

SNEHA CARE HOME CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



SNEHA CARE HOME & SHINING STAR SCHOOL

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THE SNEHA CARE HOME CHILD PROTECTION PLEDGE

We (the governing body, staff and volunteers of Sneha Care Home and Shining Star School) pledge that we believe:

- All children (girls and boys and others) including those living with HIV infection have equal rights to protection from abuse exploitation, violence and discrimination
- We will strive to and encourage others to instil confidence and good self image in our children through our speech and actions.
- We will create a nurturing, happy, caring and stimulating environment and provide our children with aptitude based educational and recreational opportunities, adequate nutrition health care and psycho-social support.
- We will disclose HIV status to our children in a sensitive manner, enable and empower them to live positively with HIV.
- All children will be encouraged to fulfil their potential and inequalities will be challenged.
- We will advocate with all our partners and collaborators to meet the standards of child protection.

We pledge to work towards the Vision: 'To endeavour to produce successful, responsible, confident and creative human beings by creating a happy, caring, child friendly and stimulating environment where values blend with academics, where skill development is aptitude based and where special needs are addressed through individual attention.

We commit ourselves to these Key Principles:

- Practice Child Protection Policy with unconditional acceptance of every child.
- Be the voice on behalf of and with the children
- Ensure the best interest of child without conditions
- Support child protection ethos to empower stakeholders.
- To ensure the healthy development of all our children.

Our action plan includes:

Empowering children to uphold their rights and abiding by their responsibilities in all circumstances.

Signature.....

Date.....

SNEHA CARE HOME CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Sneha Care Home Child Protection Policy provides a framework of principles, standards and guidelines for:

1. Recruitment
2. Induction, Image of God acceptance of every child, and training
3. Management systems
4. Encourage children to live positively with HIV
5. Behaviour protocols
 - Appropriate behaviour of staff towards children
 - Appropriate behaviour of children
 - Appropriate behaviour of visitors
6. Communication protocols regarding children
7. Reporting and reaction protocols regarding allegations of abuse
8. Empowerment building

1. Recruitment

All Sneha Care Home staff and volunteers (paid or unpaid, full time or part time, temporary or long-term), having direct or indirect contact with children, will face a thorough and standardized recruitment and interview process. We will ensure that all the foreign volunteers working with us have their crime check up done at their respective countries prior to joining us and they obtain a police clearance certificate at the time of joining us. Background checks will be undertaken for all Indian and Foreign volunteers before they join for work.

2. Induction and training

There will be opportunities within the organization to develop and maintain the necessary skills and understanding to protect children.

- A full day orientation on child protection issues for all new recruits to be given within one month of joining with a copy of the policy for reference.
- Half day refresher training for staff and volunteers of Sneha Care Home every year to remind them of procedures and updates on new developments will be organized with the help of professional organizations carrying out such trainings.
- One pager on behaviour protocols to be displayed on notice boards of all units.
- Child Protection Policy to be mainstreamed in all other programmes.

3. Management Systems

A management process will be adopted in order to facilitate the implementation of the child protection policy and procedures.

- Clear and open lines of communication will be followed. The staff/volunteers have to strictly follow these lines of communication in order to raise concerns, confidentially if necessary, about unacceptable behaviour by other staff/volunteers/visitors to children, as well as, from children to other children.
- Regular core team meetings to discuss the issues of children will be held.
- Reports and personal information on children will be kept confidential and disclosed to only those who need to know.
- Management will be responsible to ensure implementation of CPP(through regular interactions with staff and children) and all the staff and volunteers adhere to the policy.
- The management will appoint one male and one female staff at mid level position as the child protection officer with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and encourage children to report to him/her if they feel that any of their rights have been violated or compromised by any staff/volunteer/visitor.
- The management will strictly prohibit any activity that would reveal the HIV status of our children.
- The management will ensure that all staff/volunteers/visitors manage children's behaviour in ways which are non-violent and do not degrade or humiliate children.
- The management will ensure that all the children are aware of their rights and where they have to go for help and advice in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying.
- The management will not use the recognisable images or case studies of our children with their names for seeking support or aid and prohibit others from doing it.
- The management will be responsible to ensure that policy is reviewed every six months by the core team and incorporate changes if necessary. The review meeting will be meticulously recorded.
- The management will strictly adhere to reporting protocols

4. Encouraging children to live positively with HIV

We will take up the following measures to encourage children to live positively with HIV:

- No staff/volunteers/visitors will show any discrimination towards any child through their words or actions.
- No staff/volunteer/visitor will openly discuss about HIV/AIDS to children other than the counsellors or others duly permitted by the management.
- We will strictly and objectively deal with anybody who offends children or violates the CPP of the organization.
- No staff/volunteers/visitors will exhibit panic or apprehension in the sight of children in case of any accident but will handle the situations calmly. Care standards, ART adherence and follow up by medical personnel, prevention of Opportunistic Infections and Universal Precautions will be adhered to as per protocols.
- Children will be encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities and strengthen their academic performance.
- Through our speech and action we will always try to stimulate self confidence, positive living and good self image in them.
- All staff/volunteers/visitors will be sincere and open to queries of children regarding questions about HIV and other things and will sensitively answer them. If they are not sure of answers they should openly accept to the child of his/her ignorance of the matter and refer it to the Programme Manager who has to make arrangements to clear the doubts of the child/children.
- Counselling services will be made accessible to children regularly and on expressed need.
- We will conduct the disclosure sessions once in 6 months in a sensitive and age appropriate manner on informed consent of the child.
- No publicity material or media products that convey the consequences of HIV/AIDS will be displayed in the institution and projected to the children.
- Parents/relatives of children will be encouraged not to blame the children and their family members for their HIV status during telephonic conversation, visits and during holidays.

- Children will have access to relaxation therapies like yoga regularly.

5. Behaviour Protocols

These protocols will ensure that the management staff, volunteers and visitors of Sneha Care Home understand and abide by a behaviour which will help in creating a child-safe environment where children's physical and mental integrity/space/privacy are respected.

5.A. Appropriate behaviour of the staff towards children

The staff will pledge to the following

- Respect the dignity of each child
- Consider each child as a unique individual with specific characteristics and needs and thus accept each child with all his/her unique personality and character within him/her.
- Observe the attitudes of children with patience and understand them within the local context in which they live.
- Be empathetic rather than sympathetic towards children.
- Listen to the views of children with value. Take their sharing seriously with respect and objectivity.
- Encourage children to express their feelings as well as to participate in decisions which affect them, while ensuring confidentiality.
- As far as possible, work with children in a place within the view of others.
- Never stigmatize or humiliate children.
- Never use corporal punishment.
- Never develop sexual relationship with any child.
- Never behave in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually proactive.
- Never sleep alone with any individual child
- Never use slang words or abusive language in the presence of children.
- Never provoke children towards any malpractice or addiction.
- Girls and boys will be given the choice of working with a male or female staff where gender may be a consideration, such as counselling, health/medical checkups.
- Never try to force the decisions or opinions of the individual on the child/children when they feel difficult to follow it.

- Permission of children and concerned authority is taken before taking their unrecognisable images or case studies are shared in print or e- media.
- In case of case studies, neither the name of child nor any personal information that could identify the child can be given.
- Never give information regarding any child-sensitive incident or work to media over telephone.
- Always follow the line of communication in reporting a confidential matter regarding a child.
- Inform about the purpose and guide children prior to medical care.
- Never take children out of their surroundings without consent from the child protection officer and without informing him/her of the purpose.
- To link and network with governmental departments for child development and follow their behaviour protocols in response to abuse, violence and threat to life of any child. While doing it we will ensure that it is done at the 'best interest of the child'.
- Sensitively handle abuse cases reported by the child. Let the child know that sexual abuse is not his/her fault.
- Ensure confidentiality of status as well as confidentiality of things discussed with the staff is maintained.

4.B Appropriate behaviour of children

Children will be empowered and pledge to the following:

These guidelines will be developed in consultation with the children

- Respect all staff, parents and outsiders.
- All relevant information will be given to the staff concerned.
- Share information and learning with other children.
- Never physically assault or sexually abuse another child.
- Never tease another child or call out nicknames.
- Never threaten or intimidate another child.
- Never spread rumours about another child.
- Never force another child to give away his/her personal belongings.

- Never to use others' things without their permission
- Never use slang or abusive language.
- Never wander with strangers out of the visibility of the staff.
- Treat all children including themselves as unique and precious human beings.

4.C Appropriate behaviour of visitors

- Get prior written permission from concerned authority regarding purpose of visit before interacting with children.
- Empathize with children rather than sympathize
- Be wary of physical contact. Physical contact with children must be appropriate to the age and circumstances and must be initiated by the child rather than the adult.
- Do not single out children
- Do not ask children personal questions, questions regarding their status and questions which embarrass them.
- Do not carry children.
- Interact with children only in the presence of relevant staff who will facilitate and monitor the process, with permission and according to the child's convenience.
- Take informed consent of children and concerned authority before taking and using information from children.
- Do not give gifts directly to any child.
- Do not use offensive or slang language in the vicinity of children.
- Wear clothes that are appropriate, keeping in mind local context in which the children live.
- Do not take the photographs of children.
- Do not visit the places of their stay without being accompanied by the staff

5. Communication protocols

These are protocols to control confidential information regarding children and to prevent the presentation of degrading images of children through publications.

- Take informed consent of the concerned authority and children (by giving details about purpose and use) before taking their non-recognisable images.

- Allow children to give their own account without interfering or asking leading questions.
- In case of case studies, neither the name of the child nor any personal information that could identify the child should be given.
- Use exact words of children in child abuse reporting.
- Take care that accurate representation of the statements made by the staff and children is made.
- The media will interact only with the organization/unit head or designated staff deputed by the head.

6. Reporting and reaction protocols

Protocols for reporting and reacting to a witness, suspected or alleged child abuse and/or violation of child protection policy will be as follows:

- Allegation of abuse must be reported to the programme manager or the child protection officer/s immediately after abuse or concerns of abuse take place. In case the allegation is against the programme manager or child protection officer the reporting could be to the Director for actions specified.
- This has to be done through a reporting format which has to be filled up by typing or the handwriting of the witness, or by person to whom the report is made, if the reporter is illiterate.
- Dialogue with the concerned abused child is important and it will happen to understand the depth of allegation and its extent. Dialogue will be initiated by the concerned authorities with the child as soon as possible before the next two working days. Counselling services will be organized for the child on a case to case basis.
- In case of an allegation by a named individual from a verifiable source, the accused will not be allowed to come in direct contact with children until proved innocent. The accused staff will be given the opportunity to respond to the charges made in a confidential manner to the programme manager, child protection officer or Director before a decision is made to be in contact with children for the programmes.
- The organization will ensure dialogue with the staff/volunteer being accused and ensure ramification of misconduct once it is proved, with proper evidence through other verifiable sources.
- If allegation is proved then the individual will be dismissed and legal action might also be taken.

7. Empowerment building

- In all programmes, Sneha Care Home will include the need for child protection, the 'every child-our child' philosophy and behaviour protocols of staff will be displayed.
- Experiential learning tools and methods for building empowerment will be mainstreamed in all child related programmes.

SNEHA CARE HOME REPORTING COMMITMENTS

Sneha Care Home commits that all its reporting will be:

- Objective, factual and sensitive, more so when we are reporting on HIV and AIDS, gender, sexual rights and child protection in a balanced manner.
- To get the right scientific and statistical information using correct non-stigmatizing terminology.
- To ensure that photographs do not breach the confidentiality or privacy of children and their families
- To promote facts related to prevention and transmission of HIV, gender and sexual rights, issues related to child protection.

Towards these objectives, Sneha Care Home staff will take the following pledge and commit to work on implementation of the following:

- We shall strengthen advocacy to ensure that decision makers own up to their accountability and responsibility to care for the CLHIV, especially their future, in the NGOs, Government, child care givers, health consultants, community groups and families.
- We shall avoid discrimination based on caste, class, religion, gender ,sexual orientation or HIV status in inducting and caring for our children.
- We shall be sensitive to gender equity, child friendly approaches, respecting the rights of every child, male, female or others when reporting on child related stories, with balanced and responsible coverage.
- We shall strive to encourage children to do good always through our words and deeds.
- We shall not resort to physical punishment of children rather promote behaviour modification techniques followed at the organization.
- Photographs used by us for various purposes will try to show CLHIV and their families in a positive light by portraying them as individuals instead of victims.

- We will follow medical ethics in our health care approaches for our children and researches conducted on health issues of our children.
- We commit to keep abreast with the changing realities of child protection and HIV scenario.
- We shall guard against gender stereotyping. The identity of the children, both boys and girls, infected and affected by HIV will not be revealed. Nor will their photographs be shown for commercial purposes.

Sneha Care Home will ensure that a committee be formed for operationalising the Sneha Care Home workplace policy on child protection.

ADAPTATIONS: The above policies are subject to adaptation in a participatory manner.

This policy is adopted by the Governing board on.....

Signed:

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Sneha Care Home reporting format (Use the exact words of the child reporting)

1. The incident has been disclosed directly by the child/others/observed by the reporting staff:

2. The incident was observed/suspected?

3. (About the child)

Child's name: _____

Sex: _____

Age: _____

4: details of the incident:

a: Date, time, and place of the incident:

b: Date when the incident came to the knowledge of the staff _____

c: Name of the alleged person: _____

5: Details of the person (*Please tick the appropriate identity*)

- a. Staff b. Volunteer c. Visitor d. Parent/relative e. other

Any further detail _____

6. Nature of allegation:

7. Personal observation of the reporting staff (visible injuries, child's emotional state, etc.):

8. Immediate action taken by the reporting staff:

Where there any other persons or children involved in the incident:

Remarks(if any):

Date:

Action taken by the programme manager_____

(Confidential document: to be reported to the Programme Manager/Director)