



Safe Place Mission

Safe Place Mission (SPM)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose of a Child Protection Policy

Child abuse happens in all societies throughout the world. A person who abuses children could be anyone, including those who work and care for children.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.
- The duty bearers are accountable to eradicate child abuse.

Based on the above guiding context and principles, Safe Place Mission is obliged and committed to ensuring that children involved with its programmes are protected from any form of abuse.

Definition

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

Child abuse includes sexual exploitation, physical, emotional or mental harm deliberately caused to a child.

A Child Protection Policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organisation is taking its duty of care seriously.

Statement of Commitment

Safe Place Mission's first priority is the safety and well being of the children under its care. SPM aims to provide safe and friendly environments where children can develop and grow in a healthy way.

SPM is committed to a strict child protection policy to ensure the children are not exposed to abuse, exploitation, violence or neglect.

This policy conforms to the general principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child as follows:

- **Best Interests of the Child:** The best interests of the child will be SPM's primary consideration. All decisions and actions concerning a child will serve the best interests of the child. When weighing up alternatives SPM will seek to ensure that the final decision or action arrived at will be that in which the child receives the maximum benefit possible. SPM will at all times consider the impact a decision or action will have on the child and ensure the positive impacts outweigh any negative impacts.
- **Non-Discrimination:** SPM will enforce a policy of non-discrimination at all times and all children will be treated with respect and love equally.
- **Participation and Self-Determination:** SPM abides by the principle that a child has the right to have his or her views taken into account in accordance with their age development in major decisions affecting their life. They will be given the opportunity to express their ideas and views and be heard on matters affecting them, and to understand how the views or information that they share will be used.
- **Acknowledgement of the importance of family, culture and local laws:** SPM acknowledges the importance of the child's family and community, Cambodian culture and laws, and the local agencies supporting responses to child abuse.

The guidelines in this Child Protection Policy protect both the child from abuse and adult from false accusation.

Safe Place Mission will:

- Respect the rights and dignity of the children, families and communities with whom we work, and always act according to the best interest of children.
- Demonstrate commitment to actively preventing child abuse.
- Take positive action to prevent child abusers becoming involved with SPM in any way and take stringent measures against any SPM associate who commits child abuse.

To ensure the above commitment, SPM is committed to upholding:

- The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.
- The Cambodian constitution, especially articles 41 and 42 (Please see appendix I)
- The Cambodian current and future laws and tools on children's rights.
- Positive traditional practice

1. WHO THIS POLICY APPLIES TO AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 1.1. This policy applies to all associates of Safe Place Mission: interns, volunteers, employees, prospective employees, counterparts, consultants, contractors, partner organisation members and visitors.
- 1.2. SPM will ensure the Child Protection Policy remains relevant and effective.
- 1.3. SPM will consistently monitor all risks pertaining to the children and when needed, make any necessary changes to the Child Protection Policy.
- 1.4. SPM will advise and assist all SPM associates in the implementation of the policy.

2. VISITORS TO Safe Place Mission

- 2.1. No visitor is allowed without the permission of the CEO or Project Manager of SPM, unless prior authority has been granted.
- 2.2. All visitors are to be escorted by SPM staff at all times.
- 2.3. All visitors are closely monitored by SPM staff. No visitor is to be left alone.
- 2.4. Photography, filming or recording is only permitted with the approval of the CEO or the Project Manager of SPM.

3. PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT, VOLUNTEERING, SCREENING AND ORIENTATION

- 3.1. Advertisements for job vacancies will make clear that SPM is committed to child protection and that prospective employees' commitment to child protection must be a condition of employment.
- 3.2. All prospective SPM associates will be informed of the SPM Child Protection Policy at the start of any recruiting process.

- 3.3. Screening of applicants may include a written application, personal interviews (where possible), copy of passport/ID card, any Child Safe children's cards eg: Australian 'Blue Card', reference/police checks and reference checks. During the interview process, applicants will be asked about previous work with children.
- 3.4. Where possible and permissible by local law, applicants for staff positions are requested to give permission for a criminal record or police check for any conviction related to child abuse or other relevant offences. Expatriates are subject to the same background checks as possible and permissible by law in their home countries.
- 3.5. SPM reserves the right to terminate a contract if reference checks (and background check in the future) reveal that the person is not suitable to work with children or for any reason, may put children at risk.
- 3.6. The Child Protection Policy is reviewed during new staff and volunteer orientation. All new personnel and volunteers acknowledge in writing their receipt and understanding of the policy, with signed copies of their acknowledgement kept in personal files.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR Safe Place Mission PERSONNEL

- 4.1. A code of conduct provides guidelines deemed to be appropriate and proper behaviour for SPM associates when interacting with children in the care of SPM. They are primarily designed to protect children but are also intended to protect personnel from false accusations of inappropriate behaviour or abuse.
- 4.2. No child is to be taken on a motorbike, tuk-tuk or car without making prior arrangements with the CEO or Project Manager.
- 4.3. No child is to be taken to any SPM associate's home, guesthouse, hotel or accommodation.
- 4.4. No SPM associate is permitted to socialise with the children outside the SPM premises apart from SPM organised events.
- 4.5. No SPM associate or sponsor is permitted to visit homes of the children/family without the presence of a SPM staff member.
- 4.6. No SPM associate is permitted to take any child to a café, restaurant or buy them food, unless permission has expressly been given by the CEO or Project Manager. If a child is obviously hungry, then SPM staff are to be informed immediately.
- 4.7. No presents or gifts of any kind are to be given to the children without prior arrangement with the CEO or Project Manager.

- 4.8. SPM associates should not act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- 4.9. SPM associates must display appropriate language, actions and relationships with children at all times. Extra care should be given to protecting the reputation of both female children and SPM staff by ensuring that language and behaviour at all times reflect appropriate male-female relationships, which are respectful of and in line with Cambodian culture and customs.
- 4.10. SPM personnel should not hire any of the SPM children to do domestic work or to perform other work without prior permission from the CEO or Project Manager.
- 4.11. SPM staff and associates must take extreme care when interacting physically with the Children. SPM staff must not fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch minors in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way. Under no circumstance should any physical contact be or have the appearance of being sexual in any way.
- 4.12. SPM personnel must not exert inappropriate physical force when dealing with the Children. This includes, but is not limited to, pushing, shoving, hitting, or any other action that could cause fear, intimidation or distress.
- 4.13. SPM personnel are responsible for their actions and reactions to children at all times. They should be aware that they might work with children who may, because of the circumstances and abuses they have experienced, use a relationship with an adult to obtain 'special attention'. The adult is always considered responsible for his or her actions regardless of how a child behaves towards them. Staff should be alert to such behaviour and avoid being placed in a compromising or vulnerable position.
- 4.14. No social media or email access is permitted with a child without the permission of the CEO or Project Manager, and the supervision of an authorised staff member.
- 4.15. Inappropriate conduct toward children, including failure to follow the behaviour standards stated above is grounds for discipline, up to and including dismissal from employment or placement and/or police notification and legal action.

5. AWARENESS RAISING AND EDUCATION

- 5.1. SPM is obliged to make all SPM associates aware of the issue of child protection and the Child Protection Policy.

- 5.2. All SPM associates and local communities are provided with opportunities to learn about how to safeguard children, to recognise and respond to concerns about child abuse.
- 5.3. Students are educated in self-protection from physical and sexual abuse. Children are taught that they have a right to do something if an adult or another young person behaves or talks to them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable or in danger, and to trust and act on their instincts.
- 5.4. The CEO of SPM initiates an open culture, encouraging opportunities for staff to raise concerns, to question, to discuss, to feedback, and learn about child protection issues. This is done during staff meetings and through supervised training. Staff are trained to identify and to report suspicious behaviour to the CEO or Project Manager.

6. COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT CHILDREN

- 6.1. All communications regarding SPM children ensure that the protection, privacy, dignity and best interests of the child are paramount.
- 6.2. The consent of the CEO or Project Manager should always be obtained before recording or photographing children at SPM. The intended use(s) must also be explained.
- 6.3. Children should be adequately clothed in photographs or images taken of them and not in poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive.

7. DECLARATION

I have read the complete Safe Place Mission Child Protection Policy. I fully understand and agree to follow all procedures contained within.

If at any time I fail to follow the guidelines set forth by the Safe Place Mission Child Protection Policy I understand that my employment / association may be terminated by the CEO and appropriate action will be taken.

Name

Signature

____/____/____
Date

Appendix I

Royal Government of Cambodia Constitution (unofficial translation)

Article 41: Causing wounds on purpose:

- Anyone who beats/fights another person on purpose resulting in permanent disability must be punished by putting them in prison for 1 to 5 years.
- If they cause temporary disability less than 6 months they must be punished and put in prison for 6 months to 2 years.
- If it doesn't cause disability they are to be punished by putting them in prison for 2 months to 1 year.
- If using any kind of weapons must be punished 2 times more.

Article 42: Rape

- Anyone who rapes another, even the same sex or opposite sex by touching or actions involving sex must be punished to put in prison for 1 year to 3 years.
- If the rape is conducted by coercing a victim younger than 16 years old then the person who commits this must be punished 2 times more.