

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ACD)

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Acronym

ACD	Association for Community Development
CRM	Complaints and Response Mechanism
CPP	Child Protection Policy
DIC	Drop in Center


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I. INTRODUCTION

Association for Community Development (ACD), a human rights based organization, has been working with and for the poor, marginalized and vulnerable people in general and women and children in particular for their human rights, mainstreaming gender equality, and social justice on northern part of Bangladesh.

ACD feels necessity to develop a safe environment and sound psychosocial practices for both the children, its staffs and volunteers who are working with/for children and responsible to protect the rights of children in its program. The **Child Protection Policy** is a strategy to develop safeguard and conducive psychosocial environment to protect all children (including child in special needs) from suffering, harmful environment and make the organization child safe. The policy was developed in 2010 and approved by the board. The policy will be reviewed at least every three years which will be approved by the board.

ACD is committed to respecting the highest standards in terms of efficiency, responsibility and transparency in its activities.

To this end, ACD's CPP:

- Encourages prevention
- Promotes detection
- Sets out a clear investigation process
- Sets out a mechanism of sanctions
- Detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are collected, processed and stored securely, in accordance with the relevant data protection policy

The purpose of this policy is aimed at guiding ACD and must be considered together with:

- ACD's Code of Conduct
- ACD's Human Resource Policy
- ACD's Gender Policy
- ACD's Policy against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- ACD's Data Protection Policy
- ACD's Social Media Policy
- ACD's Communications Policy

This policy demonstrates ACD's commitment to protect children within the framework of its internal procedures and overall external coordination, and in particular for the implementation of child protection program and the mainstreaming of this issue during all its interventions. The policy ensures that ACD has implemented procedures to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation regarding children, as well as any violation or non-compliance with this policy or any other related procedures.


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II. CHILD PROTECTION PRINCIPLES

In order to reach the above mentioned objectives, ACD is committed to raise awareness among all its staffs, to carry out a prevention policy and, if required, to sanction behavior that contravenes the present policy. The welfare of a child is always paramount. The partners working with ACD will have to comply with the policy and their own policy that meet the standards. ACD will be responsible to assist the partners meet the minimum requirements on protection. ACD will terminate of any contractual relationship as per Article 1 in the event of a breach of this policy and legal step will be taken as per the UNCRC and relevant children's acts of Bangladesh.

(a) Awareness:

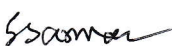
Recruitment and Selection of Staff: ACD prevents the employment/deployment of inappropriate individuals through rigorous selection processes, (i) written examination and face-to-face/video conference interviews, (ii) verification of experiences and references, including - where possible - obtaining additional documents provided by third parties for staff in direct contact with children. Persons with registered crime record cannot be selected for ACD's any program. Criminal activities include murder, sexual offences, offences and convictions for aggravated assault, indecent behavior, abduction crimes, and crimes related to child prostitution and child pornography.

- Job vacancy adverts refer to the child protection policy.
- Involvement of experienced staffs working on child protection in the recruitment committee.
- One member of the recruitment panel will be trained or is familiar with issues of child protection. In the interview, question/s will be asked focusing on understanding and practice on child protection.
- A job applicant has to sign a personal declaration that s/he is not involved in criminal convictions (provide a police check where available).
- A newly recruited staff will have to sign on appointment letter, code of conduct, and child protection policy. Child safeguarding responsibilities will be included in all job descriptions.

(b) Prevention:

Training/Orientation: As a part of recruitment, ACD provides training to its staff and partners on the Code of Conduct, Child Protection Policy and the reporting and responding of all forms of violations. Staffs who have possibility of contact with children and child-related activities will receive training and may develop their skills on the subject, including (but not limited to) child protection policy, prevention and response to violence against children and integration of child protection into programs. The staffs employed or engaged by ACD will have the access to regular training on child safeguarding that is appropriate for their role and responsibilities, beginning at the induction/orientation stage and to understand the reporting mechanism.

Selection of Partners and Sub Contractors: ACD does not sign contracts with partners or suppliers who cannot respect the code of conduct and professionalism, applying the principle of "knowledge of its supplier" for all national, international and restricted calls for tenders. Suppliers, as far as possible, are required to sign an ethical declaration clearly stating their responsibilities for the protection of children prior to the finalization and signing of service or supply contracts.


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Strict Application of the ACD's Code of Conduct: All staffs and those of partner organizations must, within the framework of their contract, strictly apply the Code of Conduct. The Code explicitly prohibits harassment, abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

(c) Protection:

All child protection actions and decisions are taken in the best interests of the child and put the safety and welfare of the child first. Depending on the seriousness of the facts found regarding policy violation, ACD will provide support i.e. emotional, psychological and physical needs, shelter, health care, legal, etc. to the child if needed.

(d) Action in case of policy violation:

Identification of fact/incident: If any behavior violating the requirements of this policy is reported to ACD, ACD is committed to carry out a thorough, impartial and timely investigation to fully investigate the allegations. Aware of the importance of a rapid response to allegations concerning child protection, ACD is committed to do its utmost to ensure that the reports relating to the present policy can be treated as a priority. If it is confirmed that a person associated with ACD has committed an act of violence against a child, a criminal act or any act that would violate children's rights or contravene the principles and norms listed in this document, ACD will take disciplinary measures as well as any other action adapted to the facts and circumstances.



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III. INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION

Article 1: Scope of Application

The policy applies to all ACD staff, board members, volunteers, adviser, visitors, vendors, development partners, beneficiaries (as victims), stakeholders, consultants, other associated entities and person employed by an entity that carries out missions for ACD.

Article 2: Definition

Definitions meant by the key terms being used in the policy.

Child	Any human being under 18 years of age.
Child safeguarding	The responsibility that organizations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programs do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organization has about children's safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.
Physical Abuse	Actual or potential physical harm as a result of an interaction or lack of interaction, that is reasonably within the power of a person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. This may be a single incident or repeated acts.
Sexual Abuse	Any attempted to use body for in exchange of money/service/social or political favor of someone. Online sexual exploitation, pornography, prostitution and child trafficking for sexual abuse are examples. <i>Consensual clause:</i> "consensual sexual activity with a child over the legal age of consent of the country in which s/he lives and/or in which the offence occurs, but below 18 years (although not a crime) will be dealt with as a breach of this Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct."
Commercial or other exploitation	The use of a child for work or other activity in the interest of others. This includes, but is not limited to, trafficking of children and children forced or recruited into armed conflict work, sex trade, drugs smuggling. These activities are harmful to the child's physical and mental health, education and spiritual, moral or emotional social development.
Emotional Maltreatment	Failure to provide appropriate and supportive conditions for development, including a person to whom the child can relate as a priority, allowing the child to develop a range of stable emotional and social skills consistent with his or her personal potential and the context of the society in which s/he lives. It may also include acts that cause or are very likely to cause harm to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social health or development. Such acts must reasonably be the responsibility of the parent or person exercising a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. These include restriction of movement, denigration, use of the child as a scapegoat or sufferer, threat, intimidation, discrimination, bad name-calling, yelling/screaming/ cursing, teasing, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, etc. or any other non-physical form of hostile treatment or rejection.


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ACD Staff	Any person employed by ACD and/or one of its sister organizations.
Governance	Any member of General Body and Executive Committee to participate in the managerial and administrative bodies of ACD. In particular, the members and boards of directors and supervisory boards are Governance members.
Partner	A partner who is assigned to implement one or more projects or activities and budget has been allocated for this purpose.
Stakeholder	Individuals or groups, with or without a legal personality, who directly or indirectly, voluntarily or involuntarily, contribute to, participate in or benefit, in any way, from the actions, programs and activities of ACD and/or one of its sister organizations.
Associated Entities	Legal persons under private or public law who play an active role in project implementation but not responsible for managing any budget.
Beneficiaries	Any person who benefits, directly or indirectly from ACD's programs.
Vendor	A third party, individual or group, with or without legal personality, who directly or indirectly provides or supply any type of goods and/or services to ACD and/or one of its sister organizations, whether for a fee or not.
Consultant	A third party, individual or group, with or without legal personality, who directly or indirectly provides any type of consulting services to ACD and/or one of its sister organizations, whether for a fee or not.

Article 3: Purpose of the Policy

1. Implement the mechanisms of child protection for ACD staffs and other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy.
2. Specify the rules on child protection and child abuse prevention that ACD staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must observe.
3. Inform third parties of the conduct that they are entitled to expect from ACD staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy.

Article 4: Information and Adherence to the Policy

1. ACD staffs as well as the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, are required to follow in accordance with this policy and must therefore be aware of and have understood its provisions and any changes. When they are unsure of how to proceed, they should seek the advice of the Team Leader of Child Protection Unit or immediate supervisor.
2. ACD staffs as well as the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, who are responsible to negotiate the terms of conditions of employment of any ACD staff, must ensure that staff is aware of and commits to the full respect of this policy.


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3. It is the responsibility of ACD staff with managerial responsibilities and other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, to ensure that staffs under their supervision comply with this policy and to take or propose appropriate disciplinary measures as sanction against any violations of its provisions.
4. ACD will review the provisions of this policy at regular intervals.

IV. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Article 5: Neutrality

ACD staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, must fulfill their duties in a neutral and apolitical manner, in accordance with the law, legitimate instructions and ethical rules relating to their roles.

Article 6: Impartiality

In the context of their professional roles and/or their missions, ACD staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, must act in accordance with the law and exercise their discretionary power in an impartial manner, only relevant circumstances into consideration.

Article 7: Confidence of Stakeholders

ACD staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, have a duty to conduct themselves at all times in a way that reflects and upholds ACD's values of integrity, impartiality and efficiency and contribute to strengthen the confidence of all stakeholders.

Article 8: Protection of Privacy

All the necessary measures must be taken to ensure that the privacy of ACD staff and of the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, is appropriately respected; as a result, the declarations provided for this policy must remain confidential, unless otherwise provided for by law.


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V. CHILD PROTECTION MECHANISM

Article 9: Importance of Prevention

1. ACD staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy shall be sensitized on child rights. To this end, ACD is training staffs on ACD's Code of Conduct, this policy and specifically informing about the need to report any form of child abuse or child protection incident.
2. ACD staff who are in direct contact with children are entitled to receive special training in particular on Child Protection Policy, prevention and response to child abuse as well as integration of child protection into programs.
3. ACD staff, as well as the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy shall actively protect the child in particular through attention, prevention and response to all forms of abuse or child protection incident as defined in Article 2 of this policy.

Article 10: Prevention and Identification Mechanism

1. ACD fully upholds principles of protection of victims and has developed mechanisms that can contribute to prevent child abuse such as:
 - Signing of the Code of Conduct by the staff in order to clarify unacceptable behavior and in particular child ill-treatment or negligence;
 - Information to the beneficiaries of existing remedies (notably through **Complaint and Response Mechanism-CRM**) allowing to sensitize all stakeholders of the projects and to ensure that the field teams maintain a respectful dialogue with the beneficiaries;
 - Implementation of **trainings and awareness sessions** to train the teams, particularly for staff exposed to working with minors or the most vulnerable population;
 - Identify risk factors on an ongoing basis and in particular throughout the project cycle.
2. ACD staff responsible for recruiting, monitoring or directing others employed by ACD must be careful to prevent the hiring or deployment of inappropriate individuals in direct contact with children.
3. ACD staff shall ensure that no ACD partner or subcontractor in any form of direct or indirect contract in their life-time with children if they have already been convicted of, or registered on lists or registers for, offences of child abuse, within the meaning of this policy and regardless of the legal qualification retained by the national courts.
4. As soon as ACD is aware of, any person who has been convicted of, or registered on lists or registers, for offences of child abuse, within the meaning of this policy and regardless of the legal qualification retained by the national courts, shall not be any time of possible contact with children, within the framework of ACD's programs.
5. Any ACD staff, partner or subcontractor in direct, indirect or possible contact with children must receive orientation/ child protection awareness training and certify that they have read and comply with the provisions of this policy and must demonstrate the highest standards of behavior and conduct towards children both in their private and professional lives. Training attendance should be preserved as the record.


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Article 11: Code of Conduct

It is strictly forbidden for ACD staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy, directly or indirectly, voluntarily or involuntarily, to participate, organize or benefit, by any means whatsoever, from any form of child abuse as defined in Article 2 of this policy.

ACD staff and the other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy never:

- Develop physical or sexual relationship with children or one that could any way be deemed exploitation or abusive.
- Act in ways that may be abusive, exploitative, physically or emotionally harmful or act in ways which places a child at risk of this.
- Behave physically in a manner that is appropriate (for example fondle, hug, kiss or touch children in a culturally insensitive way) or behave sexually.
- Sleep in the same room or bed with a child.
- Use corporal punishment or otherwise physically assault children.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against, show unfounded differential treatment to, or favor particular children.
- Let children do domestic or other labor which is inappropriate given their age or development stage which interferes with their education or which places them at risk of injury.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Bring children to stay overnight at their home unsupervised.
- Take photos unless taken prior approval from the children (if under under age, permission from parents) and the child should be well dressed up.

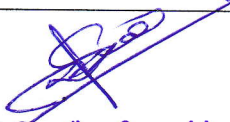
If anyone is proved to be guilty for child abuse, ACD will sack immediately and will not keep further retation with the staff(s). If needed, legal action will be undertaken. In case of false aquisition given by staff and if any staff hide the child violation incident which occurred by other staffs and if it is proved through investigation then the remedial measure will be taken agasint him/her.

Article 12: Visitor's Code of Conduct

Children's consent must be taken before interviewing any children.

Do's	Don't
▪ Share objective of meeting with the children. ▪ Sign code of conduct (shelter home or DIC). ▪ Follow visiting hour (9 am to 5pm) but need management permission to meet with children. ▪ Ask simple questions.	▪ Develop relationship with children who could in anyway be deemed exploitative or abusive. ▪ Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive. ▪ Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse. ▪ Take individual interview or closed door interview. ▪ Engage in any form of inappropriate touching even in fun. ▪ Ask case history and oversee victims' personal files. ▪ Take photographs, recording, video footage, drawing and writing.


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	▪ Offer gifts/chocolates or collect contact details. ▪ Cross check the children's daily routine. ▪ Force to answers question.
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Article 13: Photographs of Children

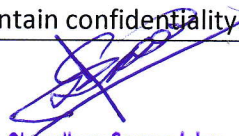
1. Taking and distributing pictures of children is not allowed for ACD staff in the framework of their professional duties.
2. ACD can share case study, photos and use social media to communicate its work or to raise funds. For this, ACD will have to follow its social media policy and communications policy.
3. Only persons duly authorized by ACD Executive Director can take photos of children in connection with ACD Programs
4. Authorized persons shall:
 - Comply with local practices and restrictions related to the reproduction of personal images before photographing or filming a child;
 - Obtain the child's express verbal consent and the written consent of the child's parent or guardian before photographing or filming the child. Within this framework, the objective and the use of the produced photographs will have to be explained;
 - Ensure those photographs, films, videos and other representations present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children must be dressed and must not pose in a manner that could be considered provocative or sexually suggestive;
 - Ensure that images are honest representations of context and reality.
5. In addition, authorized persons shall:
 - Obtain the express consent of the child and the written consent of the child's parent or guardian before using an image for publications, advertising, fundraising, advocacy or other purposes, in print or online. The explicit (unwritten) consent of the child's parent or guardian is sufficient if the photos are taken in the private home. The purpose and use of the photographs will be clearly specified to the consenting party;
 - Obtain explicit consent from the child, but not necessarily from the child's parent or guardian, for the images and photos with children from behind or at a distance not identifiable;
 - Not reveal the identity of the information or disclose information such as to enable children to be identified or located in the image through the name of the photo files, as well as the metadata or descriptions and texts associated with the photos, in the context of the dissemination, sending and publication in all their forms of electro-technical images ;
 - Not publish identifiable photos of children on social networks or any other online media without the formal approval of ACD's Child Protection Unit.

Article 14: Investigation and Reporting Mechanisms

ACD staffs who consider to be a witness of child abuse which may be in violation of or contravenes to the present policy, must report it to Team Leader of Child Protection Unit through **hotline number** and initial report by **SMS and phone call**. Cases of misuse of complaint mechanisms may be subject to sanctions.

▪ Prepare written report within 24 hours and share with Team Leader of Child Protection Unit ▪ Report child abuse concerns to appropriate authority only and maintain confidentiality.


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- Follow the standardized reporting format.
- Committee formation.
- Requests, where appropriate, further clarification and evaluation of the complaint.

Article 15: Report to Stakeholders

1. ACD wishes to support people who are witnesses or victims of violations of the policy. ACD intends to facilitate stakeholders reporting for any violation of this policy. Any stakeholder as defined in this policy, who is a witness or victim of the violation of the policy, can report to ACD through the CRM.
2. ACD must ensure that any stakeholder who reports a case as described above on the basis of reasonable suspicions and in good faith does not suffer from any harm as a result.

Article 16: ACD Investigation in case of Reporting by Stakeholder

1. Stakeholders may report through CRM any cases of suspected child abuse or incident.
2. A response via the CRM will be provided upon receipt of the complaint. This response:
 - details process to be followed in the event of suspicion of child abuse;
 - Requests, where appropriate, to provide further clarification and elevation of the complaint.
3. ACD staff and other entities referred to in Article 1 of this policy must:
 - cooperate in the investigation conducted by ACD;
 - keep all records of suspected involvement in such cases that may be required in case of investigation;
 - Preserve the confidentiality of all allegations.

Article 17: Investigation Authority

The **Child Protection Unit** is responsible to ensure effective implementation of the policy for the welfare of children by safeguarding their rights from abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation; and encouraging meaningful child participation.

Child Protection Focal Point Person and Position: The Team Leader of Child Protection Unit will be the **Child Protection Focal** Person to be posted at Head Office of ACD. S/he will keep close contact with other members of the unit.

Number of Member: Unit consists of 7 persons: i. senior management ii. shelter home iii. Human Resource Unit iv. program staff working on child protection v. two children	Responsibility of Child Protection Unit: The Team Leader (Child Protection Focal Point Person) is responsible to ensure the effective implementation of the Child Protection Unit and respond to policy violation as per policy. The name and contact number of the focal person will be displayed at child protection policy information board. Unit's responsibilities: • Module development on CPP for all level of staffs. Customize training module as when necessary. • Arrange training for staffs, vendors, board members on CPP and
Member selection	


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process: The unit members will be selected for one year by participation of all level of staffs (top to lower level) and children.	procedures. Making an easy, understandable CPP to all. • Oversee the newly recruited staffs have signed CPP while getting the appointment letter. • Consult either through focus group discussion or one-to-one consultation with children of Shelter home, Drop in Center, Socialization Center and child led organization (Child Rights Forum, Child Cultural Group, Adolescent Group, etc.) on child protection issue. • Orient the children about their own code of conduct through relevant staffs.
Process of member selection: Members will be nominated by arranging a consultation involving staffs of various projects, felid level staffs, children, team lead of the various program supporting units of ACD.	• Develop conductive and child friendly environment which respect and protect the rights of children and ensure the quality care and standards of services for the children. • Regular monitor and supervise to ensure that the staffs are in the tract of policy and ensure care for the children and also identify the areas of professional and service development. • Develop child protection situation assessment and monitoring • Documentation (training report, meeting minutes, FGD report, photos, module, materials, etc.) • Attend monthly meeting of Drop in Center/Shelter Home/managers meeting/staff annual workshop.

Article 18: Sanction for Policy Violation

Disciplinary Sanction: The violation of the ACD's Child Protection Policy is **zero tolerance**. If any staff hide the child violation incident which occurred by other staffs and if it is proved through investigation then the punishment will ranging from warning to termination of the employment contract for serious misconduct, with no notice and no payment of compensation. If needed, legal action may be undertaken.

Other Sanctions: ACD reserves the right to use the full range of contractual sanctions, up to the termination of any contractual relationship, in the event of a breach of this policy by any entity referred to in Article 1 of this policy.

Reporting to Competent Authorities: ACD has the right depending on the seriousness of the facts found, to report to the competent prosecution authorities the facts constituting child abuse or child protection incident.

Article 19: Risk Assessments and Safe Programs

A risk assessment examines all aspects of its service from a safeguarding perspective, to establish whether there are any practices or features of the service that have the potential to put children at risk. ACD's Child Protection Unit and/or relevant Project Coordinator will be responsible to asses risk to children from all organizational functions and develop strategies to minimize those risks.

- A risk assessment of all ACD's operations, programs and project activities will be conducted.
- Risk mitigation strategies will be developed, which will minimize the risk to children, and incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of programs, operations and activities which involve or impact upon children.


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Template of Risk Assessment Tool

Risk no.	Who is at risk?	What factors place children at risk?	What is the risk?	What controls are in place?	Risk rating H,M,L	What additional agreed controls are to be put in place?	By whom?	By when?

Article 20: Monitoring and Review

The Child Protection Unit is responsible to develop yearly plan, reporting and monitoring of the policy. The plan will be reviewed on quarterly basis to track progress on policy implementation. ACD will develop a M&E framework to track progress on child safeguarding and perform reputation checks for partners and check their compliance. If needed, ACD will assist partners to strengthen their systems for monitoring the performance in the area of child safeguarding.

Template of Implementation Plan:

Area of action	Indicators of success	Means of Verification	Frequency	Responsibility chart	Implementation deadline
POLICIES/ GUIDELINES					
PROCESS/ SYSTEMS					
ROLES AND RESPONSABILITIES					
CAPACITY BUILDING					


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Annex 1: Primary Information Collection Format

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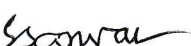
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Primary Information Collection Format

1.	Name & Address of the child	
2.	Name & Address of abuser/suspected person	
3.	Details of the incident (including information of support services, rescue, legal steps)	
4.	Time	
5.	Name of Place	
6.	Type of Abuse	
7.	Recommendations of reporter	

Report prepared by:

Signature	
Name	
Designation	
Date	


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Annex 2: Final Report Format

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FINAL REPORT FORMAT

1.	Name & Address of the child	
2.	Name & Address of abuser/suspected person	
3.	Details of the incident and overall observation	
8.	Recommendations (specific)	

Prepared by:

	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3
Signature			
Name			
Designation			
Date			


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Particulars	Date	Remarks
Child Protection Policy development	2010	
1 st review/updated	8. August. 2012	
2 nd review/updated	15. July. 2019	
Updated	09. 12. 2020	

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