

Child Protection Policy

‘Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility’ for Icon for Child and Adult Nurturing (I-CAN) Social Enterprise



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Scope

This policy applies to all ICAN employees, Board Members, volunteers, interns, consultants and contractors.

Definitions

1. Child

For the purpose of this policy, the definition of a child is “**every human being below the age of 18**” as recognized by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child for which Pakistan is a signatory.

2. 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.

2.2 Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, and drowning. Giving young people inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.
- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, and inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young

people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill-treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

- **Bullying** may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying. It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).
- **Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.
- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

3 Principles/Code of Conduct

This policy applies to all employees of ICAN including Board Members, volunteers, interns, consultants and contractors. All children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief and sexual identity have equal rights to protection and freedom from abuse and exploitation as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

ICAN staff and partners undertaking business on behalf of ICAN that involves working or contact with children are expected to take a risk assessment approach and adhere to the following behaviours while they are performing those duties:

- a) treat all children with respect
- b) not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- c) not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual activity including paying for sexual services
- d) wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working near children
- e) not invite unaccompanied children into private residences, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
- f) not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case the supervisor's permission must be obtained, and ensuring that another adult is present if possible (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children)
- g) not to possess or access to any material that is abusive towards children.
- h) never use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material through any medium
- i) not use physical punishment on children
- j) comply with all relevant local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour in Pakistan
- k) immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures
- l) ICAN staff must obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child for work purpose. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided
- m) ICAN is against all forms of child labor and the staff should comply with all relevant legislation, including local labour laws in relation to child labour and they should immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures
- n) In line with local laws, children under the age of 18 years will not be hired for any employment at ICAN
- o) ICAN staff should immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures

p) ICAN staff should immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse

4 Awareness Program

Employees will be made aware of Child Protection policy at the time of joining for new employees and annually for existing employees.

It will be obligatory for ICAN staff to immediately report to the Managing Director or Program Manager if it is believed that an offence has occurred. If a member of staff felt the Program Manager and MD were not taking seriously, same should be immediately reported to Board.

Any violation of the Child Protection Policy could result in disciplinary action which may include but is not limited to:

- an employee's removal from a contract,
- reduction in benefits or termination of employment.

5 Child Protection in Recruitment And Screening

As part of its HR policies, ICAN Pakistan will only recruit and engage with the safest and most suitable staff, volunteers and partners to work with or have contact with children.

ICAN Pakistan has put in place robust recruitment screening processes for all personnel in contact with children. These recruitment procedures include:

- criminal record checks before engagement
- verbal referee checks

Besides this, additional screening measures (such as interview plans that incorporate behavioural-based interview questions) are in place specifically for positions requiring working with children.

6 Child Protection Training

ICAN will provide training and awareness raising for all persons covered under the scope of this policy to make them aware of their responsibilities to protect children from exploitation and abuse and to report concerns or allegations under the specified reporting procedures.

7 Reporting Process

1. Reporting suspected or actual child abuse or access or possession of material that is abusive towards children is mandatory for all to whom this policy applies.

2. Initially all concerns should be raised with the immediate supervisor. Where this is not possible or appropriate the Managing Director should be approached. If a member of staff felt the Program Manager and MD were not taking seriously, same should be immediately reported to Chair of Board.

3. Employees should consult the Managing Director or Program Manager if they are uncertain whether a specific action would be in violation of the Child Protection Policy policy.

8 Child Protection Incident Reporting & Investigation

ICAN Pakistan commits to developing and implementing a child protection incident reporting mechanism. This mechanism will require immediate, mandatory reporting of any suspected or alleged incidents of child exploitation or abuse or non-compliance with the ICAN Policy or Code of Conduct to the responsible persons within ICAN and to donors and other respective authorities. Efforts will also be made to make the reporting process accessible to the public so they can report concerns

As required, ICAN commits to thoroughly investigate allegations relating to the exploitation and abuse of children based on the principles of confidentiality and procedural fairness and a commitment to protect the rights of the child. As specified in employee and consultant contracts, anyone covered by the scope of this policy may be suspended or be transferred to more appropriate duties if subject to an investigation; Substantiated allegations of child exploitation, child abuse or breaches of the Child Protection Code of Conduct will be considered gross misconduct and may lead to the termination of contract.

9 Posting

This policy is part of ICAN Pakistan's Employees Services Rules and will be circulated annually to all persons covered under this policy.

10 Code of Conduct

Requiring all persons covered under this policy to adhere to the ICAN Child Protection Code of Conduct outlining acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in dealing with children. Short term consultants and contractors will be required to sign a Code of Conduct defined in ICAN Pakistan Child Protection Policy.