



Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction

Centre for Youth Development and Activities (CYDA) is a voluntary organization that works with Youth (age group of 13-29 yrs.) to provide them a space to grow as responsible, healthy, sensitive, productive, and independent adults. CYDA believes in building capacities of young people by developing a forum of young people that is centered around the values of gender equity, respect diversity, plurality, integrity, and democracy. It mobilizes youth to raise voice against injustice and human rights violations in society.

The growing incidences of child abuse within the safe environment of homes, school, and in openspaces such as public transport, religious places, public spaces, and social gatherings, in general, have urged CYDA to develop Child Protection Policy for their employees and its associates. CYDA's employees work with Youth on different forums, communicate with them at different levels where the possibilities to encounter their vulnerabilities is unrestrained. Therefore, it was felt essential to draft the Child Protection Policy, to understand Child rights, as well as respect the mental and physical welfare of a child. Children means anyone between the age of 0 to 18 yearsof age.

CYDA aims:

CYDA aims to create a safe, supportive, and responsive society that ratifies the protection rights and dignity of a child, as defined by the law. This is to be achieved by establishing a dialogue with youth, on effective prevention and early intervention measures, strengthening of support systems, and building partnerships with like-minded organizations and people. This is done by engaging with youth who could easily reach-out to children to protect and aide them.

1. Behavioral PROTOCOLS:

- 1.1. CYDA expects all- its staff, volunteers, patrons, and visitors to respect and treat children with dignity whether they are associated with the work of CYDA or they are associated or related to them in their personal lives.

- 1.2. CYDA's staff, volunteers, and visitors will ensure that there is no hostile environment towards children in its work areas and they are treated with care and kindness.
- 1.3. CYDA's staff, volunteers, and visitors are expected to be accompanied either by parents, guardians or concerned authorities such as school staff, member of the organization, community members, etc., while interacting with children in work space or in any sort of private place.
- 1.4. Volunteers and external visitors will require permission from authorized persons of CYDA to take photographs or video footage of children. It is advisable to take verbal/written consent of the children, before taking the pictures. As far as possible share the pictures with them.
- 1.5. Strict regulations will be applied to the nature of photographs taken. Prior permission of CYDA will be required to publish/use these photographs/videos for any purpose.

- 1.6. CYDA's staff, volunteers, and visitors will treat the children with special needs with respect and dignity. At work they will assist and support the physically and mentally challenged child and if required will direct their parents/guardians to consult professional expertise after consulting the senior CYDA's officials.
- 1.7. Due to their vulnerabilities special attention needs to be provided to the physically and mentally challenged children. They become easy victims of sexual abuse thus needs to be protected. If CYDA's staff, and volunteers will make parents and guardians aware of their children's vulnerabilities and guide them to on their protection and advise special attention.
- 1.8. Inexperienced CYDA staff and volunteers should not try to handle children with complicated problems. (Example: children who have experienced a traumatic situation or sexual abuse). Concerned CYDA staff who encounters such a child or children should notify responsible officers and prompt them to competent and reliable professional consultation.
- 1.9. CYDA staff, volunteers, and visitors will not attempt to discipline a child or children in a way that is against the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This effectively means any form of violence against the child will not be tolerated.
- 1.10. CYDA's staff, volunteers, and visitors must always present, a good image and maintain a high standard of behavior/character in the presence of children. They must be concerned about perception, appearance, actions, use of language, and relationships when relating to minors and children. (Example: should not use any unacceptable language in the presence of a child)
- 1.11. CYDA staff, volunteers, and visitors will appropriately dress and approach children, families, and communities, with cultural sensitivity during programs program implementation.
- 1.12. CYDA staff, volunteers and visitors need to be aware that at work they may come across children who, because of the circumstances and abusive encounters in the past may seek "special attention". In such a situation the 'adult' would always be considered responsible even if a child behaves seductively. Adults should avoid being placed in a compromising or vulnerable position.
- 1.13. CYDA shall take disciplinary action such as dismissal from employment, volunteer/internship or board /advisory council membership against inappropriate behavior toward children, and failure to follow CYDA Behavior Protocols or sexual abuse of a child.
- 1.14. CYDA staff and volunteers will seek to live up to the CYDA's Mission Statement and Core Values in all relationship with others in any circumstances.
- 1.15. CYDA staff, volunteers, and visitors with direct contact with projects and children must sign the policy statement saying that they have read the policy, will respect, and abide by it, and understand that action will be taken in cases where behavior is not in accordance to the policy. This will lead to disciplinary action and possible job loss for staff or dismissal of volunteers who break these protocols.

2. RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

- 2.1. CYDA staff, volunteers and visitors will be carefully and properly screened during their recruitment period. They will be expected to follow subsequent protocols:
 - i. Obtaining a police check where possible or necessary.
 - ii. Agreeing to sign to the Child Protection Policy.

- iii. State of no previous convictions for abuse against children, violent behavior, or improper and unlawful conduct.
- 2.2. CYDA will ensure that all the references of approved local candidates for work are checked, preferably by telephone, and recorded in the staff files before the new staff member is invited to take the position. This will include a verbal and written request to the referee of whether they have any concerns as to why the candidate should be employed to work with children.
- 2.3. CYDA staff, volunteers, and visitors agree to immediately **inform the Coordinator/Director** in case they encounter new information that casts doubt on the team member's trustworthiness regarding children. Such information would be treated as confidential and disclosed to the individual team member for appropriate action.
- 2.4. Individuals who are hired as independent contractors are notified of CYDA's Policy and Required Standards for Child Protection and are made aware about the behavior protocols and expected to abide by its norms.
- 2.5. In the best interests of children, CYDA reserves the right not to hire an applicant if the background check reveals that the person is not suitable to work with children.

3. **COUNTERING ALEGATIONS OF STAFF MISCONDUCT**

- 3.1. CYDA staff, volunteers and visitors will be encouraged to openly discuss the potential of abuse within the organization, and annual child protection training.
- 3.2. CYDA will take the appropriate action to deal with the allegation of misconduct made against any of CYDA staff, volunteer or visitors has abused a child, situation.
 - 3.2.1. First inform the Coordinator/Director. In case if the Director is the subject of the allegation, a Senior Staff/ board member must be informed.
 - 3.2.2. Since the beginning till the end both child and alleged perpetrator will be treated with respect.
 - 3.2.3. Confidentiality: All details will be entered on the CYDA's allegation form and filed confidentially. Allegation would be discussed with only those having appropriate information. Disciplinary action, written warning, termination of service, etc., will be taken against CYDA staff, volunteers, and visitors who found breaking the confidentiality norm.
 - 3.2.4. Confidentiality of the investigations will be maintained. It will be conducted under the guidance of external counsel.
 - 3.2.5. CYDA will build and maintain relationship with child welfare and legal organizations. It will encourage accountability and support at the time of allegation.
 - 3.2.6. CYDA will respect child's accusation of abuse against the alleged perpetrator, whoever s/he may be.
 - 3.2.7. CYDA will confer with other organizations in a case child requires extra protection.
 - 3.2.8. Records of all the facts related to the investigation and allegation, will be maintained and carefully and confidentially filed by the Committee.
 - 3.2.9. If essential, CYDA will designate an expert to deal with the media and the police. Committee will strategize procedures to deal with police and media involvement.

4. **COMMUNICATION ABOUT/TO CHILDREN**

- 4.1. CYDA recognizes the apprehensions related to the internet services where

instances of the doctored photographs create abusive environment for children. Therefore,

CYDA will not post individual child's picture but only those where children are in groups. It will never display pictures of children in vulnerable situations.

- 4.2. CYDA will take special care to protect children's identity while displaying their photographs. It will not reveal their names, background, or geographic location in all materials.
- 4.3. CYDA will not disclose information on any history of abuse of a child to any person not related to the case.
- 4.4. Children will not be presented as victims. Sexually suggestive photographs of a child will not be displayed on any of CYDA's communication material. They would be referred in respectful language.
- 4.5. Individuals or organizations requesting the use of CYDA resources such as videos or photographs would have to sign an agreement with CYDA. The agreement would disallow any use of the resource materials for purposes other than what is agreed upon could subject the borrowing individual or organization to legal action and would require immediate return of all materials provided by CYDA as well as any copies of such materials.
- 4.6. CYDA discourages volunteers to entertain private correspondence with individual children. In such a case, CYDA would review all correspondence with a child for inappropriate or suggestive comments, requests, or obscenities. In case inappropriate correspondence is revealed, CYDA reserves the right to take severe action against the volunteer.
- 4.7. Once a year all members, staff, and volunteers will conduct self-appraisal and peer appraisal to monitor the behavior of each other in context to children.
- 4.8. Should there be any concerns, these should be raised with the Coordinator /Director.

5. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS:

- 5.1. To facilitate the reporting, investigation, and follow up of all cases, CYDA will set up formal or informal support systems of professionals and people with authority within the community. It will build rapport with local police, government or non- government social services, doctors, lawyers, social workers, and teachers. They would be encouraged to attend the CYDA's annual Child Protection Training as both participants as well as experts concerning their professional service and community.
- 5.2. CYDA staff will extend support to an abused child and help him/her to report a case within 48 hours to the Coordinator/Director regardless of whether they are served by CYDA. The higher officials will immediately report the case to local authority using the same Allegation form.
- 5.3. All the necessary procedures will be followed, assuring the safety of the alleged victim and all children within the community.

6. TRAINING, EVALUATION & MONITORING

- 6.1. CYDA will conduct training to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and visitors understand the content of this Child Protection Policy before signing their commitment. This training will be conducted as mandatory procedure for all new member and staff. The session will be led by local experts, and local support team members. The scope of the training will focus on definitions of child abuse, characteristics, causes, handling of disclosure, reporting systems, laws, local multi- disciplinary specific measures open to CYDA.

- 6.2. CYDA will be committed to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of child protection procedures and behavior protocols. Annual staff evaluations will include the items of active listening, activities, and behavior that empower clients, assertiveness when advocating for a client, and basic knowledge on child protection issues.

7. DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

To be signed by all CYDA staff, volunteer, visitors, and partner organizations. A copy will be kept on file in the CYDA office.

I declare that:

1. I have read and understand the CYDA Child Protection Policy and have attended/will attend the Child Protection Training.
2. I will work within the procedure as laid out in the CYDA Child Protection Policy.
3. I have not been accused or convicted of any offense involving physical or sexual abuse of children, or young people.
4. I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse of children while engaged in CYDA activities, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities.

Signature:

Date:

