

**The Child Protection Policy of
Manbhum Ananda Ashram Nityananda Trust**

Safe guarding children from any form of abuse & maltreatment

Functional Area : Child Protection Policy

Language : English

Applicable to : All society members, staffs, donors, volunteers, interns, visitors

Introduction

MANT is a non-profit, non-racial, non-political, non-religious development organisation registered under the Society Registration Act of 1860 in 1960, has been working in the field of Education, Community Media, Livelihood Promotion, Health Service Delivery and Health Behavior Change to ameliorate the immense sufferings of the marginalized section of the contemporary society and empower them to strive for their own development in the states of West Bengal, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, India. MANT is also keen on improving the lives of the children as well. It includes certain specific child protection protocols, guidelines for reporting incidents, awareness, preventing abuse, responding and training our staffs and volunteers to follow certain rules when working with the children. It is expected that all who work with MANT are committed to safeguard the children they come in contact with and any deliberate act of abuse will not be tolerated. It recognises its responsibility to take all the reasonable steps in promoting and practice in safeguarding the children from any kind of harm, abuse, exploitation and respects the rights of children.

“Child abuse is a global problem that is deeply rooted in cultural, economic and social practices” (WHO 2002) It exists in all countries, communities and is expressed in personal values, beliefs and practices and also through wider societal, cultural and institutional systems and processes that mean children are abused and denied their right to a safe, secure happy and healthy childhood. At present scenario in every country and society, girls and boys are affected by sexual violence, abuse, maltreatment and exploitation. Few cases are reported but the number is higher for unreported incidents. We think no standards can offer complete protection for children, but following certain standards can minimise the risk to children from abuse and exploitation. By implementing standards, organisations can make clear their commitment to keeping children safe. The standards will help us to move towards best practice in this area and deter potential abusers from joining the organisation. As an employee, consultant, intern or volunteer of MANT, we have a responsibility too to keep the children we work with safe from harm, and to report and respond to abuse effectively when it occurs. Therefore the organization finds it important to have a child safe guarding policy within own organization which aims towards protection of Children, agency representatives & other stakeholders.

This document of Child protection policy will be followed by all members, employees of the organisation and will be followed and promoted by those in the position of leadership within the organisation.

Definitions & types of abuse

Who is a child?

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 1) a child is every human being below the age of 18 years.

What is child protection?

Child protection in its widest sense it is a term used to describe the actions that individuals, organizations, countries and communities take to protect children from acts of maltreatment (abuse) and exploitation eg, domestic violence, child labour, commercial and sexual exploitation and abuse, HIV, physical violence to name but a few. It can also be used as a broad term to describe the work that organizations undertake in particular communities, environments or programs that protect children from the risk of harm due to the situation in which they are living.

In the context of keeping children safe - standards for child protection, child protection relates to the responsibility and duty of care that an organization has to protect children with whom they come into contact with. It is important to remember that child protection concerns may be more likely in emergency situations, in situations where children are displaced and separated from families, or where the family is under extreme stress. It is therefore important to distinguish between children in need of protection and specific incidents of maltreatment (abuse) that may be physical, sexual, and emotional or caused through neglect.

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)

Within the broad definition of child maltreatment, five subtypes are distinguished – these are:

Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Emotional abuse, Neglect and negligent treatment, Sexual and commercial exploitation

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents (WHO, 1999). Physical abuse includes but not limited to the following

- ✓ Punishing a child excessively

- ✓ Smacking, punching, beating, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving, grabbing
- ✓ Hitting a child with an object
- ✓ Leaving a child in an uncomfortable and/or undignified posture for an extended period of time or in a poor environment
- ✓ Forcing a child to work in poor working conditions, or in work that is inappropriate for a child's age, over a long period of time
- ✓ Gang violence
- ✓ Harmful initiation ceremonies
- ✓ Bullying
- ✓ Threatening to harm someone

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances, internet pictures and materials (WHO, 1999). The recent use of technology such as the internet by adults to entice children to meet or participate in virtual sex is also an abuse. Sexual abuse can be classified in two ways **Contact** and **Non- contact** which includes but not limited to the following

Contact

- ✓ Kissing or holding in a sexual manner
- ✓ Touching and fondling genital areas
- ✓ Forcing a child to touch another person's genital areas
- ✓ Forcing a child to perform oral sex
- ✓ Vaginal or anal intercourse and other sexual activity
- ✓ Biting a child's genital area
- ✓ Incest
- ✓ Sexual exploitation, where sexual abuse of a child involves some kind of commercial transaction (monetary or in-kind)
- ✓ Child sex tourism, where abusers travel to a place other than their home and there have sex

with a child

Non-Contact

- ✓ Obscene calls or obscene remarks on a computer or a phone or in written notes
- ✓ Online sexual solicitation and grooming
- ✓ Voyeurism
- ✓ Exhibitionism
- ✓ Exposed to pornography or used to make pornography
- ✓ Sexually intrusive questions or comments
- ✓ Forced to self-masturbate or watch others masturbate

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can reach their full potential in the context of the society in which the child lives. There may also be acts toward the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, scape-goating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment (WHO, 1999). Emotional abuse includes but not limited to the following

- ✓ Isolating or excluding a child
- ✓ Stigmatising a child
- ✓ Treating a child who is a victim as a suspect (repeated questioning and investigation)
- ✓ Failing to provide a supportive environment
- ✓ Failing to give a child an appropriate sense of self (for example, criticising weight)
- ✓ Main caregiver(s) does not respond to a child's emotional needs
- ✓ Exploiting a child
- ✓ Treating or looking at a child with disdain, disrespect, denigration
- ✓ Patterns of belittling, denigrating, blaming, scaring, discriminating or ridiculing

- ✓ Spreading rumours
- ✓ Blackmailing a child
- ✓ Institutionalising a child without exploring other options
- ✓ Cyber bullying and sexual solicitation

Neglect and negligent treatment is the inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the development of the child in: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and which causes, or has a high probability of causing, harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible (WHO, 1999).

Neglect also harms children although it is more about being inactive and not doing something than the previous forms of abuse, which are more active. Neglect may include:

- ✓ Inattention/omission of care
- ✓ Failing to supervise and protect from harm
- ✓ Leaving a child at home for a long period without supervision
- ✓ Sending a child away without ensuring they will be safe and happy at the place to which they are sent
- ✓ Failing to ensure suitable nutrition for a child (a parent may give a child money for food but not monitor to ensure they eat healthily; a parent may deliberately withhold food from a child)
- ✓ Failing to ensure a child attends school (parent and/or teacher)
- ✓ Failing to follow up or report repeated bruising or burns (for example, a community health worker)
- ✓ Giving in to a child's every wish because it is an easy option – despite knowing this choice is not in the best interest of the child's development
- ✓ Failing to take time to reasonably monitor children's activities and thus potentially exposing them to risks
- ✓ Failing to ensure a safe environment (leaving dangerous things within reach of a child, such as medication, guns, knives, pornography etc.)

Sexual exploitation is the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the exploitation of another. Child prostitution and trafficking of children for sexual abuse and exploitation is being one example of this.

Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social- emotional development (WHO, 1999). Children being recruited in to the army would also come under this category.

Other forms of abuse

Internet abuse and abusive images of children Abusive images of children, commonly referred to as child pornography, is defined as any representation, by whatever means of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for sexual purposes. Technology has also meant that children are now subject to additional abuse through the internet. There is a trade in the transmittal of abusive images of children. Digital and phone cameras have made it possible for some children images to be distributed across the internet without their knowledge. Children may also be at risk of coming in to contact with people who want to harm them through their use of the internet

Abuse linked to belief in 'possession', 'witchcraft' or related to spiritual or religious belief can occur when communities or individuals believe that a child or an adult is in possession of evil spirits and action needs to be taken to „punish“ the alleged possessed person, or free him or her of the spirit. Child abuse linked to accusations of „possession“ or „witchcraft“ generally occurs when the child is being viewed as „different“ (the child could be disobedient, ill or disabled) and the accuser (often small groups of people somehow related to the child) think they need to exorcise him or her. These beliefs can result in extremely cruel practices to children, eg, severe beating, burning, starvation, isolation, cutting or stabbing and can even cause death to the child. Ritualistic ceremonies or other practices to hurt children can also be part of this harmful practice. The belief in „possession“ and „witchcraft“ is widespread. It is not confined to particular countries, cultures or religions. (www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

Policy Framework

This Child Protection Policy (CPP) will encompass of all programs and personnel of MANT (both in registered office, communication office & field units). Every person who comes into contact with the organization in various capacities (includes members, part time & full time employee, interns, donors, partner organizations, library readers, resource persons, volunteers, visitors, teachers, suppliers, sweepers, plumbers, electricians) should know and abide by the CPP.

The CPP provides a framework of principles, standards, and guidelines in the following areas.

1. Standards for Human Resources
 - 1.1 Job advertisement, recruitment, selection
 - 1.2 Induction and training
2. Code of conduct for MANT's staff
3. Guidelines for other stakeholders
 - 3.1 Guidelines for person visiting projects (visitors/donors/interns)
 - 3.2 Guidelines for Children
4. Standards for Communication
5. Case management system
6. Implementation with partners
 - 6.1 Declaration of commitment of Partner organization
7. Monitoring & Evaluation
 - 7.1 Review of the policy
 - 7.2 Ongoing feedback mechanism & learning process

1. Standards for Human Resources

1.1 Job advertisement, recruitment, selection

All employees/interns with direct or indirect contact with children have to face a thorough and standardized recruitment and interview process.

- Child protection statement mentioned in the job advertisement
- Questions on child protection issues relevant to the role
- Original evidence of qualification
- Two reference checks to be verified either over telephone or in writing
- Resolution of employment gaps, frequent changes of employment or reasons for leaving employment (if sudden)
- Requirement to sign a statement of commitment to the organization's CPP "*I will abide by the Organization's Child Protection Policy*". This statement is to be mentioned in the contract letter of all new recruits.
- ***In case of interns***, letter of reference from the institution and for volunteers a statement of intent as well as two reference checks, to be submitted
- Will have to give complete details of their work, objective of doing the work and expected outcome
- Will have to sign a statement of commitment to the organization's CPP
- Orientation of the organization and its work
- Completion of the given assignment within stipulated time
- Report to be submitted and if possible presentation to be made at the end of internship

1.2 Induction and Training

To develop and maintain CPP the necessary skills and understanding of safeguard children should be there within the organization

- Half day orientation on Child Protection issues for all new recruits will be given within seven days of joining with a copy of the policy. The recruits includes regular staff, contractual staff, assignee, interns, volunteer at field
- Half day follow up training for personnel every 1 year, to remind them of procedures and

update on new developments.

- Orientation of children on all relevant aspects of CPP within seven days of their arrival.
- Orientation of donors and visitors on behavior and communication protocols before interaction with children
- One pager on behavior protocols to be displayed on notice boards of all field units of MANT.

2. Code of conduct for MANT's staff

The aim of the Code of Conduct for interacting with children is to take joint responsibility for the safety of children. A further aim is to protect MANT employees and individuals who have access to children via MANT from false allegations regarding their conduct towards children.

- Respect the dignity of each child. Consider each child as unique individual with specific characteristics and needs and thus accept each child with all the good and bad things with in him/her.
- Observe attitude of children with patience and understand them within the local context in which they live.
- Be empathetic rather than sympathetic towards children.
- Views of children to be listened, valued and taken seriously with objectivity
- Encourage to express their feelings as well as participate in decision making processes.
- Appreciate their good efforts and performances since it would be rewarding and reinforcing for further development.
- As far as possible, work with children in a place within the view of others.
- Equal attention to be given irrespective of gender with no favoritism.
- Never engage, encourage or support abuse, in any terms
- Never stigmatize or humiliate children.
- Never use corporal punishment.
- Never develop sexual relationship with any child.
- Never behave in a manner, which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Do not use slang words or abusive language in presence of children.
- Never provoke towards any malpractice or addiction
- Staff must never engage children in their personal work.
- Must wear clothes that are appropriate keeping in mind the local context in which the children live.
- At the time of rescue, restoration and follow up, a girl child is to be accompanied preferably by a female staff.
- Girls and boys will be given the choice of working with a male or female staff where gender may be a consideration such as counseling
- Permission of children and concerned authority to be taken before taking their images or case studies

- Images of children not to be taken while they are taking bath or changing clothes. They are to be properly clothed while taking images.
- In case of case studies name of child has to be changed as well as no personal information to identify location of child to be given.
- Never give any information regarding any child, sensitive incident, to media over telephone.
- Be clear about purpose and inform and guide children prior to media coverage.
- Ensure confidentiality at the time of disclosing case studies to media.

3. Guidelines for other stakeholders

3.1 Guidelines for person visiting projects (visitors/donors/interns)

- Prior written permission from concerned authority to be taken, regarding purpose of visit before interacting with children
- Physical contact with children must be appropriate to the age and circumstances which must be initiated by the child rather than by the adult.
- Interaction with children, only in the presence of relevant staff who will facilitate and monitor the process
- Consent of children and concerned authority to be taken before taking images
- Images of children not to be taken while they are taking bath or changing clothes
- Must not give treat or take any child out on any kind of excursion. If it is done in a group then prior intimation in terms of letter of permission will be required.
- Must not give gifts directly to any child or donate money as a gift item.
- Will not be allowed to record case histories or take personal history of any child without prior permission of the relevant staff and child.
- In case of case studies name of child has to be changed as well as no personal information to identify location of child to be given.
- Never sensationalize or manipulate text and images and emphasis to be given on dignity of child.
- Do not use offensive or slang language in the vicinity of children.
- Must wear clothes that are appropriate keeping in mind the local context in which the children live.
- Never take any child to any place independently.
- Before publishing any report or document on the organization the draft has to be approved by the organization

3.2 Guidelines for Children

- Respect all staff, parents and outsiders.
- All relevant information to be given to concerned staff.
- Share information and learning with other children.
- Never physically assault or sexually abuse another child.

- Never tease, threaten another child.
- Never spread rumors or use slang & abusive languages about another child.
- Never force another child to give away his/her personal belongings.

4. Standards for Communication

In order to protect the girls and boys from the risk of violence or stigmatization, MANT ensures that any media content (sound, text, film, images) that is produced or circulated maintains the child's dignity and protects the child's identity.

- All media content rests on the values of respect and equality, and preserves the dignity of the people described.
- Before creating media content, all the affected children are informed in an easy to understand way of its intended purpose and use.
- When creating media content, consent must be obtained from the affected children and their parents or guardians. For general reports about the project, this may be done orally by the reporters themselves or in advance by project employees.
- Children must be adequately (in the local context) dressed. Images of children not to be taken while they are taking bath or changing clothes. They are to be properly clothed.
- When describing the children's living situations, you must account for the social, cultural and economic context in order to demonstrate the complexity of the development situation.
- In case of case studies name of child has to be changed as well as no personal information to identify location of child to be given.
- The media will interact only with the organization head or unit heads or designated staff deputed by the heads.
- Prior information to be given regarding date of publication/telecast/broadcast.
- No information regarding the any child to be obtained over telephone

5. Case management system

The goal of the case management system is to enable an appropriate and speedy investigation of any given case and to identify cases of abuse and maltreatment early on. It should also be ensured that the affected children are protected and that they are offered access to special support in order to guard against any further injury to them. Decision makers in the child protection system are provided with a frame of reference and the flow of information to relevant parties is ensured. All MANT employees are aware of this system.

- Clear and open lines of communication through regular meetings.
- Raising concerns on sensitive matters in relation to children and staff in appropriate forums.
- Reports and personal information on children are kept confidential and disclosed to only those who need to know
- Child protection issues are included in regular staff evaluations/appraisals
- Responsibility of management to ensure implementation of CPP (through regular interactions with staff and children) and surprise checks of reporting documents
- Responsibility of management to ensure that Policy is reviewed at regular interval.
- Allegation of abuse must be reported in prescribed format to the designated person
- All complaints must be submitted to the redressal committee of our organisation through a written order. The committee will be comprised of the following member:

Sl. No.	Position	Designation
1.	Chairperson	Executive Director, MANT
2.	Member	Director, MANT
3.	Member	Asst. Director-Admin, MANT
4.	Member	Asst. Director-Programme, MANT
5.	Member	Asst. Director-Research, MANT
6.	Member	Project Coordinator, MANT
7.	Member	Radio Station Manager, MANT
8.	Member	Legal Consultant (External)
9.	Member	Teacher (External)

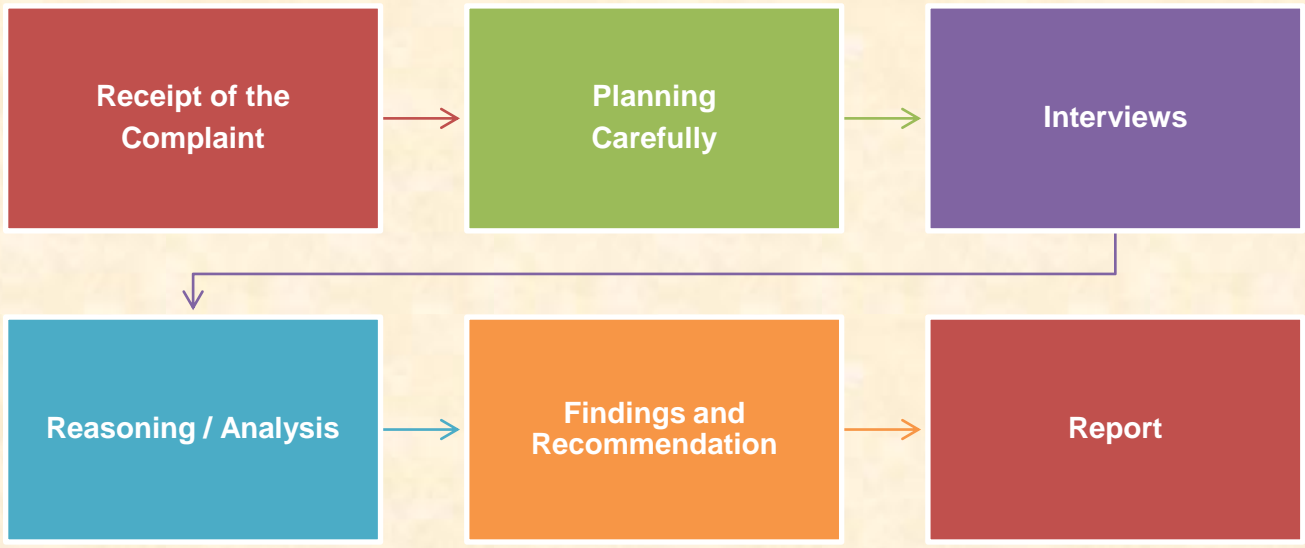


Diagram: The Process

6. Implementation with Partners

6.1 Declaration of commitment of Partner organization

Each partner's declaration of responsibility for child protection is part of the General Agreement with every partner. A key part of the declaration is that the partner accepts its duty to implement an extensive and codified Child protection Policy. If the grass root level NGOs does not yet have a standardize Child Protection Policy in place they must agree to develop it at earliest. In initial development of CPP MANT can provide guidance to those partners.

7. Monitoring & Evaluation

7.1 Review of the policy

MANT's Child Protection Policy must be **revised at least once every four years**. The revision is based on the analysis of data relating to internal child protection practice as well as external changes to child protection standards that apply nationally & internationally.

7.2 Ongoing feedback mechanism & learning process

- The Child Protection Team meets on a regular basis to consult with one another on cases and developments that have arisen relating to child protection, to provide each other with information
- CPT plan continuing training events for employees.
- Documentation and reporting by CPT / CPO ensures and monitors the transparency of the Child Protection Team

The purpose of these efforts is to foster an ongoing internal learning process as to how to improve MANT's child protection system.

Annexure

Annexure I: Reporting Format of cases

Date of reporting	
Reporting Person	
Reporting person's name	
Reporting person's current designation	
Reporting person's contacts	
Child's Information	
Name of alleged victim	
Sex	
Age	
Location	
Incident Information	
Date, time, and place of offense	
Name of alleged offender	
Designation of alleged offender	
Nature of alleged abuse	
Was the reporting person a first-hand witness? YES NO	
If no, date when the information came to the attention of the staff?	
If yes, what was the immediate action taken?	
Name of witness, if any	

NB: Confidential document

Annexure II:

Statement of Commitment to MANT's Child Protection Policy

I hereby acknowledge that I have thoroughly read and understand MANT's Child Protection Policy (CPP). For the time that I am affiliated with MANT, I agree to abide by everything placed before me in the Child Protection Policy.

Signature:

Date:

Designation:

References:

- The child protection policy of Kindernothilfe
- The child protection policy of Plan-International
- The child protection policy of HCL Foundation
- NCPCR Handbook on Counselling
- Conceptual documents provided in CPP workshop at KKID, Coimbatore on July, 2015
- Sample document on example of child protection policy for community organizations from Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board