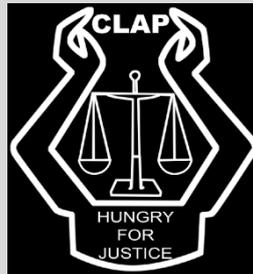


COMMITTEE FOR LEGAL AID TO POOR

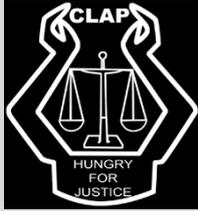


CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Committee for Legal Aid to Poor
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Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction:

This policy is a statement of intent of CLAP that demonstrates a commitment to protect children with/for it works, from abuse and harm. CLAP adopts this Child Protection Policy in order to comply with Art. 19 of UN Convention on Rights of the Child regarding protection of children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, etc.

CLAP Focus: CLAP protect and promote the Rights of Children in India regardless of caste, gender, creed, race, colour, religion and ethnicity with the use of law and legal system of the country.

CLAP Position on Child Protection:

CLAP believes that every place in the world should be child-friendly and children have a right to live in a safe and happy environment. We express our sincere commitment to safeguard the children that we come in contact with, from abuse and harm.

Key Principles and Beliefs:

CLAP believes in certain principles for prevention of child abuse in its work atmosphere.

- Child Abuse is never acceptable.
- Child abuse is preventable.
- Child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights.
- Children have rights to protection from abuse and harm.

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2. Our Commitments:

As an organization working for and with children, we are attentive that the members of the organization may come in contact, both directly and indirectly, with children. There is a possibility of attempts to cause harm to children by organization members. Therefore, we have a commitment to protect children with/ for whom we work. Our commitment for prevention of child abuse and exploitation will be met through the following ways:

Knowledge: All Members of the CLAP are to be made aware of the problem of child abuse and its repercussion on development of children.

Policy: A code of conduct for all Members of the CLAP for preventing child abuse shall be adopted.

Practice: The members of CLAP shall practice the code of conduct, which will minimize the risks to children.

Response: Prompt action is to be taken to protect children from possible abuse and harm.

3. Definitions:

Child: By “Child” we mean any person under the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse: Child abuse is a state of emotional, physical, economic and sexual maltreatment meted out to a person below the age of eighteen years.

Categories of Abuse: Child Abuse can be categorized as Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Neglect.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is the inflicting of physical injury upon a child. This may include burning, hitting, punching, shaking, kicking, beating or otherwise harming a child.

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Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse is inappropriate sexual behaviour with a child. It includes fondling a child's genitals, making the child fondle the adult's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism and sexual exploitation. Sexual abuse also includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment, though it may occur alone.

Neglect: It is the failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Neglect can be physical, educational, or emotional. Physical neglect can include not providing adequate food or clothing, appropriate medical care, supervision, or proper weather protection (heat or cold). It may include abandonment. Educational neglect includes failure to provide appropriate schooling or special educational needs, allowing excessive trancies. Psychological neglect includes the lack of any emotional support and love, never attending to the child, substance abuse including allowing the child to participate in drug and alcohol use.

Members of the Organization: Members of the Organisation include management members, staff, volunteers and interns. It also covers consultants and visitors.

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4. Implementation:

Child Protection Policy Management:

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CLAP shall be responsible for management of this policy. All the information and evidences relating to concerns of abuse must be submitted to the CEO. He/She shall keep these informations securely and confidentially. Presently, Mr. Purusottam Sahoo is the Chief Executive Officer of CLAP who is responsible for management of this Policy.

Our Actions:

CLAP undertakes the following actions for implementation of this Policy:

- It is binding on all members of CLAP to sign up to and abide by the attached code of conduct.
- All members of CLAP shall have access to a copy of the child protection policy.
- Induction procedure will include a briefing on child protection issues.
- Every workplace of the organization will display contact details of the person in charge of management of Child Protection Policy for reporting possible child abuse.
- Disciplinary proceedings shall be initiated against the concerned members of CLAP in case of their indulgence in child abuse cases after due enquiry into such cases.

Recruitment:

The Child Protection Policy receives highest priority in the recruitment process of CLAP. As a part of our induction policy, the prospective

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employees are required to undergo processes such as disclosure of previous convictions or intelligence enquiry. Checking evidence of identity and the authenticity of qualifications, requesting self-declarations about previous convictions, and a minimum requirement of at least two references are integral parts of our induction process. Visitors, Interns and Volunteers who are not in employment relationship with CLAP are required to adhere to the Code of Conduct attached with this policy.

Photography/Filming Policy:

CLAP aims to ensure that the photography and filming of children does not denigrate any child. Photographs, films of children and website must show respect for children and must be in their best interest.

When photographing or filming a child, the concern member of the organization must:

- Obtain permission from the child and its parents or legal guardian after explaining the use of the photograph or film.
- Assess and endeavor to comply with the local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming of the child.
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.
- Ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically.

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5. Child Protection Procedure:

Roles and Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of every member of CLAP to identify and report concerns about abuse, or suspected abuse, and to take part in, as required, the process of investigation. All CLAP members have a responsibility to pass on any concerns immediately to the Chief Executive Officer who is in charge of management of Child Protection Policy.

Application of this Policy:

This policy applies to all the members of CLAP, which include management members, staff, volunteers, interns. It also includes consultants and visitors.

Responsibility CLAP staff:

It is the responsibility of CLAP staff to ensure that concerns are reported and that issues raised are listened to and handled appropriately by the Chief Executive Officer who is in charge of management of this Policy. It is neither the responsibility of the staff to establish all the necessary details from the child, nor to establish the truth.

Reporting and Investigation about Child Protection Concerns:

Any child protection concerns regarding a CLAP member should be communicated to the Chief Executive Officer of CLAP who shall cause an investigation into the matter. Disciplinary action shall be taken against the concern member if found guilty. Where the matter is of non-compounding in nature, it will be intimated to the police. While adjudicating the concern, CLAP ensures that the best interest of the child is always the overriding concern.

Confidentiality:

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CLAP shall maintain full confidentiality about child protection concerns and its investigation. However, appropriate information will be given to those who have a Right and a need to know.

Recording and Information:

A written record should be undertaken as soon as is reasonably possible and must be dated and signed. All records relating to the protection issue must be kept safely and securely by the Chief Executive Officer. All records must contain detailed information that can be accurately used in case conferences and court proceedings. If possible it is often particularly helpful to have noted the timing and location of particular events. When written records are being made, the language used by the individual raising concerns must not be altered or amended.

Removing Difficulty:

Difficulty arises in giving effect to this Policy should be reported to the Executive Body of CLAP for removing the difficulties. The Executive Body will review this policy yearly for necessary amendments.

References:

Stars Foundation: Children and Vulnerable adults Protection Policy:
www.starsfoundation.org.

Action Aid Child Protection Policy: www.actionaid.org

Save the Children Child Protection Policy: www.savethechildren.org.uk

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org/crc

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