



Child Protection and Safety Policy

1. Purpose

All children deserve a happy childhood and the opportunity to lead a dignified life safe from violence, exploitation, neglect, deprivation and discrimination. Protection of children is not only a matter of their human rights but also an investment towards building a robust nation.

The purpose of the policy is to demonstrate RDT's intent and commitment to safeguard children who are under RDT's care and are beneficiaries of various programs and projects of RDT; from intentional and unintentional harm, harmful practices, abuse, bullying, neglect and exploitation in any form.

2. Scope

This policy applies to anyone working for RDT, associated with RDT or visiting RDT and includes without limitation:

- a) RDT's employees at all levels.
- b) Associates – includes volunteers, interns, consultants, professionals, vendors, contractors, Advisors, Trustees, Board Members, sponsors, representatives, partner organisations etc.
- c) Visitors – anyone visiting RDT including donors, sportsperson, journalists, artists, filmmakers, photographers, researchers, celebrities, family members of staff etc.

3. Policy Statement

The Constitution of India recognize children as equal right holder and grants highest priority for their protection and well-being. India is also signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and accordingly has a strong legal framework to protect children which include the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015; the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012; Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act 1994; the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act 2005; the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009; Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006; and Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016

RDT abides by the safeguards provided under the Constitutions of India, various child-centric legislation, international treaties as well as other existing policies for the protection and wellbeing of children which includes child's right to safety and protection from intentional and unintentional harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form, freedom of expression and fundamental right to life, survival and development irrespective of their language, culture, religion, gender, economic and social background or physical or mental condition and abilities. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

RDT's employees, associates and visitors who directly or indirectly harm, abuse, neglect and exploit children in any form or in any way curtail children's rights will be in direct contravention of this policy and RDT will be bound to take necessary recourse to redress such contravention including filing of criminal charges having regard to the severity of the contravention of this policy.

Our response towards breach of this policy will be guided by the principle of 'the best interest of the child'.



4. Definitions

Child—for the purposes of this document “child” or “children” is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child protection and safety—a broad term to describe philosophies, policies, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm.

Direct contact with children – being in physical presence of a child or children.

Indirect contact with children – not being in physical presence of a child or children but able to make an impact on safety and protection indirectly which would include having access to information on children such as their names, addresses, photographs, case studies etc. This is not an exhaustive definition.

Direct Harm – includes any direct action or inaction which will curtail children’s ability to freely exercise their rights under UN Convention for the Rights of the Child. This is not an exhaustive definition.

Indirect Harm – includes any indirect action or inaction which will curtail children’s ability to freely exercise their rights under UN Convention for the Rights of the child. This is not an exhaustive definition.

Child Abuse – is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions or inactions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child Sexual Abuse - contacts or interactions between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult when the child is being used as an object of gratification for the older child's or adult's sexual needs. Sexual abuse includes touching a child in a sexual manner, making the child touch the offender in a sexual manner, making the child look at sexual body parts, taking pictures/videos of child depicting them naked or in partial clothing or in sexually suggestive manners, or making the child watch sexual activity or pornography.

Child Emotional Abuse—behaviours, speech and actions of parents, caregivers or other significant figures in a child’s life that have a negative mental impact on the child and impairs child’s emotional development or sense of self-worth. Examples of emotional abuse includes name calling, insulting, threatening violence, allowing children to witness the physical or emotional abuse of another, withholding love support and guidance.

Child Physical Abuse - is deliberately hurting a child through an act of violence causing physical injuries which includes bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

Bullying/Cyber Bullying -Bullying is a form of violence between equals that consists of a behaviour performed by an individual, or a group, that is repeated in time to hurt, harass, threaten, frighten or interfere with another person with the intention of causing hurt. It is different from other aggressive behaviour because it implies an imbalance of power that leaves the victim unable to defend himself.

Cyber Bullying is a form of harassment that involves the use of mobile phones (texts, calls, video clips), internet (email, social networks, instant messaging, chat, web pages) or other



information technologies and the communication to deliberately harass, insult, threaten or intimidate someone. The peculiarity of cyberbullying is that a single aggression that is recorded and uploaded to the internet is considered cyberbullying because of the possibility to reproduce it in an innumerable way and its potentially global audience.

Harmful practices - Includes certain forms of violence against children that are common in some societies or cultures or traditions and are contrary to respect for the rights of children such as early or forced marriage, child marriage etc.

5. Responsibility for Implementation, Monitoring and Continual Improvement

The responsibility of developing and improving this policy lies with the Executive Committee headed by Executive Director. The committee will also in a continuous basis evaluate all national and state level policies and laws regarding child protection and safety and incorporate them in the policy.

It is the responsibility of all Directors to implement and monitor this policy in their respective departments, sectors and regions and provide suggestions to the Executive Committee for improvement where necessary.

It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure the implementation of this policy in their areas of supervision.

It is the responsibility of all supervisors by whatever designation called and every employee who are in direct or indirect contact with children in RDT's institutions, schools or under any program to ensure the protection and safety of children and ensure the compliance of this policy.

6. Code of conduct

RDT's employees, associates and visitors must:

- Always treat children with empathy and respect, regardless of race, colour, gender, sexuality, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- Always listen to children and respect their views.
- Never abuse any child or act in a way that puts a child's safety and protection at risk or commit any action that contravenes this policy.
- Respect the privacy and dignity of each and every child.
- Contribute to an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights. Never stigmatize or humiliate a child
- Never be with alone with a child. Be visible and not in a secluded place, while in contact with children.
- Never take children to their rooms, houses or guest houses.
- Never use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Never develop or induce or support in any way physical/sexual relationships with children.
- Never use private vehicles to transport children from RDT programs.
- Approach children only after receiving permission from RDT and in the presence of an officer from RDT.



- Always ask permission from children or their parents, guardians, caretakers before taking any images or videos.
- Never take any **image** or **video** of child depicting them naked or in partial or inadequate clothing or in sexually suggestive manners or in any manner that disrespects the child and his/her dignity. Respect their decision to say no. Any story or image should be based on the child's best interest.
- Never disclose to anyone any information on children acquired during the course of association, visit or employment with RDT without explicit consent from RDT.
- Inform RDT if they have been at any time before being in employment with RDT before association with RDT or during the course of their employment with RDT or during the course of their association with RDT been prosecuted or convicted of any offence committed towards a child.
- Report any contravention of this policy.
- Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns and allegations. RDT's employees, associates and visitors are expected to bear in mind the principles of Child Protection Policy and apply high standards of behaviour towards children in both their professional and private lives.

- Not initiate or maintain behaviours that generate gender discrimination or practices that go against an equal society between girls and boys.
- Not encourage consumption of alcohol, tobacco or narcotic substances and will not provide children access to alcohol, tobacco or narcotic substances.

- Not discriminate, show differential treatments or favour to certain children while excluding others.

- Not accept violent behaviour among boys and girls and establish dynamics based on power imbalance.

7. Reporting on contravention of policy

It is the responsibility of every one to take action if they witness any direct or indirect harm to children.

Anyone who witnesses or suspects any direct or indirect harm being caused to children are responsible to report to Executive Director or Program Director. The report can be made in writing, through email or verbally. There is no limitation of time regarding reporting. However, it is advised to report within 48 hours so that quick action can be taken.

On receiving the report, Executive Director or Program Director will form a Special Committee of 3 members to investigate the matter.

The Committee will begin investigation with the consent of the child and/or his/her parents, guardians or caretakers as the case may be. The Committee will ensure that the identity and privacy of the child and offender is maintained unless there is a legal requirement to do otherwise. The Committee will treat both the child and the offender respectfully and provide both of them equal opportunity to put forward their case.

The Committee may use external experts if they deem it necessary having regard to the severity of the breach. Upon completion of the investigation, a report will be prepared and presented to Executive Director and Program Director that will include the methodology of the



investigation, findings of the investigations, evidences to support their decision and appropriate action that is required to be taken against the offender(s) if found guilty which would include filing criminal charges with the Police.

Appropriate action will be taken on the offender(s) as determined in the report by the Committee. In case charges are filed with the Police based on the recommendation of the Committee, appropriate action will be as determined by the Courts as per the findings of the police investigation.

In case the child or his/her parents, guardians or caretakers as the case may be are not satisfied with the recommended action against the offender(s), they can submit an application to Executive Director and Program Director with their reasons. In such case Executive Director and Program Director will consult with the Committee and Board and may revise the appropriate action or uphold the initial recommended action by giving adequate reasons.

The child or his/her parents, guardians, caretakers as the case may be can at any time during or before the investigation by Committee can file FIR with the Police if in their opinion a case exists to do so. In such case Committee will provide full support to Police in their investigation. The appropriate action in this case will be as determined by the Courts as per the findings of the police investigation.

Any incident can be reported to CHILDLINE 1098 as well.

8. Offence punishable under various laws in India:

Offences/Behaviours	Laws
Sexual assault, sexual harassment, use of child for pornographic purpose	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012
Production, dissemination and use of child sexual abuse materials	The Information Technology Act, 2000
Disclosing identity of child victim to anyone other than appropriate authority	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, JJ Act 2015
Sale and procurement of children for any purpose including illegal adoption, trafficking of children for sexual exploitation, use of children by militant groups, giving children intoxicating liquor, narcotic drug or tobacco products or psychotropic substances, offences against disabled children, trafficking of children for sexual exploitation/exploitative labour/other reasons and, kidnapping	JJ (Juvenile Justice) Act 2015; Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956; Human trafficking (section 370 & 370A IPC), after creation of specific section in IPC by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013
Corporal punishment in child care institutions	JJ (Juvenile Justice) Act, 2015



Corporal Punishment in schools	Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009
Adopting a child without due procedure through CARINGS and child welfare committees/ promoting or facilitating such illegal adoption	JJ Act, 2015
Employment of children below 14 years in any occupation or industry	Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016
Employment of children 15-18 years in hazardous occupation or industries	Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016
Marrying a child/ promoting or solemnizing child marriage	Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
Pre-natal diagnostic techniques for determination of the sex of the foetus leading to female feticide	Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act 1994