



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse (CPTCSA)

All staff, board members and volunteers must read and sign our child protection policy below:

CPTCSA is committed to upholding the law on child rights and welfare. This includes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. CPTCSA believes that all children have a right to protection from abuse irrespective of race, social background, age, gender, skin color, disability, religion or beliefs. CPTCSA believes that child sexual abuse and exploitation is wrong. Keeping silent is also wrong, if it is known that a child is being abused or exploited. CPTCSA believes in the importance of child protection, so that not **only are children protected from abuse CPTCSA committee members, staff, donors, and volunteers, but also that preventative measures can be made to protect the CPTCSA staff, and the CPTCSA own integrity.** CPTCSA believes that children have the right to speak and be heard. Therefore, where possible children will also be included as stakeholders and in research and other relevant reports/evaluations.

The different forms of child abuse are described by:

Physical Abuse: Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury, or suffering, to a child, including deliberate hitting, beating, shaking, throwing, burning, drowning, suffocating or poisoning.

Mental/Emotional Abuse: Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused but persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. May involve conveying to the child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate and cause children to feel frightened, in danger and corrupted.

Neglect: The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health of development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Sexual Abuse: Actual or likely exploitation of a child or adolescent, representing the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate social taboos or family rules, such as touching a child's genitals, forcing a child to watch or take part in pornography or coercing the child to have sex. It is considered abuse whether or not the child consents.

Spiritual Abuse: Spiritual abuse occurs when a spiritual leader, or someone in a position of

spiritual power or authority (whether organization, institution, church or family) misuses their power or authority, and the trust placed in them, with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating, or dominating a child. Spiritual abuse is always about the misuse of power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice, in order to meet the needs of the abuser (or enhance his or her position) at the expense of the needs of the child. Spiritual abuse results in spiritual harm to a child and can be linked to other abuse, such as physical, emotional and sexual abuse. (Refer to Indicators of Spiritual Abuse for warning signs).

PROTOCOLS:

CPTCSA expects all its partner organizations, committee members, staff, volunteers and visitors to give respect and dignity to all children associated with the work of CPTCSA

CPTCSA BOT members, staff, volunteers and visitors with direct contact with projects and children must sign a statement to say that they have **read the policy**, will respect it and understand that action will be taken in cases of inappropriate behavior. This will lead to disciplinary action and possible job loss for staff or dismissal of BOT members or volunteers who break these protocols.

It will not be permissible for CPTCSA, volunteers and visitors to take photographs or video footage of children. Authorization should be sought from the Executive Director/BOT and strict regulations will be implemented on the nature of how photographs are taken. These photographs and/or video will not be used for any other purpose outside CPTCSA without prior permission.

CPTCSA committee members, staff, volunteers and visitors will not discipline a child in a way that is against the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This effectively means no tolerance to any form of violence against the child.

CPTCSA committee members, staff, volunteers and visitors need to be aware that they may work with children who, because of the circumstances and abuses they have experienced, may use a relationship to obtain "special attention". The adult is always considered responsible even if a child behaves seductively. Adults should avoid being placed in a compromising or vulnerable position.

Inappropriate behavior toward children, including failure to follow CPTCSA protocols or sexual abuse of a child is grounds for discipline, up to and including dismissal from employment, volunteer/internship or board /advisory council membership.

CPTCSA committee members, staff, volunteers and visitors must be concerned about perception and appearance in their language, actions and relationships with minors and children.

CPTCSA committee members, staff, volunteers and visitors should maintain a high standard of behavior/character in presence of children. (Example: should not use any unacceptable language in the presence of a child)

Inexperienced and unauthorized CPTCSA staff and volunteers should not try to handle children who are undergoing treatment program. These children should be directed to CPTCSA Treatment Program Unit.

CPTCSA committee members, staff and volunteers should seek to live up to the CPTCSA *Mission Statement* and *Core Values* in all relationship with others in any circumstances.

RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

CPTCSA committee members, staff, volunteers and visitors will be carefully and properly screened during their recruitment period, including obtaining a police check where possible.

CPTCSA committee members, staff and volunteers will be carefully and properly screened during their recruitment period, which includes signing to agree to the Child Protection Policy and stating that there have been no previous convictions for abuse against children, violent behavior or improper conduct.

CPTCSA will ensure that all the references of approved local candidates for work are checked, preferably by telephone, and recorded in the staff files before the new staff member is invited to take the position. This will include a verbal and written request to the referee of whether they have any concerns as to why the candidate should be employed to work with children.

CPTCSA staff, volunteers and visitors agree to **inform the Director/Committee Member** immediately if new information arises that casts doubt on the team member's trustworthiness with children. Such information would be treated as confidential and disclosed to the individual team member for appropriate action.

Individuals who are hired as independent contractors are notified of CPTCSA Policy and Required Standards for Child Protection and are made aware that they are expected to follow behavior protocols set out below.

In the best interests of children, offices should not hire anyone with a prior conviction for child abuse, pedophilia or related offences. In the event that local law prohibits this broad a hiring rule, no person with a conviction for child abuse, pedophilia or related offences may be hired into any position, which includes direct access to children. CPTCSA reserves the right not to hire an applicant if the background check reveals that the person is not suitable to work with children.

RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS

CPTCSA committee members, staff, volunteers and visitors will be encouraged to be open in discussing the potential of abuse within the organization.

Where an allegation has been made that any of CPTCSA committee member, staff, volunteer or visitors has abused a child, CPTCSA will take the appropriate action to deal with the

situation.

- Where there is an allegation, first inform the Director. If the Director is the subject of the allegation, a Committee member must be informed.
- The allegation will be kept confidential, with only those directly involved having the appropriate information.
- All details will be entered on the CPTCSA Allegation form and filed confidentially.

CPTCSA committee members, staff, volunteers and visitors found to be widening the circle of confidentiality will have disciplinary action taken against them **according to the rules of their sending agency**. Committee members and staff will receive a written warning.

Any investigations will be kept confidential and take place **under external advice and counsel**.

Relationships with child welfare and legal organisations should be encouraged for accountability and support in times following an allegation.

Both survivor and alleged perpetrator will be treated with respect from the start of the process to the end.

CPTCSA will not dismiss a child's accusation of abuse without appropriate investigation, no matter who the alleged perpetrator is.

CPTCSA will confer with other organisations in a case where the child involved requires extra protection.

Records will be made of all facts related to the investigation and allegation, and these will be carefully and confidentially filed by the Committee. **(Refer to allegation forms)**

If a foreigner is involved, the relevant Embassy will be informed.

CPTCSA will designate someone to deal with the media and the police if necessary. Consideration will be made beforehand by the Committee about how the police and **media** will be informed/involved.

COMMUNICATION ABOUT/TO CHILDREN

Where photographs of children are used, CPTCSA will take special care to protect children's identities and specific geographic location in all materials.

Disclosure of information about past or present abuse of children and any of the persons involved should be limited to only the people who need to know.

Communications about children should use pictures that are decent and respectful, not presenting them as victims. Children should be adequately clothed and poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive should be avoided. Language that implies a relationship of power should also be avoided.

Individuals or organizations requesting the use of CPTCSA resources such as videos or photographs should be required to sign an agreement with the appropriate CPTCSA entity as to the proper use of such materials. The agreement should include a statement that 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 upon use of the material will result in the immediate termination of CPTCSA permission to use the subject materials and/or require immediate return of all materials provided by CPTCSA as well as any copies of such materials.

All correspondence with a child by the CPTCSA volunteers is reviewed for inappropriate or suggestive comments, requests or obscenities. In the event of inappropriate correspondence being discovered, CPTCSA reserves the right to sever the volunteer relationship.

TRAINING, EVALUATION & MONITORING

CPTCSA will be committed to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of child protection procedures and behavior protocols.

Should there be any concerns, these should be raised with the Director/ Committee.

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

To be signed by all CPTCSA committee member, staff, volunteer visitors and partner organizations. A copy will be kept on file in the CPTCSA office.

I declare that:

1. I have read and understand the CPTCSA Child Protection Policy.
2. I will work within the procedure as laid out in the CPTCSA Child Protection Policy.
3. I have not been accused or convicted of any offence involving physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.
4. I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse of children while engaged in CPTCSA activities, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities.

Signature: _____

Date: _____