

# Project KHEL

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### 1. Background of the Organization

Project KHEL is a customised programme that uses sports as a platform to engage with adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds. Once engaged, the programme leads the beneficiaries through a series of modules designed to impart crucial Life Skills Education (LSE) through experiential learning and activity based learning models. Sessions at each beneficiary location are held on a semi-weekly basis and sessions consist of both sports as well as LSE. In addition to these sessions, the project conducts specialised thematic workshops and modules from time to time which aim to arm the beneficiaries with awareness on issues such as Civic Responsibility, Child Sexual Abuse (good and bad touches), Personal Hygiene and Self Presentation, Menstrual Hygiene Management, Safe Hand Washing, Peer Pressure, Tobacco and Substance Abuse and so on.

### 2. Policy Statement

The broad objective of the policy is to set minimum standards and procedures on child protection that seek to ensure that the session coordinators and visitors to the programme maintain a safe environment for beneficiaries. Specifically the policy seeks to protect beneficiaries from abuse and exploitation by encouraging good practice among team members and preventing behaviour that may be abusive to beneficiaries.

### 3. Definitions:

- **Child:** Any person, male or female, below the age of 18, as evidenced by relevant birth certificate or in cases where birth certificate is not available, medically ascertained by competent authorities, who has or is undergoing training in ProjectKHEL's sports for development programmes at any of its locations. This would include Community Coordinators who are under the age of 18.

- **Sessions:** A Session is a period starting from the time the beneficiaries are brought to the playground from their respective location by their respective teachers or coordinators till they are put into a line to disperse with their teachers or coordinators. A ProjectKHEL session will generally last for an hour.
- **Coordinators:** Any person, who has chosen out of his/her own volition, to extend help in any programmatic or non-programmatic areas of ProjectKHEL's operations, with or without any remuneration whatsoever, and who has signed an application cum undertaking to protect beneficiaries's best interests at all times during the period of his/her association with ProjectKHEL, following the due process of Coordinator selection as laid down in the Volunteer-Partner Organization Engagement document of ProjectKHEL. The Community Coordinators are also to be considered in this category.
- **Community Coordinators:** Any senior beneficiary who has been appointed as a coordinator post exhibiting immense improvement and outstanding peer leadership, visiting and conducting sessions in partner locations apart from the one they belong to, with a remuneration, and who has signed an application cum undertaking to protect beneficiaries' best interests at all times during the period of his/her association with ProjectKHEL.
- **Visitors:** Any person who has signed the prescribed undertaking attached to the CPP and escorted by a team member, visiting any location(s) where sports and/or outdoor activities are conducted.
- **Protection Issues:** In the context of activities of ProjectKHEL, an indicative list of child protection issues is as follows:
  - Gender discrimination
  - Religious/Caste discrimination
  - Physical, emotional or psychological harassment
  - Sexual abuse
  - Verbal abuse
  - Corporal Punishment
  - ProjectKHEL recognises that beneficiaries have the right to be protected both from the violation of their rights by adults, as well as by older/other beneficiaries.
- **Corporal Punishment:** Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child pain, not for the purpose of injury but for correction

#### 4. Purpose of the policy

Beneficiaries living on streets, other disadvantaged circumstances, or living with or without families face increased risk of abuse and exploitation not only from peers, individuals, immediate stake holders, family members and community , but equally so from development workers and care givers whose role is to bring relief to beneficiaries.

As an organization working with hundreds of beneficiaries on a daily basis; team members come in contact with beneficiaries through their work. And due to the global increase in reports of child abuse by development workers, it is important that ProjectKHEL puts in place mechanisms to protect beneficiaries, team members and the organization itself.

The organization, since its inception in 2012 has been rapidly increasing its strength by reaching out to more number of beneficiaries while providing quality Life Skills Education. In this process the number of team members has also grown significantly. Due to its rich work culture and commitment towards overall development of the beneficiaries it is important to make everyone associated with the organization accountable to promote child safety. It is both a moral and a legal responsibility for ProjectKHEL. The policy thus seeks to create an organisation-wide culture of awareness by promoting and upholding principles of transparency and accountability on matters of child protection.

#### **Safety Norms for ProjectKHEL sessions:**

- Prior to the delivery of the session, if the Coordinator and/or the visitor spots an area physically unsafe for the beneficiaries to play then they are to communicate them to the beneficiaries and ensure their physical safety during the session.
- A First Aid box must be kept handy with the team at all sessions.
- An incident/accident can be understood as an event that occurs on a ProjectKHEL session in which the child is harmed (whether intentionally or unintentionally) and that exceeds the capacity of the available resources (first aid) available with the program team.
- In case of accidents, the child must be given appropriate first aid.

- If the accident is of a nature that requires further medical support, the partner location coordinator and the child's local guardian/ parent must immediately be informed, and the child taken to a nearby hospital/doctor.
- The information of such an accident/incident must immediately be communicated by the person(s) conducting the session to the Project Manager/ Project Coordinator who will then advise the concerned person on a further course of action.
- As a rule, it is required that First Aid be administered to a child by the staff of the same gender, unless it is not possible to do so due to any exceptional circumstances. In such cases the First Aid should be administered in the presence of at least two adult witnesses.

## 5. Guidelines For Coordinators and Visitors:

The principle behind this code of conduct is that staff and visitors should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

### DOs

- Be alert and support the ProjectKHEL team to protect the beneficiaries from any physical, emotional or sexual injury or harm.
- Be a good role model – do not smoke, drink alcohol, take drugs, consume *paan/ gutkka / misri* in the presence of the beneficiaries.
- Respect the surroundings – littering, spitting, defacing plants and the physical environment in any way is against the ProjectKHEL ethic.
- Be warm, friendly and caring towards the beneficiaries.
- Adhere to the time schedules.
- Wear clothing and shoes that are appropriate for sports and outdoor activities. Avoid tight clothing, revealing clothes and high heeled shoes.
- Treat all beneficiaries equally with respect and dignity.
- Be sensitive to the issues of beneficiaries who are especially vulnerable in given contexts. For instance, the girl child, beneficiaries with disabilities, beneficiaries from backward socioeconomic groups etc.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.

- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with the beneficiaries.
- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
- Plan and organise the sessions and the play space so as to minimise risks
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between adults – team members and visitors so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
- Talk to beneficiaries about their association with the team or others visiting our sessions and encourage them to raise any concerns
- Empower beneficiaries - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem
- Be aware that beneficiaries are watching and learning from you – and may emulate behaviour you display. For example, a friendly punch among adults may look different to a child with whom we are trying to share the message of non-violence

## DON'Ts

- Carry any separate snacks or refreshments for yourself during sessions unless advised by a Doctor. Also, this is to be done with full knowledge of the Managing team of the organization.
- Take photographs of the beneficiaries during the session without prior permission.
- Counsel beneficiaries on a one on one basis unless you are authorised by ProjectKHEL or the concerned Partner Organization to do so.
- Conduct any games/ sports activities with the beneficiaries unless ProjectKHEL authorises you to do so.
- Make promises you cannot keep. Eg. Promise children from shelter homes that you'll take them home or help them reconcile with their family or get an abusive care taker removed from position and so on.
- Give your phone numbers, email address or postal address to the beneficiaries. Do not take personal numbers, address of the beneficiaries. Your contact point with the beneficiaries is ProjectKHEL.
- Use foul language, inappropriate words, tease, ridicule or humiliate beneficiaries.

- Bully or harass any child.
- Punish beneficiaries. Always report problems and issues to the coordinator /incharge.
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse beneficiaries
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with beneficiaries
- Develop relationships with beneficiaries 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
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade beneficiaries, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular beneficiaries to the exclusion of others.
- Ask personal questions to any of the beneficiaries
- Give or take gifts, either small or big, to or from any of the beneficiaries
- Use the sessions for photo opportunities
- Hug children anytime before, during or after our session.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list.

## AVOID

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. Where unavoidable (e.g. the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital) ensure that action is taken only with the full knowledge and consent of person in charge).

Otherwise, avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with beneficiaries away from others.
- Taking beneficiaries to or from an event/session/home in one's vehicle unless absolutely required.

## NEVER

Under no circumstances, does ProjectKHEL sanction the following:

- Rough physical or sexually provocative games.
- Any form of inappropriate touching.
- The use of inappropriate language.
- Shouting at a child.
- Sexually suggestive comments made to a child, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Doing things of a personal nature for beneficiaries or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
- Inviting or allowing beneficiaries to stay with you at your home.

Signature and name of the Coordinator/Visitor:.....

Date:.....