



# Human & Hope Association

*Empowering Cambodians to create a sustainable future*

## Child Protection Policy

### Introduction

Child abuse happens in all societies throughout the world. The child abusers can be anyone, including those who work with children.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children
- The duty bearers are accountable to eradicate child abuse

Based on the above guiding context and principles, Human and Hope Association (HHA) is committed to ensuring that all children involved in its projects are protected from any form of abuse.

### Definitions

A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years, although principles within this policy are extended to the young adults within HHA's projects

Child abuse means sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect or child labour.

Child Protection Policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children.

### Statement of Commitment

As an association working with children, HHA is committed to a strict child protection policy to ensure the children participating in its projects are not exposed to abuse, exploitation, violence or neglect.

The guidelines in this Child Protection Policy protect both children from abuse and adults from false accusation.



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HHA will, at all times:

- Respect the rights and dignity of the children, families and communities with whom we work
- Demonstrate commitment to actively preventing child abuse.
- Take positive action to prevent child abusers becoming involved with HHA in any way and take stringent measures against any HHA associate who commits child abuse.
- To ensure the above commitment HHA will follow the:
  - UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
  - Cambodian constitution
  - Cambodian laws on child rights

## **1. Persons involved**

This policy applies to all associates of HHA: interns, volunteers, employees, prospective employees, consultants, contractors, partner association members and visitors. The term HHA associates will be used throughout this policy.

The HHA Community Manager is responsible for

- the effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy
- advising and assisting all Managers in the implementation of the policy
- ensuring the policy is understood by associates
- monitoring risks pertaining to children
- reviewing the policy in January and July each year and if needed make any necessary changes to the policy.

All project managers are responsible for ensuring the policy is understood by all associates in their teams



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## 2. Visitors to Human and Hope Association

All visitors to HHA must read and sign the Visitor Code of Conduct upon their first visit and are to be issued with a visitor pass to wear. The following rules must be abided by:

- Visitors to the school are required to make advanced arrangements with the Director or Operations Manager prior to their visit
- Visitors shoulders and knees must be covered by appropriate clothing
- Visitors must remain accompanied by a staff member at all times and no visitor shall be left alone with children during their visit
- Taking photos or videos is NOT permitted
- No presents are to be given to the children directly. If making a donation, it is to be presented to a member of the management team
- We reserve the right to refuse entry to visitors who are deemed to be under the influence of any substance
- All children must be treated equally and favoritism can not be showed
- Students can not be taken out of the vicinity for any purpose
- Human and Hope Association is obliged to report any misconduct to the local authorities
- The management team reserves the right to deny the visit or terminate the visit at any time and the decision will be respected and not questioned.
- Visitors will not be permitted under any circumstance to leave HHA in the company of a HHA student. Activities such as going for a walk off property, going to dinner, going to the movies, going shopping, etc. are strictly prohibited.



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## **3. Recruitment**

- Advertisements for job vacancies will make clear that HHA is committed to child protection and that prospective employees' commitment to child protection is a condition of employment
- All prospective HHA associates will be informed of the Child Protection Policy at the start of any recruiting process
- HHA reserves the right to not offer or to terminate a contract if reference checks reveal that the person is not suitable to work with children for any reason that may put children at risk.
- The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed during new staff or long term volunteer orientation.

## **4. Code of Conduct**

This code of conduct gives guidelines for appropriate and proper behavior for HHA associates when interacting with children (and young adults).

- No child is to be taken away from HHA by an associate without the knowledge and permission of the management team
- No child is to be taken to any HHA associates' home, guesthouse, hotel or accommodation
- No HHA associate is permitted to socialize with the children outside the HHA premises apart from a friendly conversation (Young adults can be met in a public place with the knowledge and permission of the management team)
- No presents of any kind are to be bought for the children without prior arrangement with the management team
- HHA associates are to not act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children
- HHA associates must display appropriate language, actions and relationships with children at all times. HHA associates must ensure that language and behavior at all times reflect appropriate male-female relationships, which are respectful of and in line with Cambodian culture and customs.



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- HHA associates must not exert inappropriate physical force when dealing with children. This includes, but is not limited to, pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping or any other action that could cause fear, intimidation or distress.
- All activities with children must be conducted in locations where there is visual contact with outside. In cases where it is necessary to close a door for privacy sake, two adults must be present.
- Inappropriate conduct toward children, including failure to follow the behavior standards stated above, is grounds for discipline, up to and including dismissal from employment and police notification and legal action.
- No students under the age of 18 can be added to a staff members social media account, and the staff member must notify management if a student over the age of 18 is on their social media account under full disclosure

## **5. Communications about children**

- All communications regarding children involved in HHA's projects will ensure that the protection, privacy, dignity and best interests of the child are maintained
- Children should be adequately clothed in photographs and not in poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive
- Real names of vulnerable children should be changed and it should be indicated that they have been changed
- All students must have their parent or guardian sign the 'HHA Photo Permission Form'

## **6. Reporting and investigating abuse or suspected abuse**

- Any HHA associate who has knowledge of, suspects, or has witnessed a potential child protection issue should immediately report to the Community Manager or Director, either directly or via a manager.
- Failure to report suspected child abuse or misconduct may result in disciplinary action.
- On receipt of the report, the Community Manager and/or Director will begin an internal investigation and where appropriate file a complaint with the relevant authorities.



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- At the discretion of the Director, a HHA associate will be suspended during investigation. The associate will be informed that an allegation has been made against him/her and they will be given the opportunity to respond.
- The rights and welfare of the child is of prime importance to HHA and therefore any investigation will respect the privacy and safety of the child and efforts will be made to make the investigation as child friendly as possible

## **7. Response to internal investigation**

- In the event an allegation is proven to be untrue, or even fabricated, appropriate steps will be taken for follow-up with the person who has been accused, the child, and the person who reported the incident. Efforts will be made to provide assistance to an associate accused of abuse including counseling or other appropriate forms of support
- If abuse is proven by the investigation, every effort will be made to assist the child in coping with any physical or emotional trauma he or she may be experiencing. This may include medical treatment, psychological counseling or any other form of assistance deemed necessary and appropriate.
- If the investigation concludes that child abuse has occurred HHA staff will be subject to disciplinary action within HHA, up to and including dismissal. Other HHA associates will be removed with immediate effect.
- If the investigation concludes that abuse has occurred which is subject to criminal prosecution according to national laws, all findings will be reported to the relevant national police authorities and full cooperation afforded them during an external investigation. If the accused is an expatriate or visitor, the relevant law enforcement authorities will also be informed with due regard given to the potential for extraterritorial proceedings by the expatriate's country of origin
- In the event an associate is discharged for proven child abuse, HHA will disclose such information as requested

**END**