



**CONGREGATION OF  
OUR LADY OF CHARITY  
OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD**



**Province  
Child Safeguarding  
Policy**

**Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
Province of Central East India/Nepal  
August-2020**

## 1. FOREWORD BY THE PROVINCE LEADER

It is with great joy that I pen this message on the official launch of the Province Child| Safeguarding Policy. St. M. Euphrasia says: “Now you can see what to do for our young people, for the children God has entrusted to you. Watch over them carefully, noticing their needs of mind and body and prudently leading them to spiritual pastures suitable to each one's state”.

Our Congregation takes seriously the responsibility of safeguarding children and calls each one of us to ensure that every child in contact with us either directly or indirectly is treated with respect and dignity.

Therefore, child safeguarding is not an option for us – it is an imperative. I therefore urge all sisters and partners in mission to take the Province Child Safeguarding Policy very seriously. By doing so we can be part of a network of positive change through collaboration; creating a better future for the children in our country. Let us all wholeheartedly commit to 'NO HARM TO CHILDREN'.

The idea that a child is born with dignity in the image of God is embedded in the Gospel values, best practice guidelines and international and domestic laws. The legal regime in India recognizes that every child has a right to live with dignity, be respected, nurtured, cared for and protected.

The term '**safeguarding**' refers to the procedures that are in place to ensure that the human rights, health and wellbeing of individuals are protected in such a way that they may live a life free from neglect, abuse or harm. This policy especially focuses on safeguarding children, young and **vulnerable adults**. Safeguarding training, policies and procedures are vital when you work in an organisation with a special focus on the welfare of children or vulnerable adults. Each one in the organization has the responsibility to ensure that the children are protected and cared for. Our mission as a Province involves situations and persons who are vulnerable and live in high-risk conditions, especially the children of women prostituted for sex, child labourers, vulnerable children in the Dalit and tribal communities and children affected by all forms of violence. We who encounter them daily are called to adopt the highest spiritual, ethical and professional standards in our dealings. Therefore, we are called to implement this policy consciously and bring about justice and healing to the vulnerable.

With this Child Safeguarding Policy – We reaffirm that in our Province any form of abuse against children, young adults, and vulnerable adults is unacceptable, and will not be tolerated. We commit to adhere to this policy in all settings that we engage with children, directly or indirectly, be it in our shelter homes, schools, non-formal education centres and in the communities

We, the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd are committed to conducting our programmes and operations in a manner that is safe for the children we work with and to help protect the children with whom GS is in contact. The child's best interest will always be our primary consideration.

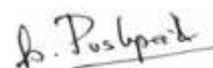
This Child safeguarding policy is in line with the policy of the congregation, which we as members of the congregation and the associate persons abide by, in words and deeds and our mission and all its programmes are in accordance with.

A word of gratitude and appreciation to the Focal Point and the team who prepared this policy. I appreciate your great commitment in preparing and presenting this Policy so that children in our care and in the community are well protected, enabling them to enjoy all their rights, and to live with human dignity and respect as God's precious children.

In this regard I am confident that this Policy will benefit innumerable children and promote the sacredness and preciousness of children in society.

*Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future.* (John. F Kennedy)

Wishing each one of you blessings in abundance,



Sr. Pushpa Louis  
Province Leader, CEIN  
10.08.2020

## 2. PREAMBLE

Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, (OLCGS), with nearly 400 years of history, is an International Congregation well known for its work among children at risk, girls and women who are exploited and marginalized, empowering them through institutional and community-based ministries. We empower children and their communities to create and promote fair and equitable societies that guarantee their rights and wellbeing.

The Child Safeguarding Policy of our CEIN Province is based on the following set of values and inspirations.

We envision a world in which everyone, especially children and women fully enjoy their rights and lead a dignified life. Jesus the Good Shepherd is our model who said, “Let the children come to me, do no harm to them, for to such belongs the reign of God” **Mark 10:14**.

**St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier** the Foundress of Sisters of the Good Shepherd had special love for children, and she said “We have no rights over those we serve, we can neither ill-treat them nor shut the mouth...harshness is no more our spirit than it is the Spirit of God.”

“We find inspiration and guidance for our Mission in Sacred Scriptures and in the teaching of St. John Eudes and St. Mary Euphrasia. Like them, we draw our Spirit of zeal from the Heart of Jesus and Mary. It is an evangelical spirit of welcome, kindness, understanding and loving service which gives witness to the value and dignity of each person.”

“In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. Institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care and protection of children shall conform to the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number of (and) suitability of their staff as well as competent supervision.”

“In responding to the needs of the girl child, it is critical to: ensure that every OLCGS program has a clear, detailed, and operative Child Protection Policy that promotes positive development and protects from abuse of any kind and uses UN human rights tools to advocate nationally and internationally.”

Protection and care of the children should be at the very heart of our communities and societies. Child Safeguarding involves our collective and individual responsibility and preventive actions to ensure that all children are protected from deliberate or unintentional acts that lead to the risk or actual harm, by children, staff, representatives, volunteers, donors, benefactors and visitors who come into contact with children. We recognise the importance of safeguarding, promoting the rights and protecting the welfare of children and their families. We are determined to put children first, in all we do and to make the rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 and all domestic laws in India, a reality for all children who are under our care.

This policy will ensure that all our communities, institutions and organizations are safe and enriching environment for children under our care. The purpose of this policy is to make sure that the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in central East India/ Nepal have policy framework and procedures in place to prevent any harm done to children.

**With this Policy document, we, Sisters and Partners in Mission in our Province reaffirm, any form of abuse against children is unacceptable. We all commit to “Do no harm to children”.**

### **3. VISION**

Every child in the care of the OLCGS is safe and feels secure in all settings and circumstances, and grows and flourishes in a safe, protected and empowering environment, one that fosters holistic development and creates opportunities for all children to reach their full potential. All stakeholders, including partners in mission, parents, caregivers and the community, work diligently and in partnership to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil all the rights of all children by respecting children and their right to participate and to share their opinions in matters concerning them, eliminating discrimination against children, while ensuring their best interest and upholding their right to live with dignity.

### **4. SCOPE:**

This Child Safeguarding Policy applies to all Partners in Mission, including the sisters of the OLCGS staff, trustees, Board members, consultants, interns, volunteers, Directors/In-charges, coordinators, Para professionals, counselors, team members, representatives of partner agencies, donors, journalists, and any other individual who is in direct or indirect contact with children and vulnerable adults in the care of the OLCGS.

All the staff members, Partners in Mission, whether full time, part time or engaged on fixed-term contracts must act in accordance with this policy in their professional lives and are encouraged to do the same in their personal lives.

### **5. POLICY STATEMENT AND COMMITMENTS:**

The OLCGS recognizes the inalienable right of every child in the care of the congregation to equal and non-discriminatory protection from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The OLCGS strongly condemns all forms of violence against children in all settings and is committed to adopting a rights-based approach so as to ensure children's right to protection from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation through effective prevention and robust response mechanisms.

The OLCGS will ensure that all partners in mission as well as others associated with the OLCGS adhere to this Child Protection Policy.

The policy creates a mechanism to report child protection violation and ensure prompt redressal. This policy calls for mandatory reporting of all child protection violations. All members within the scope of this policy should report as they witness, suspect or come to know of any form of child protection violation. The CEI does not tolerate any form of child abuse, violence or exploitation. Children, who come into contact with, must be protected from deliberate or unintended actions that place them at risk of child abuse, sexual exploitation, injury, discrimination and any other harm.

The OLCGS makes a firm commitment to strive for truth, the healing for victims and assistance to other persons affected and shall put in place procedures to effectively respond to allegation of abuse.

The OLCGS shall follow the mission, vision, goals of the Province (CEIN), the Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, the core Christian values of the Bible and the example of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

The OLCGS recognizes the obligations arising out of applicable national/international legal instruments and guidelines, and shall ensure that in all actions concerning children undertaken by the OLCGS, the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration with the Province of CEIN

## 6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Children are citizens and rights-holders; the dignity, liberty and freedom of every child must be respected.
- The best interest of the child must remain in focus and be the primary consideration in all matters that affect or concern the child.
- Children have the right to freedom of expression and have the right to participate in decisions affecting them, and their views shall be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.
- A child's right to privacy and confidentiality must be respected within an overall consciousness and awareness of child protection requirements.
- Zero tolerance of any form of abuse of any child whether direct or indirect.
- Child protection is the responsibility of all.

There are clear consequences for a breach of the guidelines. The principles of this policy are rooted in Human values, which seek to meet international best practice guidelines on Child Safeguarding, domestic and international laws, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (UNCRC).

## 7. DEFINITION & TERMS:

**Child:** Every Human Person under the age of 18 years, including an unborn child in the foetus. Child includes both “child victim and/or the child witness”

**Child Abuse:** Any form of physical, sexual, and/or emotional ill treatment to a person below the age of 18 Years.

**Child sexual abuse:** Involving a child in sexual activity with an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, with an intention to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include; inducement of a child to engage in unlawful sexual activity, use of child in prostitution and other unlawful sexual activities, use of children in pornographic performances and material.

**Physical abuse:** An act that results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of an interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust.

**Emotional abuse:** 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 lives. There may also be acts towards 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 include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

**Online Child Sexual Abuse:** This includes grooming, live streaming, consuming child sexual abuse material, blackmailing children for sexual purposes, sharing images of abuse, inspiring children to indulge in sexual activities online.

**Neglect or Negligent Treatment:** Failure 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 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.

**Commercial or Other Exploitation:** Trafficking for commercial exploitation, child labour, etc., resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity.

**Child Safeguarding:** Making sure there is no harm potential or actual. The responsibility that organisations have; to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children; and that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse. Any concerns the organisation has about children's safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.

**Contact with children:** Working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve any interaction with children, no matter how minimal, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment. This includes indirect interaction with children in the community.

**Working with children:** Being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid work.

**Partners in Mission:** Lay women and men who are committed to the vision and spirit of Good Shepherd, to take genuine responsibility for the development of the mission.

**Members, Staff, volunteers:** Good Shepherd sisters, anyone employed as permanent or on special contracts, volunteers, an apprentice or trainee, casual, temporary or part-time employees.

## 8. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES:

If members, employee and persons associated with the organisation is accused of allegedly abusing a child, the accused person:

- a) During the time of investigation, as to whether or not the allegations are true, will not be permitted to engage in any responsibility and will be assisted in obtaining any support they may need.
- b) Will be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and the next steps.
- c) Will be informed of the progress and the outcome of any investigations and implications.
- d) Can be reinstated to the responsibility, if the allegation is determined to be false after investigation, and additional support should be provided.

### ▪ **Breach of the Safeguarding Policy:**

All members, employee and people associated with the organisation have a responsibility to act consistently with this Child Safeguarding Standard and the expectations set out in this document. Failure to comply with this policy and expectations may lead to serious disciplinary action or the termination of the employment, contract, or other relationship with the organisation. In addition, the organisation will report the situation to the relevant civil and ecclesiastical authorities as appropriate.

All members, employee and associated people also have a duty to report any breaches of this policy through the Child Safeguarding Focal Point at the Unit offices or to the Organisation's Child Safeguarding Coordinator.

### ▪ **Sanctions:**

Breaches of this policy and failure to comply may lead to the following sanctions:

- a) For the members, employee and persons associated with the organisation: disciplinary action

leading to possible dismissal;

- b) For the organisation's partner organizations: up to and including termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements;
- c) Where relevant, appropriate legal or other such actions, referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation may apply.

The focal point ensures that child safeguarding measures are in place and are effective. In addition, protection concerns and updates will be reported.

#### ▪ **Reporting procedures:**

- The members and associated persons who have a concern related to safeguarding shall report it **immediately** to their **Safeguarding Focal Point** at the field level in every Unit.
- The field Focal Point will manage the concern or incident according to the **local adapted reporting procedures or by using the reporting form Annex VI**. The Focal Point has a duty to report the child abuse concern to the Province Child Safeguarding Committee (PCSC) through mail *childsafeguardingfp@gmail.com* which then will be recorded at the province level and actions will be taken accordingly.
- If the member or associated person does not feel comfortable reporting to their Child Safeguarding Focal Point (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern), they **may report to another Child Safeguarding Focal Point** or appropriately assigned member or person associated with the Province (for example a member of the Unit leadership team or ministry management team, who is trained in the reporting response procedure). However, if none of the above options are available the concern should be reported to the PCSC directly.
- The PCSC shall gather all facts and information related to the issue, with all respect to human dignity of the persons concerned. Throughout the entire procedure, they will maintain the highest degree of objectivity and impartiality and consider both the perspectives of the complainant and the respondent. As far as possible, the PCSC will document all the testimonies electronically namely, audio-visual recording. Upon the completion of the enquiry, the PCSC will submit a detailed written report to the Province Leader/PLT together with all other documents availed during the process. When the evidence has been granted, the Assessor examines it and reaches a conclusion based on the criterion of the “Balance of Probabilities”. A copy of the assessment is generally provided to both parties unless it contains names and/or other confidential information. A facilitated meeting shall be organised to provide an opportunity for the victim to tell the story.

#### ▪ **Justice Process:**

The whole justice process shall be child-sensitive in its procedures and services, either internally conducted process or through the legal system of the country. The system shall take care that no child shall suffer violations of any rights and operates in the best interest of the child. The Organisation/team shall ensure that the child's safety and protection with dignity and respect is upheld in any state of affairs.

#### ▪ **Inquiry Process:**

- i. Regarding child abuse; physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or exploitation, of a minor by a GS member or GS Partner in Mission, during the time of investigation as to whether or not the allegations are true, the person is not permitted to engage in any ministry with children or other

vulnerable persons. The unit leader or responsible person communicates this information to the person concerned and assists him/her in obtaining the necessary legal, psychological and spiritual help, including participation in a restorative justice process, where appropriate.

- ii. During the time of investigation and if the allegation is determined to be true, the unit leader or responsible person must include the information in the permanent confidential file.
- iii. If serious allegations are determined to be true, the person is dismissed from the organisation and ministry. If necessary, s/he will be provided with ongoing expert help, both to assist and to lessen the risks of further incidents of abuse.
- iv. If the allegation is determined to be false, s/he can be reinstated in the organisation and ministry. Additional support, in the form of psychological and spiritual assistance, should be provided
- v. If there is a violation of a law that is in force, the congregation is obliged to file an FIR and trigger and external investigation process through the police, isn't it?

#### ▪ **Structure of the Province Child Safeguarding Committee**

- Provincial Councillor/PLT Member
- Representative (sister or lay) from Education Ministry
- Representative (Sister or lay) from Social Action Ministry
- Representative from Formation Team
- Representative from Residential Care Ministry
- Lawyer with 10 years of practice experience

The **Province Child Safeguarding Committee** will be constituted by PLT

NP: Each registered society too could have Child Safeguarding Committee comprising of President, Lay mission partners and an expert.

#### ▪ **Procedure to handle grievances**

##### **Petitioner:**

The person who brings the complaint of abuse is encouraged to be accompanied by his/her support person. Any petitioner in our institution/community has the right to approach the local Community Leader, Director or the Province Leader with written complaint. If the complainant is a child who cannot write, it can be recorded. One who receives such complaints should give a patient hearing to the complainant. The one, who receives such complaints, shall facilitate an atmosphere of freedom, responsibility, and respect for human dignity in acceptance with human/Gospel values of listening and approachability. In case the petitioner is a child, a confidant/counsellor/guardian may accompany the child.

##### **Accused:**

The accused shall be informed of the nature of the complaint and given sufficient details to be able to make a response. If the accused admits the basic substance of the complaint the matter then proceeds to the facilitation stage. However, when there is a significant dispute about the facts or where there is a need for further information concerning the complaint, it shall proceed to assessment stage.

When a complaint is made, the accused is required to stand aside from his/her role. This is in accord with community expectations for all professional people accused of serious misconduct. It is not a signal that the allegation has been taken as fact. Rather it is a statement to all concerned that allegations of abuse are taken seriously to enable a fair inquiry, and prevent possibility of the accused

person from potentially harming other children and that we are not prepared to follow the possibility of other victims, in the event of the allegations being accurate. None the less, it must be stressed that whatever complaints are made, the accused must be regarded as innocent unless or until it is clearly till proven guilty. When a complaint is one of criminal abuse, the complainant is supported with the adult to refer the matter to the police.

### **Assessor:**

In the event of receiving face to face or phone contact from a person who is abused; listen, keep calm and do not take personally any offensive comments. In case the complainant is a child, reassure the child that it is not his/her fault. Refer to the concerned authorities including the civil authorities where required. Assure the person that we will respond to her/him in due time. The Assessor may request to tape the conversation; however, this will be done with the person's consent. The tape will be kept in the safe place (in the custody of PLT) and once the case is over it shall be destroyed.

### **Facilitation stage:**

Those who receive the complaints should immediately send it to the Province Leader. Within 24 hours the Province Leader/PLT refers the matter to the PCSC who immediately follows the procedure of enquiry. If the committee finds the matter grave in nature, the Province Leader consults both the PLT and the PCSC. The PCSC may also facilitate meetings with Petitioner and Accused together with support personnel. Understanding and concern be assisted in obtaining counselling or related services and in assurance of emotional and psychological support. (No anonymous complaints or letters shall be entertained).

### **Response:**

The final resolution for the Petitioner may include an apology, financial assistance for current needs or a decision that no further action will be taken. The final resolution for the Accused will depend on the outcome and may include removal from current ministry and/or referral to a centre for assessment and treatment. The accused acts in response by written communication when she/he is found guilty.

If required, the Province Leader shall inform the accused of her/his right to an attorney who will explain her/him the legal rights. The accused shall, with all understanding and concern, be assisted in obtaining counselling or related services and in assurance of emotional, psychological and spiritual support.

### **Quorum:**

When there is urgency, the PLT member, the lawyer and the other two members would suffice for a quorum of the PCSC. Yet it is advisable that the other two give their consent for the meeting and subsequent decision in their absence.

### **Procedure for disciplinary action**

1. Issuing of Notice/Memo
2. Obtain response from the Respondent within 15 days.
3. Enquiry, fair hearing, evidence in accordance with the procedure
4. Record the enquiry in accordance with the procedure
5. The Petitioner and the Accused getting witnesses
6. Findings to be recorded
7. Issuing of Order of Punishment when required

## Disciplinary action

1. Warning
2. Fine/Penalty
3. Suspension
4. Withholding of increments
5. Demotion
6. Discharge for misconduct
7. Dismissal

The Province shall ensure that safe, appropriate and accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are available to all members, associated persons and the communities with whom they work. Any member or associated person reporting concerns or complaints through formal channels shall be protected by the policies of the Province.

There will be severe consequences for anyone making false accusations/ allegations.

## Support and information for the accused member or associated person

The accused person:

During the time of investigation, as to whether or not the allegations are true, shall not be permitted to engage in ministry and shall be assisted in obtaining any support s/he may need (Province Administration Manual (PAM), Appendix 32, Section II).

Shall be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and the next steps.

Shall be informed of the progress and the outcome of any investigations and implications.

Can be reinstated in the ministry, if the allegation is determined to be false after investigation, and additional support shall be provided.

According to Article 16 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, all children have a **right to privacy**. The Convention also states that children should be protected from abuse and that their best interests should be prioritized when making decisions that affect them. This means that, if a child is at risk of harm, it is in their best interests for an adult to share information with the relevant child safeguarding focal point within the organization and in all cases where it is required under the laws applicable in the State in which the incident has allegedly occurred, with external appropriate agencies and statutory authorities– even without the child's consent.

The Province shall also accept reports from external sources such as communities and stakeholders.

All information and reports shall be kept at the Unit at Provincialate level and managed and monitored by the Province's Child Safeguarding Committee.

The present policy aligns the Province with the recent recommendations included in Pope Francis's Motu Proprio and responds adequately to the included requests in terms of internal reporting procedures. All sisters and associate persons are subject to the dispositions of the Motu Proprio. Therefore, they are accountable for reporting abuse and violence within the congregation and the Catholic Church.

## 9. PREVENTION OF HARM AGAINST CHILDREN

### Responsibilities of the Organisation

The organisation shall:

- a) Ensure that all members, persons associated with the organisation know, understand and commit to their responsibilities within this policy;
- b) Ensure that risks of harm are carefully considered and mitigated in the design and delivery of every project and initiative (including how information about individuals will be gathered and processed);
- c) Ensure that risks of harm are carefully considered and mitigated in the design and delivery of the organisation's communications including the disclosure of people's identities in public materials;
- d) Apply stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying members and associated persons;
- e) Ensure that all members and persons associated with the organisation receive training on safeguarding at a level that is appropriate to their role within the organization;
- f) Respond to reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and in line with due process. In addition, the organisation shall put in place a set of behaviour protocols to ensure that all members and people associated with the organisation always behave appropriately with children.

### Responsibilities of members, associated persons

The following responsibilities shall apply at all times while the members, associated persons engaged with work or visits related to the organisation.

#### **As a member, person associated with the organisation, one shall;**

- a) Support and uphold the organisation's Child Safeguarding Standards and all efforts the organization makes to protect children from harm;
- b) Proactively report, via the organisation's Child Safeguarding Standard reporting procedures any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by any of the members, employee or person associated. It is a severe offence to fail to disclose knowledge of such incidents that could lead to serious disciplinary actions;
- c) Treat all children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability, birth or other status.
- d) Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working or dealing in the proximity of children.
- e) Refrain from physical punishment for disciplining of children (including one's own children, if married and having family).
- f) Refrain from hiring children for domestic work or other labour which is inappropriate, given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- g) Comply with Organization's child safeguarding standards and the supporting procedures and prevailing legislations in relation to child labour.
- h) Immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures.

#### **As a member, person associated with the organisation one shall not:**

- a) Sexually abuse or exploit any children;

- b) Subject any children to physical, emotional or psychological assault, abuse, or neglect;
- c) Engage in any commercially exploitative activities, particularly with children, including child labour or child trafficking;
- d) Use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- e) Engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, which is criminalized under the law(s) of the country.
- f) Invite unaccompanied children into one's home or place of residence, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger which needs to be then discussed with the wider team.
- g) Sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case one must obtain her/his supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible.
- h) Not use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium
- i) Exchange (or offer or imply an offer of) money, employment, goods or services for any form of sexual activity or any other exploitative activity. This includes any exchange of the organisation's assistance that is due to its programme participants;
- j) Engage in any form of sexual activity with the organisation's participants of assistance (of any age), since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics and pose a risk of conflicted interests.

## **10. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, REVIEW & EVALUATION:**

The Province Leadership Team is ultimately accountable for this Child Safeguarding Policy. The province leader and the PLT of the CEIN are responsible for its overall implementation in all the communities and in the associated organisations and institutions.

A Province Child Safeguarding Committee (PCSC) shall be formed at Province level to review the policy once a year. The Focal Link points from each community, institution shall give their quarterly feedback to the PCSC in a prescribed format.

The PCSC committee shall monitor regularly the compliance of policy and its implementation. The focal point will circulate a questionnaire to all the communities to collect the information and data which will analysed by the PCSC and presented to the PLT for feedback.

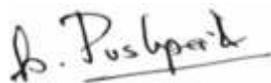
Any changes in the policy, after the approval by the PLT, shall be strictly under the authority of the PLT and the PCSC.

A report on the Child Safeguarding Action initiated and implemented by each community/institution of the province shall be prepared by the PCSC and presented to the PLT once in 6 months.

Each community/institution shall have their own child safeguarding policy in line with the policy of the province.

This policy, as approved by the PLT in 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020 shall be reviewed annually or when any changes in legislation or discovery that prompts an early review.

10<sup>th</sup> August 2020



Received by Sr. Pushpa Louis, Province Leader  
On behalf of the Province of Central East India Nepal.  
Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd

## 1. CASE DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING:

The Child Safe Guarding Policy articulates our aspiration and commitment to practicing the highest level of child safety across our operations' network. The organisations take a proactive stance in laying out a set of documenting and reporting guidelines that are to be incorporated into all process and functions.

### Procedures for reporting a protection concern

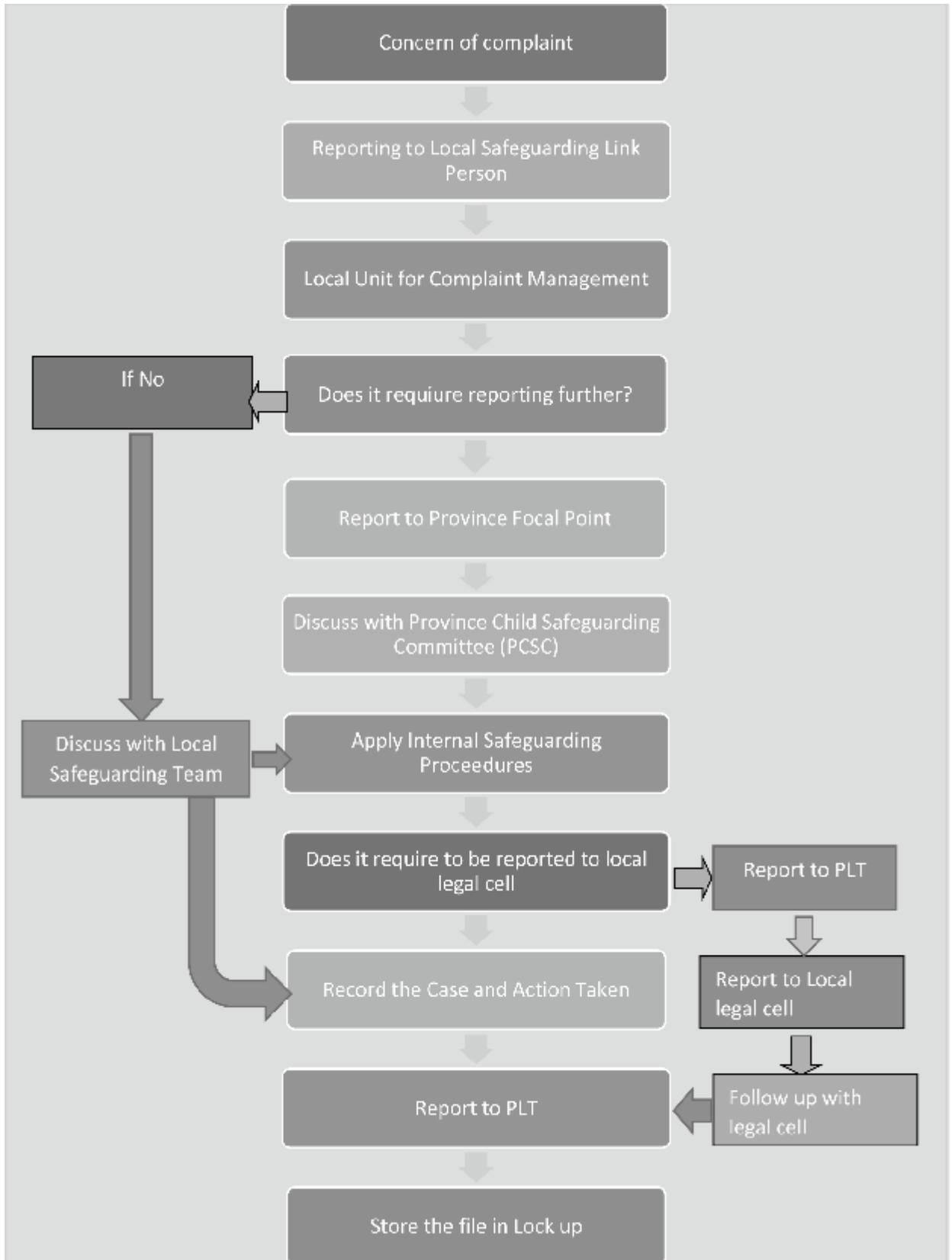
Members, employee and associated persons who have a concern related to child protection should report it immediately to their Child Safeguarding Focal Point at the field level in every Unit. The field Focal Point shall manage the concern or incident according to the local adapted reporting procedures or by using the reporting form (Annex no). The Focal Point has a duty to report the child abuse concern to the organisation's Child Safeguarding Committee, which then will take appropriate action accordingly.

If member, employee or associated persons do not feel comfortable reporting to their Child Safeguarding Focal Point (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern), they may directly report to Child Safeguarding Committee or appropriately assigned person associated with the organisation. It is imperative and obligatory for an adult, if a child is at risk of harm, to share information with the relevant Child Safeguarding Focal Point within the organization and in some cases with external appropriate agencies – even without the child's consent.

The organisation shall also accept reports from external sources such as communities, stakeholders and children themselves. All information and reports will be kept at the organisation safely and managed and monitored by the Organisation's Child Safeguarding Committee.



## The Line of Complaint- Resolving



## 2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SAFEGUARDING FOCAL POINT

### Purpose of the role:

- To take the lead in ensuring that appropriate arrangements, policies and procedures for keeping children safe are in place in the organisation.
- To promote the safety and welfare of children involved in organisation's activities, programmes at all times.
- To take appropriate action to deal with any cases of child abuse or potential child abuse.
- To act as a link between the PCSC and the PLT in all the matters of harm or potential harm to children.

### Duties and Responsibilities:

- Ensure that all safeguarding and protection issues concerning children who take part in organisation's activities and programmes are responded to appropriately through policies, procedures, etc.
- Make sure that everyone working or volunteering with or for children at organisation understands the safeguarding procedures and knows what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare.
- Make sure that everyone working, or volunteering is familiar with how to assess safeguarding risks within the organisation, including its programs and projects.
- Make sure children persons who are involved in activities in the programmes and their parents or care givers know who they can talk to if they have a concern and understand what action the organisation will take in response.
- Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child who takes part in organisation's activities or program.
- Take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a child's concern. This includes:
  - i. assessing and clarifying the information;
  - ii. making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate;
  - iii. consulting with and informing the relevant members of the organisation's management;
  - iv. following the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures.
  - v. Storing and retaining safeguarding records according to legal requirements and the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures.
  - vi. Sharing with, passing on information to, and receiving information from the organisation's Child Safeguarding Committee.
  - vii. Reporting monthly or quarterly to the management committee of the organisation on issues relating to safeguarding to ensure that safeguarding is seen as a priority issue and a fixed item on the organisation's management team and meeting agenda.
  - viii. Taking a formal referral to a statutory agency (e.g., police) or another organisation, if appropriate, in consultation with the organisation's Child Safeguarding Committee.

### **3. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: RECRUITMENT AND FORMATION**

The commitments undertaken in this Safeguarding Policy must be reflected throughout the human resources management cycle. In particular, during recruitment processes, The Sisters of Good Shepherd CEIN Province shall employ persons who best guarantee the safeguarding and positive care to the children. The province shall ensure that the selection criteria include and emphasize the necessary experience and credentials for jobs that involve direct contact with children.

The province shall include relevant information on safeguarding in the current formation, induction and introduction materials, which will be used during the selection process of every member and lay partner joining the province as members, employees, volunteers, associates or providers. Board members, leadership teams and staff at the province and unit level, including short term consultants and volunteers shall be recruited with clear job or role description that includes a statement on the position or the roles and responsibilities to meet the requirements of the Province's Child Safeguarding Policy.

#### **Child-safe Recruitment**

The Sisters of Good Shepherd CEIN Province acknowledge that creating safe environment for children starts with the appointment of suitably qualified, skilled and vetted staff, partners in mission, who have the desired competencies and skills to carry out their functions in an effective, efficient and safe manner. The recruitment processes used within the province/unit aim to be in the best interests of children and will reflect our commitment to safeguard children and prevent abuse.

Highest standards are applied in all recruitment processes to guarantee the suitability of the candidates to work with children and their understanding of the concepts of protection, safeguarding and positive treatment to children. These processes include strong checks based on the verification of identities, credentials and reference checks (at least two).

#### **Awareness raising and training**

All the actors included in the scope of this policy must receive training about the policy, adapted to the level of contact with children that each of them has, and in accordance with their general responsibilities in the organization, as well as with those specific to the area of safeguarding.

The people that make up the board of trustees and the Sisters of Good Shepherd CEIN Province staff team must receive an initial orientation about child safeguarding during the process of joining the organization, which is then strengthened by applying awareness raising, updating and ongoing training plans that ensure that they have the necessary skills to adequately apply the policy to their ministry. The province must develop, with the support of the social action ministry and the mission development office, the plans for awareness-raising, updating and organizing ongoing trainings, so that they are adapted to each context and each local legislative framework.

In particular, staff with explicit responsibilities in the area of protection, safeguarding and positive treatment must receive specific comprehensive training within the first six months of joining the organization. Equally, all staff that work in direct contact with children must receive training about how to manage a hypothetical situation in which a child reports about a concern, suspicion or incident.

## 5. CODE OF CONDUCT: FOR MEMBERS, STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, DONORS, VISITORS AND MEDIA PERSONS:

All those covered by the policy commit to respecting, promoting, upholding and protecting, at all times, the rights of the children as set out in the UNCRC and all applicable domestic law. The standards of behaviour set by the Code Conduct are required of all those covered by this policy in respect of their conduct towards all children. Anyone found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of membership or termination of contract or any other arrangements that deem to be fit as per the policy of the organisation.

### **The members, staff, volunteers, donors, visitors and media persons shall;**

- always treat children with respect regardless of their sex, ethnic or social origin, language, religious or other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or other status;
- use language or behaviour towards children that is at all times appropriate and in no way harassing, abusive, sexually provocative or demeaning;
- not indulge in any activity that is inclined towards any kind of abuse including sexual, with children, regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child will not serve as a defence;
- not engage children in any form of sexual activity, including paying for sexual favours, i.e., exchange of money, employment, goods or services. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to them;
- ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children and when inviting children home, unless the relevant precautions have been taken;
- not make inappropriate use of any computers, mobile phones, video/digital cameras or other electronic devices, to access, view, create, download or distribute online sex abuse images of children;
- not make use of physical punishment or inappropriate physical force of any kind towards children in order to discipline children.
- not use children for domestic or other labour when it is inappropriate for the child's age or developmental capacity and that which interferes with the time available for education and recreational activities; or places the child at significant risk of harm.
- not dither to report immediately any concerns, suspicions, incidents or allegations of actual or potential abuse or any breaches of this policy in accordance with appropriate procedures and to the Designated Officer, charged with receiving such complaints. This Code of Conduct has been developed to provide a set of standards for interaction between, among and with all children, youth and adults, visitors, staff and donors. The Code shall be printed out and signed by everyone and the signed documents shall be stored in a secure file in the care of the Child Safeguarding Officer.

The Code of Conduct is built upon the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures already in place in the organisation. It is meant to provide overall guidance in establishing common standards of conduct and respectful behavior within the organization, communities/ institutions.

The code of conduct is founded upon a deep respect for human dignity, high standards of integrity and honor in order to prevent any action which does not follow the standards that may cause harm to anyone including while carrying out the organizational activities.

## Undertaking:

As a member, staff, volunteers, visitor, donor, media person (Tick whichever applicable)

### I agree to:

- ✓ have full knowledge on child rights and be aware of my responsibilities;
- ✓ read, understand and follow the Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct of the organization;
- ✓ respect the rights of children and all people by acting fairly, honestly, and kindly as well as work in the best interest of children;
- ✓ ensure children's personal identification and respect one's dignity;
- ✓ balance love, care and concern in all the actions;
- ✓ be non-violent, non-abusive (verbal, physical sexual, mental), tolerant and respectful;
- ✓ be aware of own biases and do not impose it on others, especially on children;
- ✓ monitor and control self-emotion;
- ✓ not to encourage children to be dependent and attached to any one person;
- ✓ be present with children during the presence of the visitors;
- ✓ treat everyone with dignity and respect, following national law and local culture, traditions, customs and practices;
- ✓ listen respectfully to children, youth, staff members and others who I come in contact with;
- ✓ avoid embarrassing, laughing at, belittling or ridiculing children;
- ✓ not to force anyone to share personal experience of abuse or exploitation;
- ✓ not to label or identify any child or youth as victim of abuse or exploitation
- ✓ work actively to ensure the safety of all children, youth and staff members with whom I have contact with, according to the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures of the organisation;
- ✓ report any matter that is in violation of the organizational standards.
- ✓ follow reporting and response procedures with regard to any possible threats to the safety of children or youth, and document/ report suspicious observations or possible potential abuse of children.
- ✓ avoid exposing children and youth to any harm that may result from the publication of their images;
- ✓ not to be alone with a single child in any setting, unless in exceptional situations;
- ✓ not to show favouritism to one or more children;
- ✓ respect and maintain principles of confidentiality set out by the organisation and apply them in all areas of my work, contract;
- ✓ contact my immediate supervisor/person responsible for any clarification, explanation or other matters that are not properly resolved or where additional consultations and guidance is required.

**Declaration:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read the Code of Conduct. I understand it to be an essential component of the Child Safeguarding Policy of the Good Shepherd Sisters- CEIN Province, and that this policy was/is available for me to read in full.

I declare that I have had every opportunity to read and discuss both the Child Safeguarding Policy of the Organisation and the Code of Conduct. I have understood the child safeguarding policy and the Code of Conduct, and fully agree to comply with it

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

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE:

Complete this form listing your concerns as soon as possible after the abuse is disclosed and the appropriate actions have taken place to ensure the immediate safety of the child. Please complete this form including as much information you know, immediately after the discussion or incident, without any further investigation.

### Step-1- Your Details

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

Phone number : \_\_\_\_\_

Email address : \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address : \_\_\_\_\_

Date of concern or incident : \_\_\_\_\_

### Step-2: Who are you concerned about.

(Fill in as much as you know without asking more questions from the child victim when you have a concern about)

#### Details about the child

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Child's place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (If available) \_\_\_\_\_ Present Location \_\_\_\_\_

Place where the child abuse incident or concern took place \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 3- Describe your concerns

What are you concerned about? Write brief factual description on what happened (Either what was said, reported or seen, including injuries or bad use of language) or any specific information that supported your decision to complete this reporting form.

Date Concern was received \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Your Concern

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Details of the Person against whom the allegation is made:**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to the child \_\_\_\_\_  
Position held at the Province Unit/ Partner organisation. \_\_\_\_\_  
Has the person received a child safeguarding induction training? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Details about witnesses if any or third party other than the child**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email ID \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Immediate Action Taken:**

Have you reported the incident to:

- The local Authority      Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- The Unit Leader          Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- The Child Safeguarding Focal Point      Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- The Province Child Safeguarding Committee      Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Report \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Report \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the Person receiving Report: \_\_\_\_\_ Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Person receiving Report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# 4. CHILD FRIENDLY VERSION OF THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY



CONGREGATION OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

CEIN PROVINCE, NAGPUR

We ensure that "NO HARM" is done to any child. A "CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT" is created in all our work, programmes, institutions and communities.



## OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

### WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE ?



Scolding child with Abusive words



Unnecessarily leaving a child



Exposing child to pornographic material or act



Touching child when the child doesn't want to be touched



Forcing child to touch you



Breaking down the self confidence of a child



Hitting or hitting a child often to relieve your frustration



Mistreating a child



Not Caring for child Clothes cleanliness food



Leaving child alone online



Using child as servant



Not listening to child



Neglecting emotional needs of child



Hitting and ridiculing a child at school



Neglecting Medical needs of child



Neglecting Educational needs of child



Leaving a child without supervision



Our Commitment to children:  
**"All children are equal.  
 Zero Tolerance to discrimination  
 based on caste, creed, colour or  
 gender"**

If anyone treats you **not equal** please raise your concern to the person.

**You are a child till the age of 18**

The Good Shepherd Sisters consider every child, whether boy or girl under the age of 18 as **a child who needs protection & care.**



- Nobody should **HURT** you
- Nobody should do any **HARM** to you
- Nobody should **RIDICULE** You
- Nobody should **NEGLECT** you
- Nobody should **BULLY** you
- Nobody should use **ABUSIVE LANGUAGE** to you
- Nobody should engage you in **CHILD LABOUR**
- Nobody should deny you the right to:  
**EDUCATION, RECREATION, GOOD ENVIRONMENT,  
 SAFE WATER & FOOD, LOVE & CARE,  
 SPEAK, PLAY & GROW**  
 in freedom.

**If you realise any body  
 doing this to you  
 or any other child.....**

**Inform  
 Immediately**

Focal Link:  
 Mobile: +91  
 Province Focal Point: Sr. Precilla Naronha  
 Mobile : +91 9516055407

## Sisters of the Good Shepherd

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