Child Protection Policy of CASP.

 Community Aid and Sponsorship programme a national Non government organisation working with underprivileged children and communities is a rights based organisation working in four states of India through its seven units and one partner organisation.

The U N Convention on the Rights of the Child came into force on 2 September 1990 and has been ratified by India. India is thus bound to The government of India is a signatory to this document which protects the rights of the child through its 54 articles.

 In light of this document CASP decided to develop/ formulate its own child protection policy document which would guard the rights of the children in general and specifically with the children whom CASP works with. This policy will be applicable to all who are directly or indirectly associated with CASP and its children.

The policy will give insight to the operation in the context of the national Policy on child of Government of India and relevant laws of our country. This Policy is subject to periodical review and refinement.

Definitions/Terminology

A child is defined as any human being under the age of eighteen years.

***Child abuse* means** Any harm intentionally or unintentionally done to the child in any form i.e. physical, mental, emotional, sexual or economical.

Who is this policy for?

**Associates** – CASP Board Members, sponsors and other supporters, staff (part time/full time) volunteer, consultants, contractors, visitors, representatives of partner organizations including government partners.

The policy applies to the whole of CASP – the field,– in relation to CASP’s board members, volunteers, sponsors, employees, consultants, contractors, and representatives of partner organizations / local governments who have been brought into contact with children while working for CASP. These people are referred to as “CASP Associates”.

**Purpose**

CASP as an international child-centred development organization, committed to the wellbeing of children and to support the Convention of the Rights of the Child, CASP does not tolerate child abuse.

**CASP acknowledges its expectation that its employees and others who work with CASP have children’s best interests at the heart of their involvement with CASP. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that CASP has procedures in place to prevent and deal with child abuse by any CASP Associates**

**This Policy has been approved by the CASP** Board on 19th February 2010. It is mandatory to all associates of the organization. It is an internal document. In case of any conflict with law it will be referred to the law of land.

.

**Policy statement**

As a child focused /centered organization CASP is committed to protect and safeguard the interest of the children from any kind of abuse. Anyone associated with the organization, violates the CPP the organization will take appropriate action against the abuser as mentioned in the procedure.”Say Yes to Child Protection” is our policy statement.

CASP is committed to actively preventing child abuse.

CASP takes positive action against the person who commits child abuse in any way and takes appropriate action as mentioned in the Procedures of CPP to prevent child abusers.

Procedures

CASP shall have its own procedures; to deal with child abuse. Unit Offices can have minor deviations with the prior formal approval from the H.O.

It is the responsibility of CASP Taskforce members to ensure that all CASP Associates are aware of and abide by this policy. CASP Associates should:

* Familiarise themselves with situations which may present risks and learn how to deal with those situations;
* Contribute to an environment where children are able to recognize unacceptable behaviour and feel able to discuss their rights and concerns;
* As far as possible concerned people meet children openly;
* Raise concerns about any case of suspected abuse.

CASP Associates must not

* Disclose any information that identifies sponsored families or children to strangers or make it available to the general public or media without the informed consent of the family and, when appropriate, the child or CASP authorities.

Dealing with Child Abuse

Alleged cases of child abuse should be reported to the relevant and appropriate authorities depending on the location of the incident occurred. They will refer the matter to the local or higher authorities and decide on other appropriate steps, including informing relevant CASP offices and/or supporting criminal prosecution.

If an employee raises a legitimate concern about suspected child abuse, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the employee.

Any employee who makes false and malicious accusations, however, will face disciplinary action. CASP will take appropriate legal or other action against other CASP Associates who make false and malicious accusations of child abuse.

An alleged perpetrator of child abuse will normally be suspended from their normal relationship with CASP during investigation of allegations. CASP will sever all relations with any CASP Associate who is proven to have committed child abuse.

Confidentiality

An allegation of child abuse is a serious issue. In following this policy and local procedures, it is essential that all parties maintain confidentiality. Sharing of information, which could identify a child or an alleged perpetrator, should be purely on a ‘need to know basis. Unless abuse has actually been proved to have occurred, one must always refer to “alleged abuse”.

This policy of CASP is approved and endorsed by the Trustees of CASP on 19th February 2010 in the Trustee meeting held on 19th February 2010 at CASP Bhavan Pune. CASP authorises the Executive Director to execute and appoint the Task force for the better and smooth implementation of the Policy.

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**PROCEDURES OF CHID PROTECTION POLICY OF CASP**

**Say Yes to Child Protection**

Guidelines for implementation and Standards for Keeping Children Safe in CASP

**CONTENTS Page. No.**

**FOREWORD 2**

**1. INTRODUCTION 3**

**1.1 Purpose, scope and applicability 3**

# 2. UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE 4

**2.1 The situation of children– risks and issues 4**

**2.2 Definitions and terms 4**

**2.3 Child abuse – some considerations 6**

**3. BECOMING A ‘CHILD SAFE’ ORGANIZATION 7**

**4. GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND STANDARDS 8**

**4.1 PREVENTION 9**

**4.2 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES 10**

**4.3 RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND SCREENING 12**

**4.4 CODE OF CONDUCT 15**

**4.5 CHILD SPONSORSHIP 16**

**4.6 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS 17**

**4.7 MEDIA 19**

**4.8 EMERGENCIES 20**

**4.9 REPORTING AND RESPONDING 21**

**4.10 INVESTIGATING CONCERNS 23**

**FOREWORD**

CASP is widely recognized as the leading national Child Centered Community Development agency. Child is at the corner stone of our all programmes. Protection of children we are in contact with is our first priority. Child abuse is an increasing global problem and we can not ignore that all children are at risk of abuse to some extent, although those we work with may be at particular risk.

As CASP is Rights based approach organization we are sure that all children have the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation. As an organization working with children, it is inevitable that at some stage our staff or associates will encounter child protection issues of one or the other. It is essential that we are able to respond appropriately and effectively in these circumstances in order to protect children.

We cannot deny the fact that, children are abused and exploited by adults external to CASP also. There may be a possibility that staff and other associates may also pose a risk to children and we need to address this issue. Therefore it is very essential that staff and others understand the duty of care they have towards children we are in contact with and are clear about the expectations we have of their conduct.

As far as possible CASP will try to ensure a safe environment for children and try to keep them safe from all forms of harm. When children need protection from abuse which they may be experiencing in their families or communities, it is our prime duty to help them to access the right support locally. To meet the professional and ethical standards in order to not to harm children it is very much part of our system.

It is a critical task to our organization to establish child protection policies, procedures and good practice and making sure that we all follow these. To uphold the reputation of the organization it is essential to have our own policy.

Being a child centered organization means transforming our values into action.. The more we do that, the more our credibility and integrity increases.

This document will be the guideline for the smooth functioning and meet our commitments to children and their protection. This document will also support our intentions of being the child rights organization at the same time it is our responsibility to ensure that all units implement the Child Protection policy and meet these standards consistently. It is our duty to work together to build a safer world for children.

CASP is a safe place for children.

B.G.Deshmukh I.A.S.(Retd)

President CASP

# 1. INTRODUCTION

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

**Article 19 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

CASP works directly and indirectly with thousands of children across the country and it is our duty and responsibility to reduce the risks of abuse to those children with whom we have contact and to keep them safe from harm.

In February 2010 the Board agreed to CASP’s Child Protection Policy “Say Yes to Child Protection”. The policy covers all CASP staff and Associates. All Units of CASP will implement this policy; establish good practices in all activities of CASP.

#### 1.1 Purpose, scope and applicability

This document accompanies CASP’s Child Protection policy. It defines and describes the actions and activities are necessary in order to effectively implement the policy. It provides a ‘good practice’ framework for all staff and CASP Associates\*:

\* **CASP Associates**: CASP Board Members, volunteers, sponsors and other supporters, employees, consultants, contractors, representatives of partner organizations including government partners. The term ‘CASP Associates’ will be used throughout this document and will refer to all or some of the aforementioned individuals and organizations.

This document will be helpful to all staff especially for the managers for implementing the policy. Both Child Protection Policy and procedures are compatible to each other. This document speaks of what is expected of the individual and the organization in order to provide a safe environment for children. The document also sets **minimum standards** that all Units must meet in order to ensure that we are operating at a basic, acceptable level of safety that everybody is at par.

Policy and Procedures are primarily designed to address incidents of abuse occurred against children of CASP. It is important to remember that it is not a programming tool. This policy and procedural document talks about the children’s protection those who come under the purview of CASP working area. For example, it does not provide guidance on how street children may be protected, but there are links to programme work and can be referred for further course of action.

# 2. Understanding Child Abuse

**2.1 The situation of children– risks and issues**

In addition to children living in such high risk situations and facing the increased possibility of abuse and exploitation as a range of other factors mean that they are less likely to be protected. These include:

* inadequate protective legislation
* weak or absent child protection systems
* prevalence of gender-based discrimination and abuse
* corruption and impunity from prosecution
* a tendency for children to be blamed for the abuse they experience
* breakdown of protective mechanisms – e.g. families and communities
* traditional beliefs and myths that sustain abusive practices
* lack of basic services

###### 2.2 Definitions and terms

**A Child:**

A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years.

National law and guidance or local customs may be based on different definitions/notions of age of childhood/adulthood, but the standard for CASP is that children should receive equal protection as far as possible, regardless of local age limits.

#### Child Abuse:

***Child abuse* means** Any harm intentionally or unintentionally caused to the child in any form i.e. physical, mental, emotional, sexual or economical or spiritual. In addition to the definition used in CASP’s Child Protection policy, the following World Health Organization[[1]](#endnote-2) definitions provide further clarification:

Child abuse and neglect, sometimes also referred to as child maltreatment, is defined as all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.

Within the broad definition of child maltreatment, five subtypes are distinguished – these are physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect and negligent treatment; emotional abuse and exploitation. These sub-categories of child maltreatment: and their definitions were devised following an extensive review of different countries’ definitions of child maltreatment and a 1999 WHO consultation on child abuse prevention.

**Physical abuse** of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

**Child sexual abuse** is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate 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 relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This 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 pornographic performances and materials

**Neglect and negligent treatment** is the inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and which causes, or has a high probability of causing, harm to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible

**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 a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potential, and in the context of the society in which the child dwells. There 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. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scape-goating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment (WHO, 1999).

**Economical (Commercial) or other exploitation of a child** refers to use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child’s physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development (WHO, 1999).

**\*Spiritual abuse**

Spiritual abuse occurs when a spiritual leader, or someone in a position of spiritual power or authority (whether organization, institution, church or family) misuses their power or authority, and the trust placed in them, with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating, or dominating a child. Spiritual abuse is always about the misuse of power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice, in order to meet the needs of the abuser (or enhance his or her position) at the expense of the needs of the child. Spiritual abuse results in spiritual harm to a child and can be linked to other abuse, such as physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

#### Child Protection

Child Protection is the term used to explain and describe the roles & responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or to stop children being abused or ill treated by the associates of CASP.

#### Child Protection Policy

**Policy statement**

**As a child focused /centered organization CASP is committed to protect and safeguard the interest of the children from any kind of abuse. Anyone associated with the organization, violates the CPP the organization will take appropriate action against the abuser as mentioned in the procedure.”Say Yes to Child Protection” is our policy statement.**

#### Duty of Care

All organizations working with children, either directly or indirectly have a moral and sometimes legal responsibility to protect children within their care from both intentional and unintentional harm.

**2.3 Child abuse – some considerations**

Abuse can happen to any child of any gender of any age, although some groups of children may be at more risk. Children with disabilities are particularly at risk to abuse as they may be dependent on others for personal care and they are often isolated from the community and social interaction. Children living away from home in institutions, street children, children in conflict with the law, for example, are also particularly at risk.

 Quite often it is noted that children are at risk of abuse from other children. **Bullying** is a common form of this, where children may experience physical and emotional abuse resulting from the actions of their peers. In addition, children may sexually abuse their peers.

**Child abuse and the Law**

In one or the other form many countries have framed their protective legislation policies. It may be effective implemented with different degrees in different parts of the country. Being social organization however, it is essential that CASP staff should be fully aware of the laws of Land in which they operate that relate to child protection. This is important so that CASP may use the Law effectively to protect children.

#### Cultural Understandings of Abuse

Each part of CASP is expected to develop local guidelines and procedures that fit with the local context.

 CASP has a responsibility to challenge behaviours and seek to change practices that result in harm to children

The definitions of child abuse need to be understood within the context in which they are being applied. However, staff should be able to recognize and respond to situations where a child receives significantly less care relative to other children in the same situation and so may be harmed.

**3. BECOMING A ‘CHILD SAFE’ ORGANIZATION**

Eliminating risk entirely may be a too far dream comes true in CASP’s work. Hence the organization will try to develop a ‘child safe’ organization that seeks to reduce the risk for children through developing measures and mechanisms designed to prevent abuse. In turn, such steps will protect staff and safeguard the reputation of the organization.

**Key components of CASP’s approach to keeping children safe include:**

* Within the organization it is necessary to establish clear expectations and boundaries to behaviour, it is the prime responsibility of the Management and concerned persons to ensure that everyone is clear about the problem of abuse, the risks posed to children, and their responsibilities to prevent abuse and protect children.
* The **Child Protection policy** and **Code of Conduct** are important and staff should be required to sign up to these so that they are clear about the expectations placed on them and the consequences of breaching the code.
* **Reporting procedures**. CASP will try to handle the situation efficiently and to deal with any allegations; suspicions or incidents of child abuse and effective reporting procedures will be developed.
* **Recruitment and selection procedures**. CASP will make sure that proper screening will be done while appointing any new person as they are important 'gate keeping' measures.
* **Management responsibilities**. Though the prime responsibility of implementing the protective measures in place is with the Management and Managers, all staff has a responsibility to protect children and prevent abuse of whom they are working with.
* **Induction and training**. Managers make sure that the new comers are fully aware of Child Protection Policy of CASP. The responsibility managers places on the fellow beings are very much supported through learning and development activities.
* **Mainstreaming protection**. Protection measures, in order for them to be consistently and effectively applied over time, must be integrated into all the core systems and processes of the organization
* **Monitoring, reporting and accountability**. Being clear on what protection measures are required and then measuring the extent to which these are in place, is another key element in making CASP a child safe organization.

# CASP ensures that we set minimum standards for the better implementation of Child Protection Policy.

# 4. GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND STANDARDS

**Why standards?**

**Standards**, such as the ones contained in this document, can provide a benchmark against which practice can be measured and audited. By drawing together and describing what is needed they can assist CASP in reviewing and evaluating current practice and identifying areas for development.

Standards also make explicit what is expected in relation to child protection. This provides a basis for accountability and challenge if practice falls below a certain standard.

Although no standards or process can offer complete protection for children, following a set of standards minimizes the risk to children of abuse and exploitation. Standards will help us to move towards best practice in this area, emphasise the importance of developing protective measures and describe a preventative, proactive and participatory stance on child protection issues.

These standards are informed by a set of **principles** that in part derive from the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child and include:

* All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation
* All children should be encouraged to fulfill their potential and inequalities should be challenged
* Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children
* CASP has a duty of care to children with whom we work and with whom our staff work
* When working through partners, they also have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for the children in their programs.

Each set of standards is also accompanied by some key points of good Guidelines for implementation.

**4.1 PREVENTION**

***This is the most important area of practice. It frames and informs all subsequent practice standards.***

**Prevention: Guidelines for implementation**

**CASP aims to develop a transparent and accountable organizational culture with a range of pro-active preventive measures and leadership. It is essential that all CASP associates know what is expected of them and what behaviours they can expect from CASP.**

 **Implementing Child Centred Community Development brings CASP staff and volunteers into contact with children in more and varied situations. CASP facilitates children to attend participatory events where they are away from their families, meet new adults and children and are exposed to new cultures. These can and should be positive experiences for children.**

**CASP updates with the modern world by using technology. At the same time it is aware that there are few places or people are not reached by the communication technology. However efforts will be made for the maximum usage of technology in implementing CPP.**

**Prevention: Practice Standards**

**Applicable to: All CASP associates particularly those in a leadership role**

**Minimum Standards:**

* **Child Protection is a cross cutting issue and is integrated into everything CASP does**
* **The Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and Complaints Procedure are widely publicised including in child friendly language**
* **Induction and Training on Child Protection (at all levels) is compulsory and there is a system to ensure there are regular refresher courses**
* **Planning for any activity involving children includes a risk assessment with particular attention to number and gender of staff, supervision of the children and contact with the media etc.**
* **Residential guidelines (When CASP is organizing any residential activities), Code of Ethics and other procedures for safeguarding children are followed and regularly reviewed and children’s views are incorporated**
* **Managers understand the nature of child abuse and that it may result from stress/inability to cope or be opportunistic. Management practices and supervision reflect this understanding**
* **All partner/vendor contracts include a clause on child protection and they are briefed on CASP’s child protection policy**

# ****4.2**** MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Management Responsibilities: Guidelines for implementation

All CASP associates have responsibility for ensuring child protection. Managers are responsible to ensure that the best interest of the child is paramount to other business considerations. and to engender and maintain an organizational culture of openness, transparency and accountability that provides the best protection from abuse and ensures CASP associates are confident to raise concerns. CASP is open and transparent to

All staff and associates have a responsibility to protect children and prevent abuse, but the responsibility for making sure protection measures are in place and operating effectively lies with managers at all levels.

**Management Responsibilities: Practice Standards**

**Aim:**

To ensure that the Child Protection Policy is fully implemented, that practice standards are met, that all relevant systems, procedures and practices reflect CASP’s commitment to the protection of children, and that child protection measures are regularly monitored and reviewed.

**Applicable to:** All managers

Managers create an organizational culture where staff and volunteers can discuss child abuse with their managers and be confident of a positive response and where children are listened to and respected as individuals.

 Minimum Standards;

* The CP Policy is discussed and adapted to fit local circumstances
* Managers create a culture that supports child protection i.e. CP issues and concerns openly discussed, children respected & protected
* All staff, partners and relevant others, including children and communities, are aware of its contents and clear about the responsibilities it places on them
* Managers are trained on the Child Protection policy and are accountable for ensuring staff and volunteers have the awareness and knowledge of child abuse, skills and behaviours to fulfil their responsibilities
* Managers put in place measures for raising awareness and identifying/meeting training needs e.g. through supervision, Performance Management
* Child protection roles and responsibilities locally are clearly defined and understood
* Job specifications, terms of reference, etc, clearly outline generic and specific child protection responsibilities
* Support is available for managers, staff and others working with children on CASP’s behalf where this work causes distress
* Recruitment and selection procedures and practices take full account of child protection issues
* Programme planning includes assessments of risks for children and identifies how children and communities can be supported to strengthen protection measures
* Risk assessments are conducted and risks to children minimised.
* Systems to prevent child abuse are fully integrated into existing management processes, are implemented and regularly reviewed e.g. recruitment and selection, induction, supervision, performance appraisal, team meeting discussions etc.
* Requirements for partner’s Child Protection policy and practice are established, all contracts, partnership agreements specify Child Protection measures and partners are supported to fulfil these requirements
* Complaints and Reporting procedures are established that are in the best interests of children,
* Consideration is given to ensuring a gender balance of managers/personnel in the reporting structure
* Child protection systems are subject to periodic monitoring and review and that issues and processes are fully documented so that appropriate action can be taken and lessons from experience drawn together at local and corporate levels

**4.3 RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND SCREENING**

**Recruitment, selection and screening: Guidelines for implementation**

**The way in which an organization conducts recruitment and selection can be a significant deterrent to abusers/potential abusers. In order to fulfill its legal and moral duty to keep children safe, CASP must ensure its recruitment and screening procedures are as vigilant and rigorous as possible. These practice standards complement other policies and procedures.**

**HR Policies and procedures need to design to both prevent potential offenders joining the organization, to make the child protection commitments and expectations of the organization explicit, and to re-enforce the individual CASP employee or associate’s role in the protection children in CASP’s care.**

**This process starts by ensuring that there are clear deterrents to potential offenders applying for jobs within the organization, by ensuring that all aspects of selection are designed to minimize the risk of this occurring, through for instance, in-depth interviewing, referencing with past employees, and conducting such police and criminal record checks as are available on a country to country basis.**

**HR policies, procedures and processes should be designed with the objective of creating an organizational environment where employees are confident to raise concerns, clear on how to do this, what action will result, and confident that all concerns raised will be handled professionally and sensitively.**

**There are general issues concerning the availability and/or efficacy of criminal records checks. The risk of focusing on one procedure is that no one check is adequate and it could lead to complacency and misplaced trust in one precautionary system. However, where available and reliable, police checks should be carried out but always alongside other checks. Equally, confidence in the external legislative framework to address all CASP’s duties of care is unsatisfactory. It is widely recognized that the best protection is an open and transparent organizational culture where people are reassured that they will not be penalised for raising genuine concerns.**

**The Whistle Blowing Policy provides an internal reporting process to raise concerns about failure to follow the Code of Conduct. Management must give a clear message that responding professionally to complaints is a high priority. This means ensuring that the persons responsible for conducting an investigation are trained and have the required resources. As awareness is raised on the Code of Conduct and the Whistle-Blowing Policy, it will be important to emphasise that child protection is given equal importance as fraud prevention.**

**Screening should not be seen as a ‘one-off’ process at the time of recruitment. Observation, assessment and supervision by line managers in the work situation is essential and it is appropriate for children to be asked their opinions at the time of recruitment (where they are included in the recruitment process in some way) at any other times following appointment and perhaps particularly when performance appraisals are being conducted.**

**Recruitment in an emergency requires urgent responses and the need to get people ‘on the ground’ as quickly as possible. Any variance on the normal procedures should be agreed in the emergency preparedness CASPs and essential checks should always be undertaken. Children are particularly at risk in emergency situations and it is CASP’s responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are quickly allocated so CASP associates appointed to work with these children are checked.**

**Recruitment, selection and screening: Practice Standards**

**Aims:**

**Minimize to the greatest extent possible the risk that CASP recruits someone with a history or potential to abuse children**

**Ensure that HR polices and practices in CASP endorse CASP’s commitment to protection of children**

**Ensure that all employees are aware of their role and accountability in the protection of children.**

**Build expertise and HR capacity in making continuous improvements to how we develop and carry out these practices.**

**Applies to: All CASP associates with particular responsibilities for Human Resources, recruitment and those managing volunteers**

**Minimum standards**

**Recruitment and Selection:**

* **Clear statements of CASP’s commitment to CP are included in all advertising, job profiles, pre and post interview documentation to candidates**
* **All jobs should be assessed to identify the level of contact with children or child data, and the level of prevention check needed for the post-holder**
* **A range of selection measures and pre-employment checks are carried out on all potential CASP staff and associates, including criminal records checks where available and relevant to role. For roles involving contact with children, such checks should be completed before the person takes up post**
* **Inclusion of information and questions at interview, developed to identify behaviour and attitudes that would be of concern, and give a clear message to potential employees that such behaviour would not be tolerated**
* **Recruitment in emergencies balances the need to appoint/move staff swiftly with the need to apply child protection checks and measures, especially in light of the increased risk for children ay such times**

**Pre-employment checks:**

* **Screening is a process that allows for checks to be updated regularly and other forms of review in the work situation to take place, including feedback from children where possible**
* **Probationary reviews and Performance Appraisals should include indicators of supporting good child protection practices as they relate to the individual’s role**
* **Expected good performance for senior management includes promoting a supportive working environment where employees feel safe in expressing and reporting their concerns**
* **Accessible Training and Development provides all employees and associates with knowledge on child protection issues, areas of risk and how to avoid these, behaviors and practices that if observed should raise concerns, their obligation to report these, and the procedures for doing so**
* **HR professionals are involved in external networks and have professional contacts, that contribute to increasing knowledge and professionalism in implementing and incorporating effective child protection procedures into HR policy and practices**

### Code of Conduct

* **The requirement to report breaches of the Code is made known and staff are clear about how to do this, including via the Whistle Blowing Policy**

**4.4 CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Code of Conduct: Guidelines for implementation**

Codes of Conduct describe acceptable standards of behaviour and promote good practice.

They contribute towards providing a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere for children and set a benchmark for acceptable conduct. They can help minimise opportunities for abuse and help to prevent unfounded allegations’.

The Code of Conduct is a policy document covering a range of behaviours and situations. As a result the behaviours identified with regard to child protection are the minimum and will require further explanation and discussion in differing contexts. The behaviours are non-negotiable but can be developed to provide more guidance e.g. the behaviour protocol for residential events gives guidance on how to organise adult/child ratios for sleeping arrangements.

Describing ‘do’ behaviours rather than ‘don’t’ can provide practical guidance and avoid a non-questioning, compliant response.

Providing employment for a child is prohibited by CASP’s Code of Conduct. CASP staff must not employ or engage children to do work for them.

**Code of Conduct: Practice Standards**

**Aim:**

CASP associates are guided and understand the behaviours and practice expected of them.

**Applies to:** All CASP associates

**Minimum standards**

* Staff discussions on how these behaviours relate to the cultural context are scheduled and given reasonable time. The purpose is to promote understanding of why they are important, not to amend or adapt
* The current Code of Conduct as it refers to behaviour with children is incorporated into all procedures and guidance issued in connection with the Child Protection Policy. CASP associates understand the consequences of not following the code
* The Code of Conduct is publicised (as part of wider commitments) in child friendly language in the communities and at CASP events so children, adults and partners know what behaviours they can expect from CASP associates
* Children involved with CASP develop guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour for children towards other children.

**4.5 CHILD SPONSORSHIP**

**Child Sponsorship: Guidelines for implementation**

Orchestrating a relationship between a child and unrelated adult across borders raises particular child protection risks. Sponsorship procedures and practice should reduce the risks and support preventive measures whilst recognizing the value of the relationship.

CASP Associates have protection responsibilities towards all children.

Child protection relies on consistent application of policies and procedures and good practice, and on high levels of communication and cooperation between all parties with some responsibility for protection.

It is essential in managing the relationships between sponsors and children and their communities. Necessary steps have been taken to manage risk in relation to this relationship.

**Sponsor visit** is an area that presents particular risks, so working together to get this right and build in protection is crucial.

It is recommended that proposed new models of sponsorship must be subject of child protection risk assessments and subsequent approval by the Global Sponsorship Team.

**Child Sponsorship: Practice Standards**

**Aim:**

Child sponsorship programmes support the best interests of the child.

**Applies to:** All CASP associates, children and communities

**Minimum standards**

* CASP Associates, children and communities are made aware and regularly reminded of the Child Protection Policy and procedures and the responsibilities it places on them to protect children from harm
* On initial contact with CASP, sponsors receive in writing an explanation of our child protection policy and Sponsors acknowledge receipt in writing
* There is a comprehensive sponsor pre-visit and post-visit procedure with sponsor and field office responsibilities, conducting all possible protection checks on sponsors
* All sponsors are informed that their correspondence will be screened prior to sending them to the sponsored children. Any deviations found will be reported to the authorities.
* Information about the child is kept safe. Regular reviews are taken and password is changed periodically. Access will only be given to staff that need the information in order to perform their duties
* Piloting of any new models of sponsorship must include a risk assessment for child protection, close monitoring and review
* As per CASP’s Policy a sponsor and the child that he/she sponsors are not supposed to exchange addresses, contact numbers during the sponsorship. This is done in the interest of both sponsor and the sponsor child in order to minimize the risk for child and to avoid exploitation of the sponsor from the sponsored family.

**4.6 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**Marketing and Communications about Children: Guidelines for implementation**

As a part of our activity and advertisement campaign and for the wide publicity of CASP activities CASP come in contact with Media.. Through CASP, children are exposed to the outer world and it is our duty to ensure that our marketing activities are in the best interests of the child, (s)he is protected from potential abuse and his/her dignity and rights to privacy are respected.

It is essential that marketing departments understand the risks and it is senior management’s responsibility to ensure that fundraising competitiveness does not lead to ignoring or underestimating risk.

The risks are complex.

Determining the circumstances when CASP’s Child Protection Policy is mentioned in marketing materials is a matter of judgement based on the understanding that the message can act as a deterrent to potential abusers and it is respected by the public. It may not be appropriate on a campaign poster or flyer but it would be appropriate on a leaflet describing CASP’s work.

Screening of advertisement contents in order to protect the children from posing to risk will be the responsibility of the management.

**Marketing and Communications about children: Practice Standards**

**Aim:**

Marketing and communications activities take every precaution to protect and ensure the dignity of the individual child and children in general

**Applies to:** All CASP associates, children and communities

**Minimum standards**

* Existing guidelines and procedures on child protection in advertising and communications are widely disseminated and staff and associates with responsibilities for this work receive adequate briefing or training on these
* Personal information about a child that could be used to identify his/her specific location within a country should not be used on web pages or in any other communication media about children. Particular attention should be given to sponsors posting information on their own websites, children-children communications and CASP magazines that describe visits
* Children that have experienced violence, exploitation or have been otherwise abused should not have their faces displayed or in any other way be represented in a way that may lead to their identification
* Images of children in states of undress should not present them in poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or in ways that impact negatively on their dignity or privacy
* The informed, written consent of the child and parent/guardian should always be obtained before a recording, photograph or image is taken and its intended use(s) explained. Where possible, the child and family should be shown the finished product before it is published. Records should be kept according to data and privacy laws
* Access to image banks should be limited and monitored. Images should be watermarked and one person held accountable for ensuring access and maintenance. Images sent electronically must be password protected
* Risk assessments for potential abuse of Internet marketing materials are made regularly
* Children’s rights are respected and there is rigorous examination and monitoring of what CASP considers acceptable risk in marketing activities
* There is a publicised complaints procedure for CASP Associates and the public to make complaints about CASP’s marketing

**4.7 MEDIA**

**Media: Guidelines for implementation**

CASP (adults and children) use the media to be a recognized voice on children’s issues

 Media is an inevitable part of NGOs. However utmost care has to be taken to avoid any complications while dealing with media that no abusing language or photograph is depicted about the child or children.

Protecting and promoting children and their interests in and with the media is complex.

CASP staff should also be well known with other agencies Child Protection Policy.

We should be aware that Media likes stories of sensational issues.

Often children want to engage with the media particularly if they are advocating on an issue. However, they may not have the experience to understand why media coverage might be potentially harmful and it is CASP’s responsibility to make this assessment and discuss it with the children and their parents/care givers.

**Media: Practice Standards**

**Aim:** Children are not harmed or exposed to risk as a result of their involvement with the media.

**Applies to:** All CASP Associates, children and communities and particularly communication personnel

**Minimum standards**

* The best interests of the individual child is prioritized over the opportunity for advocacy on child rights and children’s issues
* Children’s rights and dignity are respected in every circumstance including emergencies
* Real names of children that may be placed at particular risk through being identified should be changed and it should be indicated that they have been changed. Other identifying details should also be changed
* Members of the media and celebrities are subject to the same pre-visit requirements as other visitors (i.e. protection measures and checks)
* Media visits should be accompanied by a CASP staff or associate whose role is to ensure child protection in the immediate and longer term.
* Children are prepared and have guidelines on interaction with the media.
* Reasons for identifying a child as the subject of an article or as the journalist should be carefully assessed with the child and his/her parents/care givers
* CASP is responsible for explaining to the child(ren) and guardian the various implications of giving an interview, publishing a story etc. especially where there may be potentially negative impact for the child

**4.8 EMERGENCIES**

**Emergencies: Guidelines for implementation**

**Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse in emergency situations. Recent investigations have revealed that adults who are part of the humanitarian relief effort have abused children. CASP has a duty to ensure that our Child Protection policy and practice is implemented with additional vigilance.**

**Practice Standards: Emergencies**

**Aim:**

**CASP ensures that children are not harmed as a result of direct or indirect contact with CASP staff or associates**

**Applies to: All associates involved with CASP directly or indirectly.**

**Minimum standards**

* **CASP’s emergency response is implemented according to ‘Say yes to child protection’ and agreed principles and codes for humanitarian assistance and protection.**
* **Recruitment of new staff and consultants needs to be rapid but there should be no short cuts on reference checks. Written records of telephone references should be kept. Additional resources should be allocated for the process. Any decision to vary this requirement should be taken by a senior manager**
* **New partner organizations and volunteers should receive an explanation of the policy and procedure at an early stage and practical protection steps identified subject to the activity and context e.g paired volunteers. Training needs and other protection measures should be identified and implemented as a priority**
* **The local procedure for reporting concerns is adapted (or established) and made known verbally and in writing to all staff and visitors**
* **If existing CASP staff and associates are to be relocated or to visit the emergency, it is their respective Manager’s responsibility to ensure that they understand CASP’s Child Protection policy and associated guidelines**
* **Media and marketing teams are subject to the usual protection checks before departure. They are fully briefed by the commissioning NO on the Child Protection Policy and related procedures and practic**e.
* **Managers know and understand common signs of stress and are supported to respond in order to meet CASP’s duty of care to its staff**

**4.9 REPORTING AND RESPONDING**

**Reporting procedures: Guidelines for implementation**

Procedures help to ensure a prompt response to concerns about a child’s safety or welfare. They also help an organization to comply with legislation and guidance.

The majority of sexual abusers are male and in such cases female may be good listeners with a different approach.

It is extremely important that the reporting procedure has to be objective in order to avoid any manipulation in the reporting and procedure. It is essential that clear and consistent reporting procedures are established to provide a framework for the response.

Reporting procedures must be developed with a good understanding of the context (law, policy and practice) in which CASP operates. These contexts can present painful dilemmas in terms of acting in the best interests of the child and respecting human rights and justice. Consequently any variances to the principles should be proactively established, clearly articulated and agreed with senior management.

###### Careful consideration is to be given to determine the appropriate level in the reporting procedure process when it is decided that a child protection concern can be addressed through other actions and organizational policies (i.e. the concern has diminished or can be addressed simply and directly or is the result of professional misconduct). No decision should be taken without the involvement of at least two managers (one of whom should be senior to the other) and recognition that human nature can compel us to underestimate the significance of the information. Internal investigations must be managed by the most senior manager.

A local complaints procedure should be established for CASP associates (sponsors, volunteers, children and their parents) who do not have access to formal organizational procedures e.g. Whistle blowing Policy, Grievance Procedure. It is recommended that the procedure includes independent personnel e.g. ombudsperson.

#### Reporting Procedures: Practice Standards

**Aim:**

All child protection concerns within CASP are addressed through the management reporting line, are addressed appropriately and in a timely fashion and always in the best interest of the child.

**Applies to:** All CASP Associates

**Minimum standards**

All CASP associates understand their responsibilities and are confident to report child protection concerns

There is a clear reporting structure that specifies timeframes, job titles and goes ‘to the top’. This is made widely available internally, is regularly updated and produced in user-friendly language

There is step by step guidance for managers on what action to take if there are concerns about child safety or welfare

Local reporting procedures are developed and are consistent with the standards and good practice described in this document and other relevant guidance - any variance should have prior agreement from senior management

When a new sponsorship or grant relationship is made between a national office and country office, it is the responsibility of the Directors of the Country and National Offices to ensure their respective child protection procedures for reporting are reviewed and any inconsistencies identified, resolved and confirmed in writing

* CASP will report suspected criminal offences to relevant local authorities in line with local reporting procedures and any interagency agreements, and will maintain a good understanding of legal frameworks and requirements
* There are designated persons with clearly defined roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection that are appropriate to the level at which he/she operates. Ultimate responsibility and accountability rests with the most senior manager
* Child protection management and focal point responsibilities are identified at the time of an emergency response
* There is a process for recording incidents, concerns and referrals that is compliant with local data protection laws and this information is stored securely
* There are agreed procedures with timescale for internal investigations
* There is a complaints procedure or representation mechanism with timescale for those associates including children and parents who do not have access to other CASP mechanisms. The process for making a complaint is described in user/child-friendly language and displayed widely

**4.10 INVESTIGATING CONCERNS**

**Investigating child protection concerns: Guidelines for implementation**

Regardless of the geographical location, CASP has an organizational duty of care to ensure that allegations of child abuse are investigated promptly, professionally, as fairly and impartially as possible and appropriate actions are taken.

It is recommended that personnel are identified and receive specialist training to conduct internal investigations. Some organizations are securing the services of external investigators in order to ensure impartiality and professionalism. In both cases it is important to identify management responsibility, accountability, timeframes and parameters of the investigation.

In the majority of cases and for the foreseeable future, it is anticipated that staff within CASP will develop and retain internally this competency for investigation. Guidance on aspects of the investigation is included in the Appendix.

Compensating a victim of abuse with whom CASP is involved (as defined in this manual) is a highly complex issue. However, the principle of being prepared to compensate a child or young person for being abused in a situation that CASP might have prevented is accepted.

**Investigating child protection concerns: Practice Standards**

**Aim:**

To establish the information available in order to determine what action to take in the short and medium term to ensure children are safe.

**Applies to:** Managers, those with special responsibilities for child protection.

**Minimum standards**

* Immediate action is taken if necessary to protect the child(ren) and the safety of the victim/reporter/witnesses is paramount
* External advisory resources have been identified previously and a commitment to provide advice has been secured
* Personnel involved in conducting or managing an investigation (internal or external) have been previously identified and trained, are impartial and know who they should report to. There is organizational commitment that the investigation takes priority over other duties and that support to the investigators is provided
* The parties involved in the investigation are regularly informed of the process, their rights and others roles and responsibilities
* Confidentiality is maintained by all parties. The number of people involved in the investigation is kept to the minimum and the content of the investigation is shared on a ‘need to know’ basis. Unless abuse has actually been proved to have occurred ‘alleged abuse’ must be used
* Conducive environment is created so that the child is comfortable to speak to talk with the sensible interviewer.
* Make sure that the child gets justice if the abuser is unfortunately CASP associate.
* Verbal information given during the investigation should be recorded at the time or immediately afterwards (no more than 24 hours) and computer or hard copies should be kept with the highest security precautions
* There are protocols for the safe disposal/storage of the written records at the end of the investigation

Child Protection Policy

I confirm that I have received a copy of the Child Protection Policy of CASP as approved by the Governing Council which I have read and understood.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)