

ASIAN AID ORGANISATION CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

2016 – 2017



I INTRODUCTION AND PREAMBLE

Child abuse is a global problem that shows no respect for culture, religion or geography. Asian Aid Organisation (AAO) is a child focused organisation that recognises that poor children who are isolated from family in boarding schools or children's homes are vulnerable to abuse. We recognise that the relationship between powerful aid givers and the powerless poor is also conducive to child abuse and exploitation.

Nevertheless, we believe that child abuse is preventable and can be limited by the development of good policy, ongoing monitoring and the development of a 'child safe' motivated organisation. It is our responsibility to minimise the potential for child abuse where possible while maximising the ability to respond appropriately to child abuse when it is alleged. Although Asian Aid is not directly responsible for the actions and policies of its implementing partners, it is responsible for its own and has a moral obligation to minimise risk to those they support through partnership with organisations who uphold these same values.

Asian Aid recognises the right of all children around the world to adequate care, support and protection as they grow and develop. This policy has been designed as a framework to ensure Asian Aid, our partners and all people associated with our work contribute to the development of a child-safe, child-friendly network that safeguards children and young people from all forms of abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation, so that they can grow, play, learn, participate and thrive in a safe and nurturing environment.

2 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION

As a child focused organisation, Asian Aid's work centres on nurturing the wellbeing and healthy development of children. Asian Aid considers all forms of child abuse, mistreatment and exploitation to be unacceptable, and is committed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, Article 19) that requires non-government organisations to protect children from:

"...all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse."

In order to uphold our commitment to protect children Asian Aid will:

- 1.1 Develop, monitor the implementation of and regularly review our Child Protection Policy and supporting guidelines.
- 1.2 Require our implementing partners to develop and abide by Policies and guidelines that reflect our own, ensuring that these are regularly reviewed and updated.

- 1.3 Facilitate staff, partner and supporter awareness and education of child focused issues, including protection.
- 1.4 Carefully screen and inform all staff, volunteers and visitors who work with children on our behalf.
- 1.5 Develop a transparent work culture that facilitates disclosure and reporting.
- 1.6 Empower children to actively contribute to the development of child protection measures within Asian Aid's program.

3 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This policy is a reflection of Asian Aid's commitment to protecting children and young people from harm and abuse. It aims to protect children through outlining practical mechanisms for awareness raising, prevention, reporting and responding to child protection issues.

For the purpose of this document a child is anyone under the age of 18 years. A young person is considered to be any person between the ages of 14 and 24. Child abuse refers to physical, mental and sexual abuse and neglect.

4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Best Interests of the Child

Asian Aid is dedicated to upholding the rights of the child, and in accordance with the UNCRC commits to developing its program to achieve the best outcomes, and therefore what is in the best interests of every child and young person, in all aspects of our work.

Zero Tolerance of Child Abuse, Mistreatment and Exploitation

All children have the right to be safe, and thus have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation. We believe that all children should be treated with respect and compassion, and therefore Asian Aid maintains a zero-tolerance stance on all forms of child abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.

Preventative Approach

Asian Aid recognises the effects of abuse to be both devastating and long-term. While we acknowledge it is not possible to eliminate all risks, we are committed to establishing careful management structures in order to reduce the risk to children associated with our program activities. We will do this through the consistent implementation of Risk Management Strategies.

Shared Responsibility

Asian Aid believes that the responsibility for protecting children is shared by all staff, partners, contractors and associates. For this reason, Asian Aid requires everyone

working for, or associated with Asian Aid's work to be aware of and commit to the provisions of this policy. All stakeholders will be held accountable to this policy and supporting guidelines through contracts, audits, and spot checks.

Promotion of Children's Participation

Asian Aid will work to ensure the inclusion of children's views and opinions in the development of the child protection policy and all program activities.

5 CONTEXT

As a Christian organisation Asian Aid believes that all children are precious to God. Asian Aid is an accredited, supporting ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is dedicated to sharing God's love.

Asian Aid works to give hope by fostering permanent positive change in the lives of disadvantaged children and their families and communities, primarily through child sponsorship. In addition, through our community development activities, we also run health education programs, educate women about the causes of uterine prolapse, create awareness of, rescue and rehabilitate victims of human trafficking, and work hard to keep our sponsors and donors informed.

6 DEFINITIONS

Child Protection

Asian Aid has implemented preventative and responsive measures to ensure that no child is subject to abuse, mistreatment or exploitation perpetrated by anyone associated with our program.

Child Abuse (Child Harm)

Child abuse involves any form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional ill treatment, neglect or exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to a child. Such abuse can be perpetrated by men or women, or by young people themselves. Both boys and girls can be victims of abuse.

Child Exploitation Material

Child exploitation material refers to written or printed material, pictures, paintings or artworks, photographic or electronic data, films or tapes which depict a child in a sexual context, engaging sexual activity or as a victim of exploitation.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. This may come from another child or an adult. There are different types of bullying: physical (e.g. hitting,

kicking, slapping); verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages); emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group); or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop stable emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potential in the context of the society in which the child dwells.

Emotional abuse may also be acts toward the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. It also includes restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Exploitation

The use of a child for someone else's advantage, be this for gratification or profit, resulting in unjust, cruel or harmful treatment of the child.

Family Violence

Ongoing exposure to violence occurring within the family unit or the child's immediate community.

Neglect

Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet, or deliberately denies, a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing; failing to protect from physical harm or danger; or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give appropriate love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse of a child occurs when physical harm results from an interaction or lack of interaction with a person who is in a position of responsibility, power or trust. Physical hurt or injury may occur to a child by hitting, shaking, grabbing, throwing, kicking, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, etc. Giving children alcoholic beverages or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse. There may be single or repeated incidents.

Sexual Abuse (Child Sexual Abuse)

Sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend and by law is unable to give informed consent to, or that violates the laws

or special taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is characterised by an activity between a child and adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power where the activity is intended to gratify or satisfy the desires of the other person. Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity, the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices, the exploitative use of children in, or exposure of children to, pornographic performances and materials. Child sexual abuse also includes incest, early and forced marriage, rape and traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

7 SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

The standards outlined in this document apply to all Asian Aid board members, staff, contractors, volunteers, partners, sponsors and supporters who interact and/or work with children on our behalf. All stakeholders must comply with the requirements outlined in this policy and must be fully informed of the sanctions that result from breaches of this policy.

8 PARTNER SELECTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Asian Aid recognises that the nature of our work, which primarily focuses on changing the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged children, is at significant risk of being targeted by those who wish to exploit or harm children.

For this reason, Asian Aid chooses not to partner with organisations, groups or individuals who pose unacceptable risks to children's safety or wellbeing.

All potential partnerships will be carefully scrutinised through set child focused criteria, with particular interest given to staff screening and selection. All formal Partnership Agreements shall include a Child Protection clause that will be monitored through a strict annual Child Protection Partner Assessment process.

9 CHILD PROTECTION RISK MANAGEMENT

Please [Contact Us](#) for more information about our Child Protection Risk Management Plan.

10 CODE OF CONDUCT

Please [Contact Us](#) for more information about our Child Protection Code of Conduct Plan.

11 SUPPORTER/SPONSOR/VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

All sponsors, supporters and volunteers are to be informed of the Asian Aid Organisation Child Protection Policy, and updated on all significant changes to this policy as they occur. All sponsor/supporter visits and volunteer placements are to be screened and approved by Asian Aid Supporter Services and Child Protection staff, with mandatory National Police Checks required for all visitors. All approved visits must be supervised by partner/school staff, and should include a sign-in/sign-out procedure.

Asian Aid does not permit direct communication between sponsored children and their sponsors, or between Asian Aid supporters and beneficiaries, with all correspondence carefully screened before distribution.

Please [Contact Us](#) for more information about visiting or communicating with your sponsor child or volunteering with Asian Aid.

12 PROTECTING CHILDREN'S PERSONAL INFORMATION AND IMAGES

As a child sponsorship organisation Asian Aid has access to personal information, images and video footage of many vulnerable children, their families and communities. Asian Aid recognises the responsibility we have to safeguard this material, stored both in hard and soft copy, and has put systems in place to limit access to this in order to protect the child and safeguard them from harm or exploitation.

Asian Aid does not disclose children's surnames, identifying or sensitive personal information with sponsors/supporters, and ensures that full names and addresses of partner institutions are not stated in sponsorship collateral, marketing campaigns, shared in presentations or publicised on the Internet or social media.

All images and video content of children, young people and program beneficiaries will be stored responsibly, with access to this limited only to those in certain roles.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors to the field, including photographers, videographers, media personnel, researchers, etc. will be briefed on Asian Aid's Child Protection Policy and standards for use of children's personal information and images, prior to disembarkation. They will also sign the Code of Conduct. In addition, partner staff will also participate in training to ensure they understand and comply with this policy.

Please [Contact Us](#) for more information about the use of Media and Images of children in our program.

I3 CHILD SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

Asian Aid will ensure child safe checks and procedures are followed for all Board members, staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, and partner staff.

Asian Aid Organisation will:

- 1.1 Supply all potential staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers with Child Protection collateral, and include Child Protection and behavioural interview questions in all staff and volunteer interviews and visitor screening processes.
- 1.2 Develop clear application procedures that provide detailed information about educational and professional experience.
- 1.3 Develop clear position descriptions for all staff, contractors and volunteers, outlining expectations for behaviour, professional boundaries, duties and accountabilities of the role.
- 1.4 Conduct an annual 'National Police Check' for all Board members and staff (including full-time, part-time, and casual employees), with Police Checks for contractors, visitors and volunteers completed as necessary.
- 1.5 Conduct face-to-face interviews with all potential staff and long-term volunteers, contractors, and receive two to three reference checks on all prospective employees.
- 1.6 Ensure all staff, contractors, visitors and volunteers receive and sign the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct.
- 1.7 In-service all new staff, contractors and volunteers about the policy and their obligations.
- 1.8 Limit the access of staff to children's personal information, images and footage.

Asian Aid Organisation will support implementing partners to:

- 1.9 Identify and adopt child safe screening and recruitment procedures, in accordance with the highest level of formal screening processes available within their country.
- 1.10 Appoint a Child Rights Manager (CRM) to whom all complaints, no matter how minor, are channelled and documented.

I4 INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESSES

It is **mandatory** for all staff, sponsors, supporters, visitors, volunteers, partner personnel or other representatives of Asian Aid to immediately (within 24 hours) report any concerns they have for the safety or wellbeing of any child participating in or impacted by Asian Aid's program activities, this includes possession of child exploitation material and/or general non-compliance with this policy.

It is **not** the responsibility of staff, sponsors, supporters, visitors, volunteers, partner personnel or other representatives of Asian Aid to conduct investigations into alleged or suspected abuse or mistreatment.

Reporting an Incident or Allegation

If you would like to make a complaint or raise a concern relating to the welfare or safety of a child or young person in our program, please [Contact Us](#).

15 RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION ALLEGATIONS

Please [Contact Us](#) if you would like more information about how we respond to Child Protection allegations.

16 CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

Every person who is privy to any information about an allegation or suspicion of abuse must ensure that confidentiality and professionalism are maintained at all times. Information should be handled and disseminated only on a need-to-know basis, and must be stored in a secure place in line with data protection laws, with access limited to only designated personnel.

Protection of the child's identity, and confidential information about them, is of the utmost importance. Asian Aid expects that all parties will abide by the governing child protection policies. Disciplinary action will be taken against those whose conduct is not in line with the behaviours outlined in this Child Protection Policy.

17 INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Asian Aid is a child focused organisation committed to the support, development and empowerment of children and young people. Our programs not only provide children with an education, but a voice and a safe and supportive environment where they can confidently share their views and opinions.

Asian Aid relies on the contribution of sponsored children to shape and influence the planning of all future program activities. We strive to incorporate their views into our policies and procedures and welcome any feedback about our programs and services.

Through the establishment of child friendly complaints handling procedures Asian Aid will ensure involvement and participation of children is done in a fair and equitable way.

I8 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Asian Aid is committed to fostering a safe, child-friendly environment. Our focus on educating staff, providing them with the knowledge of how to identify and reduce risks and prevent the abuse or exploitation of children is paramount.

Please [Contact Us](#) if you would like more information about our Child Protection Education and Training activities.

I9 REVIEWING THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Asian Aid Organisation Board should regularly monitor the implementation of this policy and review reports submitted by the Child Rights Manager (CRM) on the progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements, gaps and areas where changes are required.

The Child Protection Policy should be reviewed every two years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

Please [Contact Us](#) if you would like more information about this Child Protection Policy, or desire to raise a concern or make a complaint relating to an Asian Aid supported child or young person.

