

2016

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



User

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Child Protection Policy for Naya Sawera Vikas Kendra

Purpose - NSVK's work to promote children's holistic development aims to strengthen family and community systems that support child protection and well-being. Consistent with its mission, NSVK strives to promote children's best interests and create positive environments in which children grow up amidst respect, hope and social justice. Recognizing the inherent worth of each child, NSVK accepts its responsibilities to protect children from harm, to promote children's rights and to ensure children's healthy development. Since NSVK works in situations that present serious physical, emotional and social risks to children's well-being and that involve unequal power relations, it is vital to define clearly NSVK's commitments to child protection. Through this policy, NSVK defines its Code of Conduct to which all NSVK staff and volunteer workers (NSVK staff, board members, volunteers, intern, contractors, affiliated entity staff) in partner communities must adhere. NSVK recognizes that each country has its own legal systems. The policy and standards must be interpreted and enforced in accordance with local law. There may be instances where the policy and standards are more stringent than local law. NSVK is committed to a culture that empowers beneficiaries to be knowledgeable of their rights, to know what is acceptable and unacceptable, and to know what to do when there are problems.

DISCRIMINATION

Definition – Discrimination is unequal treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of personal characteristics such as disability or appearance or group characteristics such as ethnicity or religious orientation.

Examples

Examples of discrimination include, but are not limited to:

- Program services that benefit men more than women;
- Hiring appearances for one religion over members of other denominations;
- Use of demeaning labels or images in regard to particular ethnic groups;
- Passive acceptance of a situation in which disabled children are socially isolated and kept out of school
- Stigmatization of or services denial to people on the basis of their HIV/AIDS status;
- Service delivery only to particular ethnic, religious or political groups

Policies

- NSVK will not discriminate in its employment, program or services on the grounds of religion, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, language, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age or political conviction
- NSVK will not discriminate against or show favour of particular children.

- NSVK will respect the cultures, practices and traditions of all people and display cultural sensitivity to those communities and countries where it works.
- NSVK will promote gender equity in all its programs.

HARASSMENT

Definition – Harassment consists of unwelcome comments or behavior that is offensive, demeaning, intimidating or physically harmful.

Examples

Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Actual or threatened fighting;
- Name calling or use of threats, slurs, or degrading jokes;
- Use of visual means such as leering, gesturing or displaying intimidating or demeaning pictures, cartoons and posters;
- Writing of offensive or threatening letters, memos or emails

Policies:

- NSVK prohibits harassment of any employee, program participant, partner, vendor or member of communities in which NSVK conducts programs
- NSVK employees and affiliated entity workers will treat each other and those whom they serve with respect and dignity
- NSVK will hire and train representatives of the highest integrity who are accountable, responsible and create an environment of openness for all involved.
- NSVK will maintain a safe environment where beneficiaries come to participate in NSVK activities.
- NSVK representatives will not use their relationship of authority inappropriately.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Definition: Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, comments, jokes or conduct of a sexual nature

Examples:

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual commentaries about a person, their manner or appearance
- Sexually suggestive or obscene letters, posters or emails
- Actual or threatened physical contact such as patting, pinching or other offensive touching
- Degrading jokes based on sexual orientation

Policy:

NSVK prohibits sexual harassment of any individuals, employee or program participant, regardless of their working relationship

EXPLOITATION

Definition: Exploitation is the abuse of power by coercing or leading people into activities that violates their individual rights

Examples:

Examples of exploitation include, but are not limited to:

- Children's involvement in heavy, dangerous or forced labour;
- Selling or buying children for economic gain (child trafficking);
- Recruitment of children into armed groups;
- Sending children to work in dangerous situations;
- A staff superior uses his or her power to coerce a subordinate to do things that are not part of the employee's job responsibilities

Policies:

- NSVK prohibits exploitation of all individuals, whether staff, children or participants in affiliated sponsorship program activities
- NSVK staff will uphold the child labour laws of the country and ensure children are protected by these laws by reporting any witnessed or suspected exploitation

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Definition: Sexual exploitation consists of misusing a position of power to pressure or demand others to provide sexual favours.

Policies:

- NSVK adheres to the six core elements:
- Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment
- Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18 years) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of child is not a defense.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.

- Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
- Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, s/he must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
- Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment, which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.

PROSTITUTION AND SEX TRAFFICKING

Definition: Prostitution consists of providing sexual favours or activity in exchange for money or other economic gain. NSVK allows the definition of sex trafficking outlined in the UN protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, which prohibits the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons sale, or transfer of person for purposes of commercial exploitation, including sexual exploitation.

Policy:

NSVK opposes prostitution, sex trafficking and other forms of trafficking in persons.

CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT AND SAFETY

Definition: Child abuse consists of children's exposure to situations that cause children harm, usually as the result of the failure of the parent or caretaker to insure a reasonable standard of care and protection. Abuse may be physical, sexual or emotional harm resulting from the actions of the parent and caretaker. Abuse also includes neglect, the failure to meet a child's basic needs or to protect the child from hazards such as extreme cold or playing in dangerous places.

Examples:

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual abuse of children through touching, fondling or rape
- Involvement of children in pornography or showing child pornography via the internet
- Harsh emotional treatment of children through isolation, rejection or teasing
- Severe physical punishment of children
- Allowing children to play in dangerous places such as building rooftops and minefields

Policies:

- NSVK staff and volunteer workers will not abuse children through either action or neglect

- NSVK staff will work in proactive manner to protect children’s safety from preventable harm
- NSVK staff will avoid being placed in compromising or vulnerable positions
- NSVK representatives will realize that they are always the responsible parties, even if a child behaves inappropriately, initiates an inappropriate relationship, or behaves in an unacceptable manner.
- NSVK representatives will not condone or participate in behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- NSVK representatives will not provide shelter in their homes expect in cases of extreme emergency for a limited time
- NSVK representatives will not put themselves in positions where their actions (physical, verbal or otherwise) are offensive, inappropriate, abusive, neglectful or exploitative
- NSVK representatives will ensure that all confidential information is handled appropriately

Reporting

All employees have an obligation to report violations of these policies. NSVK will not tolerate any form of coercion, intimidation, reprisal or retaliation against employee who makes a report regarding possible violation of this policy or who provides information or assistance in an investigation.

Policies

Due to sensitivity of reporting and known understanding of child protection incidents throughout child-focused international agencies. NSVK offices will democratically select two staff members (one man and one woman) that will act as Point Persons for receiving incident reports, suspicions of violations, child abuse or known breaches of the Code of Conduct. Staff will report alleged violations to these staff “Point Persons” who, in turn, will report alleged violations to the Secretary. If the Secretary is under suspicion of violation the persons will report to the Board. If a person knowingly chooses not to report an incident, then s/he will be removed from any association with NSVK. Anyone found in violation of the Code of Conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.