Policy (SOP) ID:	HR-001-2023
Policy document	Cankids Child Protection Policy
Description:	This is a document that lays down the guidelines to safeguard children with cancer from abuse and exploitation. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children with cancer and to demonstrate that the organization is exercising its responsibility of care candidly.
Policy / Procedure for:	Cankids Staff (includes employees, full time, part-time, fixed term, volunteers, interns, consultants, short term contract engagements), management and governing board members, staff and representatives of partner agencies, vendors, service providers, suppliers, visitors etc.
Responsible Department	Human Resource Department
Policy / Procedure:	Head-HR
Author department:	Human Resource Department
Date of Approval:	9-Dec-2023
Pages:	15



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Mission Statement

- Cankids Kidscan aims to be a child safe organization

- Everyone associated with Cankids Kidscan must be aware of the risks that children face to abuse, sexual exploitation and violence against the children we work with and come in contact, like children visiting our offices and care centres.

- Cankids Kidscan must do all that it can to prevent, report and respond to such issues.

- Our staff, volunteers, interns, vendors, suppliers and other representatives will at all times demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour towards children and the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy. It applies to both in their professional and personal lives of all staff and representatives.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Children have a right to be protected from all forms of abuse, exploitation and violence envisaged in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and National legislative and Policy framework. Nevertheless, abuse and sexual exploitation of children still occurs on a global scale and in every country, culture and society. All child abuse and sexual exploitation involves the abuse of children's rights and is unacceptable.

1.2. CanKids…KidsCan is a not-for-profit organization, dedicated to the cause for Change for Childhood Cancer in India. Cankids provides holistic support to the child with cancer and the family, from moment of detection, through diagnosis, treatment and after. Cankids works in partnership with 141 Cancer Centres in 57 cities and 22 States & UT of India. In addition, Cankids also run 17 Home away from Homes - a low-cost model where the children with cancer and their families can stay while they are undergoing treatment. Cankids' core area of intervention in India is Health Care - Childhood Cancer. Its vision is to enable global standards of survival between 70 – 95% for childhood cancer in India, to provide access to holistic treatment, care and support,

and to secure the Rights of the Health Impaired Child with Cancer to health, education, childhood, pain free palliative care and the Right to be heard.

1.4. Children with cancer are primary stakeholders of Cankids. In the course of their medical treatment at the CHSUs, children with cancer and their families come into contact with our social support teams; some children stay with their families at our Care Centers - Home Away from Homes, Pediatric Palliative Care Center and also get formal and non-formal education at our Canshalas. Thus, protection of these children from any kind of abuse and exploitation is of paramount importance to Cankids. Cankids has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and sexual exploitation of children by our staff, partners and others who represent us.

1.5. Our commitment to children's rights means we have a commitment to safeguard children, especially those with whom we are in contact. The focus of Child Protection Policy is to ensure that we take all reasonable steps to make children safe both as an organization and in the conduct of all aspects of its day-to-day operations.

1.6. The Child Protection Policy lays down the standards that Cankids is required to apply and monitor in order to ensure that any children who we come in contact with are respected and protected from abuse and sexual exploitation of any sort.

2. COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN

Awareness: We will ensure that all staff and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and sexual exploitation and the risks to children. Children and their families will be made aware of the standards of behaviour they can expect from our staff and other representatives and how they can raise a concern.

Prevention: We will ensure through awareness raising and good practice, that staff and representatives minimize the risks to children. Staff members will be oriented to ensure that they create an environment where children 's rights are respected and child abuse and sexual exploitation of children is prevented.

Reporting: We will ensure that staff and other representatives are clear as to what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the abuse or exploitation of children.

Responding: We will ensure that action is taken to support, safeguard and protect children where concerns arise regarding their possible abuse and exploitation.

3. DEFINITIONS, PURPOSE & SCOPE

3.1. The Child Protection Policy is a set of policy and procedures applicable to all Cankids Offices, Care Centres and all other workplaces where Cankids staff come into contact with children. The purpose of the policy is to create awareness on child Protection and how to prevent and report child abuse by any stakeholders of Cankids and to ensure that Cankids takes all reasonable steps to make itself safe for children both as an organization and in the conduct of its operations, activities and development work.

3.2. Staff, representatives, partners of Cankids are placed in a special position of trust by the stakeholders we serve. Through the implementation of the Child Protection Policy, Cankids strives to ensure that this special trust is not exploited and that child protection standards are upheld. Cankids adopts a strictly zero-tolerance approach to the sexual exploitation and abuse of children by our staff, partners and others who represent us.

3.3. Child for the purpose of this Policy, any person under the physical age of 18 years would be deemed to be a Child and as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of Children, The National Policy for Children 2012 and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015.

3.4. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood, abuse may occur through direct contact, online or without the knowledge of the child.

3.5. Cankids recognizes five categories of child abuse, which are sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation, each one is described below:

- **Sexual abuse** includes forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in any kind of sexual activity, whether or not the child is aware of or consents to what is happening. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, but also includes non-contact activities, such as encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, pornography or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). To protect the children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography and provide for establishment of Special Courts for trial of such offences and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, an Act has been enacted by the Indian Parliament. This

Act is called the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. This act provides for punishment for following offences against children:

- Penetrative sexual assault
- Aggravated penetrative sexual assault
- Sexual assault
- Aggravated sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Using child for pornographic purposes
- Storage of pornographic material involving child

- **Physical abuse** includes physical injury to a child, such as hitting, kicking or shaking, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. There may be single or repeated incidents.

- **Emotional abuse** include harm caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats, denial of care or bullying, which results in adverse effects on the behaviour and emotional development of a child or young person. 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 develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potentials and in the context of the society in which the child dwells. There may also be acts towards 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.

- **Neglect** means persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and which result in serious impairment of a child's or young person's health. Neglect is the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health of

physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

- **Exploitation** means abusing a child's vulnerability or trust for commercial or sexual purposes. 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 (as in the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 2016, child trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation and other purposes (as defined under Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code). These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, or spiritual, moral or social-emotional development.

3.6. The child Protection Policy has been approved and adopted formally by the Governing Board and senior management team of Cankids.

3.7. The CEO is the owner of the Child protection Policy and senior leadership team is responsible for the overall implementation of the Policy.

3.8. The Child Protection Policy and Procedures are applicable to the following:

3.8.1. This Policy extends to all team members of Cankids including staff - full time, part time and those engaged on short term contracts, e.g., consultants, and volunteers, interns, governing board members and society members (referred to as "staff/team members");

3.8.2 All staff and representatives of partner agencies and any other individuals, groups of organizations, vendors, service providers, suppliers, visitors, parents who have a formal/contractual relationship with Cankids that involves having contact with children (referred to as "staff of partner agencies").

4.11. All Cankids staff and team members must act in accordance with the Code of Conduct and the Commitment to safeguard children as set out in the Child Protection Policy in both their professional and personal lives.

4.12. Each department / program /function within Cankids needs to ensure that they are child-safe.

4.13. This Policy will be reviewed every three years.

5. AWARENESS AND PREVENTION GUIDELINES

5.1. The Head Office, Regional/State Offices and Care Centres will be responsible to:

5.1.1 Implement measures to raise awareness amongst the team members, representatives and beneficiaries of our organization, about child protection issues and to prevent child abuse or sexual exploitation in line with the Awareness and Prevention Measures.

5.1.2 Implement measures to make the participation of children in all Cankids activities within and outside office premises safe and free from harm.

5.1.3 To follow the reporting procedures in cases of suspected child abuse situations.

5.2. Measures: The Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct must be widely circulated to all stakeholders ensuring that the purpose and approach of Cankids is well understood by all everyone.

5.2.1 All team members must receive the Child Protection Policy Document. Team members at all levels must be briefed/trained on child safeguarding measures according to their roles. They should receive briefing about child safeguarding measures in the course of their induction.

5.2.2 Commitment to Children document must be displayed in all Head Office and Regional/State Offices

5.2.3 Local child safeguarding materials to be developed and produced in local languages

5.2.3 Child safeguarding materials along with Child Protection Policy should be disseminated to all partners and other stakeholders and they should be appropriately briefed/trained about Child Protection Policy

5.2.4 Children are aware of their rights under the Policy and Cankids responsibility to them.

5.3. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

5.3.1 All team members and staff of partner agencies of Cankids and third parties connected with Cankids must demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour and conduct towards children both in their personal and professional lives. They must do all that they can do to prevent, report (within 24 hours) and respond immediately to any child safeguarding concerns.

5.3.2 It is the responsibility of every individual contracted or associated with Cankids work to make sure that the incidents that breach Cankids Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and other related policies are reported and recorded through the appropriate mechanism.

6. CODE OF CONDUCT

Cankids code of behavior sets the expectations it expects from its team members and others to ensure children are protected and prevented from being abused in any way. All Cankids team members, staff of partner agencies are expected to comply with the standards set out in the code of behavior:

- Establish an atmosphere conducive for the development of children through their word, deed and demeanour. This includes listening to children and showing respect to them.
- Treat children with respect and recognize their right to privacy.
- Avoid showing favouritism towards particular children.
- They must not spend time alone with children – they must plan activities so that more than one person is present or, at the very least, other people are within sight and hearing.
- As much as possible, staff and team members should ensure that a parent or guardian is present while interacting with the child.
- The team members must not stay overnight in the same room as a child.
- Not allow any children to visit the homes of any staff, volunteer, intern, etc. unless it is precipitated by a severe threat to the safety of the child.
- Not have the children stay overnight in the home of Cankids staff at any time.
- Not engage in any form of corporal punishment of children

- Not spend time alone, in a personal capacity, with a project child or children. There should always be another adult who would be able to see the interaction
- Staff must avoid inappropriate physical contact with children.
- Not touch private parts of the body, or any touch in such a way that would make a child uncomfortable.
- Never hit, otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
- Never develop physical/sexual relationships with children or any such relationships which could be deemed exploitive or abusive.
- Not use language, make suggestions or offer advice, which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive to children.
- Not act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, be little or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Not discriminate against, or favour a particular child to the exclusion of others.
- No staff, representatives or staff of other partner agencies will document/take picture/video of children, which shows the child in distress and undignified condition.

6.1. The Cankids team members and staff of partner agencies who are in contact with the children must:

- be aware of situations, which may present risks and they should be able to manage the same.
- plan and organize the work at workplaces in such a way so as to minimize the risks as far as possible.
- have a dialogue with the children about their contact with the staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns.
- Empower children by discussing with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

7. PREVENTION AND REDRESSAL MECHANISM

7.1. A committee called the Child Protection Committee shall be set up within the organization, which shall consist of a CXO, the Lead Specialist – Gender Justice, two members from the regional offices across all grades and one external child rights specialist. expert member – child rights specialist. These members would be carefully chosen and their contact details would be widely shared among the stakeholders.

7.2. ROLE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Once allegations related to child abuse are raised, the Child Protection Committee will investigate the same. Confidentiality must be observed at all times, in reporting such concerns/allegations.

(a) The committee shall ensure availability of the contact details for registering complaints on child protection related violation through various mediums of communication.
(b) the committee shall work in collaboration with the Communication Team in case any image of child/ children is used.
(c) The actions/redressal undertaken by the committee will be informed to the Governing Board annually.
(d) The committee will give recommendation to the Board EC within 30 days.

7.3. Action by the Board EC

- The Board EC will meet within 3 days of receiving the recommendation from the Child Protection Committee.

- The Board EC will give its decision within 5 working days after hearing the Child Protection Committee and the person in contact.
- The decision of the Board EC will be final.

7.4. The role and duty of Human Resource Department in Child Protection

Recruitment: Child Protection would be made integral part of the staff recruitment process. As part of the acceptance procedure, employees would be asked to sign a declaration of the policy stating that they are aware of its existence and would abide/adhere to it. The declaration would be kept in the staff members file for reference legal proceedings, if any in future.

8. How to report?



9. <u>REDRESSAL OF GRIEVANCES</u>

9.1 The Cankids team members, staff of partner agencies by the nature of their work, interact with the children and therefore should be aware of sensitive information concerning children.

9.2 Any Cankids team member when notices or is informed of his/her concerns relating to or about the exploitation or abuse of a child must inform his/her supervisor and HR Department at HQs and Regional Offices, as the case may be, regarding his or her concern. If the concerns involve

his/her immediate superior, then, the concerns must be reported to the next most appropriate person, such as Head of Department, as soon as possible. Any Cankids staff having concerns or suspicion regarding child abuse by someone in another agency must report such concerns in order to enable Cankids to communicate them through appropriate agency reporting mechanisms. Concerns should be reported as soon as possible, and, if at all possible, within 24 hours.

9.3 Cankids team member, to whom any concern has been reported, must take all appropriate and reasonable steps to protect the child or children involved. It is essential to avoid delay if any; inaction may place the child at further risk. In case of possible abuse, every effort should be made to provide the child with appropriate assistance.

(i) Cankids team having firsthand account of such child abuse will inform the child Protection Committee. Confidentiality will be maintained for each case.

(ii) All team members, parents, children, staff of partners agencies, will be informed about the Redressal mechanism process and also the communication process to report cases of child abuse and exploitation.

(iii) All incidents of abuse, complains, enquiry proceedings and Redressal of it would be documented and would be shared with staff from time to time to create awareness in Child Protection practices within the organization.

(iv). Disciplinary measures would be initiated against any Staff member found to be engaged in the following acts:

- Inducing or coercing a child to engage in sexual activity
- Exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking
- Use of children's photographs for pornographic or other inappropriate use
- Subjecting any child to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- Mistreating or depriving the child in any manner

Disciplinary measures would include

Suspension until the Child Protection Committee investigates and submits the report and HR officially communicates the person to rejoin the office.

In case based on recommendation of the child Protection committee, the Board EC recommends legal action then the organisation will pursue a legal case against the person.

(v) Any staff of a partner agency/ vendor found to be engaged, or suspected of being engaged in the above acts would be reported to the relevant authorities. If the allegation will be proved against the staff of partner agency or vendor, Cankids would discontinue working with such a partner or vendor.

10. AUTHORITY & RESPONSIBILITY:

Human Resource Department will be responsible for managing this policy. The approving Authority has been defined in the Table below:

Approved by Chief Operating Officer:



Signature: Sumita Kirti

Chief Operating Officer

Date: 3-Jan-2024

Annexture:

National Society for Change for Childhood Cancer in India

Say 'YES '! to Keeping Children Safe

Cankids Kidscan's Policy on Child Protection

2023

Acknowledgement Receipt

This is to acknowledge that I have received Cankids Kidscan's policy on Child Protection

Name: _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Organizations _____

Date _____