



## Child Protection Policy

Gender at Work India's goal is to build cultures of inequality and justice across the world. The organisation takes the rights of minors and children very seriously. In order to protect children with disabilities, Gender at Work India uses the available human rights instruments and relevant legislations such as the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (UNCRC and UNCRPD).

Gender at Work India recognises that child abuse may occur in all places regardless of culture, ethnicity, sex, caste, class or disability. We are committed to ensuring that in all its activities and those of its partners, the necessary steps are taken to protect the rights of children and children with disabilities, to safeguard their well-being:

- All employees, associates, consultants and partners must co-sign the Child Protection Policy.
- All employees, associates, consultants and partners ought to be made aware of the issue of child abuse in all forms.
- The Code of Conduct, underlying principles and guidelines are to be respected by all employees, associates, consultants, partners, donors, and others including volunteers, journalists, etc.
- The recruitment and selection criteria for employees, partners, vendors or any other persons related to Gender at Work India Trust will be subject to their affirmation and adherence to the Child Protection Policy.
- Failure to comply with the Child Protection Policy can result in termination of contract whether with an employee, associate, partner, vendor, or consultant.

### 1. Definitions and Terminologies

- A child is one who is below the age of 18 years.
- A child with disability, according to the UNCRPD is one who because of physical, mental sensory or intellectual disability, cannot effectively interact with others on an equal basis.
- Employee means and include employees of the organisation, whether working part-time, full-time, as interns or as volunteers.
- Partner includes the parent support groups, and related NGOs with whom we work.
- Vendor means any entity, either business or individual, contracted by Gender at Work India Trust to carry out services that further the goals and objectives of the organisation.
- Child abuse: The universal categories of child abuse (see the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child referenced above).
- Sexual abuse: Actual or threatened sexual exploitation of a child including all forms of sexual activity such as rape, defilement, pornography and incest.
- Physical injury: Actual or physical harm to any child or a failure to prevent physical harm or suffering.
- Emotional abuse: Persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves emotional ill treatment.
- Exploitation: Using a child for economic gain, or performing work that may be hazardous, or that interferes with the child's growth and development. This includes educational programmes that are focused on production rather than acquisition of skills, asking the child to perform excessive chores and tasks, asking children under the minimum labour age to perform paid labour, and keeping a child out of an educational facility to perform other tasks.

### 2. Code of Conduct for Child Protection

All staff, partners, volunteers, parent representatives must follow these rules to prevent, stop and report any and all abuse of children, and children with disabilities:

- Know the code of conduct.
- Treat children with respect and dignity regardless of race, colour, sex, religion and nationality.
- Be aware of children's vulnerability: generally, girls and children with disabilities are vulnerable and susceptible to child abuse, thus requiring special protection.
- Be aware of situation that may present risks (sports coaches/teachers being alone with children in the course of a project, taking film/photos or interview for work purpose/reporting).
- Plan and organise the work, workplace or visit to manage risks.

- As far as possible, be visible in working with children or visiting children.
- Participate in achieving a culture of openness to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns.
- Empower children and use the relevant verified channels to inform them of their rights.
- Report concerns or instances of child abuse to the designated person and authorities.
- Do not develop a physical or sexual relationship with children.
- Do not spend time with children alone away from others.
- Do not condone or participate in any behaviour towards children that may be illegal.
- Do not behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate including, fondling, kissing, or touching children in culturally insensitive ways.
- Do not administer corporal punishment.
- Do not act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children.
- Do not discriminate against children.
- Do not employ children to do domestic work as maids and casual labourers.
- Do not allow a child to be systemically neglected.

### 3. Guiding Principles

- The dignity and rights of the child are to be respected in every circumstance.
- In interviewing and reporting of children, special attention is to be paid to every child's right to privacy and confidentiality.
- All actions must be undertaken in the best interest of the child.
- While trying to determine the best interest of the child, their views are to be taken into account and given due weight in accordance with age and maturity.
- Those closest to the child/children are to be consulted in order to adequately assess the political, social and cultural ramifications of any reporting related to the child/children.
- Do not publish a story or an image which might put the child, siblings or peers at risk even when identities are changed, obscured or omitted.
- The Child Protection Policy takes into account local concepts of normal adult-child interaction, culture, religion, and local laws except in case where these are deemed to be contrary to the best interest of the child.

### 4. Guidelines for Using Media

Gender at Work India recognises media and technology as integral components in raising awareness and reporting on issues pertinent to the organisation's work and operations. These include: photography, video or film coverage, the internet including but not limited to social media. In relation to media use, Gender at Work India shall:

- Seek the consent of the child/children or their parents for any coverage that may involve them.
- Take images of children that are dignified and respectful.
- Ensure that the images of children cannot be interpreted as sexual or condone any other situation of abuse.
- Protect the safety and privacy of children and their families by adhering to the ethical principles identification.
- Not promise returns for any coverage.
- The images and messages may only be used with the explicit consent of Gender at Work India Trust.
- Journalists, reporters, photographers, filmmakers and other media/marketing professionals must also adhere to the aforementioned guidelines.

### 5. Guidelines for Interviewing Children

- Do not harm any child. Avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental, insensitive to cultural values that may place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, grief, or pain from any traumatic events.
- Do not discriminate against children on the basis of sex, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.

- Ensure that the child or guardian knows that reporters are talking to them and explaining the steps involved in the interaction while observing the highest ethical standards.
- Obtain permission from the child and their guardian for all interviews, videotaping and whenever possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing.

#### **6. Guidelines for Reporting on Children**

- Do not stigmatise any child; avoid categorisations or description that expose a child to negative reprisals.
- Always provide an accurate context for the child's story.
- Avoid using negative descriptions like "lame, limping, crippled", etc.

Always change the name and obscure the identity of the child.

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