



Smile always Foundation

Child Safe Policy

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Child Safe Code of Conduct

The purpose of 'Smile always child safe

'SMILE ALWAYS' is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and/or young people accessing our services. We support the rights of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is maintained at all times.

I/We will:

- Take action to inform ourselves on the Rights of the Child and to follow the guidelines as outlined in 'SMILE ALWAYS' Child Safe Policy.
- Make sure all disclosures, allegations or suspicions of abuse are recorded and acted upon swiftly and in confidence, according to the procedures outlined in the Child Safe Policy.
- Consider children's best interests as paramount.
- Establish and follow practices which minimize and monitor risks of all forms of child abuse and accidental harm to children.
- Nurture a culture that empowers children, their families and communities to be knowledgeable of their rights and avenues of redress.
- Ensure that our own behavior, when in contact with children, is above reproach. Strive to be sensitive to cultural differences.
- Ensure the confidentiality of all Sponsors' details.

I/We will not:

- Disregard the concerns voiced by a child, either personally or by correspondence.
- Condone or participate in behavior involving children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- We will not hold, kiss, cuddle or touch children in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive way, or make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even as a joke.
- We will not do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as when going to the toilet, or changing clothes.
- Knowingly link any child with a Donor/Sponsor who is known to intend harm to a child.
- Publish photographs where the dignity of the child in the photograph is compromised or where permission is not obtained from the child or a family member.
- Discriminate against or show favour to particular children.
- Spend time alone with any child or children we meet through child sponsorship or development programs, in their homes, project premises or elsewhere, or develop relationships outside the program.

Child Safe Policy

Notes:

- *For the purpose of this policy, a child will be considered to be a person under the age of 18 years.*
- *In instances in this policy where the DIRECTOR is mentioned as having a role it may be assumed that, where appropriate/necessary this role can be taken another person with relevant authority e.g. Chairman of the board*
- *It is the responsibility of the appointed Child Protection Officer to monitor, review and coordinate child safe policy procedures*

Mission Statement

Policy is to ensure, as far as possible, the safety of all children who are involved in 'SMILE ALWAYS' programs and projects. The intention of this policy is to fulfill all 'SMILE ALWAYS' 's legal obligations as well as promoting a culture of child safety within the organization. This policy is a working document and as such will be subject to regular review and revision.

Statement of Responsibility

In the adoption of 'SMILE ALWAYS' Child Safe Policy, September 2005, 'SMILE ALWAYS' affirms its commitment to the welfare of children and their protection from abuse and exploitation.

From all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse."

We believe that child protection is both a corporate and an individual responsibility. Every person who shares in the work of 'SMILE ALWAYS', including staff, volunteers, contractors, sponsors and supporters, also shares in the responsibility to take every precaution to protect the children and families we serve.

How we care for the most vulnerable among us is an outward expression and evidence of our love for God and all his creation.

'SMILE ALWAYS' will express its concern for the protection of children by developing policies, practices and guidelines that increase awareness of this issue provide a framework for accountability at the organizational and individual level and seek opportunities for advocacy.

1. Action Statement

'SMILE ALWAYS' will:

- 1) Develop, implement and review guidelines and practices that support the protection of children
- 2) Network with other Non-Government Organizations and domestic agencies for the purpose of increasing awareness and support for the protection of children
- 3) Develop and deliver staff awareness programs
- 4) Screen and provide orientation information to all individuals and groups visiting 'SMILE ALWAYS' projects, including but not limited to staff, volunteers, contractors, Board members, sponsors, supporters and donors
- 5) Advocate for the protection of children from all forms of exploitation, especially sexual exploitation
- 6) Be vigilant in protecting confidential information about children and their families in 'SMILE ALWAYS' projects and;
- 7) Demonstrate our responsibility to and respect for children by being sensitive in our communications that involve them.

2. 'SMILE ALWAYS' - A Child Safe Organization

'SMILE ALWAYS' is seeking to promote a child safe organizational culture that is open and dynamic. This is a culture where staff and volunteers in India, donors, supporters and overseas partners and beneficiaries have a clear understanding and experience of policy and procedures in action.

3. Implementation

Implementation of the policy involves, at the very least, informing staff and all relevant stakeholders that the document exists. However the issue of child protection will be included in all induction sessions for new staff. The key requirements are that all staff and others are clear about their responsibilities to prevent abuse and have access to a detailed process by which they can raise concerns.

4. Child Abuse

4.1 Definitions and terms

Child abuse can be physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect or bullying.

4.1.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a person purposely injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns, or fractures.

4.1.2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is a chronic attack on a child or young person's self esteem. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child or young person.

4.1.3 Neglect

Neglect is the 'intentional withholding' from a child the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter and supervision to the extent that the child's health and development are at risk.

4.2 Child Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is when a child or young person is used by a child, adolescent, or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification, or economic gain.

5. 'SMILE ALWAYS' Commitment as a Child Safe Organization

'SMILE ALWAYS' commits itself to a number of processes to ensure the safety of the children in its programs. These are:

5.1 Recruitment

'SMILE ALWAYS' follows strict guidelines in the recruiting of new staff, contractors and volunteers, especially potential applicants who are likely to be in direct contact with children overseas. The recruitment guidelines are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that they accurately reflect current child safe recruiting and screening standards. Currently they include:

- Behavioural interviewing questions
- Pre-interview screening
- Conducting reference checks
- Conducting national police checks

5.2 Police Check

All employees, contract staff, volunteers and Board members will be asked to sign an Authority for a Police Check to be conducted. A Police Check will be requested for all full-time, part-time and casual employees, contracted staff, volunteers and Board members. Employees and volunteers will be monitored by the managers to whom they are assigned to ensure that proper processes are being maintained in relation to confidential information concerning sponsorship projects and sponsored children. Where there are concerns the DIRECTOR must be informed. The DIRECTOR will ensure that appropriate counseling and other relevant action is undertaken.

5.3 Training and Development

Employees and volunteers will be trained in issues related to the protection of children from abuse and violation. All employees, contracted staff, volunteers and Board members will be made aware of their individual responsibility to uphold the 'SMILE ALWAYS' Child Safe policy.

5.4 Raising and reporting Concerns of child abuse

The possibility of employees, volunteers, donors or partners abusing children is something that 'SMILE ALWAYS' takes seriously. Any employee or volunteer who discovers or suspects abusive practices must refer the matter immediately and in confidence to the DIRECTOR, who will take all necessary action, including informing the Police.

'SMILE ALWAYS' will take all steps possible, within its organization and network, to prevent abuse and hold accountable those who abuse children.

5.4.1 Incident reporting

Any incident, belief or suspicion of sexual or physical abuse (past or present) by a 'SMILE ALWAYS' employee, contractor, volunteer, sponsor, donor, board-member or other partner must be reported immediately in writing to the DIRECTOR. If the report concerns the DIRECTOR then incidents will be reported to the Board Chairman. If a child reports an incident to you, the child/young person must be taken seriously and listened to carefully. At no time should the child be returned to the environment where the abuse occurred.

5.4.2 Distance the alleged perpetrator

The best interests of the child/young person may warrant the standing down of the person complained against while an investigation commences. If this course of action is being considered, the relevant manager must first recommend this course of action in writing to the DIRECTOR. If the report concerns the DIRECTOR then incidents will be reported to the Board Chairman. Staff members stood down will receive full pay and are entitled to a just process that does not pre-suppose guilt or innocence. The allegations should not be discussed or communicated to other people until all issues have been considered and a decision made by the DIRECTOR or other person who is delegated to fulfill the task. The decision made should be documented and filed.

5.4.3 Document the incident

As soon as possible (and no longer than 24 hours after the disclosure of the incident), the staff member receiving the disclosure needs to have fully documented the allegation, including the time, place and witnesses to the incident.

5.4.4 Confidentiality

All cases of child abuse will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. When concerns arise, all participants will be directed through a formal complaints process involving the DIRECTOR (or person delegated in the DIRECTORs place) and relevant manager.

5.5 Allegations made in Overseas

If the incident is alleged to have occurred in Overseas, the DIRECTOR or Child Protection Officer may contact the police, depending on the nature of the incident, to investigate the allegation.

5.5.1 Reporting allegations of physical/sexual abuse to police

All allegations of actual physical or sexual assault as defined in this policy must be reported to the police, whether or not the victim has consented to the matter being reported.

5.5.2 Family

The family of the child should be informed of the allegation and action proposed. They should be consulted where possible on the process to be followed.

5.6 Allegations made overseas

If an allegation is made of a staff member, volunteer, supporter, donor or someone else representing 'SMILE ALWAYS', the following procedure will apply:

5.6.1 Incident reporting

Any incident which involves an Overseas staff member, volunteer or donor must be reported to the DIRECTOR / Child Protection Officer in Overseas and confirmed in writing. The DIRECTOR / Child Protection Officer will also consult with relevant 'overseas partner' stakeholders where necessary to ensure due process is followed.

6. Sponsor Visits/Project Visits

In order to ensure all reasonable precautions are taken to protect sponsored children, their families and communities from persons who may wish to exploit them, all sponsor visits, without exception, will be arranged through the 'SMILE ALWAYS' Project Officer (PO) concerned. All sponsors and visitors will be provided with information concerning procedures relating to visits to the field.

Upon receiving an inquiry to visit a sponsored child, the PO will provide the sponsor/visitor with information which outlines Sponsor Visit procedures including reinforcing 'SMILE ALWAYS' commitment to the protection of children. (Refer to the relevant manual section - Sponsor Visits).

Upon receiving a confirmation of interest to visit a sponsored child, the PO will ensure compliance with all visit requirements, including the necessary forms to enable a complete police background report to be completed, prior to confirming the visit.

'SMILE ALWAYS' must refuse or cancel a visit by a sponsor if the background report is not provided, or if it contains information that would disqualify the sponsor from visiting the child. In the event a sponsor visit is cancelled for the above reasons, the overseas partner office should be contacted in case the sponsor attempts to visit the child or arrive at the Head Office unannounced.

While visiting projects, visitors must be accompanied by a 'SMILE ALWAYS' or overseas partner staff person or authorized volunteer at all times. Under no circumstances should a visitor be allowed to visit a child's home. A visitor should not spend time with the child unsupervised. A visitor must not exchange mailing or contact details with a sponsored child or anyone else in the Sponsorship program where they are visiting.

Inappropriate or otherwise suspicious behaviour on the part of the visitor toward any child must be addressed immediately. The 'SMILE ALWAYS' or partner staff member accompanying the visitor will seek the assistance of their supervisor and follow the guidelines established by the 'SMILE ALWAYS' Child safe Policy.

Unauthorised visits are when a sponsor visits the child's community directly, or arrives at the overseas partner office, requesting access to the child without the required approvals having been obtained. The partner office will be expected to manage the sponsor according to the guidelines established in the 'SMILE ALWAYS' Child Safe Policy.

Once a child leaves the Child Sponsorship Program, 'SMILE ALWAYS' will not facilitate any ongoing direct contact between the sponsor and the child.

7. Privacy and Confidentiality – Staff

Personal information related to the children 'SMILE ALWAYS' sponsors should only be utilized in the course of normal employment and should not be shared with any unauthorized person. Moreover, no material transmitted to sponsors or other people outside 'SMILE ALWAYS' should contain any information indicating the children's place of residence (temporary or permanent). All staff and volunteers are required to refer and adhere to 'SMILE ALWAYS' Privacy and Confidentiality policies to ensure that the privacy of children is protected.

8. Child Information Security

'SMILE ALWAYS' will take every reasonable precaution to protect child information, progress reports, and picture folders from falling into the hands of individuals who do not share 'SMILE ALWAYS' commitment to the protection of children. 'SMILE ALWAYS' will maintain its picture folders and child information in as secure an environment as is practicable and every caution will be exercised to ensure security.

9. Use of Child Photos and Information

Pictures, images, or other likenesses of children and/or information related to children that could compromise their care and protection will not be made available through any form of communication media without proper protection and understanding of their use. Moreover, any images of children should not be accompanied by any information relating to their place of residence. When using the image/s of a child for publicity purposes, names must be completely changed to protect the child's identity. Images, with corresponding text, which may identify a child should be pixilated or removed.

10. Advocacy

'SMILE ALWAYS' is committed to:

- 1) Promoting the rights of children and seeking their protection from all forms of exploitation and abuse through advocacy initiatives at community, national and regional levels.
- 2) Pressing for changes in government policy at State, Territory and Federal level that have an adverse affect on children or do not adequately address their needs.
- 3) Raising awareness among sponsors and donors of issues relating to the exploitation of children and measures being taken to protect them.
- 4) Seeking collaboration with childcare professionals and other agencies, such as Child wise Inc., to ensure that the organisations' knowledge, policies and practices are kept up to date and staff well-informed on child protection issues.
- 5) Developing and supporting policy and research capacities that seek to change structures and systems that jeopardize the rights of children, especially girls.

Mankind owes every child the best it has to give.

The Rights of the child, which affirms that all children are entitled to:

- The enjoyment of the rights mentioned, without any exception whatsoever, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion or nationality
- Special Protection, opportunities and facilities to enable them to develop in a healthy and normal manner in freedom and dignity
- A name and nationality
- Social security, including adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services
- Special treatment, education and care if handicapped
- Love and understanding and an atmosphere of affection and security
- Free education and recreation and equal opportunity to develop their individual abilities
- Prompt protection and relief in times of disaster
- Protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation
- Protection from any form of racial, religious or other discrimination and an upbringing in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.

*Let us resolve to ensure that all children without any exception
whatsoever are entitled to these rights*

Let us all do what we can for the fulfillment of these rights

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