



DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES BY SOCIAL ANIMATION (DISA)

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY



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1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of any society can be judged from the way it treats its young and the elderly. From this point of view Indian Society notoriously falls short of standards. The scale of child abuse in India is far worse than people generally imagine. Many stern laws have been enacted by the Government to protect children from abuses, yet the situation remains grim. While much abuse takes place in families and work places, unfortunately it can take place also in institutions of child care and education. Hence it is necessary that a strict code of conduct and stringent measures of discipline be implemented within our own institutions. This is the reason why the DISA has adopted the *Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding*. This Child Protection Policy will help to eliminate vigilantly all risks of child exploitation and abuse in all our services.

The effective protection of children and vulnerable adults and a commitment to ensure their integral de

velopment and empowerment, in keeping with the dignity of the human person, in accordance with the Constitution of India are very vital for all citizens of this country. Our commitment to safeguarding, especially by those in positions of leadership and responsibility, value the lives, wholeness, safety and well-being of each individual person within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to uphold the highest safeguarding standards in our relationships with people of all ages who are involved in whatever capacity within our Organization. Therefore, we accept that it is the collective responsibility of all of us - Employed and Voluntary Members associated with DISA to work together to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse or harm.

1.1 DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES BY SOCIAL ANIMATION (DISA)

Development Initiatives By Social Animation (DISA) is a Registered Society since 24 September 2001 under Societies Registration Act 1860 (Registration No: 462/2001-02, renewed for five years up to 23 Sep. 2026). DISA has interventions for empowerment through facilitation and mentoring of Self Help Groups, Women Associations, Groups of Adolescent Girls, Farmers Clubs, Community Based Inclusive Development of Children and Youngsters with Disability, and Family Centered Child Care. DISA has FCRA Registration (FCRA No:

136310026) and Exemption from Income Tax with 12 A (10 AC) Certificate (146 / 02-03 w.e.f. 01 April 2002, renewed up to March 2027). The Organization is accredited with Credibility Alliance (CA/16/2021, valid up to 19.02.2027) and is registered for CSR Activities (Regn. No: CSR000774795).

The organizational life of DISA is like a mustard seed, though small in size, it is growing to become shelter for many and useful in manifold ways to the community. The Organization intervenes in the lives of the excluded and the most marginalized for their empowerment and their *life in fullness*. “*Growing to Serve*” has been the hallmark of DISA, with total dedication and hard work of our Members and Collaborators. The Covid 19 Pandemic and other setbacks have affected the pace of our interventions, but we are determined to march forward with greater vigour and commitment.

Although considerable progress has been made in all the fields over a period of many years, after Independence, DISA views that the present Society is not an ideal Society as visualized in the Constitution of India. There is rampant corruption, exploitation, exclusion, violation of human rights and gross discrimination of the weaker sections of the Society. They are the “Little Ones”, who are cut off from the main stream and are pushed to the peripheries of the Society. Restoring their dignity and upholding their rights so that they enjoy the constitutional safeguards, shall be the means to create a new social order of human communities, where the universal values of justice, fraternity, equity, love, peace etc. will reign supreme. We believe that *another world is possible*, where all shall have their due share in the community and the resources of this country. Hence DISA sets the goal of bringing a social transformation with structural and systemic changes that the new order is integrated, participatory, inclusive and sustainable.

Organization Vision, Mission and Strategy

Vision: Communion of human communities, for a Just, Responsive and an inclusive society and nurturing universal values.

Mission: To restore the human dignity of the poor, the excluded and the marginalized and achieve their rights as citizens.

Strategy: A process of social animation and right based and inclusive development approach among the poor, excluded and marginalized for enabling awareness capacities and collective actions.

2. CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This Child Protection Policy of DISA, based on the POCSO Act, 2012,

enacted in the Indian Parliament with the assent of the President of the Union of India on 19 June, 2012, is to protect children and vulnerable adults under its care, or wherever children are somehow beneficiaries in its jurisdiction, from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment, pornography and matters connected there with.

2.1 What is the Child Protection Policy?

Child Protection Policy is the Organization's commitment to protect children from abuse, exploitation and organizational negligence. This is reflected in the way an Organization conducts its activities and the way its staff behave. Child Protection procedures are measures that an Organization takes to put its policy into action. Procedures include measures to produce a safe and conducive environment for children and for those working with them, a code of conduct for staff, awareness of the issues and their long-lasting effects to deal with an affected child, family and institution, institutional and legal measures to deal with the perpetrator, guidance on the appropriate use of the children's image and information and requirements of the staff for reporting suspected or actual abuse etc.

It is also meant to enable all children to access rights, opportunities and resources for survival, protection, development and participation to ensure for them a safe and happy childhood and to secure their future prospects in collaboration with the State, Non-State actors, the Families of children, efforts to offer every child a nurturing, respectful and safe environment based on an agenda of equity and the best interests of the child.

2.2 Why this Policy?

This Child Protection Policy of the DISA is intended for the proper development of a child, that his / her right to privacy and confidentiality is protected and respected by every person by all means and through all stages of a judicial process involving the child.

It also envisages that the best interests and wellbeing of children be protected at every stage to ensure the healthy, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child.

The policy also avows, besides signing an undertaking by all members, that all members in any of the institutions shall take all measures to prevent inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity, such as prostitution or any other illegitimate sexual or pornographic practice.

This child Protection Policy of the DISA takes upon itself the responsibility of bringing the staff members found guilty of heinous crimes against children, within the arms of the law.

3. TERMS USED IN CHILD PROTECTION POLICY:

- a. Accused** - Is the person or persons alleged to have committed abusive behaviour, provided that the allegation is in the form of a signed statement.

- b. Allegation** - Is any disclosure of an act of inappropriate behaviour of an abusive nature.
- c. Child** - Is a minor who has not completed eighteen years of age.
- d. Complainant** - Is an individual who formally reports abusive behaviour.
- e. Disclosure** - Is the revelation of any information, in whatever form to any personnel of the institution.
- f. Institution** - Is a school, college, training centre, hostel / boarding, hospital or religious institution, health care centre, social service centre, established / administered by DISA.
- g. Staff** - Are Adults working in the Institution
- h. Protection Officer** - Is a member of the staff working on the Child Protection Committee to ensure that all protective measures for safeguarding children and young people are in place and implemented.
- i. Sexual assault** - Is an abusive sexual act / manipulation of any body part of a child to any extent or vice-versa.
- j. Sexual harassment** - Is any act, word, gesture, exhibit, object, sound, or any threat or coercion by any form of media or that which entices a child with pornographic content.
- k. Victim** - Is an individual against whom abusive behaviour has been directed.

4. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes of all forms of physical and emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity.

4.1 Types of abuse:

There are many types of abuse defined by the Supreme Court of India but there are six types of abuse which are commonly spoken of and dealt with.

4.1.1 Physical abuse of the child:

It includes hitting, kicking, shaking, throttling, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocation, slapping, pinching, etc. It can also refer to when a caretaker or the one In-charge deliberately ill-treats the person under his /her care. It may even be the result of over disciplining and physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age.

4.1.2 Sexual abuse of the child:

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child or young person in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which he / she is not developed, mentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that which violates the

laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child, who by age or development, is in a position of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. (Refer: Chapter II of POCSO, Act 2012):

It involves :

- a. repeated attempts to contact the child directly or through electronic or digital media.
- b. the use of real or fabricated depictions of the child through electronic media or otherwise to entice or to condescend.
- c. undue physical contact or touching.
- d. the convenient and calculated use of cameras, cell phones and other recording gadgets.
- e. unhealthy favouritism.
- f. excessive use of social networks to keep in contact with the child etc.

4.1.3 Emotional abuse of the child:

It is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a person so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects to the child's emotional development. The expression in the eyes and the whole body language may involve making children feel worthless, useless, good-for-nothing or unloved and inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs and expectations of others.

It may also involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the deprivation or corruption (where a person is in a position to do so) of the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing. It is an act of omission or commission leading to the denial of a child's basic needs.

4.1.4 Verbal abuse of the child:

Words which give emotional or intellectual pain in any way to the listener and hurt either emotionally or otherwise, are considered to be abusive: words like stupid, ugly, lazy, cry-baby, dummy, loser, moron, etc. cause lasting emotional pain.

4.1.5 Child neglect:

It involves, deliberate or absolute carelessness or negligence, failing to provide for or secure for children their rights to safety and development. Neglect is sometimes passive in as much as it relates to failure in carrying out some key aspects of care and protection of children at the appropriate time. Such neglect could result in significant impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to grow emotionally and socially. Severe neglect or repeated failure to provide timely care, thereby endangering the child is criminal negligence, e.g. deliberate failure to

provide medical care is exposing a child to severe harm or even death.

4.1.6 Child exploitation:

It refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit, often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child. This is detrimental to the child's physical, mental, emotional, moral, social health and development. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimization, oppression or ill treatment. Any assignment given to children should take into account the age, capacity and the best interests of the child.

5. COMMITMENT OF DISA:

DISA is committed to prevent and protect children from all forms of abuse namely physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. This includes other forms of abuse such as bullying, corporal punishment, child grooming and exposing them to, or using them for pornography, witchcraft and ritualistic abuse, spiritual abuse and harmful traditional practices. The underlying principle of this policy is to act in the best interest of the child always.

The organization also expects its collaborators and partners to be committed to safeguarding children. To promote safeguarding children as the responsibility of everyone we encourage our personnel, partners and all others associated with the organization to participate actively in building and maintaining a child-safe environment. Hence the Policy:

- Guides to plan and implement programmes to reduce the risks faced by vulnerable children and collaborate with stake holders at all levels to ensure that children are protected from all forms of inhuman, degrading treatment including abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence.
- Creates awareness against harmful customary practices such as child marriage, corporal punishment, ragging, human sacrifice, honour killings and witch hunting.
- Advocates before the State for special protection, schemes and rehabilitation measures to address the special needs of children at risk.
- Makes efforts to enroll school dropouts back in school and prevent children from dropping out of school so that they may not fall into the dangerous situations of child labour and other forms of exploitation.
- Builds the capacity of personnel who have their responsibility for the care of children with adequate information, education and training in the right attitudes and practical skills.
- Creates awareness among children about their rights, about how to respond to situations of risk and thus train them to protect themselves.

The Child Protection Policy of DISA believes that abuse, neglect,

exploitation and violence against children are not acceptable in any form. If it is known that a child is being abused, exploited, neglected or is a victim of violence, keeping silent or being indifferent would be wrong.

5.1 Ideology of the Policy:

- The Child Protection Policy is based on the basic principle that each child is a gift from **God** born with an inherent dignity and right for respect.
- Protection of children and the youth who are under the care and protection of the institutions becomes besides being a responsibility also a priority.
- We, the Care-givers, are to safeguard children from all possible, physical, emotional and spiritual dangers. We have to share the responsibility of the State in the care and protection of children especially the marginalized and vulnerable.
- This Policy for children in our Institutions is a living commitment and contribution to the welfare, protection and empowerment of the children under our care.
- The Care-givers have to protect the rights of the children under their care so that they are protected from any harm and get every opportunity for development of individuals without any discrimination of any kind.
- The children of the Institutions have to be educated regarding their rights and what constitutes a violation. They must be trained to participate in the exercise of their rights as well as to ensure that they know whom to contact if there is any violation.
- The Policy is also designed to keep the staff, students and volunteers educated and trained in acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour so that they may safeguard themselves from allegations of misconduct.
- The Constitution of India guarantees certain rights to every person in this country including children. All children have equal rights. No class, origin, custom, tradition, cultural or religious practice shall be allowed which violates, restricts or prevents children from enjoying these rights.
- Child Rights are universal, inter-related, interdependent, indivisible and inalienable. The best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration in all actions concerning or affecting the child.
- The safety and security of children shall be of prime importance. The children will be protected from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and violence as they have the right to protection.
- The physical, social, psychological, emotional, intellectual, moral, cultural and spiritual development of children shall be addressed in totality.
- A family setting is the most conducive to the integrated development of children. Therefore, educate parents to take keen interest in the integrated development of their children and help in providing the conducive ambience.
- The principles of equity, justice and non-discrimination shall guide all actions concerning children.

- Individuality, age, gender and recognition of special needs and vulnerability will set the direction for any / all programmes and interventions related to children.
- Consultation and participation of children in a manner appropriate to their age, in all matters affecting them, is an indisputable right of every child and shall be respected in all our dealings with children.
- Taking positive measures for the care and protection of children is the primary responsibility of the State and these measures are to be carried out by the State, adhering to the “Right” perspective. Collaborating with the State in implementing its laws, policies and schemes for the care and protection of children will be an important contribution of the DISA while being faithful to the guiding principles and standards of this Policy.
- The publishing of information and depiction of children in whatever form will be done, respecting the privacy, dignity and the best interests of the children and with utmost circumspection.
- Children have the right to access information that is important to their development and well-being.
- Children should also have access to children’s books and other forms of media appropriate to their growth and development.
- The preventive system of education with its principles of reason, religion and loving kindness shall be practiced in all the institutions of DISA for the overall development and protection of children.
- Consistent with the mandates enshrined in the Constitution of India, the international standard of the Child Right Convention of the UN, legal directions as in the Juvenile Justice Act and other relevant legal systems of the country and in keeping with the spirit of the preventive system of DISA in collaboration with the State and other Non-State sectors, shall create a safe environment for children.

Hence this Policy is implemented to enable children, staff and volunteers to express their concern on witnessing an act of physical, sexual, emotional and mental harm to any child.

Scope of the Policy

This policy is binding upon the staff of DISA, its related services, visitors, third parties (being member association staff, donors, VIP's, consultants, volunteers, journalists, etc.). This policy is designed to provide guidance to all Representatives of the Organization so that they understand the importance of child safeguarding issues as well as undertake their legal, ethical and policy responsibilities within and outside working hours. The underlying principle of this policy is to always act in the best interest of the child.

5.2 Purpose of the Policy:

The Child Protection Policy of DISA, in all its services and support to all the

children for whom it assumes responsibility, commits itself to:

- Ensuring the necessary standards of human and infrastructural resources, so as to enable children to develop to their full potential.
- Establishing strong preventive and promotive measures which lead to the care and protection of children.
- Creating an environment wherein the aspirations of children are a part of all decisions on matters concerning them.
- Consulting, networks and collaborating with like-minded people for the care and protection of the rights of children.
- Making every effort to improve knowledge, attitudes and practices among children and personnel regarding child rights and their violations and to finding out and making known how and where to access protection and in supporting them in situations that threaten or violate children.
- Adopting the preventive system or the “Pedagogy of Presence” that uses reason, religion and loving kindness to enable the best in every child to blossom; to create an environment of preventive care by taking active steps to prevent any harm to the child; to provide healthy environment that supports the integrated development and protection of the young; to create a culture of rights so that any violation of child rights becomes rare and difficult and to protect the young from falling into situations of risk, harmful influence and situation of abuse and exploitation.

5.3 Priority Areas of Policy Implementation:

The DISA is committed to the following priorities while implementing the Child Protection Policy:

5.3.1. Survival:

The right to life and survival is an inalienable right of every child. It is important to accord the highest priority to promoting the health and well-being of children.

Hence the DISA shall:

- Make efforts to eliminate crimes against life such as abortion, female feticide and infanticide.
- Make efforts to prevent child marriage and ensure the right age at the time of marriage.
- Provide for child friendly and safe physical spaces by ensuring easily accessible facilities, a clean environment, adequate infrastructure facilities, living spaces, playgrounds, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, etc.

5.3.2. Development:

There is no substitute of any sort for quality and appropriate education for the physical, emotional and cognitive development of children, so as to empower them to live confident and happy lives with life skills for their

own safety and protection.

Hence, the Child Protection Policy of DISA shall:

- Provide and promote quality, child-friendly, gender-sensitive and relevant school education.
- Provide opportunities for sports, leisure, recreation and creativity, provide early childhood education, prevent children from dropping out of education, promote better enrolment, ensure quality primary and upper primary education for all as non-negotiable, and promote secondary education.
- Enable children to develop holistically, draw out their aspirations and focus on their aptitudes by reviewing the curriculum with a special focus on mental health from a perspective of self-esteem, confidence and life skills.
- Train children to prepare themselves to face the challenges of life.
- Address issues of children affected by life threatening and / or stigma attached diseases such as HIV / AIDS.
- Educate children about their rights and teach them to access help when their rights are violated.
- Make necessary efforts to secure or to restore to children a meaningful access to the own culture, religion and language, so that they may know, understand and value their own identity.
- Provide care, support and services to the children in a spirit of accompaniment, supportive supervision and in a friendly family-like atmosphere, offering a caring presence to the child.
- While caring for children, give them sufficient freedom, be reasonable towards them provide emotional support, discipline them with loving kindness and avoid corporal punishment and public humiliation.
- Educate and take care of children in an environment which respects and tolerates all cultures and religions.
- Provide a trained Counselor to help children who need professional Counselling for personal growth.

5.3.3. Protection:

A positive and protective environment for children can foster their development, progress, health and education leading them to become knowledgeable, committed and compassionate men and women when dealing with others. This is ensured by caring and enabling policies, regulations and services.

To ensure a protective environment for children always and everywhere, the Child Protection Policy of DISA will network with like-minded people towards transforming society to become a caring community that protects and takes care of its children.

Child protection involves creating a child safety net in society to protect children from all vulnerability underlying many forms of harm and abuse.

6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

6.1. Prevention Strategies within DISA : Code of Conduct

All Management members, Staff and Volunteers, Network Partners, Focus Community, Visitors and any Stakeholders are required to understand their responsibility to keep children safe and abide by the following code of conduct that outlines the rules of appropriate and proper behaviour when working with children.

All DISA Staff is responsible for encouraging and promoting the dissemination of this code of conduct. This code of conduct is mandatory for all the Staff and Members. Any violation of code of conduct will result in disciplinary procedures which may include legal actions where the severity warrants it. It protects representatives from false accusations and the name and reputation of the DISA.

a) Guidelines for Staff and other Stakeholders such as Volunteers, Partners, Consultants, etc.

1. Be aware of situations which may present risks
2. Plan and organize the work and the workplace so as to minimize risk possibilities.
3. Be visible to others when working with children whenever possible.
4. Create and maintain a non-defensive attitude and an open culture.
5. Foster a culture of mutual accountability so that any potentially abusive behaviour can be challenged.
6. Develop a culture where children can talk about their contacts with staff and others openly
7. Respect each child's boundaries and help them to develop their own sense of their rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem.
8. Strive to understand children within the local context in which they live
9. Value the views of children and take them seriously.
10. Treat children with respect and recognize them as individuals in their own rights.

All representatives of DISA are required to understand their responsibility to keep children safe and abide by the following Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct is designed primarily to protect children; however it also serves to guard representatives from false accusations; and the name and reputation of DISA. All DISA Staff is responsible for encouraging and promoting the dissemination of this Code of Conduct.

b) Acceptable Behaviour and Conduct

It is important for all Staff and others in contact with children to:

1. Treat all children with dignity and grace that will be applicable in terms of language, dress, behaviour and attitude.
2. Never spend time alone with one child / away from all others or in a room with door closed.
3. Be committed to creating a culture of openness and mutual accountability at work places to enable all child protection concerns to be raised and discussed and where abusive behaviour can and must be challenged.
4. Ask permission from parents or school authorities before taking photographs or video documentation
5. Take permission of children and their guardian before engaging them in any activity of Organization.
6. Provide the children with all sort of possible safety during transit, rehabilitation or repatriation.
7. Raise any concern of inappropriate behaviour immediately.
8. Use positive, non-violent methods to manage children's behaviour.
9. Encourage children to raise their concern about staff or others safely
10. Ensure appropriate physical contact at all times and not an invasion of the child's privacy.
11. Take steps to empower children by providing their views to be heard on acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
12. Ensure that the risks of working alone are minimized by ensuring the "two adults" rule and that they are always visible to others when working with children.
13. Comply with any investigation (including interviews) and make available any documents or information necessary for completion of the investigation.
14. Contribute to an environment where children are listened to and respected as individuals and which is safe, positive and encouraging to them.

c) Unacceptable behaviour

It is important for all Staff and others in contact with children not to:

1. Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative or develop physical or sexual relationships with children that they interact, engage or work with.
2. Take a child to their home or visit a child at their home where they may be alone with that child, or sleep in the same room.
3. Spend excessive time alone with a child, away from others, behind closed doors or a secluded area.
4. Sleep in the same bed with a child or allow child to stay overnight at their home unsupervised.

5. Do things of personal nature for a child that they could do for themselves or show favour to particular child to the exclusion of others (promising gifts or enticements).
6. Engage in sexual activity with a child regardless of the age or consent. (Mistaken belief regarding the age of the child is not a defence).
7. Be intoxicated (under the influence of alcohol or drugs) prior to assuming responsibility for any child.
8. Act in such a way intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade or otherwise perpetrate any form of abuse.
9. Act in a way that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
10. Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children (even where this may be culturally acceptable).
11. Use of language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
12. Condone or participate in behaviour with children which are illegal, unsafe or abusive, including being part of harmful traditional practices, spiritual or ritualistic abuse.

6.2. STANDARDS FOR HUMAN RESOURCE

a) Job Advertisement, Recruitment and Selection

The role of Human Resource Development (HRD) is to improve the performance of the Organization by maximizing the efficiency and the performance of the people through working on developing knowledge and skills, actions and standards, motivation, incentives, attitudes and work environment.

Selecting right people for job and placing them in right roles plays an important part in determining the adequate functioning of the organization. Thus, the recruitment and selection strategies play an important role in ensuring the efficiency of an Organization.

To build in the best process of selection for DISA, the selection criteria and selection process has been set keeping in mind the job responsibility of each profile and also the knowledge and capabilities required fulfilling those responsibilities in the context of the organization and the target area.

b) Child Safe Recruitment and Selection

DISA commits risk to deter and detect applications from unsuitable people who may seek to gain access to children through the activities of the Organization.

The following procedures will apply:

1. All job advertisements state that DISA is a 'child-safe Organization'.
2. Ensure the 'Certificate of Good Conduct' or equivalent, during the recruitment.

3. DISA will ask for written references from previous employers which also include questions related to child safeguarding.
4. Candidates will have their employment history checked including an investigation of any gaps between jobs.
5. Candidates will have their identity checked with original documents.
6. Candidates will be asked specific child-safeguarding-related questions during their interview.
7. All Staff will undergo mandatory training on safeguarding policies.

b) Orientation and Induction Program

Induction and orientation program is applicable for both Staff and Volunteers selected in DISA. All induction and orientation program at DISA will be guided by its induction and orientation norms.

Objectives of the induction and orientation:

1. To acquaint new entrants with the organizational culture, system, policies and operational norms of existing system of DISA.
2. To facilitate the adjustment of the new entrants in the new environment.

6.3. STANDARDS FOR COMMUNICATION

a) General Standards to Protect Children in the Communication Process

1. DISA is committed to ensuring all interviews and images of children are undertaken with sensitivity in order to safeguard the child's right to dignity, identity, confidentiality and privacy. Where possible, children should be prepared for interviews prior to being interviewed.
2. Pictures of children should always be decent and respectful. Consent to use information obtained in interviews and/or images of children who have been interviewed should be obtained from children themselves (if they are of an age, understanding and possess the maturity to do so) and from their parents and/or guardians.
3. Where the risk of harm and stigma is high to vulnerable children who are being featured in any publication, DISA will ensure that mitigating steps are taken for example, concealing faces, using pseudonyms and vague geographical locations and non-disclosure of personal information (e.g. HIV status)
4. Individuals or organization requesting for the resources depicting children, such as personal information, videos or photographs, will be required to sign an agreement with DISA as to the proper use of such materials. Failure to adhere to the terms could result in the termination of permission and return of information.
5. Pictures, materials and personal information regarding children will be held in a secure area where every caution will be exercised to ensure its security. Access to these is by way of permission only.

6. Personal information and details of children which may identify and increase any potential risk of harm to them should not be used.

b) Protective measures for children in emergencies

There are three main areas to ensure Protective measures for children in emergencies:

- Family separation
- Sexual violence of children at emergencies
- Any other form of abuse faced by children

Our child protection in emergency work includes capacity building, psychosocial support and inclusion of child protection and risk reduction. As far as cases of sexual violence is concerned, it is to be addressed through intervention strategies recommended as per Indian Laws for 'Child Protection and Child Care' such as Juvenile Justice Act, POCSO Act and other legal frameworks. We will also ensure the impunity of perpetrators, to prevent sexual violence and provide rehabilitation services for victims besides taking measures to fight against any form of abuse inflicted upon children within or outside DISA including – illicit.

7. CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - GUIDELINES

The following guidelines and procedures shall be followed while dealing with child abuse.

7.1. Child Protection Committee (CPC)

DISA shall have a Child Protection Committee, appointed by the Governing Body to deal with the alleged cases of abuse of children and young people.

The Committee shall be comprised of 5 competent persons consisting of a child Counselor, three members of the Staff (one male and two female) and another person endowed with wisdom and prudence.

7.1.1. Contact Persons:

Two members of the Child Protection Committee - preferably female - are to be appointed by the Governing Body as contact persons, who on being informed of any complaint, will get in touch with and assure the complainant that the matter will be taken seriously and investigated in accordance with the procedures. The Contact Person is bound to take immediate remedial steps and, in case of a need, medical care of the victim.

The chairperson and members of this Committee are appointed by the Governing Body of DISA for a term of three years, renewable for another term of three years. In case of vacancy the same shall be filled for the rest of term.

The function of this Committee is to ensure proper investigation of child abuse cases, especially those of a sexual nature involving children and young people so as to verify the guilt or innocence and to suggest penalties and provide advice.

The Committee will, within a period of 15 days, submit its findings to the

Governing Body of the Institution and seek advice and guidance, if required.

On receiving the information about any complaint with regard to Child Protection Violation, the Contact Person shall immediately inform the Programme Director or the Secretary who will convene a meeting of the Child Protection Committee.

The Programme Director or the Secretary shall immediately inform the Station Officer of the local Police Station in writing, providing whatever information he has about the offence. However, he will not disclose the name and identity of the victim.

7.1.2. Officers:

The Chairman of the Committee:

The main function of the Chairman of this Committee is protection envisioned by this policy and to safeguard the children from child abuse.

The Chairman of the Child Protection Committee, after having called the first meeting shall inform the Programme Director or the Secretary whether there is a prima facie case against the accused. Should there be a case, Programme Director or the Secretary shall suspend the accused till the whole enquiry is completed and action is taken on the report of the enquiry.

Skills of the Chairman:

- #. Should be a good listener and a good communicator.
- #. Have the ability to empathize, keep confidence and be objective.
- #. Should be generally friendly and approachable.

Scope:

- #. Assumes responsibility of ensuring that the Policy is adhered to in the Institution.
- #. Ensures that any breach of Policy is properly reported.
- #. Ensures the protection and safety of the children and youth.

Responsibilities:

- Acts promptly when there is a breach of the code of protective behaviour.
- Is personally available, whenever required, and maintains a climate that encourages individuals un-disclosing / reporting any allegation of abusive behavior especially sexual behaviour.
- Writes a report of the incident which has taken place.
- Ensures immediate medical attention needed, and ensures the protection of all individuals involved in the reporting or as witnesses of abusive behaviour.
- Upholds confidentiality of the report concerned or allegations of abusive behaviour.
- Ensures the confidential and safe custody of all original written or typed

reports signed and dated.

Secretary:

A Secretary appointed from among the members of the Committee shall record minutes of the meetings, its deliberations and decisions as well as other relevant matters/actions.

7.1.3. Competence and functions of the CPC:

- Shall maintain a file on every case or matter it considers. Each file shall contain a written / typed report of the investigation conducted, conclusions reached with stated reasons and written / typed summary to be forwarded to the Governing Body.
- Shall ensure the safety of all files and the availability of the same in the future. It shall treat as 'Confidential' all records, documents and information received by the members.
- Shall direct the contact person/s to meet with the alleged victim for the purpose of filling in details required, providing information and inviting statement.
- The first and foremost task is the prevention of abuse through the protection committee of all the institutions of DISA. It will initiate and sustain any and all interventions aimed at educating and maintaining, a continued awareness of all matters relating to abusive behaviour.
- To ensure that all the concerned In-charges of the institutions formally examines on a regular basis, all the activities in their institutions / centres for the possible risk of abusive harm.
- To see that all Staff / Volunteers consent to upholding the code of protective behaviour drawn up by the institutions.
- To ensure that no person who has allegedly been abused is in any manner exposed to further victimization rather it will protect the person from the alleged perpetrator.
- Ensures that all Child Protection Committee Members of an Institution or Centre are answerable to DISA.
- All members shall keep themselves updated on contemporary thought and research on the issues of abusive behavior.

7.2. Operating Procedures:

The complaint alleging a case of sexual abuse should clearly state the name and address of the victim, together with the name and address of the offender.

The complaint should be dated. It should also include the date and place of the offence and if possible, mention the date of birth of the victim to determine the age of the victim at the time of the offence.

It should carry a brief account of the offence, its frequency, place, time, circumstances and should be signed by the petitioner.

If the complaint is made by a third party, it should be done by someone who has locus stand, such as a parent, guardian, family member or a legal practitioner.

If the petition is signed by someone other than the above, the party should obtain authorization from the victim or from a legal representative of the victim.

If the complaint does not have the above-mentioned details, the petition will be sent back for clarification and details. It should be noted that the Committee must accept only written and not verbal complaints.

It is important and mandatory to maintain a register in every institution wherein all-important information with regard to incidents are recorded.

7.3 A Guideline / Format of the record shall include the following:

- Data and category of the reporter.
- Data and category of the victim.
- Data and category of the abuser.
- Time / date / place of accident / incident of abuse (accident and incident to be specified).
- Type of abuse.
- Person/s, category of person/s involved in reported abuse.
- Mode/means of abuse.

7.4. Responding to a complaint:

Upon receiving a written complaint by any member of the Child Protection Committee, the Committee verifies the authenticity of the complaint and the Chairman convenes a meeting of the Committee.

Preliminary investigation:

The Child Protection Committee then initiates a preliminary enquiry. During the enquiry, all attempts must be made to protect the good name of the accused and the victim and undue revelation of the enquiry, statements, progress etc. to the public are to be avoided. Hence, in order to prevent any miscarriage of justice and to protect the reputation of both the parties, both the preliminary enquiry and subsequent processes are to be conducted in such a manner as to safeguard the identity of the individuals concerned.

In the ensuing enquiry, the complainant and the alleged offender are to be heard. The alleged offender has the right to know the accusation and the conclusion of the Preliminary Enquiry Committee. Witnesses represented and alleged offenders are to be heard as well. Utmost patience is to be displayed by the Committee during the enquiry and no biased conclusions should be arrived at, keeping in mind the principle that every accused is innocent until proved guilty. The Committee may call for witnesses ex officio, documentary evidence such as letters, emails, audio-video recordings, photographs, etc. The Child Protection Committee

may also seek the opinion of legal or such experts who are in the same field. All statements are to be recorded and signed by the Committee, witnesses, the alleged offender and the victim or his / her representatives in the presence of both the alleged offender and complainant with date and time.

The final report and findings are to be submitted to the Governing Body of DISA within 15 days. The Child Protection Committee may request for an extension of this period for specially stated reasons. The conclusions of the Child Protection Committee are to be communicated to the petitioner and the alleged offender by the Chairman / Secretary of the Child Protection Committee, with the clear understanding that the conclusions are purely findings of the Committee and that the same are not binding according to the civil law of the country.

Action to be taken when a Staff is found guilty:

If the Governing Body of DISA accepts the conclusions of the Child Protection Committee that the offender is guilty and poses a potential threat to the minors of the Institution, he / she is to be immediately dismissed from the Institution as per the provisions of the code of conduct of the institution. If needed legal proceedings, too, may be adopted in which case the law of the land would take its due course.

It is to be noted that if any person makes a false complaint in connection with child abuse or provides false information solely with the intention of tarnishing the image, humiliating, threatening or defaming another person or institution, legal action shall be taken against him / her. (Refer: Sec. 22 of POCSO Act 2012)

At any given stage, the victim cannot claim any compensation, monetary or otherwise from the Institution where the offender was discharging his / her duties, as it is understood that the Institution hires only the services of employees for a remuneration agreed upon and that it is not responsible for his / her behaviour, character, personal interests, private life and traits.

UNDERTAKING BY THE STAFF OF DISA:

All members of the Staff must necessarily sign an undertaking as part of appointment as the Member of Staff before the Secretary of DISA. The signed undertaking countersigned by the Secretary has to be kept in the file of the Member of Staff.

(i) I, (Name and Address of the Staff) hereby state that I shall ensure:

- 1. The best interests of children and young people by protecting their physical, emotional, intellectual, social, moral and spiritual development which will enable them to become good citizens.*
- 2. That I shall respond to each child or young person as a unique creation*

of God, who has the right to determine his / her own future.

- 3. That I will seek to establish a caring, protective and respectful relationship with each child or young person.*
- 4. That I shall be alert to the vulnerability of certain groups of children and young people being isolated, bullied or hurt.*
- 5. That I am open and not secretive about my activities associated with my service in the Institution.*
- 6. That I will interact with every child, young and / or vulnerable person in a manner which demonstrates respect, dignity, integrity, empathy, understanding and patience.*
- 7. That I will be a model of socially appropriate adult behaviour to children and young people which reflects the capacity of listening to, understanding and being respectful towards others.*
- 8. That I shall respect and treat children as individuals capable of forming and expressing their ideas and opinions.*
- 9. That I shall respect any resistance to involvement from a child or young person, in any activity that is not part of my legitimate service to the Institution.*
- 10. That my relationships will be governed by the age and stage of development of children or young persons.*
- 11. That I shall respect children's rights to privacy and confidentiality.*
- 12. That I shall protect and support children against all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual assault and exposure of children to psychological stress through reality shows and competitions, through effective procedures and programmes, as well as assist with identification, reporting, referral investigation and treatment for judicial involvement.*
- 13. That I shall keep the doors open or have transparent doors, so that there is visual access to the activities inside, during interviews, counselling, instruction, tuition etc.*
- 14. That I shall try to avoid any physical touching in response to the need of a child and never resort to any of an inappropriate kind, immaterial of the apparent need.*
- 15. That while being available to a child or young person, I will maintain the professional boundaries of my relationship with them.*
- 16. That my first priority is the care, safety and protection of children or young persons.*
- 17. That I shall only physically restrain a child or young person, when there is a danger to the individual or to other individuals in the area.*
- 18. That I shall announce myself if legitimate business of the Institution requires me to enter any area of privacy for children or young people.*

19. *That I shall maintain confidentiality about information known to me about a child or young person.*
20. *That I will be vigilant and attentive to any harm towards children and young people and shall immediately report any concern I have of the same, to the Protection Officer in my Institution.*
21. *That I shall speak out upon any genuine case of abusive behaviour, no matter what will be the consequence of it.*
22. *That I shall refer all media queries to the spokesperson designed for the task, and otherwise give no comments.*
23. *That I shall comply with all the procedures of the Child Protection Policy.*

(ii) I hereby state that I shall not:

24. *Indulge in any type of indecent touching of the bodies of children or cause to show or touch any part of my body.*
25. *Discriminate against any child on the basis of age, sex, place of birth, disability, race, ethnicity, socio economic status, caste, cultural practices, work, activity or behaviour.*
26. *Subject any child to any type of physical punishment in public or in private.*
27. *Shout at children nor use any indecent words to address them, nor shall I, by gestures, giggling, smirking or looks, demean them in any way.*
28. *Take any child into a closed and secluded area, such as Staff Room, Library, Lab, Washroom, etc.*
29. *Subject any child to shame or belittle any child.*
30. *Contact children over the telephone or by email. My primary contact will be with the Head of the Institution or the Parents / Guardians of the child.*
31. *In any way provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs or anything prohibited by law to children.*
32. *Give gifts to children studying in the school except in public on special occasions like birthdays.*
33. *Show or cause to show children pornographic materials through any media whatsoever.*
34. *Take photographs of children while they are nude, partially nude or undressing / dressing.*
35. *Undermine any parent's authority by ridiculing the parent's beliefs or allowing children to do things against the wishes of their parents.*
36. *Ask a child to keep any secret from his / her parents or the authorities.*
37. *As part of punishment, resort to caning, pinching, keeping children standing out, making them run, kneel down, etc.*
38. *Engage in behaviour or use any verbal abuse causing shame or humiliation or causing mental or psychological strain, belittling and calling bad.*

39. *Use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language when speaking especially with children or young people.*
40. *Swear in the presence of children or young people.*
41. *Do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for him / herself, such as assist with toileting or changing clothes.*
42. *Enter any area of privacy for children or young people, unless legitimate business of the institution requires me to do so.*
43. *Take children or young people that I am professionally engaged with, to any own home / hotel, or sleep in the same room or bed with any of them.*
44. *Slap, hit or physically assault a child or young person.*
45. *Develop and / or use disciplinary means, which are physically or emotionally derogatory to a child or young person.*
46. *Engage in any sexual conversations or discuss sexual activities, unless they are part of a legitimate lesson and the discussion has been approved for sex education.*
47. *Indulge in any manner of activities that are, or could be interpreted to be, aimed at sexualization of any relationship with a child or young person.*
48. *Develop a sexual relationship or one that may be deemed exploitative or abusive with children or young people.*
49. *Indulge in behaviour with children or young people that lead to close physical contact.*
50. *Show sexually oriented or inappropriately printed or digitalized material, such as magazine videos, films etc. to children or young people or carry them in the premises of the Institution or in my possession when involved in an activity of the institution or outside of it.*
51. *Behave provocatively or inappropriately with a child or young person,*
52. *Expose areas of my body considered private, in an inappropriate manner in the presence of children or young people.*
53. *Condone or participate in the behaviour of children or young people that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.*
54. *Act in a manner that shows unfair and differential treatment of particular children or young people.*
55. *Photograph or video a child or young people, without their consent and that of his / her / their parents or guardians.*
56. *Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child or young person in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way.*
57. *Seek to make contact and spend private time with any child or young person outside legitimate official programme time.*
58. *Interact with children or young people I am professionally involved with, over the*

internet or on social networking sites.

59. *Use any officially or individually owned computer, mobile phones, videos or cameras to inappropriately access websites that are illegal or have inappropriate content for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children or young people.*
60. *Transport children or young people, without the permission of their parents or legal guardians, except under the direction of the Head of the Institution in the event of an emergency.*
61. *Receive personal gifts / money / services from individuals partaking of the services of the Institution as a condition of service.*
62. *Neglect to take action when a child or young person is in real need.*
63. *Let allegations made by a child or young person go unchallenged.*
64. *Seek to avoid any involvement by not speaking up for the rights of any person, especially children and youth who are being abused.*

I have received, read and understood the provisions and its corresponding implications, hereby fully agree to abide by the entire contents of the document entitled Child Protection Policy of DISA, and affix my signature with my full consent. I acknowledge and consent to being held personally accountable for any breach of this Code of Protective Behaviour and Undertaking in the spirit behind it, ethically and legally, and agree to make my signature below the statement of adherence and a condition for my continued appointment as a Member of the Staff of the Institution.

Signature: Date:

Name: Place:

In the presence of:

Signature:

Name:

.....

Head of the Institution. Date:

.....

8. SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS:

We all are expected to observe certain standards or ethical conduct, which assure the public of the quality and trustworthiness of our works. Public trust in those who care for the vulnerable is dependent on knowing that certain standards of service and conduct are being adhered to by those who have taken on these responsibilities. The following eight Safeguarding Standards set out the required levels of care and protection to be offered by all who are responsible for children and vulnerable adults:

Standard 01 : *Creating and maintaining safe Institutional environments which are welcoming, nurturing and safe for the well-being of all.*

Standard 02 : *Vetting (Careful Screening for the suitability) the appointment of Employees and Volunteers for working with vulnerable groups. Care is taken in recruiting and admitting personnel.*

Standard 03 : *Responding to concerns or allegations and following legal and civil procedures when alerted to information. We ensure prompt response.*

Standard 04 : *Providing care and support for survivors of abuse when they disclose their experiences. We offer them compassionate response with support, advice, care and compassion.*

Standard 05 : *Managing and providing those accused of abuse when an allegation is received. We offer pastoral care and support to the accused including supervision and management of appropriate duties when necessary.*

Standard 06 : *Working together in Safeguarding. In our shared responsibility for Safeguarding, we work together effectively: recording, communicating and sharing information safely, in full compliance with both Civil and Legal ways.*

Standard 07 : *Training and support for all involved in Safeguarding. Our Personnel participate in induction training and continuing professional development. They receive support in all aspects of Safeguarding. They acquire necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for best Safeguarding Practices.*

Standard 08 : *Quality Assurance in Safeguarding. We deploy effective planning processes to monitor, review, self-evaluate and report on our Safeguarding Practices and compliance with Safeguarding Standards.*

9. CONCLUSION:

The entire system of "Assistance" of DISA is a framework of constructive presence among the Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults involving also rules and regulations, meant to protect and promote all under the care in our Institutions. This Policy is dedicated to all the children and vulnerable persons. Let us unite and commit ourselves to remove the shame of child abuse in its various forms from the society and always uphold the human dignity and inalienable rights.

"GOD CREATED MAN IN THE IMAGE OF HIMSELF, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM, MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED HIM." (Genesis. 1: 27)
