

# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**SAHAYOG SOCIETY**  
**A-240, INDIRA NAGAR, LUCKNOW**





## **FOREWORD**

SAHAYOG's work is rooted in a deep commitment to the safety, dignity, and well-being of all children. As an organization working with the most marginalized communities, we recognize our responsibility to actively prevent and respond to all forms of harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect affecting children. This Child Protection Policy reflects our values of respect, care, and accountability in every program and partnership.

Every staff member, volunteer, partner, or visitor has a shared responsibility to uphold this policy. We must be vigilant, proactive, and responsive in safeguarding children, especially those living in vulnerable contexts. This policy, supported by both Indian law and international conventions, offers clear guidelines to protect children, handle incidents, and foster an environment where all children are safe and heard.

We reaffirm our zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and commit to constant learning, strengthening systems, and empowering children and communities to assert their rights.

s/d

**DIRECTOR**  
**SAHAYOG**

**LEGAL FRAMEWORK (2025 Addition)**

This policy is aligned with and operates in accordance with:

- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015
- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012
- The Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005
- Articles 15(3), 21, 39(e), 39(f), and 45 of the Constitution of India
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

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***CHILD PROTECTION POLICY***

Concern, care for and safeguarding of children are the principles of SAHAYOG's activities. SAHAYOG works with the poor at the grassroots and promotes the wellbeing of all children whose lives are directly impacted through its projects.

While children are often vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, protection is a right of every child. Thus, SAHAYOG places the highest importance on the protection and safety of children in all its operations. SAHAYOG commits to child protection to safeguard children from exploitation, neglect, sexual and physical abuse and has a zero-tolerance policy for the same.

SAHAYOG strives to reduce the risk to children in all its programmes. Therefore, these Standards for Child Protection are intended to keep children safe from possible abuse and exploitation by staff, volunteers, interns etc. with whom they are in contact. This policy also intends to increase awareness on child protection in the community and in the family.

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***The guidelines for implementing the Policy are outlined below –***

1. Awareness Raising;
2. Program Planning;
3. Personnel – Screening and Recruiting;
4. Behaviour Protocols and Code of Conduct;
5. Allegation / Incident Management Plan;
6. Visit to SAHAYOG's Programs;
7. Advocacy on Child Protection and Child Rights;
8. Communications about children and photographs;
9. General Confidentiality of child information;

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**1. Awareness Raising**

SAHAYOG will –



1.1. Promote regular awareness on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), including their right to protection, among SAHAYOG Staff, Board & Society members.

1.2. Promote awareness of Child Rights among interns, consultants, community leaders, community volunteers in the communities in which it works and the general public.

1.3. Ensure SAHAYOG's Child Protection committee comprises suitable members, including staff, Board Members, and selected externals for ongoing review of Policy, its compliance and also as and when incidents are reported. The Director of SAHAYOG is the Advisor to this group, also the chairperson of the Committee

1.4. Ensure Project Staff are sensitized about child protection and given required skill training.

1.5. All the complaints should be sent to the mail ID- [childprotection@sahayogindia.org](mailto:childprotection@sahayogindia.org).

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## **2. Programme Planning**

SAHAYOG will -

2.1 Incorporate into its project design activities that focus on Child protection and rights;

2.2. Plan programs to reduce risks facing vulnerable children and to address the needs of children who are in situations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation;

2.3. Design programs addressing the causes of abuse such as threats/vulnerabilities/existing violations and promote responses that promote family and community support for the wellbeing of children and the prevention of child abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

2.4. Appropriately rehabilitate abused and exploited children by enhancing and maintaining safety security, and reduce the risk of further harm.

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## **3. Personnel Screening and Recruiting**

SAHAYOG will –

3.1. Recruit staff after obtaining adequate background verification for any history of child exploitation, neglect, and abuse;



3.2. Ascertain their aptitude, interest and sensitivity in working with children and their previous work with children

3.3. Enhance capacities of staff working with children in projects, to effectively deal with issues of Child Rights and advocacy, to promote rights of children and to provide protection from exploitation, neglect and abuse;

3.4. Ensure that all work and activities of staff support the protection of all children in communities from any form of exploitation, neglect and abuse;

3.5. Ensure that personnel exercise behaviour protocols consistent with the Organization's values in their relationship with children, in context of their language, actions, dress, and behaviour;

#### **Addition (2025):**

All staff, volunteers, consultants, and interns must undergo **mandatory background verification**, including checks against the **National Sex Offender Registry** (if accessible), and submit **Police Verification Certificates (PVC)** before induction into any child-related role.

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#### **4. Behaviour Protocols and code of conduct**

SAHAYOG will try to ensure –

4.1. All SAHAYOG personnel will establish an atmosphere conducive for the development of children through their word, deed and demeanour. This includes listening to children and showing respect to them;

4.2. All staff, interns, consultants, volunteers and visitors will respect the local cultural context and behave appropriately with children in communities as per behaviour protocols;

4.3. Personnel including staff, volunteer, interns and consultants will not allow children under a project of SAHAYOG to visit their homes under any pretext without the prior knowledge and agreement of their supervisors;

4.4. Children under a SAHAYOG project are not permitted to stay overnight in the home of SAHAYOG personnel at any time;

4.5. SAHAYOG and partner NGO Staff will not employ children as domestic workers in their homes;

4.6. All SAHAYOG personnel are always responsible for their behavior during interaction with a child even when it appears that a child is acting in a provocative manner;



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### **5. Allegation/Incident Management Plan**

SAHAYOG will take up –

5.1. Any incident of child abuse in SAHAYOG programmes implemented, directly or indirectly shall be reported to the Director of SAHAYOG, who is the chairperson of Child protection Committee and managed in the following manner:

5.2 In the event of a staff being involved, the details shall be immediately conveyed to the Child Protection Committee

5.3 When such a report is received against a staff, irrespective of rank, a due process enquiry shall be initiated by the, Child Protection Committee SAHAYOG to ascertain the facts in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Based on the findings of the enquiry, appropriate action will be taken to bring a closure to the matter;

5.4 Ensures investigation will be treated with care, concern and in absolute confidentiality. In case of a criminal offence, the matter should be referred to the police and SAHAYOG will support all due processes

5.5 The Chairperson and members of the Child Protection Committee should be kept fully updated on all Child Protection incidents irrespective of who is involved (community, volunteers, staff etc.)

#### **Addition (2025):**

Any staff or representative found guilty of child abuse will face:

- a) Immediate suspension pending inquiry
- b) Mandatory FIR registration under applicable laws
- c) Permanent blacklisting from child-facing roles
- d) Reporting to child protection authorities (e.g., Child Welfare Committee, District Child Protection Unit)

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### **6. Visit to SAHAYOG's programs**

SAHAYOG will –

6.1. Encourage visits to projects that are informed in advance and with the consent of the family/community;

6.2. Permit a visit to children in a project only when:

- a) it is announced
- b) the appropriate background checks as per local law are completed





- c) the visitor has agreed in writing to abide by the behaviour protocols and local code of conduct
- d) the visitor is accompanied by a SAHAYOG staff (Two Adult Rule Principle) and child's parent/guardian or a member of the community

6.3. Permit the visitor to meet the project child in a central location, usually the SAHAYOG Office/Project office or community, accompanied by a project staff and child's parents/guardian or a member of the community, but the meeting will not be in the sponsor's hotel or a private place or alone in the child's home.

6.4. In the event of actual or suspected cases of child abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a visitor the Program Director or in-charge should immediately report to the Chairperson/members of the Child Protection Committee. Appropriate action will be initiated immediately against the perpetrator, which may include criminal investigation.

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### **7. Advocacy on child protection and child rights**

SAHAYOG will –

7.1. Endeavour to influence relevant changes in public policy that will support Child Rights and provide protection to children through at different levels of administration and Non-Government Organizations.

7.2. Encourage, promote and develop research activities that will support such advocacy efforts to seek structural and systemic changes for child protection and to promote children's participation in securing their rights.

7.3. Collaborate and network with agencies engaged in Child Rights and Child Protection for sharing knowledge and to secure the rights of children.

7.4. Provide support in the areas of legal aid/advocacy pertaining to instances of infringement of child rights/protection.

7.5. Share best practices and lessons learned concerning child rights and child protection and disseminate to like - minded partners to enhance knowledge.

#### **Addition (2025):**

SAHAYOG is committed to protecting all children **regardless of gender, caste, class, religion, disability, or gender identity and sexual orientation**. Sensitization trainings shall incorporate **gender inclusion and safety for LGBTQI+ children**.

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### **8. Communications about Children and Photographs**



SAHAYOG will –

8.1. Ensure that all communication material on children in the form of pictures/captions are decent, dignified and respectful, and will not present children as victims, nor will exaggerate/glamorize poverty at the cost of the child.

8.2. Ensure individuals or organizations requesting the use of SAHAYOG's resources such as videos or photographs should be required to sign an agreement with the appropriate personnel as to the proper use of such materials.

**Addition (2025):**

Written **parental/guardian consent** shall be mandatory before photographing, video recording, or transporting children. A designated **Community Liaison Officer** shall ensure transparency in family communications during program visits or evaluations.

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**9. General Confidentiality of child information**

SAHAYOG will –

9.1. Ensure Projects to protect and safeguard records and documents of abused / at risk children and maintain their confidentiality.

9.2. Share Information about a child protection incident shared with people only if it is deemed necessary by Child Protection Committee.

9.3. Ensure names and identities of abused / at risk children are not to be disclosed outside or to the media.

9.4. Child abuse incidents to be flagged as confidential and handled with care and concern.

**Addition (2025):**

All **digital records** of children will be **encrypted and access-controlled**. Sharing of child data (e.g., names, locations, photographs) on digital platforms must be **pre-approved by the Child Protection Committee** and comply with the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**

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**ADDITIONAL 2025 POLICY ADDITIONS**





### **Age-Appropriate Reporting Mechanism**

Children should have access to **child-friendly, age-appropriate, and confidential complaint mechanisms** in every program location. Visual charts, helpline numbers, and periodic awareness sessions will be part of every SAHAYOG centre's routine.

### **Mandatory Annual Training and Refresher Courses**

All staff, interns, volunteers, and field-level coordinators must undergo **annual training** on child protection laws, psychosocial first aid, and handling disclosures of abuse. Attendance will be tracked and reported to the Governing Body annually.

### **Anonymous Complaint Handling and Digital Reporting**

SAHAYOG will establish a **secure digital platform** and allow **anonymous reporting** of child protection violations. These reports, when supported by credible indicators, will be investigated with full confidentiality.

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Reviewed and revised by- Gul Srivastava  
Date- June, 2025

Approved by- Secretary, Sahayog