



Trulyhelp Foundation

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY – TRULYHELP FOUNDATION

Policy statement: Trulyhelp foundation believes to make a world in which everyone can get the equal opportunity, healthcare and education which they need. We want to break the vicious cycle of society and work for the social developments of all groups (individuals, underprivileged children's and communities).

THF- TrulyHelp Foundation is committed towards accountability, innovation and collaboration, we believe in bringing change by empowering children and families so that they can help themselves. With regardless of all dimensions and layers of discrimination, are entitled to their rights as defined by the United Nations Convention of Child Rights (UNCRC) Charter and the Constitution of India, including an equal right to protection from all kinds of abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect.

TRULYHELP Child Protection Policy stands for its commitment and responsibilities towards safeguarding children and to protect them from all kinds of harm and abuse, keeping the best interest of the child in perspective. It also makes clear that any form of harm and abuse of children is unacceptable and non-negotiable to THF, and any violation of the policy, whether intentional or unintentional, will invite appropriate disciplinary action and judicial procedures as per this policy, other related policies of the organization and law of the land.

Section 1. Purpose Of The Policy

1. To promulgate and reinforce the organizations commitment for safeguarding children
2. To ensure that the safety, care, protection and welfare of the child are imperative to practice and adopt in whatever we do.
3. To provide a protection mechanism to all children covered through the development initiatives of TrulyHelp Foundation
4. To establish a standard code of conduct and standard procedures for all staff members and associates of THF to ensure that no harm or abuse is caused to any child.
5. To provide a mechanism to ensure all staff members of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION and associates are informed, empowered and self-equipped to ensure safety and protection of children

Section 2. KEY DEFINITIONS

- ❖ *Child: In the policy, the child is defined as a person up to the age of 18 years.*
- ❖ *Child Abuse: Child abuse is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill- treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any action that result in actual or potential harm to a child. Child abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development.*
- ❖ *Child Protection: Child protection is the protection of children from any violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. Within the ambit of this policy, it would mean the measures, activities and safeguards that TRULYHELP FOUNDATION would be taking to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm.*
- ❖ *Staff Member of THF: Staff member of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION would include all employees on the pay-roll, part time or contractual duty or deputation of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION whether within TRULY HELP FOUNDATION office premises or on field duty / project visit or elsewhere.*
- ❖ *Associate of TrulyHelp: This would include all consultants working with TRULYHELP FOUNDATION, all volunteers, interns, tele-callers, agency staff, contractors, vendors and donors visiting TRULYHELP FOUNDATION offices or work areas. This would also include all staff of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION project partners and all volunteers and interns who would work with children and /or have access to and are party to TRULYHELP FOUNDATION's program and child data.*

- ❖ *THF Visitors: This would include representatives of local governments, journalists, print and online media, agencies and contractors, donors and visitors who would come into direct contact with TRULYHELP FOUNDATION-supported children and / or have access to TRULYHELP FOUNDATION's child sensitive data. This would also include celebrities invited to TRULYHELP FOUNDATION events and program spaces or visiting project offices and areas and coming into direct contact with children.*
- ❖ *Board of Trustees: This would mean the members of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION's Board of Trustees.*
- ❖ *Designate Authority (DA): DA will be the technical focal point/s for this policy.*
- ❖ *Child Protection Task Force (CPTF): A committee formed by the management to implement the policy and provide support in the awareness and monitoring process of the policy.*
- ❖ *Informed Consent³: It is the decision, which must be written, dated and signed, to take part in any activity, taken freely after being duly informed of its nature, significance, implications and risks and appropriately documented, by any person capable of giving consent or, where the person is not capable of giving consent, by his or her legal representative; if the person concerned is unable to write, oral consent in the presence of at least one witness may be given in exceptional cases, as provided for in national legislation.*

Section 3. APPLICABILITY OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to:

- ❖ All staff members of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION, whether within TRULYHELP FOUNDATION office premises or on field duty / project visit or elsewhere
- ❖ All associates of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION within TRULY HELP FOUNDATION office premises or on field duty or at project partner offices and /or elsewhere
- ❖ All visitors to TRULYHELP FOUNDATION offices
- ❖ Board members

Section 4. CODE OF CONDUCT

This Policy is developed to ensure the highest standards of professional behavior and personal practice to ensure no harm occurs in any situation to children during their involvement in any activities or projects. As a condition for working with THF all staff, Management, Board members, Advisors, interns, consultants, partner counselors, volunteers, donors, visitors and all those acting on behalf of Truly Help Foundation are required to undergo the Code of Conduct listed below. Both acceptance and commitment to our Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct for working with children by signing a commitment to adhere to the Child Protection Policy principles and procedures is a prerequisite to engage with THF beneficiaries, primarily children. The following elucidates the code to be followed by each Person as listed above.

4.1. Code of Conduct for Employees

All the existing and potential employees:

- ❖ Will be communicated with clear job role descriptions during vacancy announcements that include a statement on the position or role and responsibilities to meet the requirements of Truly Help Foundation's child protection policy so that potential employees are well aware of the organization's expectation at the outset. All job posting will have the link to Truly Help Foundation CPP.
- ❖ Will need to give consent to Truly Help Foundation gaining information on the person's past behavior through cold checks in relation to their conduct with children as specified in the job application format to be filled before appearing for an interview.
- ❖ Will provide the name and contact information of two character references, preferably an employer/ supervisor from recent work places excluding family members, who have knowledge of the candidate's experience and suitability to work with children. The identity of the referees will be verified. The potential employees will undergo a reference check to find out any child abuse- related record (irrespective of whether it has been reported to the Police/ law enforcement agencies).
- ❖ Will undergo an in-depth interview/interaction to assess their aptitude, interest and sensitivity towards working with children and their previous work with children. All recruitment interviews would include a discussion on child safeguarding and protection, the candidate's understanding of this and Truly Help Foundation's commitment. For example the job interview would include specific questions on child protection issues to probe the applicant's attitude, experience and approach to working with children relevant to the post applied .

- ❖ Will sign a personal declaration stating any criminal convictions, including spent convictions. Staff in employment will also give declaration in case they are convicted during their tenure.
- ❖ Will read and sign the Child Protection Policy with complete commitment at the beginning of their engagement with TRULYHELP FOUNDATION. Adherence to TrulyHelp Foundation's Child Protection Policy is part of TrulyHelp Foundation employment contracts and service agreements.
- ❖ Will be observed during the induction or engagement process for their attitude and behavior towards children and feedback will be accordingly provided to the respective supervisor and Director/ CEO before the final appointment on the respective post.
- ❖ Will undergo internal and external training programmes and counseling services (if required) in order to enhance their capacities and demonstrate the best behavior in relation to children.
- ❖ Will exercise behavior protocols consistent with the Core Values of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION in their relationship with children, in the context of their language, actions, dress, and behavior.
- ❖ Will establish an atmosphere conducive for the development of children through their word, deed and demeanor. This includes listening to children and showing respect to them and their opinions.
- ❖ Will respect the local cultural and religious context and behave in appropriate manner with children in communities.
- ❖ Will not promise and/or give children and their families/ caretakers verbally/ non verbally any monetary or non-monetary favors without the knowledge and permission of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION management.
- ❖ Will not allow children (beneficiaries of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION) to visit or stay in their homes under any pretext.

- ❖ Will not employ children as domestic workers in their homes/ business. Will abide by the 'Child Labour Law" of India and ensure that all conditions in terms of age limit (over 14 years), working conditions, basic minimum facilities provided to the children are followed.
- ❖ Will not engage in any behavior with children that can be classified as sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. Will not act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse that includes intentionally humiliating, belittling, degrading, holding, kissing, cuddling, touching a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- ❖ Will not spend time alone with a child or children except where they are employed as counselors and/or facilitators of Personal Safety Education lesson plans and individual sessions.
- ❖ Will be responsible for the interaction between an adult and a child even when it is perceived that a child is acting in a challenging (not listening to the facilitator, creating disturbance in the class or session etc.) manner.
- ❖ Will not touch, look or talk about children's Private Body Parts or discuss about any sexual content to children or make them feel uncomfortable in any other way or show them any material of sexual nature except in cases of the health/ hygiene, Personal Safety Education Project and individual/counseling sessions and any other platform for involving children in the designing/ evaluation of Truly Help Foundation services which is being done for protection purposes.
- ❖ Will not develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- ❖ Will not condone, or participate in, behavior towards children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive or exposes the child to danger.

- ❖ Will not discriminate against, show different treatment, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others.
- ❖ Will take permission from children, their parents/ guardians and schools and/ from the participants of a workshop and training session before taking and using any photos and videos involving these beneficiaries.
- ❖ Will always accompany children in the Truly Help Foundation premises to the extent possible and will not leave them alone.
- ❖ Will accompany any adolescents volunteering in Truly Help Foundation premises to the extent possible.
- ❖ Will make children aware that they can report any violation by the staff if they have behaved inappropriately by calling the Truly Help Foundation Helpline number.
- ❖ Will not accept any gift from children or other beneficiaries of Truly Help Foundation. In case the unacceptance has the potential to be disrespectful to beneficiaries including children, employees can accept token of appreciation. However, this needs to be communicated to supervisors and all gifts need to be handed over. In case of cards in the staff's name, soft copies of all cards given by Truly Help Foundation stakeholders including children need to be submitted. The staff can keep hard copies. However, if the cards are in the name of Truly Help Foundation then they need to handover both the hard copies and soft copies.
- ❖ Will not take their relatives/friend/people unrelated to Truly Help Foundation to any project site.
- ❖ Will be empowered and aware to cull out any situation or behavior which may present risks for children and report it to the supervisor and take appropriate step.
- ❖ Will apply high standards of behavior towards children within both their professional and their private live; unlawful or other conduct by employees which jeopardizes reputation or position of Truly Help Foundation whether during or after business hours will not be permitted. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to: any unlawful activity related to sexual abuse; sexual harassment; physically/verbally abusive behavior; and public disorderly conduct.

4.2. Code of conduct for Consultants, Partner Counselors, Volunteers working directly with children

- ❖ The consultants, partner counselors, volunteers working directly with children:
- ❖ Will undergo a reference check to find out any child abuse-related record (irrespective of whether it has been reported to the Police/ law enforcement agencies).
- ❖ Will sign a personal declaration stating any criminal convictions, including spent convictions. Stakeholder will also give declaration in case they are convicted during their engagement with Truly Help Foundation.
- ❖ Will undergo an in-depth interview/interaction to assess their aptitude, interest and sensitivity towards working with children and their previous work with children.
- ❖ Will have to exercise behaviour protocols consistent with the Core Values of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION in any platform that they participating on behalf of Truly Help Foundation.
- ❖ Will read and abide by the Child Protection Policy with complete commitment at the beginning of their engagement with TRULY HELP FOUNDATION.
- ❖ Will undergo internal and external training programmes and counselling services (if required) in order to enhance their capacities and demonstrate the best behaviour in relation to children.
- ❖ Will be observed during their engagement process for their attitude and behaviour
- ❖ Will be open to Truly Help Foundation taking feedback from children on their behaviours, attitudes towards children and other beneficiaries.
- ❖ Will respect the local cultural and religious context and behave in inappropriate manner with children in Truly Help Foundation premise or any other space organized and participated by Truly Help Foundation.
- ❖ Will exercise behaviour protocols consistent with the Core Values of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION in their relationship with children, in the context of their language, actions, dress, and behaviour.

- ❖ Will establish an atmosphere conducive for the development of children through their word, deed and demeanor. This includes listening to children and showing respect to them and their opinions.
- ❖ Will not take any of their family or friends to sites of TrulyHelp Foundation's fieldwork.
- ❖ Will not allow children (beneficiaries of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION) to visit or stay in their homes under any pretext.
- ❖ Will not engage in any behaviour with children that can be classified as sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. Will not act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse that includes intentionally humiliating, belittling, degrading, holding, kissing, cuddling, touching a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- ❖ Will not touch, look or talk about children's Private Body Parts or discuss about sexual content to children or make them feel uncomfortable in any other way or show them any material of sexual nature except in cases of the health/hygiene, Personal Safety Education Project and individual/counselling sessions and any other platform for involving children in the designing/ evaluation of Truly Help Foundation services which is being done for protection purposes.
- ❖ Will not spend time alone with a child or children without any professional reason to do so - Such as (i) where they are professionally recognized trained counselors, (ii) in case of lesson plans and individual sessions for Personal Safety Education Programme.
- ❖ Will be responsible for the interaction between an adult and a child even when it is perceived that a child is acting in a challenging (not listening to the facilitator, creating disturbance in the class or session etc.) manner.
- ❖ Will not develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.

- ❖ Will not condone, or participate in, behaviour towards children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive or exposes the child to danger.
- ❖ Will not discriminate against, show different treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- ❖ Will take permission from children, their parents/ guardians and schools and/ from the participants of a workshop and training session before taking and using any photos and videos involving these beneficiaries.
- ❖ Will make children aware that they can report any violation by the staff if they have behaved inappropriately by calling the Truly Help Foundation Helpline number.
- ❖ Will be empowered and aware to cull out any situation or behaviour which may present risks for children and appropriately bring it to the attention of the supervisor.

4.3 Code of conduct for donors and visitors:

- ❖ All existing and new donors and visitors:
- ❖ Will inform in advance about their visits and any organizational/ partner visits will be conducted only once consent from appropriate authorities of the beneficiaries has been taken. TRULY HELP FOUNDATION staff member(s) will accompany the donors/ visitors for the visit.
- ❖ Will have to exercise behaviour protocols consistent with the Core Values of TRULY HELP FOUNDATION in their relationship with children, in the context of their language, actions, dress, and behaviour.
- ❖ Will have to establish an atmosphere conducive for the development of children through their word, deed and demeanor while observing the Personal Safety Lesson plans.
- ❖ Will respect the local cultural and/ religious context and behave in appropriate manner with children in communities.

- ❖ Will not interact with children in groups or individually even for professional reasons such as funder evaluation. Under interaction for evaluation purpose will be restricted to adult beneficiaries. Any third-party evaluator will have access to children for evaluation purposes only when it is commissioned by Truly Help Foundation and under strict supervision of Truly Help Foundation management.
- ❖ Will not promise and/ give children and their families/ caretakers verbally/ non verbally for any monetary or non-monetary favours without the knowledge and permission of Truly Help Foundation management.
- ❖ Will not engage in any behaviour with children that can be classified as sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. Will not act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse that includes intentionally humiliating, belittling, degrading, holding, kissing, cuddling, touching a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- ❖ Will not take any photos and videos of children and other beneficiaries without the permission of the Truly Help Foundation management and in the absence of a Truly Help Foundation employee.
- ❖ Will not have any access to data, take and/ use any data/ photographs/ videos, testimonials of children, family members, caretakers, institutional staff etc. in their internal and/ knowledge
- ❖ Will not use any images and/ content available on the Truly Help Foundation website without informing the Truly Help Foundation management and taking adequate permissions for the utility of the same in their internal and external communication.

Section 3. SECURITY BREACHES

TRULY HELP FOUNDATION places the security and safety of all staff and those with whom we work as a top priority and will strive to do all that it reasonably can to ensure that staff are secure as they go about their work. Security is an individual as well as an organisational responsibility, therefore TRULYHELPFOUNDATION staff shall:

- ❖ Adhere to the TRULYHELP FOUNDATION security principles and guidelines or her/his own organizational security policy and procedures
- ❖ Not use or possess weapons or ammunition of any kind while on duty
- ❖ Not drive a vehicle while on duty under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance and comply with the laws of the land.
- ❖ Not report to duty in work under the influence of alcohol.

SECTION 4. COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY

Violation of this Code of Conduct will not be tolerated and may, in accordance with relevant legislation, lead to internal disciplinary actions, dismissal or even criminal prosecution. TRULYHELP FOUNDATION has a responsibility to handle and respond to any allegations of misconduct it receives from their stakeholders about their employees in line with their organisational policies and related disciplinary measures. Management of TRULYHELP FOUNDATION and that of the partner organisations should establish proper systems for investigating, recording and dealing with misconduct.

A Redressal mechanism should be in place where complaints are investigated promptly, while maintaining discretion and confidentiality and protecting the rights of all individuals involved. Breaches of the Code of Conduct should be reported immediately to senior management of TRULY HELP FOUNDATION under complaints handling procedures.

Those who wish to lodge a complaint about an alleged breach of the Code by a TRULY HELP FOUNDATION staff should lodge their complaint to her/his line manager (or designated complaints focal point) as soon as possible after s/he becomes aware of the concern. Any TRULY HELP FOUNDATION staff person purposely making false accusations on any action by another TRULY HELP FOUNDATION staff which is in breach of the Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the employer.

Section 5. AUTHORIZATION & ADMINISTRATION

This policy will be administered by the HR function. Any questions regarding this policy should be referred to the human resources Department and DA/DAs (Child Protection Focal Point). This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. However, if TRULYHELP FOUNDATION Leadership feels or meets with any urgent requirement, then a review may be taken up within this period as well.