

DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES BY SOCIAL ANIMATION (DISA)



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND SAFEGUARDING **&** **RESPONSIBLE USE OF CYBER TECHNOLOGY** **AND** **PREVENTION FROM BULLYING**

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND SAFEGUARDING

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 development 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 September 2001 under Societies Registration Act 1860 (Registration No: 462/2001-02, renewed for five years up to 23 Sep. 2026). DISA started its interventions through facilitation of Self Help Groups, Women Associations, Farmers Clubs, Community Based Rehabilitation of Differently Able Children and Helping Children in Distress through CHILDLINE Gorakhpur City Coordination. DISA has FCRA Registration (FCRA No: 136310026) and Exemption from Income Tax with 12 A Certificate (146 / 02-03 W.e.f. 01 April 2002, renewed up to March 2027)

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.

Development Initiatives By Social Animation (DISA) views the present Social System, as a system meant to perpetuate exploitation of the weaker sections of the Society. The existing system thrives on illiteracy, poverty, disease and many other socio-economic and cultural conditions. The ideology provides legitimacy to such a system. We witness to gross discriminations against the weaker sections. Hence these people are cut off and excluded from the main stream of the Society, pushing them to further marginalization and rampant violation of human rights, proving that *the rich become richer and the poor become poorer* day by day. Restoring their dignity and upholding their rights shall be the means to create a new social order of human communities where the universal values of justice, equity, love, peace etc. will reign supreme. 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 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. ChildProtection 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 intent.
- 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. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OF DISA:

The DISA is committed to the protection of children from any perceived or real danger / risk to their lives, their personhood and childhood with a focus on reducing vulnerability. 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 measures, 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.

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. GUIDELINES FOR CHILD PROTECTION IN DISA:

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

6.1 Child Protection Committee (CPC)

All the educational institutions, health care centres, social service centres etc will have a Child Protection Committee, appointed by the Management Committee of the Institution, 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.

6.1.1. Contact Persons:

Two members of the Child Protection Committee - preferably female - are to be appointed by the Management Committee 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 Managing Committee 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 Managing Committee 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 Head of the Institution who will convene a meeting of the Child Protection Committee.

The Head of the Institution 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.

6.2 Officers:

6.2.1. 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 Head of the Institution /

the Management Committee whether there is a prima facie case against the accused.

Should there be a case, Head of the Institution / the Management Committee 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.

6.2.2. 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.

6.3 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 Managing Committee.
- ☐ 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.

6.4 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 standi, 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.

6.4.1. 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.

6.5 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.

6.5.1. 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 Management Committee of the Institution 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.

6.6. Action to be taken when a staff is found guilty:

If the Management Committee of the Institution 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.

7. GENERAL NORMS FOR THE STAFF OF DISA:

All members of the Staff must necessarily sign an undertaking as part of continued appointment as the Member of Staff before the Head of the Institution. The signed undertaking countersigned by the Head of the Institution 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 material 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 canonical 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 Canon Law.*

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)

RESPONSIBLE USE OF CYBER TECHNOLOGY AND PREVENTION FROM BULLYING CYBER

TECHNOLOGY:

Cyber Technology has provided access to vast resources of information and entertainment and the opportunity to communicate with people on a global level. Social networking sites such as Myspace, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Online Chat Rooms and Instant Messaging (IM) allow individuals to connect with other users from around the world. The Students use the internet facility on campus under the direct supervision of the Teaching Faculty.

When children, young persons or adults do not feel connected and experience isolation and loneliness, their vulnerability may be heightened and they may be at risk of finding on-line contacts ready to exploit their loneliness and vulnerability. Social networking can become in such cases substitute for healthy social interaction.

We need to recognize that Cyber Technology, useful as it is, has its share of dangers and risks. Cyber Technology is being used increasingly to disseminate both adult and child pornography. Images transmitted across the internet, once downloaded / uploaded can be subsequently misused beyond one's knowledge or control. Misuse of electronic media can cause considerable harm and may indeed constitute a criminal offence.

Those persons working with children and young people have the responsibility to protect children and young people conscious of their educative role in the context of any cyber communication with children and young persons.

All personnel in our Institutions are expected to use cyber communication responsibly. Internet child pornography is not a victimless offense. A person who views child pornography is tacitly supporting the sexual exploitation of children and is involved in criminal activity. To safeguard integrity and to preserve clarity of professional boundaries, all personnel are to use electronic and print media responsibly.

PREVENTION FROM BULLYING:

What is Bullying? It is any willful, conscious behaviour intended to hurt another person, either physically or emotionally through words or

deeds. If the bullying tendency or attitude is not checked in time, it will develop into an interest towards ragging later on.

Bullying may take many forms and can include:

- Picking on others, gossiping, defaming.
- Making hurtful and racist comments.
- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting.
- Making suggestive comments / gestures or other forms of sexual overtones.
- Forcing others to act against their will.
- Verbal threats of aggression against the person, property or possessions.
- Using words or actions that put-down or belittle others' abilities and achievements.
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others or their families.
- Act of vandalism or violence.
- Bragging about self while belittling others.

Bullying is a serious issue. Bullying is not acceptable. Do not tolerate bullying. It must be reported. A tradition of silence is a barrier to be broken down. All who associate with our Institutions shall feel that is not only our right to protect, but our responsibility to report bullying, whether it happens to you or to someone else.

a. Who are the Bullies?

Anyone can be a bully. We all have the capacity and, occasionally, the inclination to hurt others. Any person who aims in some way to hurt someone else by causing either physical or emotional pain is a bully. Some bullies do the hurting themselves, some are ringleaders and some are members of a group. Others unintentionally encourage bullies by being passive onlookers when bullying occurs - they fail to intervene or report instances of bullying. Often bullies justify their behaviour by saying they were only teasing another or having fun. If the person being teased does not like it, or want it, and yet others persist with it, then it is a clear case of bullying. It is cruel and unfair behaviour.

b. Why Bullying cannot be tolerated

As caring and concerned members of the Family, Institution and Society we:

- Expect discipline and high standard of behaviour at all times.
- Are committed to striving to provide a safe and caring environment for everyone, where the right of every person to be free from all forms of bullying is respected.

- Encourage and positively reinforce behaviour which is courteous and considerate.
- Have a policy for detecting, preventing and dealing with bullying.
- Educate our Members, Co-workers and Associates about issues related to bullying behaviour.
- Offer support to all victims through our compassionate attitude and caring outlook as educators and enable persons to grow up the same way.

c. What can you do if you are a witness to Bullying?

There is a risk that you can become the victim, or be labeled, but we need to work together if we are to be effective.

- You should be first of all caring enough to want to do something.
- If possible, you could intervene when bullying occurs by simply persuading him / her to stop it. This is very much possible if you have some influence over the bully, e.g. you are Coordinator, Facilitator, In-Charge, Senior, a Friend, a Team Captain, Leader etc.
- If you cannot act immediately, it is helpful to report the incident to your Supervisor / Head of the Institution as soon as you can. You may need to establish that you want privacy and confidentiality. Alternatively, you may wish to make an anonymous report of the incident of bullying in order to prevent it for the future.
- You can offer support and be a friend to the victim. Encourage the victim to get help through Staff, Family, Heads of Institutions etc.

d. What can you do if you are bullied?

As the victim, you are the one who should take action most strongly but carefully.

- Try not to retaliate by becoming a physical or verbal bully yourself.
- Try to ignore the bullying. If you show that you are not upset, the bully may stop.
- Tell the bully politely to stop it.
- Laugh it off, use humour.
- Don't be afraid to talk about it with your friends or family or authorities.
- Leave the area and go directly to a responsible adult.
- Talk to some Friends or Co-workers. They may help you decide how to handle the situation.
- Establish a friendship network.
- Be smart about avoiding high risk places and times.

There are many adults at work-places who want to help you too. They can help you decide how to handle the situation and they can take action.

e. Consequences

There must be clear consequences for bullying and, if a person is found to be bullying, then he / she could expect some of the following responses or “sanctions”.

- Written records being kept in the person’s file
- Stern warnings accompanied by a formal letter to the bully
- Legal action as per the requirements of law and court directives
- Consultation with parents
- Reparations for any damages caused
- Detentions and community service
- Referral to the Head of the Institution
- Counselling and behaviour modification programmes
- Exclusion from privileges
- Suspension from Institution, resuming only on the condition that a formal contract is signed undertaking to cease all bullying behaviour
- Expulsion when repeated corrective measures prove to be futile.

Those who bully or harass others are themselves in need of help. It is in fact a cry for attention and help. Help could be given by way of assistance with behaviour modification strategies, counselling and by providing clear directions and demarcating definite and clear boundaries.

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