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The points of this policy document mentioned below has been approved by Executive committee Governing body of Northeast centre for Equity Action on Integrated Development – NEAID as a part of annual revision of organizations internal policies on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

## **NEAID's CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR STAFF, FELLOWS AND VOLUNTEERS:**

### **Introduction:**

As per Indian Law, child protection involves keeping children safe from the risk of harm caused by neglect or abuse (including mental, physical or sexual abuse). It aims to reduce children's vulnerability by providing them with the necessary care, protection and support required for them to survive, develop and thrive. Child protection is integrally linked to the rights of a child. All children, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse, regardless of class, caste, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

Research has demonstrated that abuse has serious long-term effects on children and can severely impede social and cognitive development. India is facing a crisis, with some estimates suggesting that over two thirds of India's children fall victim to physical abuse alone. NEAID has a responsibility to create awareness about this problem and support Fellows/staff in tackling its causes. NEAID encourages Fellows and Staffs to understand the effects of child abuse and will support them in becoming leaders who role model safe, appropriate and positive interactions with children at all times that advocate the protection of all children.

All staff and Fellows have a professional duty to ensure the safety and protection of all children who come into contact with NEAID.

The following groups have specific responsibilities as follows:

### **Human Resources and Admin –**

- Are the custodian of the policy and guardian of the processes to ensure all staff and Fellows are aware, informed and supported in understanding and meeting the expectations laid out in this document.
- Are responsible for ensuring that all new staff, Fellows and volunteers understand the policy through their induction.
- Ensure the teams sustain awareness of the policy and methods to increase the safety of children in the care of NEAID.
- Coordinate the investigation of any breaches of the policy in a timely, fair and accurate manner in accordance with other conduct related Fellow and staff policies.

### **All staff and Fellows -**

- Have a responsibility to be fully aware and informed of this policy handbook and adhere to it at all times even if other teachers or parents are not aligned with this policy.
- Have a duty of care to report any incidents that arise relating to child safety and ensure they are documented and/or appropriately investigated. Failing to report this will be considered as a gross misconduct.



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## Volunteers -

- Must undergo their induction training and should not be left alone unattended with children for any length of time. City Human Resources will make sure that all volunteers are inducted on the Child protection Policy. For the annual revision on the Child Protection Policy, NEAID is connected to organizations with expertise in the relevant field viz ChildAid Network, TFIx among others.
- Manager of Social Work and Communities/ Program Manager will be responsible for raising awareness of the key issues surrounding child and Fellow safety. However, the manager will not be responsible for investigating any breaches of the policy.

## 2. Preventive Measures:

- NEAID shall ensure that staff/Fellows are aware of this policy and have access to it.
- NEAID will do background and reference checks on Fellow and staff suitability to work with children.
- Through awareness and training, staff/Fellows will be educated about the different risks to children.
- Staff/Fellows shall raise awareness about children's rights in their classrooms, with their students and within their schools and communities.
- NEAID will encourage a workplace of transparency, openness and accountability, where children, staff and Fellows know about children's rights and both challenge and report to Human Resources any breaches to child protection.

## 3. Responsibilities:

- To ensure the Safety and Protection for all children in our classrooms, NEAID may:
  - a. Equip and train staff to informally check with students about their perceived and actual comfort levels in the classroom.
  - b. Administer a bi-annual student survey to assess the culture in the classrooms.
  - c. Require all Fellows and staff, at the start of the school year, to commit to the standards and expectations set out in this policy and the Code of Conduct below.
  - d. In case of any Violation, NEAID will report to the District Child Welfare Committee constituted by the Government to handle the cases related to Child Rights.
  - e. Within the Organization, the cases of violation will be reported to the notified person as per the details given below:
    1. **Ms. Mayuri Borkakoti, currently a board member of NEAID and an HR professional with 12+ years of experience in Human Resource Management and Training.**  
(email Ph -+91- 8876746515; email - mayuribk@yahoo.com )
    2. **Mr. Meraj Ahmed ( Co-Founder, NEAID)**  
(Ph - 9864748194; email - [meraj@neaid.org](mailto:meraj@neaid.org))

## 4. NEAID Child Protection Code of Conduct:

- No Fellow/staff/employee shall ever:
  - a. Hit or otherwise physically abuse a child.
  - b. Develop relationships with children, which could in any way, be deemed exploitative or abusive.
  - c. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.



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- d. Act in any way that intends to embarrass, shame, humiliate, or degrade a child.
  - e. Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
  - f. Discriminate against a child on the basis of race, economic status, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, political persuasion or any other status.
  - g. Behave or suggest physically or otherwise in a manner, which is inappropriate or sexually provocative or may be considered to be sexual abuse.
  - h. Have a child/children with whom such Fellow/staff/employee is working to stay at their home unsupervised during any time of the day, for any length of time with or without knowledge of the parents/caretakers/ guardians of such child.
  - i. Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom such Fellow/staff/employee is working.
  - j. Kiss, hug, fondle, rub, or touch a child in any way that may be considered inappropriate or culturally insensitive, and which may or may not be construed as sexual abuse.
  - k. Demonstrate any lessons by physically touching a child, that maybe considered inappropriate or culturally insensitive and which may or may not be construed as sexual abuse.
  - l. Do things or provide unsolicited assistance to a child to do things of a personal nature that a child could do for him/herself (including dressing, bathing, and grooming).
  - m. Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other.
  - n. Ignore or not take any action where (i) inappropriate actions are inflicted by children on other children in person and/or (ii) offensive material (including violence/abuse/pornography) in any form of media (including in any magazines/newspapers/personal computers) is found in possession of any staff/Fellows or in use by NEAID.
  - o. Plan any school trips without taking the time to consider and document the potential sample risk assessment form to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.
  - p. Promise to keep secrets that may harm the child.
- The use of cameras, media and the internet:
- a. Fellows/Staffs should use their discretion before they take photographs or videos of children in their classrooms taking necessary permissions where relevant, particularly if they intend to share or distribute images publicly.
  - b. To minimise the risk of children accessing inappropriate or harmful content or being exposed to strangers online. Fellows/staffs should not provide children unsupervised access to the internet during or after school.
- In general, it shall be considered inappropriate to:
- a. Spend excessive time alone with any child/children outside of school.
  - b. Take any child/children to your own or other people's homes or any other place without supervision, especially where the children will be alone with Fellow/staff/volunteer/ employee without the prior written consent of the parents. This includes extra classes.
  - c. This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list and may be updated and revised from time to time by NEAID.
- This section is to guide the next steps if you witness the following situations. What to do if ;
- a. You breach the policy- Inform your Program Manager immediately in the spirit of integrity. Your Program Manager will work closely with you to investigate and understand the situation and obtain access to relevant advice from the Senior Program Manager and



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Human Resources on potential actions and appropriate support.

b. You witness a breach of the policy by another Fellow or staff member of NEAID- Inform your Program Manager immediately about this. Your Program Manager will inform the Senior Program Manager/Founders/ Appropriate Authorities so that the incident can be investigated. Confidentiality is paramount to conducting a fair investigation at this stage. Above all the designated personnel with the final authority to initiate necessary actions and recommendations will be the board member designated as the key person in regards to NEAID's Child Protection Policy for Staff, Fellows and Volunteers for reporting.

c. You witness breach of the rights of a child by another child in your care- Inform your Program Manager immediately. Your Program Manager will inform the Senior Program Manager, Human Resources and work with you to investigate and understand the mechanisms of support that are available and are appropriate for the children in your community.

d. You witness a breach of the rights of a child by a child that is not in your direct care- Inform your Program Manager immediately. Your Program Manager will inform the Senior Program Manager and work with you to investigate and understand the mechanisms of support that are available and are appropriate.

e. You witness a breach by an adult who is not a Fellow or employee of NEAID- Inform your Program Manager immediately. Your Program Manager will inform the school management and work with you to investigate and understand the mechanisms of support that are available and are appropriate.

In all of the above situations, the underlying principle for all of the steps is to minimize risk to children and ensure the safety of our people. The policy will be reviewed every-year to incorporate any changes as per Government directives.