



# Tibetan Homes Foundation

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Applicable to all staff  
Teaching & non-teaching  
Visitors & Volunteers

# **TIBETAN HOMES FOUNDATION**

## **Child Protection Policy (CPP)**

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which was ratified by India in 1992, all children have fundamental rights which must be recognized by governments and citizens alike. At Tibetan Homes Foundation (THF), we're committed to doing everything we can to ensure the rights of children under our overall development and care.

Tibetan Homes Foundation (THF) believe in providing a safe holistic environment to each child, free of violence, harassment, abuse, neglect, and should be based on respect for the child. We ensure the welfare of the children as our highest priority.

We fully believes in building a safe environment for all the children, till the age of 18 years and firmly believes in protecting them from abuse and exploitation. Hence, a crucial need for a Child Protection Policy is required to ensure the safety of each and every child under the care of the Tibetan Homes Foundation. "THF Child Protection Policy" is framed and is effective henceforth with zero tolerance.

All children are vulnerable to neglect, violence and abuse but marginalization further compounds such vulnerability. Exposure to unsafe environments can negatively impact the physical, emotional, mental and social development of the child and the damage is often permanent.

Hence, this policy defines our commitment to safeguard children from harm and abuse, ensures to create a safe and positive environment for children and lays down the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders.

## **Vision**

All children in Tibetan Homes Foundation stay safe and feel secure in all settings and circumstances.

## **Scope of the Policy**

The Child Protection Policy has been exclusively formulated for the Tibetan Homes Foundation Schools, and it applies to all the members of the THF community-staff at all levels (academic, co-curricular, administrative), students, parents and visitors including sponsors and donors.

The policy comprises key elements to guide behavior and practices of personnel and individuals in relation to the School such as prevention, abuse in terms of physical, mental and emotional, complaint mechanisms and response etc.

The policy covers abuse, harassment, and offenses that can occur in school campus and in premises under the management of the Foundation.

## **Purpose of this policy**

The policy aims :

- In providing a clear direction to all the members of the Tibetan Homes Foundation about the expected codes of behavior in dealing with child protection issues.
- To provide a safe and positive environment in the school, conducive for learning and development.
- To define roles and responsibilities and accountability of school authorities and the stakeholders.
- To enable staff to recognize signs of abuse or situation when a child may require protection and help; and enable them to report or bring to the notice of the concerned authority for immediate action.
- To make child/children aware of their rights and their active role in their own protection.
- Informing children, staff, management members, governing body members, family and community members, volunteers, sponsors, donors, visitors etc about the child protection policy and related procedures.
- Ensuring of putting in place fair, secure and transparent reporting channels in all the schools running under the institute that guarantee the right of the stakeholders (children, parents, staff) to be heard.
- Forming an active network of protection especially through the POCSO committee members so that all children in our foundation are safe and protected.
- In believing that child protection and safeguarding incidents could happen anywhere at any time and all staff should be alert to possible concerns being raised in this institute.

## **Applicability :**

This child policy will apply to all the personnel and persons related to the Tibetan Homes Foundation and who come in direct or indirect contact with the children. Hence, it covers all the school staff, teachers, visitors, parents, visiting faculty, third party service providers, sponsors and all the stakeholders.

## **Defining child abuse :**

### **Physical abuse :**

Physical abuse covers all aspects of physical punishment which inflicts pain on a child. It may involve hitting, spanking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning and suffocating, beating, kneeling and bowing. It can also mean causing physical harm to a child by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child. The incidents may be single or repeated.

### **Sexual abuse:**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities with or without consent, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can be

evident by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who, by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power; the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may involve physical contact and penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. The inappropriate touching, observing and displaying of the sexual organs, engaging in any form of intimate relationship with student, sharing of personal information, including photos of sexual nature, conveying anything with a sexual pun by any means to a child represent sexual abuse. "Sexual Assault" has the same meaning as assigned to it in Section 7 of POCSO Act, 2012 and "Sexual Harassment" has the same meaning as assigned to it in Section 11 of POCSO Act, 2012;

### **Emotional abuse :**

Emotional abuse can involve insulting behavior, rejection and withdrawal of emotional warmth, blaming and sarcasm, partial treatment, passing racial comments, body shaming, name calling and ragging. The abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that adversely affects his or her self perception and development.

### **Neglect or Negligent treatment:**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It is widely regarded as pernicious lack of care for a child.

### **Identifying abuse :**

All staff should be vigilant in observing students' behaviours. It is not a simple matter to identify traits in behavior and to readily attribute causes. Students who spend a number of years in an academic institution, particularly a closed one, mature and develop naturally and will exhibit differing behaviours as they mature and develop an understanding of their place in the world. Nonetheless, a sympathetic staff member will always be sensitive to the needs of the students with whom they have been entrusted and should be open and available as a first point of contact should they be approached. Foster mothers in the respective smaller and larger hostels must be particularly vigilant in assuring that all children are protected from bullying, ragging, sexual assault, sexual harassment and ragging of any kind. Any incidents must be reported to the authorities immediately. Authorities here can be school disciplinary committee, school heads, POCSO committee members and Management committee members.

### **Complaint of an offense:**

A complaint in writing by a student and/or any staff of such student complaining of any act that constitutes a penal offense under the law may be handed over to either any teacher, Counselor, School heads, THF Management Committee member(s) or POCSO committee member(s). The complaint shall be dealt with by the Disciplinary committee and procedures as established by the Disciplinary committee members. The detailed report from the Disciplinary committee members should be maintained and should be duly signed by all the members. The document should be submitted to the THF Management committee

members for final decision. In the event the complaint falls under the POCSO Act of 2012, the school is duty bound to report the offense to the concerned law enforcement agencies.

When the matter is closed or withdrawn for any reason whatsoever, the responsible committee members ; either POCSO/Disciplinary/case formed committee must prepare a post incident report/closure report.

### **Specific considerations:**

Child-to-Child abuse allegations or concerns regarding the abuse of a child by another child need to be responded to with particular sensitivity; nevertheless, they have to be dealt with through the child protection procedures.

All work with young people who have committed abuse requires an effective approach which ensures the protection of people affected, while at the same time supporting the young person in challenging and changing his/her behavior.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

It is imperative that confidentiality is observed at all times as the protection of the child is paramount. School personnel have a professional responsibility to share information with other professionals who are investigating a case. A child, when confiding information to a member of staff, must be made aware that for the child's own sake this information cannot be kept secret. The child must be reassured that the information will only be shared with the designated staff who will decide which information needs to be shared, when and with whom. All child protection records are regarded as confidential and will be kept in a secure place.

### **Code of conduct for the staff:**

- Be compassionate, affectionate, caring and understanding to the safety of the children.
- Be responsive in case of child's health issues or emotional support.
- Be conscious of and respect the privacy and dignity of each and every child.
- Educate children about their rights, issues of abuses, neglect and exploitation.
- A sense of accountability, in order to deter any poor practice or potentially abusive behavior.
- Immediately report any suspicious behavior/suspect occurrence of abuse.

### **Inappropriate for staff to :**

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others.
- Physically assault or physically abuse the child.
- Use of language that is discriminatory, abusive or hurtful to the child.
- Develop relationships with the child that could be in any way deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Showing to children any obscene / pornographic materials through use of any media means.
- Act in a manner that puts the child at risk.

- Engage in any sort of physical contact with a child that may make the child or an observer feel uncomfortable, or that may be seen by an observer to be violating boundaries.
- Conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicious of potentially illegal or inappropriate behavior. It is an employee's duty to report the matter to the school heads or member of Management committee or Discipline committee.
- Every complaint regarding inappropriate behavior or communication with a child, shall be taken cognizance of by the THF Management committee members. However, whether or not a particular behavior or action constitutes inappropriate conduct, or is in contravention of the aforesaid Code of Conduct of this CPP, will be a matter determined by the THF Management Committee, having regard to the relevant facts and circumstances. The findings and decision of the management of THF shall be final.

### **Amendment and Dissemination of this CPP :**

This CPP may be revised or amended from time to time, by the THF Management or by a committee appointed for this purpose.

A copy of this CPP is given to all staff members and they shall acknowledge that they have received, read, understood and will abide by the CPP.

The copy of the CPP is also uploaded on the School's website.

### **Stakeholders :**

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. It is an integrated part of our work and affects everyone in Tibetan Homes Foundation and anyone who comes into contact with our institute. The specific approach is defined by each member in the Tibetan Homes Foundation based on the Child Protection Policy on hand.

- Child below 18 years of age.
- Young adults ( 18 years of age or older living in the Tibetan Homes Foundation)

### **Conclusion :**

Tibetan Homes Foundation thrives on its reputation for academic achievement, encouragement of intellectual growth through innovative teaching and co-curricular programmes of learning. The physical and emotional well-being of students is a fundamental building block in the school's philosophy, ensuring that students are successful learners, ready to grow into confident individuals who are responsible citizens and effective contributors to their society. Staff members are responsible to protect them from harm and safeguard their welfare.

## Annexure: I

Non-Exhaustive offences/behaviours are punishable by law and it is the duty of every adult citizen to abide by these laws:

S.N.	Offences/Behaviours	Laws	Punishment
1	Sexual assault, sexual harassment, use of child for pornographic purpose. Unwanted physical touch, whether voluntary or not would also constitute sexual assault.	POCSO Act, JJ Act	Criminal offences – Imprisonment (Jail) Terms not less than 2 years, depending on gravity upto death and jail terms of 20 years
2	Production, dissemination and use of child sexual abuse materials	POCSO Act and Information Technology Act	Criminal offences – Imprisonment (Jail) Terms not less than 2 years, depending on gravity upto death and jail terms of 20 years
3	Disclosing identity of the child victim to anyone other than appropriate authority	POCSO Act , Indian Penal Code and JJ Act	Imprisonment term which may extend to 2 years and fine
4	Sale and procurement of children for any purpose including illegal adoption, trafficking of children for sexual exploitation, use of children by militant groups, giving children intoxicating liquor, narcotic drug or tobacco products or psychotropic substances, offences against disabled children, trafficking of children for sexual exploitation/exploitative labour/other reasons and, kidnapping	JJ Act 2015; Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956; Human trafficking (section 370 & 370A IPC), after creation of specific section in IPC by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013	Imprisonment terms which may extend upto 5 years and fine
5	Corporal punishment in schools	JJ Act, RTE Act and even under the IPC	Imprisonment terms as well as fine

## **Annexure : II**

### **CHILD PROTECTION REPORT FORM**

This form must be used by members of staff to report incidents that raise any concern about possible child abuse. Care must be taken to report information pertaining to child abuse, accurately and confidentially.

A hard copy of the form should be handed over to the Disciplinary committee members. This document has to be signed by all parties concerned.

Name of the person filing the report \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of relationship with the student (teacher, tutor, counselor) :

\_\_\_\_\_

Student involved:\_\_\_\_\_

Admission No. : \_\_\_\_\_ School : : \_\_\_\_\_

Home number : \_\_\_\_\_ Class:\_\_\_\_\_Section : \_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Time:\_\_\_\_\_

Any witness(es):\_\_\_\_\_



### **Details of Concern :**

A record of the incident of what you saw or heard, including the actual nature of abuse in an accurate form, without any embellishment, or an extra record – as far as possible- of anything said to you by the child is to be made. Include relevant comments made by you, preferably in verbatim form. Avoid asking too many questions than are necessary to clarify any uncertainty.

Please attach any information that will support your report of the incident which may consist of any notes, photographs or other staff comments etc.

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of reporting: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken/ No further action: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_