

# HARI WELFARE ASSOCIATION

## Child Protection Policy

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This Child Protection Policy provides a framework for managing and reducing risks of child abuse by the persons



**HARI WELFARE  
ASSOCIATION**

## Child Protection Policy

### HWA's CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

HWA's Child Protection Policy describes standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In the current context, it applies particularly to the duty of HWA and individuals associated with HWA towards children whether in direct or indirect contact.

This policy is a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children.

This policy will assist in creating a safe and positive environment for children, specifically protecting children from accidental harm as well as deliberate abuse within organizations intended for their benefit and to show that the organization is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if warranted, and lessons learned incorporated into subsequent versions.

The policy shall be translated into local language and made available to all HWA offices.

#### Scope

The policy applies to:

- HWA staff
- Volunteers
- Individually contracted advisers/consultants to HWA

HWA expects personnel of the above entities to act in accordance with the principles set out in this policy, in addition to abiding by other relevant international declarations, conventions and agreements.

#### Definitions:

**Child:** A child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years.

**Child Abuse:** Child abuse is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development into adulthood.

**Child Protection:** Within the scope of this policy, child protection is defined as the responsibilities, measures and activities that HWA undertakes to safeguard children from both intentional and unintentional harm.

#### Procedures

The following procedures provide clear step-by-step guidance on what to do in different circumstances.

#### Recruitment and screening processes

HWA's internal recruitment processes should use stringent screening measures to ensure inappropriate persons are not employed by it. These include background checks on all successful candidates before they begin work. Additional screening measures should be incorporated into selection processes for positions that require working directly with children. These include referee checks and targeted interview questions.

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### **Training**

HWA will ensure that orientation training about the Child Protection Policy is given to all staff and personnel, including training on behavior guidelines for those in direct contact with children, and guidance on the acceptable and unacceptable sharing of information on children.

### **Children's participation**

Children will only benefit from this policy if they are aware of their rights and are given the proper environment in which to exercise them. HWA will create a space where children feel able and willing to speak out about abuse, without fear or shame.

### **Complaint Process:**

- A Committee comprising of the **Child Protection Manager (VAC Manager)**, the Human Resource Manager and supported by the Executive Director shall be responsible for the implementation of the policy and all concerns and complaints shall be referred to the Committee.
- In each of the regional offices person(s) shall be designated who shall have the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of child protection guidelines included in the Code of Conduct and with whom people can share their concerns regarding child protection matters and lodge complaints with.
- It is mandatory for HWA staff to report immediately all concerns related to violations of the Policy to the designated persons so that incidents are recorded and appropriate investigation and action is undertaken. Information related to the concerns and or complaints shall be kept confidential.
- Verbal complaints, especially by children associated with HWA programs, shall be taken seriously and addressed adequately.

### **Disciplinary Action**

HWA reserves the right to immediately suspend any employee, intern or volunteer who is alleged to have violated the Code of Conduct pending the outcome of an investigation and to take disciplinary action against person/s proven guilty which may include dismissal and reporting the incident to the police.

## **Code of Conduct**

### **HWA Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct includes guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behavior towards children.

### **General Principles**

- The best interests of the child are to be protected over any other consideration including advocacy for children's issues and the promotion of children's rights.
- Protect children from all types of sexual, emotional, verbal and physical abuse.
- Ensure children are heard and taken seriously
- Ensure children's safety when part of an event arranged by HWA offices and partner organizations.
- Do not discriminate against children on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or any other status.
- Encourage and respect children's voices and views.
- Develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable including children with disabilities from abuse.
- Be aware of high-risk peer situations (e.g. unsupervised mixing of older and younger children).
- Develop clear rules to address specific physical safety issues relative to the local physical environment of a project.
- Meet with a child in a central, public location whenever possible.
- Report suspected or alleged abuse to the designated Child Protection Officer.
- Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns and allegations.

### **Inappropriate Behavior**

- Hit or otherwise physically assault a child.
- Act or use language in any way that intends to embarrass, humiliate, or degrade a child.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child could do for him/herself, including dressing, bathing, and

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grooming.

- Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other.
- Develop relationship with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Stand aside and not intervene when inappropriate actions are being inflicted by children on other children simply because it is frequent and commonplace.
- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- Take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you
- Indulge in any behavior or action that may culturally or socially be considered inappropriate.

### **Communications about Children**

All publications and the website that include images and text related to children will not contain the following:

- Manipulated or sensationalized text and/or images
- Discriminatory and degrading language
- Information that could be used to identify the location of the child and cause them to be put at risk
- Photos of children that will be included on the website or any of our publications must be taken with the child's verbal permission.
- In addition, all information relating to children is limited to those members of staff who need to know and will be treated as confidential.
- Before photographing or filming a child all efforts should be made to comply with local traditions.
- Wherever possible informed consent should be obtained from the child or a parent/ guardian of a child including explaining how the photograph or film will be used.
- Ensure photographs and videos present children in a dignified and respectful manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.
- Ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child.

### **Interviewing children**

- Obtain permission from the child and his or her guardian for all interviews.
- Special attention should be paid to child's right to privacy and confidentiality.
- Do not publish a story or image which might put a child at risk.
- Avoid question, attitudes or comments that are judgmental or insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation or that can reactivate a child/s pain and grief from traumatic events.
- Do not ask children to tell a story that is not part of their history or experience.
- Ensure that the child or guardian knows who they are talking to, explain the purpose of the interview and that the content/story will be disseminated locally as well as internationally.

### **Reporting on children**

Always change the name of name and obscure the visual identity of a child who is a victim of sexual abuse or exploitation, a perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse, is charged or convicted of a crime, a child combatant or former child combatant.

### **Programs involving direct contact with children**

Before initiating any program that involves direct responsibility for children, for example relief activities, events related to Children's Parliament and Child Rights Clubs, delivering talks to children in schools, facilities such as safe play areas, drop in centers etc; the Manager must follow the above mentioned general guidelines in addition to the added provisions specific to the event. It must be understood that when children are attending or are involved in any event with HWA or because of HWA, their protection is the responsibility of HWA.

- A coordinator must be appointed to oversee the protection of children and is familiar with the HWA Child Protection Policy
- All contact numbers of related adults of children should be with the manager and the coordinator.
- Request written parental consent for significant travel arrangements and overnight stays.

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- Ensure that if mixed groups of children are taken to an event they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff
- Identify risks, including the potential for an accident or incident to occur, and take steps to minimize them.
- Safety of the children must be ensured where they are lodged.
- Children's transportation, boarding and lodging are supervised by the manager/ coordinator.
- Children with special needs or disability must be catered to with special attention.
- At no time should children be left unattended.
- Children child must not be part of any controversy or controversial place or event.
- As far as possible, be visible in working with children
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potential abusive behavior does not go unchallenged
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns.
- All visitors to a facility must sign in a Visitors' Book. No adults, other than staff are ever left unattended with the children.
- Any person visiting the provision in an official capacity, not previously known to staff, are required to provide proof of identity.
- No child is ever allowed to leave the provision/facility with an adult who is not the normal collector of the child without prior permission being obtained.

### **General**

The Employee shall not:

- Undertake any other paid employment without the written permission of the Executive Director. In the event of the employee accepting any work during the period of employment with HWA, the employee shall pay HWA 10% percent of his or her earnings which will be deposited by HWA in its HWA Charity Fund.
- Engage in personal business activity of any sort during office hours.
- Disclose to any unauthorized person any information about the business affairs of HWA, or make use of such information for own account or that of others.

### **Communication**

Computers, electronic mail (email), access to HWA's computer network, access to the Internet, and presence on the World Wide Web are HWA resources provided to employees as business communication and productivity tools.

- Every employee is expected to follow conventional and legal standards of ethical conduct in their use of computing resources.
- HWA users of computing resources are to behave responsibly, ethically, politely, and in good taste-even in the absence of reminders or active enforcement.

Communications resources, including phone, fax, and computer, are made available for project and employee communication and research associated with ongoing work at HWA.

- Every employee has a responsibility to maintain and enhance HWA's public image when using electronic communications. The policies of HWA, including policies on Gender Harassment, and discrimination, apply to all information conveyed through electronic information and telecommunication networks.
- All messages composed, sent, or received on HWA's email system, or otherwise written, are the property of HWA. The content of electronic mail and other communications, properly obtained for legitimate business purposes, may be disclosed within HWA without the permission of the sender or recipients.
- HWA reserves the right to review, audit, intercept, and access messages sent or received via the HWA system for any purpose.

### **Use of Computing Resources**

Every employee is expected to use computing resources in a productive manner and he or she is responsible for the content of all text, audio, and images that he or she transmits, stores, or displays using HWA provided computer and

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network access, including email and the Internet.

- When transmitting confidential data via email, special care should be taken to ensure that addressees include only the intended recipients.
- HWA-provided computer and network access may not be used for transmitting, receiving, storing, or displaying any communications of a discriminatory or harassing nature or of materials that can be interpreted as obscene or pornographic.
- No messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, age, disability, religion, national origin, physical attributes, or sexual preference shall be transmitted.
- No abusive, profane, or offensive language shall be transmitted.
- Electronic communications may not be used for any purpose that is illegal or against HWA policy or contrary to HWA's best interests. No email or other electronic communications may be sent that conceals the identity of the sender or represents the sender as someone else or someone from another organization.
- No employee should place HWA material on any publicly accessible Internet computer without appropriate prior permission of key management responsible for the material.

### **Organizational Ethics**

It is the policy of HWA to conduct all organizational matters with integrity and in accordance with the highest ethical standards.

HWA employees are responsible for their own ethical conduct. Integrity and compliance with laws, regulations, contractual obligations, and HWA policies are expected of all employees in order to safeguard HWA's resources and reputation.

Report of suspected ethics violations will be investigated, and if a violation is confirmed, appropriate action will be taken up to and including termination.

Following are examples of Organizational Ethics Violations that an employee should report to his or her supervisor.

- Requests to an employee to engage in any activity that he or she believes would be contrary to HWA's standards of organizational ethics and conduct or mission.
- Request to an employee to engage in any activity that he or she believes are contrary to local laws, regulations, or HWA policy.
- Information that another employee is violating HWA standards of organizational ethics and conduct or that any other person or firm representing HWA is engaged in such conduct.
- Any criminal offense that has or may be committed in connection with HWA's affairs.
- Any failure by HWA personnel to comply with legal obligations.
- If the health and safety of any individual may be endangered.
- If the environment may be affected by HWA's activities.

### **Confidentiality of Complaints**

Employees providing information relating to above will be protected from any form of retaliation.

In view of the potential for harm to innocent persons, HWA will treat any allegation and the relevant evidence as confidential, to the maximum extent possible. HWA will ensure that any employee making an allegation as mentioned above will not be subject to any detriment as a result.

Further, the privacy of those who, in good faith, report apparent violations will also be protected to the maximum extent possible.

### **Information Disclosure**

HWA's major role is to create and raise awareness, advocate and lobby for the protection, promotion and development of child rights.

HWA functions on the basis of a strong belief that in order to enhance the human rights sector, relevant information should be shared with the various actors, beneficiaries and stakeholders involved in this line of work.

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HWA has a belief that communicating with the media, and public access to timely, accurate and comprehensive information is an essential tool for realizing substantive benefits within the framework of human development. To accomplish this goal, HWA believes that information must be provided early and regularly to civil society organizations, affected parties, and the general public

### **Declaration**

I confirm that I have received a copy of the Child Protection Policy which I have read and understood

Name:

Designation:

Department:

Duty Station:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: