



**St Jude India ChildCare Centres**

# Child Protection Policy

**Guidelines for successfully running St. Jude India  
ChildCare Centres**

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## St. Jude India ChildCare Centres- Policy for protection of children

### Principles and purpose of the policy

This policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment from St. Jude India ChildCare Centres to safeguard children from harm and to ensure that the procedures are in place to minimise the risk of and deal with any abuse and exploitation of children.

This policy is being developed because of the involvement of St. Jude's in providing safe accommodation for children under treatment for cancer and their parents while undergoing treatment at various hospitals.

St. Jude ChildCare Centres is committed to supporting the welfare of the children in its care and has a zero tolerance policy toward abuse of any kind.

The welfare of the child is paramount

- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language and religious beliefs have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the CEO.

### Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the following and St. Judes will make them aware of the policy and expect them to abide by it:

1. Staff, Team members, volunteers and engaged consultants visiting centres who may have contact with children
2. Any other person who visit centres and may come into contact with children (donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians etc).

As a responsible organisation St.Judes recognises its legal obligations to notify relevant authorities of any concerns it has in relation to the treatment of children.

### What is Child Abuse?

'Child abuse' or 'maltreatment' constitutes 'all forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment 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.'(WHO, 1999)

### Recruitment

All employees, team members and volunteers (paid or unpaid, full time or part time) having direct or indirect contact with children have to face a standardized recruitment and interview process

Requirement to sign a statement of commitment to the organization's CPP

I .....(Volunteer/Intern/Staff) acknowledge the provisions under CPP for Staff Conduct & Good Practice guidelines, and hereby confirm to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Signature.....

Date .....

This statement is to be mentioned in the contract letter of all new recruits]

### Induction and Training

St.Judes aim is to ensure that all staff understand and adhere to the policy of zero tolerance, and maintain the necessary skills and understanding, to safeguard children supported by them.

- All new recruits should be briefed about the Child Protection Policies upon beginning the employment and training. At this time each employee should be provided a copy of the policy for reference to be given to them. This briefing to be done by either the COO, CEO or a TM.
- As with other training modules there will be a short quiz to assess their understanding.

- At the end of the briefing and quiz each trainee will sign a declaration that they have understood and will abide by the Child Protection policies of the organization.
- Orientation of all existing staff on Child Protection policies and procedures within 30 days after the Child Protection Policy comes into force.
- Regular engagement of personnel at least once in a year, to remind them of procedures and update on new developments.
- Orientation of donors and visitors on behaviour and communication protocols before interaction with children
- All appropriate staff will receive a copy of this Child Protection Policy. A copy will also be available on the organisation's website.
- **Awareness of child protection issues will continue to be addressed through ongoing training. Each year there will be a refresher session. Attendance to this session is mandatory and once again each person attending will be given a certificate of completion, signed by a representative of the management as well as the staff member.**
- **These certificates will be maintained in the HR files of the employee.**

### **Staff / Volunteer Conduct** **Good Practice Guidelines**

All staff should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from allegations of misconduct. Staff should maintain their standards of behaviour therefore acting as a role model. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets). Never allow yourself to be left alone with a participant. There may be rare occasions when a confidential interview or a one-to-one meeting is necessary and in such circumstances, the interview should be conducted in a room with an open door or visual access. Where this is not possible, the member of staff should ensure that there is another adult nearby. Never make gratuitous physical contact with a participant. [There may be occasions where a distressed participant needs comfort which may include physical comforting and staff should use their discretion to ensure that it is appropriate and not unnecessary or unjustified contact.] Be cautious about physical contact in games. Where physical contact is inescapable staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should take place and of the possibility for misinterpretation of such contact.
- Treat all children equally, and with respect and dignity. Staff should ensure that children are protected from discrimination on any grounds, including ability and challenge discriminating comments and behaviour. Activities should be designed to include all children and to promote positive attitudes towards differences.
- Be clear about what the objectives of the activity are before it begins and always put the welfare of each child first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children
- Do not allow a parent to leave a child alone at the Centre in the care of another adult while parent is not present. If there is a need for the parent to leave for any reason please ensure that permission is requested, e.g. father or mother has to go to hospital in an emergency situation. Permission cannot be given for extended periods, a reasonable time frame would be for travel time and hospital visit. It is incumbent on the staff to ensure the safety of the child and maintain contact with the parents at all times.
- Ensuring that if children of mixed genders are to be supervised, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Always refer any problems to the CEO/COO/TM.
- Question any unknown adult who enters the centre and/or who attempts to engage with the children.

### **Practices never to be sanctioned:**

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Children's inappropriate use of language and/or behaviour. This should always be challenged.
- Sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.

The following guidelines can be used to deal with challenging behaviour constructively:

- Be aware of what unacceptable behaviour is.
- Explain to children why certain behaviour is unacceptable. This makes children feel responsible for their behaviour and they are less likely to repeat it.

### **Child Protection Procedures**

- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to their superiors. However, staff should remember that they are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately. Ensure all records are kept securely in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Adopt a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.

### **Awareness of actual or likely occurrence of abuse**

There are a number of ways in which abuse becomes apparent:

- A child discloses abuse.
- Someone else discloses that a child has told him/her or that he/she strongly believes a child has been or is being abused.
- A child may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- A child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely that he/she is being abused.
- A member of staff's behaviour or in the way in which he/she relates to a child causes concern.
- Denial or disciplining of child without consent of parents especially with teaching & playgroup
- **Evaluation by a child guidance team (comprising of Social worker, counsellor & a physician )on site counsellor assessment & then the counsellor report along with the statement reviewed by the management team.**(In case of paediatrics under law interview by counsellor is warranted as children tend to block the experience).

Weekly follow up sessions along with parental counselling can be offered if necessary.

### **Responsibility**

- The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or who is told of abuse is to report it and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously whilst adhering to the dos and don'ts above.
- The incident should be reported immediately to the CEO/COO/TM who is then responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse.

It is important to maintain the confidentiality of the child. So care must be taken to ensure that the issue is not discussed with anyone else other than the CEO/COO/TM.

Staff should **NEVER try to deal with a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse by him/herself.**

### **Reporting suspected, alleged, or actual incidents of abuse**

#### **It is important to "say something if you see something"**

It may sometimes be difficult to accept that something that has been disclosed in confidence by a child or anyone else should be passed to a colleague. But the welfare of a child must be paramount

and you therefore have a duty to report suspicions, allegations or actual incidents to the designated member of staff.

Information should also be reported if you yourself have concerns that a child may be suffering harm or at risk of abuse, even if you are unsure about your suspicions.

**Procedures for reporting and action**

- St. Judes can receive reports of child abuse by staff, team members, or a person connected to a certain project and this could come from a number of sources.
- All information relating to any concerns about abuse must be notified to the CEO or in her/his non-availability to the Chairman of the organisation in the prescribed format. (Annexure 3)
- Dialogue with concerned/ abused child to understand the depth of allegation and its extent should be done by an experienced persons delegated specifically for the task by St. Judes.
- The reports and personal information on children are kept confidential and should be revealed only to relevant authorities.
- St. Judes must never act or make a decision alone where abuse or exploitation is suspected and will ensure appropriate action and enquiry is undertaken.
- Any person found to be supporting, engaged, or suspected of being engaged in the any acts or any form of abuse will be reported to the relevant authorities which may include law enforcing officials.
- If the incident involves a member of its own staff, St. Jude's will take appropriate steps outlined in this policy.
- [Dissemination of the policy](#)
- The policy will be displayed on the website, copies will be readily available at the centres
- The policy will be shared with all those listed under 'Scope of the policy'

- **Reporting Format**
- **(This is a confidential document and should be handled by only by designated persons)**
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- Reporting authority: ..... (CEO/ Chairman of St.Judes)
- 1. The incident has been disclosed by child/staff/others/ observed by reporting staff him/her self:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. The incident that was observed /suspected?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. (About the child) Child's Name:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Place/Centre: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Incidental Details:
- a. Date, time and place of incident: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Date when the incident came to the knowledge of the staff:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Name of the alleged person:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Details of the person:
- Staff/team member/engaged consultants/ representatives of St.Judes/from partner organisation/other \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Nature of allegation:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Personal Observation of the reporting staff (visible injuries, child's emotional state etc.):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Immediate action taken by the reporting staff:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Were there any other people or children involved in the incident:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Remarks (If Any):
- 11. Action taken by reporting authority:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The following declaration is to be signed by each person who has reviewed the policy with the staff as well as the person receiving the briefing.

Name \_\_\_\_\_/Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Designation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Person Reviewing \_\_\_\_\_/Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Site Location. \_\_\_\_\_.