

**ETASHA Society**  
**Child Protection Policy**  
(Revised on 17.06.2020)



**Objective**

ETASHA Society aims to

- Create and maintain a secure work environment where it's Employees, Trainees, Volunteers, Interns and NGO Partners can work in an atmosphere free of assault, harassment, exploitation and intimidation caused by acts of Sexual Harassment within office premises and other locations directly related to our functioning.
- Creating 'child safe' environments, both internally and externally, where children are respected, protected, empowered and active in their own protection, and where Staff are skilled, confident, competent and well supported in meeting their protection responsibilities.
- Promoting the rights of children including their rights to be protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation. ETASHA takes active measures to ensure that children's rights to protection are fully realized.

**Statement**

The Child Protection Policy is ETASHA's statement of intent that demonstrates our commitment to safeguarding children from harm and makes clear to all in the organization and who come into contact with us what is required in relation to the protection of children, and that child abuse in any form is unacceptable to ETASHA Society.

ETASHA is committed to actively safeguarding children from harm and ensuring that children's rights to protection are fully realized. We take our responsibility to promote child safe practices and protect children from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form, very seriously. In addition, we will take positive action to prevent child abusers from becoming involved with ETASHA in any way and take stringent action against any ETASHA staff and / or partner who abuses a child. Decisions and actions in response to child protection concerns will be guided by the principle of 'the best interests of the child'.

ETASHA acknowledges its expectation that it's employees and others who work with ETASHA have children's best interests at the heart of their involvement with ETASHA.

This policy is endorsed by ETASHA's Governing Council members. The implementation and ongoing monitoring of the policy in both specifics and spirit is the responsibility of ETASHA's team members.

**Definitions under the Child Protection Policy (in compliance with POCSO Act, 2012)**

1. A Child is defined as any person under the age of 18 yrs.
2. Child sexual abuse includes touching and non-touching activity.
3. Activity includes:



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- touching a child's genitals or private parts for sexual pleasure
  - making a child touch someone else's genitals, play sexual games or have sex, penetrate or insert objects or body parts (like fingers, tongue or penis) inside the vagina, in the mouth or in the anus of a child for sexual pleasure Non-touching activity includes:
    - showing / sharing pornography to a child
    - deliberately exposing an adult's genitals to a child
    - photographing a child in sexual poses
    - encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts
    - inappropriately watching a child undress or use the bathroom
    - Uploading and downloading sexual images of children on the Internet (also referred to as child pornography). To view child abuse images is to participate in the abuse of a child.
4. Child Protection, within the scope of this policy, is defined as the responsibilities, measures and activities that ETASHA undertakes to safeguard children from both intentional and unintentional harm.

**Scope:**

**Child Protection Policy (CPP)**

The Child Protection Policy applies to everyone working with ETASHA. It encompasses the whole ETASHA and includes without limitation:

- All our centres including partner NGO centres and schools
- Any external location visited during the course of work.
- Staff at all levels - in office, in field or elsewhere.
- ETASHA Associates - these include board members, advisors, consultants, interns, volunteers, community volunteers, and the staff and/or representatives of partner organizations.
- ETASHA Visitors- These include funders, friends of ETASHA, and Service Providers & Vendors including entities providing logistic supports.

**Responsibilities under Child Protection Policy (CPP)**

1. ETASHA Society will impart special training to project staff, coming in contact with children in any manner (face to face, online or telephonically) on child safety & protection
2. ETASHA Society will ensure a police verification and background check on periodic basis, of every staff coming in contact with children.



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3. ETASHA staff, visitors and service providers must:

- a. Never abuse and /or exploit a child or act/ behave in any way that places a child at risk of harm.
- b. Never misuse any information or available DATA of children which can harm them in any manner.
- c. Report any child abuse and protection concerns they have in accordance with applicable police procedures. **This is a mandatory requirement for staff. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.**
- d. Respond to a child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with applicable office procedures.
- e. Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns and allegations.
- f. Contribute to an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights.
- g. Always seek permission from children (or, in the case of young children, their parent or guardian) before taking images (e.g. photographs, videos) of them. Respect their decision to say no to an image taken. Ensure that any image taken of children is respectful. Stories and images of children should be based on the child's best interest.
- h. Be aware that where concerns exist about the conduct of staff or associate in relation to Child protection and /or where there has been a breach of Child Protection Policy, this will be investigated under this policy either:
  - i. By consideration of referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under local laws within India and /or by ETASHA in accordance with disciplinary procedures. This may result in Disciplinary sanctions and/ or dismissal for staff.
  - j. ETASHA will sever all relations with any ETASHA Staff or partners who are proven to have committed child abuse.
  - k. Be aware that, if a legitimate concern about suspected child abuse is raised, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, any employee who makes false and malicious accusations will face disciplinary action. ETASHA will take appropriate legal or other action against ETASHA staff and visitors who make false and malicious accusations of child abuse.

4. ETASHA staff must not:

Disclose information that identifies anything about family or child or make it available to the general public unless that disclosure is in accordance with ETASHA policies and procedures.





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**Child Protection Committee**

To receive and effectively deal with child sexual abuse complaints, a Child Protection Committee (CPC) has been put in place by ETASHA Society wef 08.12.2018.

**The CPC consists of:**

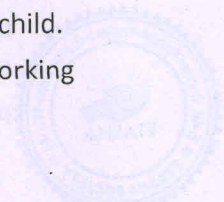
Name	Designation	Contact no.	Email ID
Ms. Anindita Kar Gupta	CPC Chairperson	7838643186	aninditakargupta@yahoo.co.uk
Mr. Mukesh Agarwal	Child Protection Officer	9311036808	mukeshaggarwal12@gmail.com
Ms. Shailly Awasthi	senior staff member	9650622938	shailly.awasthi@gmail.com
Ms. Shikha Gupta	External NGO/Legal member	9810413920	shikha@kmplegal.com

**Quorum:**

A panel of three (3) members is required to be present for the proceedings to take place. The panel shall include the CPC Chairperson and at least two (2) members.

**The CPC will:**

- Focus only on the complaints/suggestions received on child safety violations/abuse and not on any administrative issues.
- Discuss the concerns, record the same and give appropriate recommendations to the organisation's management for further action.
- Ensure the concerns are addressed and closed within a specified time.
- Maintain all registers, files and folders and documents related to child safety and protection.
- Seek external expert help as and when required.
- Convene as soon as an incident is reported and continue with periodic follow-up until closure of case.
- Cooperate with the police, judiciary and local administration in investigation of the reported incident, to the extent applicable by law, while keeping in mind the safety, security, right to privacy and confidentiality in the best interest of the child.
- Assess and address the impact of the incident on other children, adults working there and on the organisation as a whole.



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**The CPO will:**

1. Assist the CPC Chairperson during case proceedings.
2. Receive all complaints of child abuse, whether verbal or written and ensure confidentiality and record it in a register.
3. Maintain case files and records pertaining to the complaints/incident.
4. Follow mandatory reporting in case of safety violation including child abuse wherever legally mandated and coordinate with the police and local authorities and ensure that there is no attempt to cover up the incident, or influence the child's parents/guardian or other authorities.
5. Follow procedures where there are allegations of child abuse including against the Head of the institution/Chairperson of CPC.
6. Coordinate capacity building related to CPP.

**Procedures**

This section states what steps should be taken if it is believed that the Child Protection Policy is being violated:

**1. Reporting:**

Employees, Associates and Consultants of ETASHA should report their concerns to the CPO within 24 hours of observing a breach of the Child Protection Policy. All concerns or allegations should be submitted in writing. It is not the responsibility of the person first hearing or encountering a case of alleged or suspected abuse to decide whether or not abuse has taken place; it is their responsibility to immediately report the concern.

**2. The reporting should focus on:**

- a. Evidence that the Child Protection policy has been violated with relevant dates
- b. Potential / Actual Risks to the child/children
- c. Measures to safeguard children and minimize risk
- d. Action/next steps

**3. Ensure the safety of the concerned child:**

The CPO shall ensure that the child is removed from any imminent danger immediately by preventing contact with the person involved. The CPO will ensure that the child is not further questioned or interrogated.

**4. The CPO will within three days of receiving the complaint:**

- a. Conduct a risk assessment of the reported concerns and inform the relevant authorities as appropriate who will ensure that child is provided care and protection.





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- b. Put together all the evidence submitted
  - c. Prepare and communicate an appropriate response e.g. disciplinary process or urgent action if consequences of breach of Code are severe.
- 5. Informing parents / guardians:**  
The CPO will liaise with the partner NGO/school to ensure that the parents / guardians are informed about
- a. The complaint.
  - b. The internal inquiry procedures that will be followed to address the complaint
  - c. The confidentiality that will be maintained
  - d. The relevant local authorities that will be informed about the case details.
- 6. Internal Inquiries and Suspension:**
- a. The CPO in consultation with the Chairperson shall convene the CPC meeting within 24 hours of reporting of the incident to take further action and inform the relevant people accordingly.
  - b. The CPO will meet with the person who has reported the concern to ensure that facts, opinions, observations are recorded accurately and prepare an investigation report.
  - c. The CPC will decide whether the person responding to the complaint should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries. If the person responding to the complaint is at an outstation location, the CPC will decide on whether they should be asked to return to the main office.
  - d. Based on the outcome of the internal inquiry, the CPC will refer to the Disciplinary policy to assess the appropriate disciplinary outcome that will be implemented.
- 7. Documentation:**  
Written complaint submitted to the CPO should be signed and dated. Minutes of the meeting should be detailed and precise, focusing on what was said or observed, who was present and what happened. Speculation and interpretation should be clearly distinguished from reporting. All such records should be treated as confidential. It is the responsibility of each individual in possession of the information to maintain confidentiality.
- 8. External Reporting:**  
If there is a suspicion about any form of criminal behaviour taking place at a programme, the CPO will assess the risk and inform the appropriate local authorities immediately. The CPO will also look into any other external bodies like the host



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organisation, community, etc that need to be informed of the action and the possible risks and inform them accordingly.

The CPO may refer to the following external redressal mechanisms as appropriate:

- a. Child Welfare Committee (CWC) or
- b. Juvenile Justice Board or
- c. Child Helpline or
- d. The Department of Women and Child Development, Delhi /Other state

**Awareness**

- All the employees, Trainees, Volunteers, interns, Partners and Visitors shall have access to this Policy at any given point of time and clarification related to this Policy shall be addressed by the administrative team.
- A brief shall be given to all existing employees regarding the features of this Policy immediately on formulation of the Policy and to new employees during their initial induction.

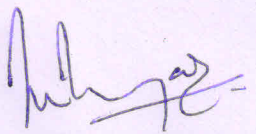
**Personal Conduct**

Unlawful conduct by ETASHA employees during office hours will not be permitted. Such conduct includes but is not limited to:

- any unlawful activity related to sexual abuse, sexual harassment and physically/ verbally abusive behaviour,
- Staffs are required to bear in mind the principles of the Child Protection Policy and heighten their awareness of how their behaviour may be perceived both at work and outside work.

This policy comes into effect from 31.03.2020 and is endorsed by ETASHA's Governing Council members. The implementation and ongoing monitoring of the policy in both specifics and spirit is the responsibility of ETASHA's team members.



  
**Dr. Meenakshi Nayar**  
President  
ETASHA Society