

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

All volunteers, observers, contributors shall abide by this policy. The policy is to ensure that they shall protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. (**UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** 1989 (CRC), Article 19)

Taken holistically, the CRC 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. On the understanding that the CRC must be read as a whole, the following articles nevertheless form the specific basis of child protection: 1 (definition of 'child'), 2 (non-discrimination), 3.1 (the best interests of the child), 3.2 (duty of care and protection), 3.3 (standards of care), 6 (survival and development), 12 (participation), 13 (freedom of expression), 19 (protection from violence), 25 (periodic review of placements), 32, 33, 34, 36, 37(a) (protection from economic exploitation, substance abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, 'all other forms of exploitation'; torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment), 39 (physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration).

This policy statement is in consonance with the fundamental rights guaranteed to the citizens of India under the **Constitution of India** and any / all laws framed thereunder. This policy follows the legal status given to children in need of care and protection as provided in the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000. This policy sets out common values, principles, and beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken in meeting our commitment to protect children.

'Any international NGO should have a Child Protection Policy if its direct or indirect beneficiaries include individuals under the age of 18' [**Setting the Standard: A common approach to Child Protection for international NGOs**, Standard 1 (Policy).]

Issues of child protection and abuse must be discussed openly and understood by children and adults. There should be free and open lines of communication internally and externally in the organization, to improve awareness and implementation of child protection practices and policies. Children require a safe space to formulate, develop and voice their opinions and thoughts, free from abuse, in order to empower children to become actors in their own futures, and to promote their own protection free from inter alia shame and discrimination.

The policy sets out guidelines and standards that must be put into practice, through recruitment, training, review of management team and structures and protocols.

‘Above all, it must be remembered that it is the children, not the standards, that are sacrosanct; and although abuse must never be tolerated, the standards are no more than a tool in the service of promoting the welfare of children.’ [**Setting the Standard: A common approach to Child Protection for international NGOs**, anonymous INGO quotation, p.6.]

POLICY STATEMENT

Integrated Development Education Association (IDEA), of which the Music Basti project is an unit, has a professional duty to take such steps that are reasonable to see that the child is safe from harm while involved in the organization’s activities. All children have a right to protection, including the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable are to be taken into account. IDEA will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in its activities through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines it has adopted.

POLICY AIMS

The aim of the Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst visiting/ in the care of IDEA staff and volunteers.
- Allow all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

SCOPE

The Child Protection guidelines apply to all staff, members, volunteers and those working on behalf of the organization, whose work involves contact and communication with children and young people under the age of 18 and vulnerable young people and also includes people who are working in any capacity whatsoever to improve or develop the Music Basti program and / or project or whose work / contribution with or for Music Basti in any way, directly or indirectly, affects or has the potential to affect the children.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability for ensuring that IDEA fulfills its child protection and safeguarding children responsibilities falls to the Executive Director. However, responsibility is delegated to the designated Project Officer. The designated Project Officer is responsible for promoting well-being. The designated officer will be suitably trained in child protection and will be responsible for taking actions set out with the Child Protection Policy, maintaining a record of all child protection related documents and reports, receiving and recording information regarding child protection concerns,

consulting with the relevant statutory agencies regarding any child protection concerns raised, and making formal referrals to relevant statutory agencies regarding any child protection concerns. The Project Officer will directly carry out all training of staff and volunteers in respect of this policy statement.

All staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that the activities that they are involved in during the course of their work are carried out in accordance with this policy and procedures relating to it.

RECRUITMENT

All staff and volunteers will be appointed and measures to ensure that all necessary checks are carried out on individuals expected to work with children and young people will be taken.

Pre selection checks include the following:

1. Completion of an application form and photo identification with proof of residence.
2. Receipt of two references with the application form.
3. Verification of qualifications.
4. Verification of identity and proof of address.

TRAINING

The child protection and safeguarding process includes training after recruitment. IDEA is committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers that work directly or indirectly with children and young people have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and the requirement for reporting suspected concerns of possible or potential child abuse. recruitment, all volunteers and staff shall be provided with training in:

1. Child rights awareness
2. Child protection awareness
3. Diversity awareness
4. Procedures on working with children/young people

OUR COMMITMENT TO PROTECT THE CHILDREN

The children part of Music Basti programs, i.e. currently at homes/hostels of the “Dil Se” Campaign, Aman Biradari, are from diverse backgrounds. Their care in the homes/hostels includes sheltering them from certain risks that they might otherwise be vulnerable to, including illiteracy and marginalization from educational facilities, exposure to crime and/or sexual abuse, unsafe households, being orphaned or abandoned, in detention enters, child labour, trafficking, etc.

Street- involved children are especially vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and ill-treatment at the hands of carers, other project workers, and those with access to

their personal information. In the case of children who have run away from home, many have already experienced ruptured relationships of trust or abuse of an adult-child relationship in the form of physical, psychological or sexual abuse.

Based on our understanding of the protection their atmosphere requires, the following are key principles and standards to apply when working with the project:

Child Centered Learning: This aims to provide children with access to information to help them build knowledge and skills, and develop attitudes and aspirations for their lives. It therefore should serve to create independence and confidence in the learner. Based on this standard, certain key values and principles are highlighted for staff and volunteers, namely:

- All child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights.
- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- The situation of all children must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
- Child abuse is never acceptable.

We have a commitment to protecting children with/ for whom we work. When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for children in their programmes.

Interactive Sharing and Learning: Teachers/Instructors leadership (use of directive, democratic and indirect styles according to the situation) is valued. Based on this standard, certain key values and principles are highlighted for staff and volunteers to follow, namely:

- take seriously any concerns raised by the children
- take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns, and to take steps to ensure their participation
- be guided through the child protection process by the principle of 'best interests of the child'
- listen to and takes seriously the views and wishes of children
- work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

Encouragement: The program is based on motivation not manipulation. Effective communication skills are essential. Adoption of the suggested plans fused with improvised techniques is useful. Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns

Flexibility: This curriculum is only a beginning. It must be adapted and expanded by those who use it. It must be flexible and open.

Commitment to a long- term vision: The conductor needs to have a long-term vision and thus move into working the process instead of looking for immediate outcomes.

Progress and Process oriented: Conductors need to observe the impact of the process, but also create tangible progress and outcomes for the children.

Documentation is necessary for recording the execution of process and its impact. There is ample opportunity for feedback and input at every stage in a systematic manner, in the form of workshop reports, and regular and periodic feedback and appraisal sessions.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All volunteers and staff should demonstrate exemplary behaviour and maintain their standards of behaviour therefore acting as a role model. The following points of the code of conduct must be maintained at all times:

General

- Familiarity with all of the organizational material, including that which is based on the issue of child rights.
- Share a common purpose.
- Commit to the project and maintain the commitment. The commitment must be personal.
- Accept responsibility along with authority.
- Be sensitive to the children's backgrounds.
- Conduct yourself in a manner that sets a good example to the participants. Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of/whilst responsible for children.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.
- Do not take on the role of counsellors unless you have been specifically engaged, in writing, by Music Basti or the relevant organization, to counsel or providing counseling to the children.

During Activities

- Treat all children equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

- Be clear about what the objectives of the activity are before it begins and always put the welfare of each child first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintain decorum with the children and be firm where necessary, without being intimidating or in any manner abusive. Using of physical force against a participant is strictly prohibited, unless it constitutes reasonable restraint to protect him/her or another person or to protect property. If it is necessary to restrain a participant because they are an immediate danger to themselves or others or to property then the minimum amount of force should be used for the shortest amount of time. Remain calm and get the attention and support of other staff. The incident should be recorded in writing, with a witness statement (where possible), immediately afterwards. Never using physical punishment. This does not in any way mean that Music Basti supports the use or threat of physical force or violence in its work and no cruelty or abuse or torture will be tolerated and offenders may be reported to appropriate authorities.
- Be well versed with teaching- plans before conducting the workshops. For this, communicate with all members of the team at the workshop. Maintain a positive attitude within the group conducting – co-conductors, volunteers, etc. All actions in the homes, prior to, during and after the workshops, must be in consonance with the teaching plans for that day and the general program of Music Basti.
- Interact with the home- staff before and after the workshop.
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets). Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
- Never make gratuitous physical contact with a participant. [There may be occasions where a distressed participant needs comfort which may include physical comforting and staff should use their discretion to ensure that it is appropriate and not unnecessary or unjustified contact.]
- Never contradict an instruction given by a tutor/ project manager or other member of staff during the activities. Any objections to or grievances against lesson plans or other program material may be taken up with the Program Development team or the Project Officer.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them during residential activities. Avoid taking them out of the visibility of the home staff).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Question any unknown adult who enters the premises and/or who attempts to engage with the children while they are under your care and / or supervision.

Volunteers and others must never:

- Be biased regarding children's learning and participative capabilities
- Be distractive by the way they dress, behave or conduct themselves
- Respond to phone calls take photos while conducting workshops.
- Take any pictures and display them publicly without approval. Any display of material for publicity of any sort will only be with the final express written approval of the Project Officer, Music Basti.
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Develop / initiate / attempt physical/sexual contact or relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves (e.g. apply sunscreen)
- Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff or volunteers should avoid actions or behaviour, which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

Guidelines that can be used to deal with challenging behaviour constructively:

Ask your lead member of staff if you are unsure. Children attending certain activities will have been issued with a code of conduct.

- Explain to children why certain behaviour is unacceptable. This makes children feel responsible for their behaviour and they are less likely to repeat it.
- Make sure it is the behaviour which is punished and not the person. Always avoid labeling someone as 'bad'.
- If appropriate ignore the bad behaviour for a while – a child may only be attention seeking.



CONCLUSION

The experience is fun and educational for the conductors as well as the children. To be effective and inclusive, and in order to share a common vision it is necessary to understand the children, their needs, rights and the importance of promoting awareness around the same. This will also help staff and volunteers to be able to speak easily, systematically and effectively about the work that they do to support Music Basti, and help the children obtain support from the community for the organization's activities.

All volunteers and staff must sign up to and abide by this Code of Conduct.

Please contact the undersigned for further information:

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