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**Antenna Foundation Nepal (AFN)**

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**Children Safeguarding and Protection Policy 2019**

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July 2019

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**1. Preamble**

Safeguarding is the responsibility that an organization needs to ensure that their members, staffs, partners and vendors do no harm children during implementation of programs and operations. They do not expose children to the risk of discrimination, neglect, harm and abuse.

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children's health or development
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process and focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. It also includes measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse.

Engaging with children is the heart of our responsibility as a public services content producer and broadcaster. AFN engages with millions of children and young people every year through the content and services that we provide.

In all that we do, AFN has a legal duty to ensure that the children with whom we engage have a right to equal protection from all types of harms or abuse, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity; an obligation we take very seriously.

AFN has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse including online grooming, possession and distribution of child abuse voice and images. Such behavior will attract AFN's Child Protection policy including disciplinary action and potentially dismissal of the employment. If AFN becomes aware of past or current convictions or upheld disciplinary for gross misconduct that suggest there may be a risk to children, these will be considered in accordance with relevant legislation and alongside the requirements of the Child Protection policy.

**2. Objectives of this Policy**

- To ensure a culture within AFN where safeguarding children, including child protection, is everybody's business.
- To inform all staff, including independents who are commissioned to make program for the AFN, contractors and freelancers, of their responsibilities to safeguard children in all areas of the AFN.
- To ensure that staff know what to do if they are concerned about the welfare of a child or concerned about the behavior of an adult who works with children.
- To ensure staff know where they can go to for advice and support if they are not sure about any aspect of working with children.

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### 3. Scope of the Policy

Everyone has a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, regardless of how a child might come into contact with us (e.g. whether as an audience, vocal artist, partner, visitor to AFN events/premises or through AFN social media).

- This policy applies to all staff working for the AFN, Members, Vendors and Consultant regardless of seniority or role.
- The child protection policy and safeguarding children guidance apply to all children up to the age of 18 years.

### 4. Commitment to implement this policy

To demonstrate AFN's commitment to Child Protection Policy the following steps have been taken:

- The Policy has been approved by the AFN Board.
- The Policy is an integral part of AFN Employees Terms and Conditions.
- The Policy is embedded in AFN's operations.

#### 4.1 Awareness & Training

Awareness and training underpin Child Protection Policy. AFN will ensure that all employees are aware of the types child abuses and the things to be followed regarding child protection and should also be aware of the reporting channels. All staff will be provided with orientation about the content and scope of the policy after the endorsement of this policy from the Executive Board. During the annual orientation and as part of the induction program new staff, following subjects as they relate to Child Protection Policy:

- Child Protection, safe guarding, abuse (online and physical) and risks
- Consent and due process
- Steps to take if child is abused or harmed
- Responsibilities for handling allegations and inquiries into cases of child abuse or harm at AFN
- The role of the Executive Committee, Executive Director, Managers of Program Operations, AFN's legal Advisor, Audit Committee, Procurement committee, Recruitment committee and members
- Available remedies and measures to be applied when a child is abused
- Measures to ensure that third parties are aware of AFN's Child Protection Policy.

AFN Staff planning to work with children in any capacity must read and sign AFN's Children safeguarding and protection policy prior to any activity. This will provide a basic understanding of best practice at the AFN.

### 5. Child Abuse

- Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can also be about a lack of love, care and attention. We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be as damaging to a child as physical abuse.
- An abused child can experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. It can often happen over a period of time, rather than being a one-off event, and increasingly it can happen online.

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- We know that children are more vulnerable to abuse because they have a disability, or because they are experiencing parental and child mental health issues, bullying, parental or child substance misuse, such as drugs or alcohol, and behavioral issues including exclusion from education, social isolation etc.

**5.1 Types of child abuse**

- **Physical Abuse** is deliberately hurting a child causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.
- **Emotional Abuse** is the emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child. It is sometimes called psychological abuse and can cause children serious harm. It may lead to a child thinking that they are worthless, unloved and inadequate. It may include expecting a child to be able to do more than their stage of development would allow, such as expecting a baby to feed themselves, be toilet trained or not to cry, as well as being over protective and stopping children from having opportunities to explore or participate in normal social interaction. It can also include seeing or hearing domestic abuse, being subject to or witnessing bullying (including cyber bullying) which can cause a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger. Emotional abuse is a factor in all forms of abuse although it may exist alone.
- **Neglect** is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs. It is dangerous and children can suffer serious and long-term harm. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal alcohol or drug misuse, but once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or a care giver failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, lack of supervision, access to medical care or keeping the child safe from danger. It may also include unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.
- **Sexual Abuse** is when a child is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This does not have to be physical contact, but it could also involve children looking at, or being the subject of, sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult men; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- **Grooming** is defined as developing the trust of an individual or his or her family for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Grooming can happen both online and in person.
- **Online Abuse** is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks or playing games online. Sexual abuse can happen online too.

**6 Editorial and Safeguarding Considerations**

- Program production team have a duty of care to children taking part in our content production. Editorial Policy must be consulted when there is a risk of harm to children either participating in Outreach events, program or as the subject of an audio visual program. Additionally where there is a risk of harm to children, or where there is potential for child safeguarding issues to arise, guidance must also be sought from the HR department.
- This will assist content makers in ensuring that robust measures and procedures are in place to mitigate any risks to children that might otherwise be posed as a consequence of their participation and ensure that appropriate action is agreed, followed up and placed on record.

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**7 Code of Conduct**

- The AFN has a Code of Conduct to which all staff working with children, in whatever capacity, must adhere. The importance of this Code is that it makes explicit the behavior that is expected when working within any environment that includes children and therefore makes any deviation from the Code of Conduct easily identifiable. It is not meant to inhibit normal interactions with children, but rather to support respectful relationships between AFN staff and children.

**8 Bringing children into work**

- AFN premises are places of work and it is therefore not possible to bring your child into AFN Offices for a work. This rule applies at all times regardless of whether you are staff, guest, consultant, artist, vendors or talent.
- While it is understood that people may wish to bring their child to visit an event or production that they are working. The person responsible for the production or event, should ensure that child in AFN office or event are not for work.
- Supervision of the child must remain the responsibility of the parent at all times and production staff must not be asked or expected to provide care and supervision. It is also forbidden for a child who is not directly involved in the event or production to wait unsupervised for their parent in dressing rooms, green rooms, back stage etc., while their parent is performing or working.
- When engaged on any AFN commissioned programs that involves a child or children in any way, AFN requires consent from their parents.

**9 Risk Assessment**

When planning to work with children, a risk assessment must be carried out which consider all aspects of how a child may suffer harm, including abuse (physical, emotional, neglect, sexual and online grooming or abuse) and how the child will be safeguarded such as having a child protection policy and Code of Conduct, child protection training for production and artist, obtaining appropriate consent, working hours, a safe environment and transport and use of social media for the child.

**10 Consent**

Informed consent (written) from the child, parent, legal guardian or organization with parental responsibility for the child must always be obtained in advance of working with children in any capacity and documented evidence of consent must be kept. Consent form is attached with this policy.

**11 Online and Social Media**

**Children as contributors** - when engaging with children as contributors it is particularly important to consider the role of social media and the Internet. The use of social media and the Internet is an intrinsic part of life for many children and you must make sure that young people understand the impact of appearing in AFN content, and what the implications can be for anyone active on social

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media. Children under 13 years of age are not permitted to have an account by many social media services, but research suggests that this is not strictly adhered to and some 10-12 year olds will have their own account. Therefore productions should make sure that the children (and their parents) know how to keep themselves safe while online.

**AFN staff, Volunteer, Intern, Consultant and Supporting Artists** - AFN has a zero tolerance to any form of abuse of children including the inappropriate use of any computers, mobile phones, video/digital cameras or other electronic devices to commit online grooming, possess, distribute or create child abuse images. Disciplinary action which is appropriate and justifiable will be taken if anyone is found to be in breach of the above.

## 12 Reporting Child Abuse cases

AFN Staff Members should report any suspected abuse to HR Manager or directly to the EC by email, telephone or face-to-face, in order of preference. All reasonable allegations will be treated seriously and systematically, and will be properly investigated.

*Decision Making Structure* -The Finance and Administrative Manager (FAM) has been delegated overall responsibility for the organizational response in the case of a reported or suspected child abuse. The EC will be informed of all developments related to cases and will be involved when there is a need to escalate the process, for example by involving the police. Care should be taken to ensure that those involved in overseeing child safeguard and protection response do not have managerial responsibilities in the area(s) affected.

## 13 Disciplinary Action

Where an investigation reveals that AFN Staff Member has committed abuse against child rights, the EC will pursue disciplinary or legal action. Disciplinary action for abuse, unless prevented by country's legal restrictions, will result in immediate termination of employment and for Partners immediate termination or suspension of the contract.

## 14 Follow-up Actions

Following a case of any actions against the welfare of child, the EC will ensure that all staff affected during the process and outcome of the investigation should also be a follow-up with the individual(s) who reported the initial allegations, to provide assurance that their claims have been taken seriously.

## 15 Related Policies for Further Guidance

The AFN Child Protection Policy is to be incorporated by reference into all instruments regulating the employment, contractual or institutional relationship between AFN and natural or legal persons, and is to be read and applied in conjunction and consistent with the following resources:

- AFN Code of Conduct;
- AFN HR Policy
- AFN Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy
- AFN Whistle Blowing Policy
- AFN Employees Terms and Conditions
- AFN Admin and Finance Policy