



CRT-Child Rights Trust

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Child Protection Policy/Child Safeguarding Policy

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Child Protection Policy/Child Safeguarding Policy

1. **Introduction:** Child Rights Trust, registered non-profit organisation is committed to the Rights of children and is a resource centre on child rights issues. The Trust reaches out to children, Government, NGOs, media, academic institutions, people's representatives and international organizations in India since inception in 2002 through training, consultations, research, advocacy, lobbying, publications, IEC and direct interventions on cases of child rights violation. Although the Trust is located in Bengaluru, the scope of operation of the organisation is extended throughout the State and national level.
2. **Vision of CRT:** Every Right to Every Child

3. **Mission of CRT** : To endeavor to protect and promote all the inherent and indivisible rights of children whoever and wherever they are. To achieve this have few aims of the organization such as; to achieve and to consolidate the rightful position of children in general to the benefits and services to which they are entitled as children, and to a healthy and safe environment which is their due as human beings, to endeavor to protect, maintain and develop inherent rights of every child to peaceful existence and quality of life to which they are entitled and etc.

4. **Summary of the Child Protection Policy:**

4.1 In keeping with the spirit of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 and CRT's commitment to protection of children the organisation has formulated its Child Protection Policy (CRT's CPP) as on 2008-09. The Child Protection Policy comprises the vision, mission, aims, **applicability and** scope of the policy and measures to prevent any form of violation and response in the event of any such. As per standard guidelines this policy also adheres to prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

4.2 The CRT CPP also delineates commitment to Protect Child Rights, definition of a child, definition of child abuse, CPP's framework, child abuse and areas where children need protection, procedure for making complaints, duties of the organisation and duties of the employees.

5. **Formation of Child Protection Committee:** CRT to ensure the implementation of the CPP and its monitoring and take necessary action if any situation arises to protect the interests of children by forming a Child Protection Committee and provide necessary funds to maintain the committee, provide necessary support to the committee whenever necessary to conduct meetings and inquiries and also to provide education to the CRT team on CPP.

5.1 **The 3 Member Committee comprises of:**

1. A senior most woman staff of the Organization
2. An external expert in the field of child rights.
3. A senior male staff of the organization

6. **CRT Commitment to Protect Child Rights:**

6.1 The motto of CRT is 'Every Right for Every Child'. To achieve these the organisation adheres primarily to the Constitution of India 1950; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989; The National Policy for Children 2013.

6.2 CRT is committed to and upholds the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, other UN/International Conventions and Protocols related to protection of children, and within India all legislative provisions for protection of children, both state and central.

7. **The Applicability of the CPP:**

7.1 CRT presently has 19 persons on its staff role (2022). This may vary as and when there is new recruitment and turnovers in the organisation.

7.2 CRT also has consultants, interns, volunteers and partner NGOs who also engage with children, either directly or indirectly.

7.3 This CPP of CRT is applicable to Board of trustees, staff (full time and part time), Consultant, interns, volunteers, visitors, NGO partners, donors/patrons whether they are interacting directly or indirectly with children.

7.4 **Direct “Persons in direct contact with children”:** Persons who are in the physical presence of a child or children as part of their professional /honorary/volunteering services, be it regular/occasional/temporary/long term.

7.5 **Indirect “Persons in indirect contact with children”:** Persons whose work does not require them to be in the physical presence of a child as part of their professional/honorary/volunteering services, be it regular/ occasional/temporary/long term, but encompasses access to information about the child such as personal details and other data including photographs, medical records, case files etc.

8. Definitions

8.1 Child: For the purposes of this CPP, a “child” is defined as anyone **under the age of 18**, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (2015) and the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights 2005 and the National Policy for Children 2013.

8.2 Child Abuse: Any physical, sexual, or emotional ill-treatment or neglect of a child or negligent treatment, specially by those responsible for its welfare 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 is considered as Child Abuse.

8.3 Physical Abuse and Harm: An act or behavior, often intentional, that hurts, causes grievous injury, pain or trauma to the child. Most often this is physical and sometimes could also be self-inflicted. Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent injury, or suffering to a child including deliberate or non-accidental hitting, beating, shaking, throwing, burning, drowning, suffocating or poisoning, cutting etc.

8.4 Emotional abuse : Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioral development of a child caused by persistent and severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless, constantly blaming or putting down a child; excessive yelling, shaming, unloved or inadequate and cause children to feel frightened, and in danger It also includes deprivation of basic needs like food, sleep, rest.

8.5 Sexual abuse : Child sexual abuse or child molestation is a form of child abuse in which an adult or older adolescent uses a child for sexual stimulation. Forms of child sexual abuse include asking or pressuring a child to engage in sexual activities (regardless of the outcome), indecent exposure (of the genitals, female nipples, etc.) to a child with intent to gratify their own sexual desires or to intimidate or groom the child, physical sexual contact with a child. In addition, exploitation of a child for pornographic purposes, making a child available to others as a child prostitute, and stimulating a child with inappropriate solicitation, exhibitionism, and erotic material are also forms of sexual abuse.

8.6 Neglect : a pattern of failure to provide for the child's physical needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, and medical care; a pattern of failure to provide for the child's emotional needs, such as affection, attention, and supervision and the persistent or severe neglect of a child, or failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including severe weather conditions and starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health including non-organic failure to thrive.

8.7 "Exploitation": Any willful or coerced act or behaviour of an adult or care provider with children, for economic gain or not, that places them in a difficult, harmful, dangerous situation or impedes their overall development. For ex. beggary, child marriage, forced labour, trafficking for various purposes

8.8 Definition of External Expert : A person working in the field of child rights with sensitivity, commitment to upholding child rights and with considerable expertise in handling cases with respect to child abuse, child protection and counseling of abused children or children in need of care and protection. Legal background will be an added value. An external expert will be selected from a panel of names to be part of the team as per the policy.

9 CPP's framework :

9.1 The Child Protection Policies framework is developed to adhere to the following while interacting with children, their parents, teachers, caretakers, and others in our research, training, workshops, seminars, consultations, campaigns, etc., and also in the theories, programmes and new concepts the organisation develops.

9.2 No exploitation or abuse of any child – physical, psychological, verbal, sexual, financial, moral or any other kind

9.3 Child's dignity, privacy, freedom of thought and religious beliefs will be respected

9.4 No child discrimination on the basis of sex, caste, creed, religion, colour, ethnicity, language, geography (urban/rural/tribal background), status or occupation or political stands of the parents, abilities or disabilities, belonging to excluded communities etc.

9.5 All the actions of the organisation aims for care, protection, treatment, rehabilitation, restoration and upholding the rights of the children

10 Interface with children:

10.1 CRT is a resource, advocacy and lobbying agency and its interface with children is largely during consultations, research, campaigns and congregation of children for specific objectives either at Bangalore (the head quarter of CRT or in locations of partnering organizations or groups). The organisation is largely involved in training personnel who in turn work with children having close contact in various circumstances and situations. CRT also engages in direct interventions at field level, both rural and urban, based on Projects being taken up. This puts CRT at a very responsible position to equip personnel of various groups to develop a child protection perspective.

10.2 CRT is also the Nodal agency for ChildLine Bengaluru Urban and hence constantly relates to children in distress or emergency situations or as required.

11. Code of Conduct /values and behavior:

11.1 The Trust holds the right to terminate contract with its staff if they are found to be violating any child rights, sexual harassment, and are going against Aim and objectives of the Trust.

11.2 The Staff members are obliged to play the role of ‘whistleblowers’ in case of any violation of rules, regulations, decorum or policies of the organization or any violation of child rights by any stakeholder of the Trust and report to the Trust immediately. All precautionary measures will be taken to protect the identity of the whistleblowers.

11.3 The trustees and employees are expected to maintain decorum both during office hours and outside while dealing with staff members, children, visitors and the public. So **CPP prohibits the following:**

- a) All forms of physical, emotional, psychological, discriminatory, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of children and if this happens then it constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment
- b) Engaging in sexual behavior or in sexual activity with children regardless of the age of majority or age of consent as per the Indian Penal legislation
- c) Physically, sexual abusing or exploiting, discriminating against caste, language, religion, etc., regardless of the sex, age, origin of the children will be reported to the police under appropriate sections of the IPC and an FIR will be compulsorily filed.
- d) Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading, ridiculing or exploitative behavior
- e) Sexual relationships between project workers and beneficiaries/participants in programmes (considered as exploitation) since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the integrity of work to help vulnerable and excluded children

The following are musts to all persons abiding to this CRT CPP

1. Respect and treat all children with dignity in professional and personal interactions.
2. Avoid taking photographs or video footage of children without authorization from the Director/Governing Board and the partner organisation (whenever applicable). Videos and photographs will not be used for any purposes outside CRT without prior permission. Permission of parents/guardians and children will also be obtained.
3. Never be alone in a private place with children, who are not their offspring when there are no other responsible adults. This is especially applicable to male members when interacting with girl children,
4. Follow the ‘Two-Adult Norm’ wherever possible and applicable. According to this norm, two or more adults, one of whom should be a woman as far as possible, must be present at all times to supervise all activities of children/adolescents conducted by CRT. If this is not possible, CRT staff is responsible to ensure alternate arrangements such as being accompanied by community members during such interactions with children.
5. Will not resort to any form of disciplining of children that is violent, abusive or harmful to them.
6. Maintain confidentiality of any case or incident or event pertaining to a child or children and avoid divulging any information to the media without CRT permission.

7. Avoid situations that could place the person in a vulnerable or compromising position such as when a child tries to get extra attention owing to his/her own trauma, abuse or experience. The onus is on the adult to handle the situation in a mature and balanced manner.
8. Dress appropriately and in a culturally sensitive manner when visiting or working with children, families and communities.
9. Maintain exemplary behavior/character in presence of children, through dignified language, action and manner of relating to children.
10. Never get any work or small tasks done by children such as fetching water, washing vessels, bringing tea/snacks, carrying adults' bags etc.
11. Avoid personal attachment with any child while mentoring, supervising or relating to him/her.
12. Avoid dealing with children who require special attention such as victims of sexual abuse, children trafficked etc. where special skill and expertise are required. Refer such children to professionals or experts.
13. All correspondences with children will use child-friendly language and content.
14. Inform the appropriate authorities/ Board Member immediately of any suspected misconduct with children. Such information would be treated as confidential and disclosed only to those concerned.
15. A project worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a colleague, whether in the same organisation or not, she/he must report such concerns in accordance with the system and procedures in place

12. Procedure for making complaints: The Trust has a zero tolerance to any form of abuse, violence or exploitation of any child. CRT, under this CPP has set up a three member committee to receive, inquire/investigate, review and recommend actions to be taken against the perpetrator or any person defined in the applicability section violating the Policy. Any child abuse or violation of child rights will be informed to the local police and an FIR will be filed by the head of the institution or the designated person by the organisation under appropriate section of IPC, JJ Act, Constitution and other Acts. The affected child will be referred to CWC of the appropriate district and the family support (if the family is looking after the child) or alternative support will be provided with utmost care.

12.1 Responses to Complaints of Offences by CRT Staff

1. CRT Trust members, staff, volunteers and visitors will be encouraged to openly discuss the potential of abuse within the organization
2. Where a complaint has been made of child abuse against any of the CRT committee members, staff, volunteers or visitors, CRT will immediately take appropriate action to deal with the situation.
3. CRT will not dismiss a child's accusation of abuse without appropriate investigation, no matter who the alleged perpetrator is.
4. The Executive director will be informed by the Board of Trustees of the complaint. If the chairperson is the subject of the complaint/allegation, then the other members of the Board of Trustees will be informed.
5. In the event of a complaint/allegation of child sexual abuse, CRT will follow the legal procedures, and not handle the issue internally. If a foreign national is involved, the relevant embassy will be informed.

6. All the details of the complaint will be recorded. The complaint will be kept confidential. Any investigations will take place under external advice and counsel.
7. The child and alleged perpetrator will be treated with respect throughout the review process and there will be fair hearing for both parties concerned.
8. CRT will confer with other organizations in a case where the child involved requires extra protection such as temporary shelter, counseling etc.
9. CRT will designate someone to deal with the media and the police if necessary. Consideration will be made beforehand by the Committee about how the police and media will be informed/involved.

12.2 Responses to Complaints of Offences by a Non-CRT Person

1. In order to facilitate the reporting, investigation and follow up of cases, CRT will set up formal support systems with concerned professionals and authority. That is, CRT will coordinate with local police, government or non-government social services, doctors, lawyers, social workers and teachers.
2. Whenever a CRT staff member has a reasonable cause to believe that a child is being abused, he/she must report it immediately to the Child Protection Committee (CPC). CRT will report it immediately to local authorities.

12.3 Procedure for Action, reporting and responding:

12.3.1 It is mandatory for any person employed in the organisation or a visitor or a consultant or a intern or a volunteer directly or indirectly contact with children to report any case or incident of child abuse by any person within the organisation structure and report it to the Line Manager or the Child Protection Committee. The complaints of abuse can be given to the Executive Director and in his/her absence or unavailability to the Directors either in written form or oral form. All the complaints either oral or written/email should be recorded immediately and brought to the notice of the three member committee. The Committee will take over the case and initiate the procedures for enquiry.

12.3.2 It is the organisation's duty to respond to any complaint of child abuse received against any person working/associated with the organisation. On receiving the complaint the organisation would conduct a preliminary enquiry and keep the employee (on whom the complaint has been registered) under immediate suspension pending detailed enquiry. The concerned committee will be convened at the earliest within five days from the day of receiving the complaint. The Committee will be empowered to conduct its enquiry by visiting the place of abuse/visit the abused person and collect evidence/statement and prepare a detailed report. A notice will be served to the suspected abuser and to appear before the Committee to give an explanation. If the offence is a grievous one a police complaint will be given at the earliest as per the suggestion of the Committee which can be convened within twenty-four hours after the incident of abuse has surfaced/complaint received.

12.3.3 Steps or procedures

1. Confidential complaint in the prescribed format/or in a free form (written or email) or orally to the head of the organization/Executive Director in his or her absence to the Associate Directors. (written document with signature is important)
2. If the higher authorities of the organization are involved in child abuse, the complaint can be communicated /given to the Trustees of the organization. In case the complainant feels that the case involves serious concern then they can go ahead and file a police complaint or approach CWC or SCPCR before approaching the organization Committee on child abuse.
3. The Executive Director reports the matter to the Child Protection Committee
4. Complainant and Respondent: The person against whom a complaint is made would be suspended till the finalization of the CPC enquiry proceedings.
5. The CPC would hold an enquiry/investigation and verify facts and the content of the complaint. Statements of the witnesses and the accused person would be recorded. Thereafter a report would be prepared and shared with the head of the organization, CPC members, complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made. The child would not be called for the enquiry proceedings and for sharing the final decision taken on the case to protect the child from being re-traumatized. The same can be shared with the guardian or parent of the child. (In case the head of the department is the violator the Trust will appoint a person or group of persons to enquire about the complaint and recommend actions to be taken).
6. The various options that can be exercised would be dependent on the nature of the complaint and the findings. They are as follows: Conciliation (in cases of very petty mistake or first time offence), stop increment or promotions for a period of say one to three years, Transfer, Termination and Criminal proceedings under the Indian Penal Code or any other relevant legislation.
7. In cases which are (prima facie) primarily an offence under the law then a complaint shall be made to the Police/relevant legal authority to initiate criminal proceedings.
8. Time frame for the inquiry and completion of the process – After received of the complaint the final report submission by the committee and also action taken by the management should be completed within two months of time
9. The relevant contact details and referrals as required for child protection services, local social services department, police, emergency medical help and help lines will also be readily available and easily accessible to the children. e.g. CHILDLINE 1098

13. Recruitment: The Trust holds the right to do adequate screening of new employees, consultants, interns or any person coming in contact with children either through the assistance of the organisation or with whom the organisation is working with.

14. Education and Awareness:

14.1 Education and awareness on child protection issues will be conducted and organised for all employees at a regular interval. Child Protection Policy (website) would be published, translated in the local language and shared with all employees. List of Committee Members and their contact details make it available in all CRT work sites.

14.2 A brief of the policy would be printed and affixed on the organisation notice board and/or in project partner organisation offices and/or in places where meetings with children are organised. The children would be provided with a child friendly version of the CPP with the contact details of the CPC members and other contact details of other agencies and Police.

14.3 All those who come under the Applicability of CRT CPP shall sign a declaration for adhering to the CPP at the time of employment/recruitment and at every renewal period. The Trust holds the right and responsibility to review and amend the CPP from time to time with the inputs of the team members/experts.

15. Training: The organisation would ensure that orientation on Child Protection Policy is given to all employees and staff-new or old. This process would also include training on values and behavior, code of conduct for all those in direct or indirect contact with children. Reorienting the existing staff and new recruits, consultants, etc., Will be done continuously.

16. Communication on children

16.1 Listening: Active listening to children and understanding their issues should be promoted to create an environment which would be conducive to the all round development of children.

17. Duties of the Employees

All employees including trustees, employees, staff, interns, volunteers, researchers, consultants, and advisers of an organisation are required to undergo the following:

- a) Provide satisfactory evidence of clearance in any past complaints of abuse of children
- b) Adhere to the requirement of police/private agency verification/background checking at the time of recruitment
- c) Acceptance and commitment for adherence to Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct/ Values and behaviour for working with children.
- d) Providing a signed declaration stating any criminal convictions, including spent convictions.
- e) Providing the name and contact information of two past professional references excluding family members.
- f) Reporting incidents of child abuse to the concerned Child Protection officer, Specialist or the CPC.

18. In case of false complaints.

If found the complaint was a false complaint, then appropriate action will be initiated at the discretion of the Management.

19. Key Attachments:

a. Contact of the committee: Name, Designation and contact number and email

1. Nagamani C.N. – 9513373169 . E mail – nagamanicn@gmail.com
2. Sathish Jayaram - 9008861067 Email- sathishj313@gmail.com
3. Mr.Lakshmi Prasanna, APSA -9945644820 Email-hklprasanna@gmail.com

b. Child Friendly version of the policy: yet to be developed.

c. Acts and Rules to be referred in the CPP implementation

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indian Penal Code 1860 2. Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 with amendments in 2015 3. Children Pledging of Labour Act 1933 4. Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act 1956 5. Young persons (Harmful Publication)Act 1956 6. Orphanages and other charitable Home (Supervision and Control) Act 1960 7. Registration of Births and Deaths Act 1969 8. Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976 9. Karnataka Devadasi (Prohibition and Dedication) Act 1982 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Integrated Education for Disabled Children 1987 11. Persons with Disability (Equal opportunities, Protection of right and full participation) Act 1995 12. Commissions for Protection of Child Rights 2005 13. Prohibition of Child Marriages Act 2006 with Karnataka amendment 2018 14. The Right of Children for Compulsory and Free Education Act 2009 15. Prohibition of Untouchability Act 16. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offence Act 2012 17. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of children Act 2015 18. National Policy for Children 2013 19. Karnataka State Policy for Children |
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Thanks to UNICEF, EDUCO, and ILP for guidelines and suggestions for the policy.

d. Complaint form

CPP Complaint Form

This is just an indicative form. You can use your own free form.

All information including the name of the complainant will be kept **confidential**. The content of the complaint, complainant and other information will be made known only to the CPP convener and the Committee for necessary action.

You can either give a printed complaint or a email complaint on the issue

1.	Name of the Complainant	:	
2.	Status with CRT	:	Employee / Consultant / Intern / Visitor / Client / other
3.	Designation if employee	:	
4.	Mobile number	:	
5.	Email id	:	

6.	The complaint (Kindly refer the incident clearly and also name of the person/persons and their designations on whom you are complaining)	:	
7.	Working relationship (s) with the accused	:	
8.	What kind of compensation you are expecting from the CPCommittee	:	
9.	Have you filed a police complaint? If so give details	:	
10.	Any other information you would like to give	:	
11.	Date	:	
12.	Place	:	
13.	Signature	:	

e. Declaration

I, Ms/Mr/Mrs. declare that:

I have read the ‘Child Protection Policy’ of Child Rights Trust (CRT) as mandated under the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and will abide by it. I will at all times treat all children and young persons I come in contact with at work and elsewhere with respect and dignity.

I have not been accused or convicted of any offence involving any form of abuse or exploitation or discrimination of children or young people.

I understand that CRT has a mandate to conduct my background verifications before or during my association with the organization.

I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse or exploitation of any child or children while engaged in the activities of Child Rights Trust the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities, and I will lend full cooperation to the process and abide by the decision taken by the Committee/Board of CRT.

I understand that during my course of work with CRT if I come across any child or children, within the organisational purview or outside being subjected to abuse or exploitation I shall immediately bring it to the notice of my supervising officer or senior staff or Board. I shall also not talk about the complaint to other colleagues, except the designated officer, or write about it in print, electronic or social media.

I also state that I will not take any pictures or videos of any child/children while on CRT work without the authorization of CRT or parents/guardians/school/college authorities or share any such pictures or videos on any form of print/electronic/social media.

I willingly attend all training, orientations and exposure programmes on child protection policy implementation to get clarity about my, co workers and organization’s role.

I also take the note of whistleblower in case I get to know any abuse of children either by my colleague or outsiders. I am assured of confidentiality clause.

Name:

Signature:

Designation & Project:

Duty Station:

Date:

Place:

Mob. No.

email id

Current Residential Address :

