

ULLENS EDUCATION FOUNDATION- CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Preamble

As a registered organization providing services in the field of education for children ranging from the age of two and half to eighteen-years of aged children, Ullens Education Foundation's (UEF) highest priority would be the protection of children affiliated to any one of its education projects. This document is meant for implementation of this policy among UEF's network to ensure security of every child so that all projects of UEF such as Ullens School and Ullens Kindergarten may be recognized as a child safe organization. UEF employs a zero-tolerance policy toward violations of children's rights and abuse of all forms. This Child Protection Policy is based upon the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and national laws on child rights. It incorporates a **Code of Conduct** for the prevention of abuse and a **Response Mechanism** for appropriate action against such abuse. The policy is revised regularly or as deemed necessary.

The Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct, and procedures for Reporting and Response must be made widely available and signed by all employees of Ullens School, Ullens Kindergarten, and UEF, members of the board of trustees, interns, and volunteers. Dissemination must be supported so as to ensure that the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct are clearly understood. This will include translation into Nepali language and mandatory induction and training. Sensitivity to and understanding of local circumstances and culture should be incorporated in learning and training without condoning acts that are harmful to children.

2. Definition

- 2.1. **Child protection** means protecting children from all forms of violence such as physical and mental torture, child labor exploitation and abuse, bullying, sexual abuse, discrimination and harassment, which have a negative impact on the development and dignity of the children.
- 2.2. **A Child:** as recognized by the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) anyone under the age of 18 is considered a child. However, this policy is applicable only for children studying within the projects of UEF.
- 2.3. **Abuse:** UEF recognizes the following four categories of harm or abuse:
- 2.4. **Sexual abuse:** any kind of undesired behavior by an adult towards a child where a child starts to feel unsafe is sexual abuse. It also includes circumstances where there is an unacceptable risk that the child may be sexually abused. Such activity can include among other things, exhibitionism, exposing students to pornographic images or text, touching, and all other sexual activities; any sexual dealing with a child.
- 2.5. **Physical abuse:** Physical abuse occurs when an adult deliberately assaults a child or young person. Physical abuse can also include placing children in situations where they are at risk of being harmed, for example, locking children in rest rooms.

- 2.6. **Neglect:** Neglect is defined as persistent or severe inattention to the need of a child. Neglect is denying a child access to their basic needs including food, clothing, housing and health care. A child living in unhygienic conditions or being denied access to education are also forms of neglect as are failing to adequately protect a child or provide age appropriate levels of supervision. It also refers to maltreatment of a child resulting from inattention to his/her needs e.g. persistent inattention to the need of a struggling student is considered 'neglect' therefore an abuse.
- 2.7. **Psychological abuse:** Psychological abuse refers to the actual or likely adverse effect on the emotional and behavioral development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection.

3. **Scope**

- 3.1. This Policy applies to anyone involved with Ullens Education Foundation (UEF) and its projects including any staff member, board members, programme participants (i.e. volunteers, trainers) etc.

4. **Objectives**

- 4.1. To regulate all Ullens Education Foundation's programs
- 4.2. To make sure that each child is safe and protected from any sort of abuses and harassments.
- 4.3. To regulate perspectives and behaviors of the members, staff, volunteers, people associated with UEF and its projects
- 4.4. To put in place fair, secure and transparent reporting channels
- 4.5. Encourage staff involved directly with children to apply the skills needed to contribute to each child's development.
- 4.6. Ensure that all staff has the working conditions needed to contribute to each child's development.

5. **Values and Principles:**

- 5.1. Child protection is the right of children and the prime responsibility of all concerned people.
- 5.2. No child should be discriminated by anyone and anywhere on the basis of caste, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, sexuality, age, color, geographical location, language, culture, dress code, socio-economic status or dis/ability.
- 5.3. Any type of abuse, discrimination, exploitation and violence against children is not acceptable in any circumstance and at any cost.
- 5.4. UEF ensures that no child is abused, discriminated, exploited or oppressed in any program/activity of UEF. UEF is committed to run its any program in an efficient manner with commitment to children's rights.
- 5.5. UEF only collaborates or works in the partnership with person/s, organisation/s, agency/ies who unconditionally accept/s UEF's Child Protection Policy.

- 5.6. UEF respects and values children's meaningful participation in all programs.

6. **Policies**

- 6.1. UEF will work to increase participation and responsibility of family, community and other stakeholders in promotion of child protection.
- 6.2. UEF ensures meaningful participation of children in all activities related to cognitive, physical, emotional, social developments of all children aged 2 and ½ to 18 years of age.
- 6.3. Children who come in contact with UEF, will not face any abuse from anyone and anywhere. Their rights will be guaranteed.
- 6.4. Each child is unique in terms of learning and growing. This philosophy is unconditionally accepted in UEF's program delivery.
- 6.5. The member/s, volunteer/s, staff and other associated person/s of UEF cannot abuse, discriminate, exploit or use violence against any child on any basis.
- 6.6. UEF program children taking part in any activities will be under the supervision of an adult/s. No child is assigned any activity to be done in isolation or alone inside the school campuses or in the field trips.
- 6.7. If a female child is assigned any task, a female adult supervisor will be assigned.
- 6.8. UEF administration takes immediate action upon any complaint, which reports any form of sexual abuse, violence, bad touches, physical and/or verbal abuse or exploitation towards a child by the members, staff, volunteers and other person/s associated with UEF.
- 6.9. UEF is a child friendly institution and it adopts zero tolerance policy

7. **The Child Protection Code of Conduct**

UEF personnel shall:

- 7.1. Treat children with respect and dignity regardless of their age, color, gender, gender identity and expression, sexuality, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- 7.2. Not use any forms of languages or show any behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
- 7.3. Ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children
- 7.4. Not invite unaccompanied children in their offices unless they are at immediate risk or injury or in physical danger;
- 7.5. Not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary during field trips in an overnight stay.
- 7.6. Not use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media that exploit or harass children or access child exploitation material through any medium;
- 7.7. Not use any forms of corporal punishment on children

- 7.8. Comply with all relevant Nepalese and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour;
- 7.9. Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures;
- 7.10. Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence
- 7.11. Be visible when working with children and, wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children;
- 7.12. Listen to children and allow them to be engaged in decisions that may affect them;
- 7.13. Follow organizational policy and guidelines regarding the safety of children.
- 7.14. Be aware of situations that may present risks; take preventive measures as much as possible to minimize risks
- 7.15. Be visible while working with children in and outside the classroom, in excursions and school tours in and out of the country.
- 7.16. Ensure that accountability exists among staff so that potentially abusive behavior does not go unchallenged
- 7.17. Empower children by discussing with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem
- 7.18. Respect the rights of children and treat them fairly, honestly, and with dignity and respect
- 7.19. Encourage open communication. Let child know/feel they can talk to you about any situation
- 7.20. Reassure a child that his/her safety is your #1 concern
- 7.21. Tell a child/student it is okay to say NO – tell him/her to follow their instinct if an adult's approach is making him/her uncomfortable and unsafe.

Unacceptable Behaviors of UEF personnel: UEF personnel shall not

- Touch a child/student in an unacceptable manner specifically where a child is uncomfortable.
- Develop relationships with sexual inclination with a child/student
- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive
- Behave physically towards a child in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative or that which makes a child feel unsafe
- Ignore or participate in behavior of children that is illegal, abusive, or exposes the child to danger
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade a child/student
- Hit or otherwise physically assault children
- Do things for children of a private nature that they can do themselves
- Condone or participate in behavior of children that is illegal, unsafe, or abusive
- Discriminate against or show favoritism to particular children

8. **Recruitment and Reference Checking**

- 8.1. UEF will not knowingly permit any person to be employed or engaged as a volunteer if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- 8.2. At least three reference checks with former employers / referees will be conducted. The referees cannot include partners, spouse and/or other relatives. Referees will be asked about the applicant's suitability for the role to work with children and/or to have regular unsupervised contact with children. Referees will be asked whether they hold any concerns about the applicant, or if complaints were made about the applicant, in connection with working or having contact with children.
- 8.3. The interview process for candidates at UEF and its programs will also include behavior based interview questions that relate directly to working with children to probe the applicant's attitude, experience and approach to working with children relevant to the post applied for.
- 8.4. UEF and its programs have the right to dismiss, suspend or transfer any personnel who breach the child protection code of conduct.

9. **Steps for policy implementation:**

- 9.1. UEF will orientate the members, staff, volunteers and people associated with UEF about the policy regularly and will receive a written consent signed by every staff member. Child Protection training, including topics such as awareness raising and reporting processes will be provided to all UEF staff members on an annual basis
- 9.2. All stakeholders will be informed about UEF's child protection policy and it will be made easily available in UEF and its Program offices.
- 9.3. The information and complaints regarding violation of child protection will be seriously investigated upon and required actions will be taken.
- 9.4. If UEF and its program staff members, volunteers and other related personnel breach the conditions of the child protection policy, then necessary action will be taken as per UEF's Child protection Policy.

10. **Steps for policy implementation:**

WHEN A CHILD TRIES TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT ABUSE:

DO

- Let the child speak
- Listen carefully
- Take the child seriously
- Take your time. If you don't have time at that moment, explain that and tell the child when you will be available.
- Reassure the child that it is OK to talk to you
- Record what was said, and get the child to sign the account (if possible and appropriate)

- Consider medical attention
- Tell the designated supervisor without delay
- Tell the child what you will do next, i.e. you will speak to a supervisor

DON'T

- Promise to keep it a secret
- Stop the child from speaking
- Force the child recall what happened
- Ask leading questions
- Question unnecessarily
- Make assumptions
- Ask to see injuries requiring the removal of clothing
- Ridicule, reject, humiliate
- Delay in passing on your concern to the appropriate authority

11. **Reporting and Incident Response**

The following mechanism explains the steps to take if it is believed anyone bound by UEF's Child Protection Code of Conduct is violating it. Concerns should be reported as quickly as possible and measures should be taken to safeguard children and minimize any risks to them.

- 11.1. The staff member who believes that the Child Protection Code of Conduct is being violated should report the allegation to his or her immediate Line Manager. The Line Manager is then required to report the case to the **Child Protection Committee**. If the staff member is unwilling to report to the Line Manager for any reason, the report should be made to the Child Protection Committee directly.
- 11.2. Until proven, the report should be confidential. Reports should be delivered only to the persons specified in this reporting mechanism.
- 11.3. All allegations will be thoroughly investigated
- 11.4. The incident will be documented and investigated in accordance with the UEF's Incident Reporting and Response Procedure.
- 11.5. The incident will be investigated with full respect for the privacy of the accused and the alleged victim and information will be dispersed on a "need to know" basis with the primary concern being the rights and welfare of the people involved
- 11.6. The accused person will be given an opportunity to express their views/opinions/version of facts
- 11.7. The views of the alleged child victim will be considered in light of the documented evidence that children rarely lie about abuse.
- 11.8. Where the incident is reasonably proven to have occurred, appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken, including, but not limited to: Warning and/or Suspension; and/or Dismissal.
- 11.9. The disciplinary measure will depend on the nature and severity of the offence

11.10. Where an allegation is found to be false or unfounded, all efforts will be taken to ensure the rights of the accused person is upheld.

12. **Reporting to concerns**

Responses will vary according the nature of the concerns. In order to protect children, it may be necessary to take immediate action to ensure that the code is not broken again or further abuse cannot take place.

Internal Investigation

There may be a need for an internal investigation to gather evidence. The Child Protection Committee will carry this out with the help of other relevant staff if necessary.

Disciplinary Process

Failure to follow UEF'S Child Protection Code of Conduct is grounds for discipline. Disciplinary action will vary, depending on the offense, and serious offenses including sexual abuse will be considered gross misconduct resulting in immediate dismissal from employment, trusteeship, volunteer service, or internship.

*Staff or others investigated can lodge an appeal of the investigation's conclusions. Appeals should be made within seven days and the UEF BOARD will hear the appeal within the next seven days.

*In case of **Child to Child** abuse, the Child Protection Committee will decide based on the nature of the offense whether the child should be counseled, warned, suspended or rusticate from School.

13. Mandatory Reporters: Professionals Required to Report

The following members are mandated by this policy to report child maltreatment. Individuals designated as mandatory reporters typically have frequent contact with children. Such individuals may include:

- a) School Principal
- b) School Leadership Team members
- c) Teachers
- d) Classroom assistants
- e) Administrative staff
- f) Drivers
- g) Vehicle assistants
- h) School Nurses
- i) Kitchen staff

CONFIRMATION OF UEF'S CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT

I confirm that:

- I understand the principles, purpose, and intentions of the Code of Conduct.
- I understand that the Code of Conduct requires me to be aware and to protect children from all forms of abuse.
- I am aware I must report any concerns/suspect I have regarding child abuse or risks to children.
- I understand I must adhere at all times to UEF's Child Protection Code of Conduct.
- If working in a management capacity, I understand I must ensure that the Code of Conduct is operating effectively, and I must respond positively to any concerns raised with me.
- I understand that failure to comply with UEF's Child Protection Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action against me.

Name.....

Position.....

Signature.....

Date.....

FILING A REPORT FORM

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure or when the concern arises. The information given on an Incident Report Form should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child;
- The child's home contact details;
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else;
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information;
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay;
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries using the body chart to indicate the location of such bruises or injury. Also details of any indirect signs, such as behavioral changes;
- Details of witnesses to any incident/s;
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred;
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Details of the alleged abuser, if known.

