed to implement the child protection policy.
- One must report the activities or practices in any program/ projects of the Vision Rescue, which do not protect the best interest of the child, fail to implement safeguard protocol for the child, or don't fit under protocol set by the local child protection law and policies.

3. Concern regarding the safety and wellbeing of the child:

- One should just report, if he/she identifies any concern about the wellbeing of the child, where intervention by Child welfare committee or Child welfare NGO is required.

WHO NEEDS TO REPORT

Every Vision Rescue stakeholder is required to immediately but not longer than 48 hours report incidents, beliefs or suspicions that they become aware of as described above

HOW AND WHO TO REPORT TO

All Stakeholders are required to report to the Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer (or the Chief Executive Officer if the allegation is against the Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer.

All stakeholders should use the Confidential Incident Report Form (Appendix 2) to report an incident. How to report the incident is depending upon, various factors i.e. where the incident is happened, who is involved in the incident, and type of incident (Abuse, non-compliance and concern about wellbeing of the child)

In urgent circumstances necessitating immediate action prior to the completion and submission of a confidential incident reporting form, said form may be completed subsequent to the resolution of the emergency situation, which is to be done in consultation with the Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer.

Any belief or suspicion of child abuse or exploitation:

- o All stakeholders, including Vision Rescue's staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors, are expected to immediately report any incident of child abuse, and belief or suspicion of and abuse or exploitations to Designated Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer, who will further guide on the procedures of the reporting and intervention in the incident.
- o Same process should follow if, any one from the organisation or anyone from the partner organisation is accused of, arrested for or charged with abuse or exploitation related to child.

Noncompliance or failure to protect the child:

- o If any program/ project of Vision Rescue, fails to protect the children or have issues of non-compliances needs to report to designated Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer. Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer will get a detailed report of the incident and the proof from the Operations Head, which support to prove the non-compliance, and failure to protect the child.

Concern regarding the safety and wellbeing of the child:

- o If anyone's concerns involve immediate harm to a child, action must be taken without delay, as inaction may place the child in further danger. If anyone knows any information about the maltreatment of a child, it is his/her responsibility to tell Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer. All staffs, consultants, interns and volunteers must therefore act immediately and report suspicions, however uncertain, to the Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer. Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer may in turn seek guidance on further action in the local context from local social services and the Police.
- o In certain instances, there will be the obligation for Vision Rescue and its staffs, consultants, volunteers and others to report concerns to the appropriate external bodies. This will usually occur as a consequence of the reporting procedure. However, if urgent action is required in order to protect children then it may be prior to the reporting procedure.
- o Relevant contact details for child protection services, local social services department, police, emergency medical help and helplines will be readily available and easily accessible to organization representatives.

WHAT IF YOU ARE UNSURE HOW OR IF YOU SHOULD REPORT THE SOMETHING

If anyone is unsure, about the reporting procedure and not sure if he/she can report some incidents or concerns, he/she can contact designated Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer at the head office. Designated Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer will provide detailed guidance and also the conversation will be kept confidential. Vision Rescue Whistle-blower Policy is in place to ensure the protection and support for any person making such a report.

CONTACT DETAILS

Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer (CPO)
 Shereen Mathew
 +91 83088 19593
shereen@visionrescue.co.in

If the report is against the Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer, reports can be made to
 Chief Executive Officer
 Dr Susan Raju Paul
 +91 88281 65059
susan@visionrescue.co.in

INVESTIGATING PRODCEDURES

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU REPORT?

All the issues related to non-compliances and concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of the child reported will be handled by designated Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer. CPO will arrange a detailed investigation of the incidents, staff, stakeholders, partners organisation, who failed to comply with the Child protection policy. The action will be based on the severity of the incident and will find out the reason of non-compliances and failure to safeguard the children. CPO will ensure coordinating support services for affected children and families, and advocating for the best interests of the child throughout all stages of intervention.

With regard to suspicion or belief of abuse and exploitation following steps will be followed.

1. Initiation of an internal investigation:

The Designated Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer will act immediately by launching an investigation and developing an investigation plan based on established procedures and in accordance with the Vision Rescue Complaints Handling Procedure. All reports will be properly investigated no matter who the alleged perpetrator is. The designated Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer will lead the investigation with other members of senior management and if deemed appropriate the Vision Rescue board member. The designated Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer will ensure relevant laws and legislative procedures are followed. The investigation will be considered top priority until closed.

2. Reporting to appropriate authority:

- Vision Rescue must report all child protection allegations of a criminal nature directly to the police. The police will advise whether the internal investigation needs to be suspended while the police investigation is underway. In such cases, Vision Rescue will ensure risk management strategies are put into place to protect children.

- If the child is in Vision Rescue premises, the concern will be immediately reported according to the Vision Rescue Child Protection Policy reporting procedures, as well as according to the relevant state/national legislation reporting requirement for which help can be availed through Childline toll free number 1098.
- In accordance with international legal obligations, Vision Rescue is obligated to promptly report any incidents to donor agencies and provide updates on the progress of investigations, ensuring compliance without compromising confidentiality. Conversely, donor agencies are obligated to maintain the confidentiality of the information provided by the Vision Rescue.

3. **Documentation of the incident and procedure:**

All the incident and procedure after taking action , within 15 days (max 30days irrespective of complexity of cases), needs to be documented and kept confidential & protected. After completion of the all procedure and closure of the case, final report will be made and will be available to Vision Rescue Board.

4. **Confidentiality:**

All the incidents and child will be handled with empathy and sensitivity. It is responsibility of the person who is involved in investigation to keep the incident, information of incidents & procedure confident for the safety of child and his/her family. There will be some incidents like child sexual abuse/harassment abduction; life threatening incidents etc. on which immediate action needs to be taken keeping the best interest of the child in mind, even the family is not ready to take any action on it.

5. **Support system:**

Until the investigation process is complete and case is closed, all related people i.e. Victim, reporter of the incident and the alleged perpetrators will be treated with dignity, Internal counseling/ support will be providing, if necessary external counseling / support to the child and family will be provided and external concern NGO will be approached for the same (Confidentiality will still be maintained)

WHAT HAPPENS IF INCIDENT IS PROVEN OR SUSPICION IS CREDIBLE?

In the event that an incident has been proven or there is credible suspicion, Vision Rescue will automatically terminate a trustee, staff member, interns, champions, consultants, contractors, vendors, donors or any other representative's association with the Partner Organisations.

VISION RESCUE STAFF/LEADERSHIP/INTERNS/CONSULTANTS/CONTRACTORS

- The staff that is proved guilty will be terminated immediately and will be keeping under observation as per the legal procedure.
- If the staff is suspected to be guilty, he/she will be immediately taken out from the contact of the child and family. He/She will be given time break and will be kept under observation and/or will be transferred to other location where he/she will not come in contact with any child until he/she is proven guilty or innocent. Till then he will be eligible for full salary and other benefits of the Vision rescue.
- Immediate Protection and throughout support will be provided to the child and family.

VOLUNTEERS

- If the volunteers proved guilty, his/her engagement in child related activities will be stopped immediately. His/Her Partner Organization will be informed about the same and the contract with such organization will be reviewed, and if required the contract will be terminated.
- An appropriate action will be taken against the perpetrator as per the Indian legal procedure if he / she find guilty.
- If Volunteer is suspected to be guilty will be investigated as per the Vision Rescue Child Protection policy procedure and will be taken appropriate action. This Volunteer will never be allowed to engage in any activities of Vision Rescue.
- Immediate Protection and throughout support will be provided to the child and family.

GUESTS / DONORS / VISITORS

- The guest will be accompanied by Vision Rescue staff during field visits. GUESTS/ DONORS/VISITORS will neither be allowed to contact any child in isolation or share/get any personal information with/from CHILD about self or child.
- If overseas GUESTS/ DONORS/VISITORS harasses/abuses child, and any legal action can't be taken on him/her as per the Indian legal procedure, then he/she will be handover to the concern organization and appropriate action will asked to take up against him/her.
- If the GUESTS/ DONORS/VISITORS harasses/abuses child, GUESTS/ DONORS/VISITORS will be immediately asked to leave the place and child will be provided with immediate care and protection. The incident will be share with concern organization, from where GUESTS/ DONORS/VISITORS has come and appropriate action will be taken as per the Indian legal procedure. If the GUESTS/ DONORS/VISITORS of donors, harasses/abuses child, and are reluctant to accept it then, management and Executive will take the decision of suspending partnership with the organization until all case related procedure is finished.
- Immediate Protection and throughout support will be provided to the child and family.

WHAT IF SOMEONE IS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE RESPONSE?

The decision to suspend is not subject to challenge. When investigating and determining the concerns or complaints, the process should always be fair and any adverse determination should be open to challenge through an appeals process. This means that if a stakeholder, including staff, consultant, contractor, intern or volunteer has been accused of violating the Child Protection Policy and the complaint has been upheld as a result of an investigation, the accused has the right to appeal this decision, for example, they may feel that the original decision was unjust or based on misinformation or a personal grudge of the person who carried out the investigation.

Similarly, in the event that the victim or their family is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation conducted by the Child Protection Officer, they reserve the right to appeal following the conclusion of the initial investigation.

An appeal would can be made to General Secretary of Vision Rescue's Board, who would re-examine the evidence to double-check that no mistakes have been made.

Contact Details

Name : Mr. Navin Chatterjee
Email : secretary@visionrescue.co.in
Phone : +91 98677 45305

The victim or their family can be avail the help through Childline toll free number 1098.

CHILD FRIENDLY REPORTING PROCESS

Children in the program are trained on good touch and bad touch and various forms of abuse using various child friendly materials in classrooms.

- Accessible Reporting Channels: Children can report concerns in-person reporting to trusted adults such teachers, case counselors, etc.
- Trained Personnel: Staff members who receive reports from children are trained to interact with them in a sensitive and supportive manner. They receive training on child protection principles, trauma-informed practices, and how to respond to children's needs effectively, and report immediately to Vision Rescue Child Protection Officer as per procedures stated above in this policy.
- Child-Friendly Materials: Child-friendly materials explaining child abuse are available in multiple formats, such as posters, brochures, or videos. These materials use age-appropriate language, illustrations, and symbols to explain how to report concerns and what to expect during the process.
- Confidentiality and Privacy: Children are to be assured that their reports will be handled confidentially, and their privacy will be respected throughout the process. Only those who need to know will be informed about the report, and children will have control over who is involved in the investigation.

- **Anonymous Reporting Option:** Children have the option to report anonymously if they feel uncomfortable disclosing their identity. Anonymous reports are treated with the same level of seriousness and confidentiality as identified reports.
- **Supportive Environment:** Children are encouraged to report concerns in a supportive environment where they feel safe and comfortable.

SECTION 3

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT *to Vision Rescue's Child Protection Policy*

"I, _____, have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in this Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing child protection policies and practice while working with Vision Rescue.

(Name)

Contact No.

(Job title / role)

Email ID

(Signature)

(Date)

(Place)

SECTION 4: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

VISION RESCUE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY - CODE OF CONDUCT

(SHORTER VERSION)

I, (insert name) _____, as a
visitor/donor/volunteer/consultant/contractor/vendor/other _____

to VISION RESCUE agree that while associated with Vision Rescue:

I WILL:

- Avoid placing myself in a compromising or vulnerable position, which could result in an allegation being made.
- Be accompanied by a second adult whenever possible; meet with a child in a central, public location whenever possible but within visual sight of another staff members or another trusted member of community, etc.
- Wait for appropriate physical contact, such as holding hands, to be initiated by the child, except in situations where it is expected for adults to greet children by offering them their hand.
- Be culturally sensitive and keep a low profile, especially if I am a volunteer from another country
- Take time and approach to interact with care, not to threaten or intimidate children.
- Provide a positive and encouraging environment for children to gain confidence and motivate them to progress in life.
- Be aware of the power balance between an adult and child, and avoid taking any advantage this may provide.
- Be aware that as a staff, consultant or volunteer, my presence with children will often be temporary and I will therefore avoid creating bonds with children which encourage emotional or psychological dependency. I will make it clear to children from the outset, in age-appropriate terms that you will not be with them long-term.
- Be aware of the potential for peer abuse; develop special measures/ supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable children; avoid placing children in high-risk peer situations (e.g. unsupervised mixing of older and younger children).

- Develop clear rules to address specific physical safety issues relative to the local physical environment of a project (e.g. for projects based near water, heavy road traffic, railway lines).
- Comply with all relevant local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour.
- Let the project coordinator know if I have a child protection concern, along with any evidence if possible to substantiate. I will not intervene directly into any such matter.
- Treat all children equally regardless of race, gender, religion, caste, etc.
- Listen to children and take their concerns seriously
- Provide children with a safe and protective environment
- Disclose any charges or convictions that relate to child abuse or exploitation
- Create a culture where child protection issues and concerns can be raised
- Abide by the media guidelines including appropriate consent requirements
- Immediately report any incident, belief or suspicion of abuse or exploitation; non-compliance with VR's Child Protection Policy or failure to safeguard a child; and/or concerns regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child

I WILL NOT:

- Show discrimination of race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, or political persuasion.
- Physically, mentally, emotionally or sexually abuse or have any kind of sexual activity with any child or approach child in any manner.
- Kiss, hug, fondle, rub, or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way.
- Be alone with a single child, including but not limited to in the following situations: in a car (no matter how short the journey); overnight (no matter where the accommodation); in your home or the home of a child.
- Show favoritism or spend excessive amounts of time with one child.
- Engage in or allow sexually provocative games with children to take place.
- Sleep in the same bed or room as a child.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child could do for him/herself, including dressing, bathing, and grooming. Where a child cannot do such things for themselves, I will ensure the "two adult rule"
- Encourage any crushes by a child.

- Use language that will mentally or emotionally harm any child.
- Suggest inappropriate behavior or relations of any kind.
- Act in any way that intends to embarrass, shame, humiliate, or degrade a child.
- Express sympathy or emotion explicitly to a child, which may create unwanted attention.
- Encourage any inappropriate attention-seeking behavior, such as tantrums, by a child.
- Use of any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras inappropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium.
- Hire children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- Engage children in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity
- Exchange personal contact details with children
- Utilise other known workers/volunteers who pose a known risk to children's safety
- Give or supply any child with alcohol or illegal drugs or be intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs prior to, or whilst, engaging with any child.
- Hit, smack or otherwise physically assault, punish or abuse children, even where this may be culturally acceptable.
- Conduct or be a part of harmful traditional practices, spiritual or ritualistic abuse.
- Participate in orphanage tourism/volunteerism including visiting or volunteering in a residential care centre where I am not a key stakeholder. I will also not be involved in facilitating orphanage tourism through sending, organising or receiving teams (of non-stakeholders) for the purpose of volunteering or visiting a residential care centre.

Full Name : _____
Address : _____
Email ID : _____
Mobile Number : _____
Organization/College/Company/Group : _____
Duration of Involvement : _____

Signature : _____

Date : _____

Place : _____

For office use only

Accompanied by/Reporting to : _____

Employee Code : _____

Locations/Projects visited/involved : _____

APPENDIX 2:

VISION RESCUE CONFIDENTIAL INCIDENT REPORT FORM

In accordance with Vision Rescue's reporting procedures, any incident, belief or suspicion of a child protection violation is to be reported and the information passed on to the Vision Rescue. This includes child abuse, child exploitation, and possession of child exploitation material or non-compliance with Vision Rescue child protection policy. Activities or practices in Vision Rescue projects that do not protect the best interests of the child or do not meet applicable local laws or standard must also be reported.

Please note:

- *In no way, nor under any circumstances, is anyone on the field or in India to attempt to persuade someone not to notify, or even to delay notifying, authorities in the case of a child protection concern.*
- *It is not your responsibility to investigate even for the purpose of gathering information for this form. It is sufficient to just report on what you observed, aware of or were told.*

PART ONE: ABOUT YOU

(Note: This form is to be filled out by the person making the report)

Name:

Contact Details (e.g. phone, email, address):

Relationship with Vision Rescue (e.g. Field Worker, Employee, Volunteer etc):

Relationship with child: _____

PART TWO: CHILDS DETAILS

Child's name (s): _____

Age: _____ Gender: **F / M**

Any other relevant details or issues to be aware of (e.g. cultural issue, disability, ethnicity, religion etc):

Who does the child live with (include address and contact details)?

Is the child aware of this referral? **Yes/No**

Is the parent/guardian aware of this referral? **Yes/No**

Where is the child now? Is s/he in a place of safety and are there any immediate medical issues?

PART THREE: YOUR CONCERN

Child protection concern:

☐ Observed/suspected by yourself

☐ Disclosure by the child

Allegation made by *(name & details)*

Date(s), time(s) and location(s) of incident(s):

Who is the person suspected?

☐ Vision Rescue Staff, Field worker or other representative

☐ Staff of partner Organization/ visitors/ guests/ Contractor/ consultants

☐ Someone in the community

Name and other relevant details of person suspected (e.g. address, job position, relationship with child, etc):

Details of Report

Please include the following:

- Details of the child protection concern or incident (Include what is alleged to have happened? What were the circumstances etc)

- Write down exactly what the child or other person has said (in his/her own words) and what you said (NB: Do not ask the child leading question-record actual details)
- Observations made by you (e.g. observed injuries, persons perceived emotional state etc. Mark which observations are fact or opinion)

Have local authorities/external agencies been notified? **Yes/No**

Date of notification: _____

Explain (e.g. name of authorities/agency, advice received, actions etc):

Name of the Reporter: _____ Employee Code: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 3:

VISION RESCUE CONFIDENTIAL INCIDENT INVESTIGATION FORM

Date matter was referred : _____

Date responded to complainant : _____

Investigation: How was the investigation conducted? Who was involved in the investigation, roles and responsibilities? Include key dates of investigation.

Findings & Comments:

Actions: Include action taken and any continued follow-up needed.

Lessons Learned: Strengths and weaknesses in areas such as the Child Protection Policy and its implementation and management etc.

Recommendations to prevent possible child protection violations and improve the investigation process in the future.

Report prepared by	:	
Employee Code	:	
Sign	:	
Date	:	
Reporting Manager Name	:	
Employee Code	:	
Sign	:	
Date	:	

APPENDIX 4:

GENERAL INTERVIEW, IMAGE and VIDEO CONSENT FORM

PART 1: CONSENT OF INTERVIEWEE

I _____, consent to be interviewed by an *Vision Rescue* staff member/field worker and consent to my image and voice being recorded for the purpose of *Vision Rescue* publications and promotional materials as per the conditions listed below:

1.	I consent to my story and image being published in <i>Vision Rescue</i> and/or partner publications and promotional materials ☐ Yes ☐ No
2.	I consent to my story and image being released on the <i>Vision Rescue</i> and/or partner website and I understand that my story can be downloaded from the internet ☐ Yes ☐ No
3.	I consent to my story and image being used by <i>Vision Rescue</i> for the next 4 years (or until I revoke my consent) ☐ Yes ☐ No If no, please state how long you consent for your story and image to be used by <i>Vision Rescue</i> : _____ <i>(Note: In the case of survivors of abuse or exploitation, content will be used for a maximum of 2 years unless otherwise specified by the interview subject)</i>
4.	I consent to <i>Vision Rescue</i> using my name & the personal details I disclose in my interview in <i>Vision Rescue</i> and/or partner publications & promotional materials. ☐ Yes ☐ Yes, but I would like to OMIT the following details: ☐ No ☐ Name ☐ Age ☐ Specifics of any condition I may have ☐ Location ☐ Other (Please specify) _____

I wish to make the following extra requests:

PART 2: DETAILS OF INTERVIEWEE

Name of person being interviewed: _____ Age (if a minor): _____

Location: _____ Project: _____

Signature of interviewee: _____ Date: _____

PART 3: PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT

- In the event that the person is under 14 years old, a parent or guardian must give consent.
- In the event that the person is between the ages of 14-18 years old, but unable to give informed consent, a parent or guardian must also sign the consent form.

Parent/Guardians name: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

PART 4: FIELD WORKER

MANAGING LEVELS OF RISKS:

When *Vision Rescue* staff/field worker wish to use images or information about an individual, they should assess the risks of harm or stigma to the individual and act according to table below in all promotions and communications activities.

As children are always more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, *Vision Rescue* will rank all children as medium to high risk.

Is the individual a survivor of abuse or exploitation:

☐ Yes ☐ No

Please tick if the individual is a child or adult

☐ Child (Please go section 4a) ☐ Adult (Please go to section 4b)

4a. If individual is a Child

Is there a high risk of harm or stigma?

☐ No- If no, please note the child will be ranked as medium risk

☐ Yes- If yes, please state below the reason why and any recommendations

4b. If individual is an Adult

Please tick level of risk of harm or stigma:

☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

If medium or high please state the reason why and include any recommendations:

Signature of Field Worker: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 5:

CONSENT FORM FOR CHILD FROM PARENTS/GUARDIAN ALONG WITH BLC APPLICATION FORM

Communication Guidelines

- Use of electronic gadgets/ photography/video is restricted only by permission from team leaders and project coordinator.
- Personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child within the city and in the community and cause them to be put at risk should not be used on the organization's website or in any other form of communication for general or public purposes.
- It should be done in a culturally sensitive manner, with no intentions of instigating or capturing any sexually provoking content.
- In images, children should be appropriately clothed and not depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually provocative.

Avoid:

- Language and images that could possibly degrade, victimize or shame children;
- Making generalizations which not accurately reflect the nature of the situation;
- Discrimination of any kind;
- Taking pictures out of context (e.g. pictures should be accompanied by an explanatory caption where possible).

Declaration and Media Consent

1. I read and understood all procedure related to the admission process. I hereby certify that all information given above is true and correct. I agree to abide by all rules and regulations of this Beacon learning center. I declare that I am sending my child to this center out of my free will and without any compulsion and lucrative offers.
2. Hereby I willingly give consent to take photos & videos of my child & family. I understand that, this information will be published on internet which will be downloaded and used for developmental welfare purpose by Vision Rescue.

Parent/Guardian name _____

Signature _____

Teacher name _____

Signature _____

Community worker _____

Signature _____

Date:

Place

.....

APPENDIX 6:

GOVT. CHILD PROTECTION MECHANISM

CONSTITUTIONAL FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN IN INDIA

- Article 14- The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of laws within the territory of India.
- Article 15- The State shall not discriminate against any citizen. Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any special provisions for women and children.
- Article 21- No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.
- Article 21 A- The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6-14 years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.
- Article 23- Traffic in human beings and beggary and other forms of forced labor are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with the law.
- Article 24- No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.
- The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act was notified on 13th December 2002, making free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right for all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

<http://www.childlineindia.org.in/national-mechanisms-child-protection-child-rights.htm>

MAJOR CHILD RELATED ACTS IN INDIA

1. Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959

The Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 criminalizes begging. Following is an overview of provisions in the act that are relevant to children ages 0-18.

Under this act, a child is defined as a boy who has not completed 16 years of age and a girl who has not completed 18 years of age. According to this act beggars found guilty by a court of law were sentenced to a minimum of one year and a maximum of three years in Beggar's Home (Certified institution). Under the provisions of this act a person who solicited or

exploited a child to beg for alms, can be sent to prison for a minimum of one year and maximum of three years.

[\(<http://www.childlineindia.org.in/Notable-State-Policies-Programmes-Legislations.htm>\)](http://www.childlineindia.org.in/Notable-State-Policies-Programmes-Legislations.htm)

2. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012:

The POCSO Act, 2012 is a comprehensive law to provide for the protection of children from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography, while safeguarding the interests of the child at every stage of the judicial process by incorporating child-friendly mechanisms for reporting, recording of evidence, investigation and speedy trial of offences through designated Special Courts.

(MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, Model Guidelines under Section 39 of, The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012)

3. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 was enacted to consolidate and amend the law relating to juvenile in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection, by providing for proper care, protection and treatment by catering to their development needs, and by adopting a child-friendly approach in the adjudication and disposition of matters in the best interest of children and for their ultimate rehabilitation through various institutions established under this law. The law saw its course and proved to be quite effective with a number of convicts been held for commission of offences under the Act of 2000, which earlier went unnoticed due to absence of a specific law in this regard.

4. Child Labour Act 1986, amendment Act 2016

The main object of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 is to address the social concern and prohibit the engagement of children who have not completed 14th year of age in 13 occupations & 51 processes and to regulate the conditions of work of children has been prohibited in occupations relating to (i) transport of passengers, goods or mails by railways (ii) bidi making (iii) carpet weaving (iv) manufacturing of matches, explosives and fire (v) soap manufacture (vi) wool cleaning (vii) building and construction industry. The Government has also prohibited employment of children in the following occupations or processes: (i) Abattoirs/Slaughter houses (ii) hazardous processes and dangerous operations

as notified (iii) printing, as defined, (iv) cashew and cashewnut descaling and processing 9v) soldering processes in electronic industry. The Fundamental Rights mentioned in the Constitution of India (the law of land) in the Article 24 under Right Against Exploitation also mentions for prohibition of employment of children in factories, etc.

As per the amendment act 2016, child is allowed to work in non-hazardous family business/ occupation. Also they are allowed to work in entertainment and advertisement industry with all the safety measures being used after school hours and during vacations.

CHILD RELATED POLICIES IN INDIA

- The National Policy for Children, 2013
- National Policy for Children, 1974
- National Policy on Education, 1986
- National Policy on Child Labor, 1987
- National Nutrition Policy, 1993
- National Health Policy, 2002
- National Charter for Children, 2003
- National Plan of Action, 2005
- Child Rights in the Five Year Plans

<http://www.childlineindia.org.in/Child-Related-Policies.htm>

MECHANISM TO DEAL WITH CHILDREN'S ISSUES IN INDIA

State Government	National Government
● Juvenile Justice Board ● Child Welfare Committee ● Special Juvenile Police Units ● State Commission on the Protection of Child Rights ● State Human Rights Commission	● National Human Rights Commission ● National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights ● Ministry of Women and Child Development ● Ministry of Labor and Employment and Related Bodies ● Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment ● Ministry of Human Resource Development ● Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

<http://www.childlineindia.org.in/National-Actors.htm>)

KEY CHILD PROTECTION ACTORS

GOVERNMENT BODIES

- Child Welfare Committee
- Juvenile Justice Board
- Local Police stations

OTHER NON PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- CHILDLINE
- Justice Venture International
- Prerana
- Arpan
- Aangan Trust

APPENDIX 7:

REFERENCES

DOCUMENTS:

- The WHO definition of Child Abuse as defined by the Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention WHO – 1999.
- *Setting the Standard: A common approach to Child Protection for international NGOs*, Standard 1 (Policy).
- Setting the Standard: A common approach to Child Protection for international NGOs, anonymous INGO quotation
- ECPAT Australia, *Choose with Care*.
- ChildHope Child Protection Policy, July 2001
- Sense International Child Protection Policy
- Tearfund Child Protection Policy, May 2001
- child protection policies of World Vision
- Save the Child UK Child Protection Policy, 1999
- Sense International and Learning for Life
- World Vision Guidelines on the Use of Images and Messages Relating to the Developing World
- Anti-Slavery International draft Child Protection Policy, Oct 2002, 'Raising and reporting of child abuse'

WEBSITES

- <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/documents/safetyofchild.pdf>
- <http://www.childlineindia.org.in/national-mechanisms-child-protection-child-rights.htm>
- <http://www.childlineindia.org.in/Notable-State-Policies-Programmes-Legislations.htm>
- <http://www.childlineindia.org.in/Child-Related-Policies.htm>
- <http://www.childlineindia.org.in/National-Actors.htm>
- www.childhope.org.uk/toolkit.php and www.createsolutions.org for information on the CRB and descriptions of standard and enhanced disclosures.