

SAFEGUARDING POLICY



**BALASORE SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY
(BSSS), BALASORE-756001
VIVEKANAND MARG
(PREPARED IN 2024)**

**APPLIED TO: ALL STAFF & AFFILIATES, INTERNS, AND VOLUNTEERS, PARTNERS,
SUPPLIERS, SERVICE PROVIDERS, VISITORS AND BOARD MEMBERS. IT IS APPLICABLE
TO ALL THE STAFF DURING OFFICE HOURS**

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I. INTRODUCTION:

BALASORE SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY (BSSS) is the Official Socio-Developmental Organization of the Catholic Diocese of Balasore for disaster management and Development. It is a State level Organization and registered under Registration of Societies Orissa Act XXI of 1860 having the registration No. 19342/61 of 1992-1999 and having its registered office situated at Balasore Social Service Society, VIVEKANANDA MARG, DISTRICT & P.O. BALASORE – 756 001, Odisha.

Balasore Social Service Society seeks the integral development which inspires the society to see its staff as human resources and as partners in delivering its services to the poor. BSSS is committed to creating and maintaining an environment which promotes its core value of human dignity, justice and peace among Tribal, Dalits, Minorities and Other backward communities (OBCs) and prevents abuse and exploitation of its employees, partners and beneficiaries. Basically, the personnel are to be motivated by a spirit of voluntarism and service to the poor. Though specialization capacitates a person to become efficient and effective in delivering a particular type of service, in the spirit of teamwork every staff member of Balasore Social Service Society is expected to be multi-tasking. However, as an organization, Balasore Social Service Society is committed to recruit and help each staff member grow with a core competency in a specific thrust area. The following policies guide Balasore Social Service society in managing its human resources:

BSSS visualizes a society where people enjoy equality, justice and peace. Its Mission is to Enable its partner organizations, civil society, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and promote collective and collaborative social action for human development, justice and Peace and thus upholding human dignity of most marginalized.

II. PURPOSE OF SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. To ensure that the Staff and programs honour and protect the rights and dignity of all people, especially children and vulnerable adults, to live free from abuse and harm
2. To Create and maintain a culture of safety and prevent Harm
3. To set a clear Standard for those included in the scope of this policy, regarding their moral and legal obligation to treat all people with respect; to actively prevent all forms of harassment, abuse and exploitation, including all forms of sexual misconduct and human trafficking.

BSSS is committed to creating and maintaining an environment, both in the workplace and in the projects, that promotes the core values and prevents the abuse and exploitation of all with whom it interacts. Abuse and exploitation constitute acts of serious misconduct and are therefore grounds for disciplinary action including termination and, as relevant, notification to specific donors and/or appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Likewise, BSSS is committed to work only with organizations including partners, suppliers and service providers including consultants, who are equally committed to the dignity of individuals and equally vigilant to preventing and addressing abuse and exploitation.

III. SAFEGUARDING IN BSSS

Safeguarding policy will apply to BSSS staffs, including Board Members, interns, volunteers, and visitors as well as partners, suppliers, service providers, and consultants. They are expected to treat all people with whom they have contact with respect, to actively prevent all forms of harassment, abuse, and exploitation, including all forms of sexual misconduct and trafficking, and to ensure our programs do no harm to the communities in which we work. BSSS Prohibits from facilitating or aiding another humanitarian worker's harassing, abusive or exploitative behavior and obliged to report any concern or suspicion of harassment, abuse or exploitation.

BSSS staff would hold to the highest standards, rigorous policies and systems in place to ensure the staff, affiliates, partners, suppliers, service providers, and community members can report harassment and safeguarding concerns, protected from the threat of retaliation.

All reports trigger prompt and thorough assessment which may include investigation, and any substantiated violation of our policy results in appropriate action, which may include termination of employment and reporting to the appropriate local authorities.

BSSS will not knowingly provide a positive referral for anyone terminated for cause and is committed to working with our colleague organizations in the development and humanitarian sector to make sure we have ways to prevent perpetrators from being hired into other agencies.

In addition, BSSS is committed to ensuring that program participants and members of communities in which they live are aware of what staff behavior is acceptable and how they can raise their concerns or questions in a confidential and secure manner.

All BSSS Staff are obligated to report any concerns or suspicions of harassment, abuse and exploitation involving BSSS Staff, partners, beneficiaries, suppliers and service provider, or aid workers associated with another organization.

IV. POLICY

The safeguarding policy will apply when there is a breach of trust. When vulnerable adults, young adults, and children are abused, harmed, and neglected by the staff or any associates of SIGN, BSSS has the responsibility to make sure their staff, operations, and programs do not harm children and vulnerable adults, or to expose them to abuse or exploitation. BSSS will ensure a zero-tolerance towards all types of misconduct.

BSSS will take strict actions if staff, affiliates, partners, suppliers, and service providers found with prohibited behaviors towards program participants and community members including children, and other vulnerable adults. The Prohibited behaviors include all forms of abuse (including physical, sexual, emotional, economic, neglect), all forms of exploitation (including use of prostitutes/sex workers, child labor, human trafficking), all forms of harassment (including verbal, physical, visual, bullying, sexual harassment) and neglect. All forms of sexual relations between aid workers / staff of SIGN with project participants or community members in the exchange of money, gift or favor are completely prohibited by the policy. Harassment, Bullying, Sexual harassment, abuse, exploitations and trafficking also come under prohibited behaviors.

1. HARASSMENT (Scope)

- i. General harassment is unwanted, unwelcomed and uninvited behaviour that demeans, threatens or offends and results in a hostile environment. Harassment is typically targeted at an individual, or a particular group of individuals. This includes, but is not limited to, harassment based on ethnicity, colour, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry, disability, medical condition, marital status, or veteran status.
- ii. General harassment is not sexual in nature and may consist of verbal or physical conduct that insults or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual or group of individuals. Some examples of conduct that may constitute harassment (but not limited to) are: (a) the use of derogatory statements, or abusive words or phrases, jokes, unwelcome pranks, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, and other intimidating or hostile acts (b) written or graphic material that insults,

stereotypes or shows aversion or hostility towards an individual or group and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, email, voicemail, or elsewhere on the organization's premises, or circulated in the workplace, and (c) a display of symbols, slogans, or items that are associated with hate or intolerance towards any select group.

2. BULLYING

Bullying, defined as persistent and repeated mistreatment of one or more targeted persons by one or more perpetrators and includes (but is not limited to) threats, intimidation, public humiliation/name-calling, persistent and unwelcome teasing, abuse or use of power to undermine, humiliate or denigrate, intentional work interference/sabotage, or stalking. While harassment is usually based on protected characteristics and may be easier to spot, bullying can occur to anyone and may be more subtle and accumulative.

3. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Sexual misconduct can cross age and gender boundaries and may include unwelcome sexual advances; request for sexual favor, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected/perceived to cause offense or humiliation to another and when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.⁴ Sexual misconduct can be verbal, physical or visual. It includes actions directed at an individual or actions observed by an individual.

Verbal sexual misconduct: includes requests of a sexual nature made by one person to another. When from a supervisor or superior, these requests may demand or imply a condition of employment or compensation, either implicitly or explicitly, or when an employment decision is based on an individual's acceptance or rejection of such conduct. When such requests are from BSSS staff to a partner or

- i. Supplier staff these requests may imply a condition of continued cooperation, commercial or otherwise.
- ii. **Physical sexual misconduct:** includes unwanted or inappropriate leering or touching of any kind, unwelcome sexual advances. Stalking may also be associated with sexual misconduct.
- iii. **Visual sexual misconduct:** includes the sharing or posting of images that create an offensive, hostile or intimidating environment or interferes with an individual's job performance. Examples include—but are not limited to—displays of sexually explicit or demeaning materials such as offensive pictures, cartoons, symbols, or items in the workplace.

⁴ United Nations, *Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, Second Edition, 24 July 2017.

4. EXPLOITATION

Exploitation is the use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or position of vulnerability, or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person.²

Forms of exploitation:

- i. **Sexual Exploitation** is any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.³
- ii. **Child Labor** is work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to a child's physical or mental development. It is work that:
 - a) is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children
 - b) interferes with their schooling by:
 - c) Depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.
- iii. **BSSS staff and affiliates** are prohibited from hiring children under the age of 18—regardless of any perceived benefit to the child or family—and prohibited from funding programs in which child labor, as defined above, is occurring. Hazardous work⁴ is prohibited for all children, including children aged below 18 years. This includes construction and manufacturing work.
- iv. **United Nations definition.** Every human being below the age of eighteen years is a child.

5. ABUSE

Abuse is a deliberate act of ill treatment that can harm a person's safety, well-being, dignity and development. It often involves individuals who have a relationship of responsibility and care for the victim including project staff, parents, guardians, teachers, community workers, health-care providers, religious leaders, friends or other children.

Forms of abuse:

¹United Nations: *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons*, 2004.

²United Nations: *Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, Second Edition, 24 July 2017.

⁴ Hazardous work is work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

- i. **Sexual Abuse:** actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.³
- ii. **Physical Abuse:** Non-accidental use of physical force that inadvertently or deliberately causes a risk of or actual injury or suffering. Physical force includes but is not limited to hitting, shaking, kicking, pinching, pushing/pulling, grabbing, burning, female genital mutilation, torture, and other physical acts.
- iii. **Emotional Abuse:** Harm done by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats, bullying, and not giving care and affection, resulting in adverse effects on the behaviour and emotional state of an individual or the behaviour and development of a child or young person.⁴
- iv. **Neglect/Negligent Treatment:** Allowing for context and resources, the failure to meet the basic physical and/or psychological needs either deliberately or through negligence of a child or individual under the responsibility of the care giver/guardian. Neglect includes but is not limited to failing to provide adequate food; sufficient or seasonally-appropriate clothing and/or shelter; failing to prevent harm; failing to ensure adequate supervision; failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or providing inappropriate medical treatment (e.g., administering medication when not authorized), or failing to provide a safe physical environment (e.g., exposure to violence, unsafe programming location, unsafe sleeping practices, releasing a child to an unauthorized adult, access to weapons or harmful objects, failing to child-proof a space that children will occupy, etc.).

6. TRAFFICKING

Trafficking in persons is a form of exploitation. Trafficking is defined as the recruitment, transportation, or receipt of persons by means of deception, coercion, threat, or force for the purpose of exploitation such as for labor, prostitution, or sexual exploitation.⁵

- i. **ORGANIZATION** places a special focus on anti-trafficking of women and children, given their specific vulnerability and given the cruelty and perversity to which trafficked women and children are particularly subjected.
- ii. The following are types of prohibited exploitative conduct that are common to human trafficking schemes, in accordance with the elements defined above: forced prostitution and child pornography; forced marriages; illicit organ trade; narcotics smuggling; forced begging or labour.
- iii. All **SIGN** staff are also prohibited from employment practices related to trafficking, including
 - a. Destroying, concealing, confiscating, or otherwise denying access to an employee's identity or immigration documents.

³ United Nations. *Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, Second Edition, 24 July 2017.

⁴ Caritas Internationalis. *Child Protection Policy Framework*.

⁵ United Nations. *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children*, 2000.

- b. Using misleading or fraudulent practices to recruit employees such as failing to disclose key terms and conditions of employment or charging employees recruitment fees.
 - c. Using recruiters that do not comply with local labour laws or charging employees recruitment fees.
 - d. Failing to provide return transportation to any employee specifically brought to a country for the purpose of working on a project.
 - e. Providing or arranging housing that fails to meet host country housing and safety standards.
 - f. Failing to provide a valid employment contract or work document where required by law.
- IV. *SIGN* also prohibits staff from knowingly obtaining work-related goods or services that have been provided or produced by trafficked or forced labour.

7. SEXUAL ACTIVITY

All sexual activity with a child, defined as a person younger than 18 years of age, is considered sexual abuse and is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.

- i. To prevent sexual exploitation from occurring, *SIGN* prohibits *SIGN* staff, board members, affiliates and visitors from buying sex (prostitution) by offering money, gifts, or other material support, regardless of the age or affiliation of the individuals selling sex.
- ii. Sexual relations between staff/affiliates and program participants (of any age) are prohibited and are grounds for termination. The only exception is a consensual relationship between a staff member and a program participant; in such a case, the employee must fully disclose the relationship to their supervisor, human resources, or the senior management at the outset of employment or the relationship.⁴
- iii. All staff must always ensure their relationships with program participants or potential program participants do not involve any form of exploitation or abuse.

8. CHILD SAFEGUARDING

When interacting with child project participants, all staff are prohibited from:

- 1. Spending excessive or unnecessary time alone with a child
- 2. Encouraging a child to interact in a manner that is unrelated to official duties, including:

⁴ Records must be kept of such disclosures on the personnel file of the relevant staff member.

- a) Encouraging a child to meet outside of work-related activities
- b) Befriending or sending private messages to a child via email, whatsapp, facebook or any other social media platform

V. SAFEGUARDING CLAUSE

Sub-recipients, Suppliers and Service Providers

- i. All agreements with sub-recipients must include the BSSS's Safeguarding Policy as an addendum and a provision in their agreement requiring adoption or adherence to a policy that affords a similar level of protection. Sub-recipients agreements must also include, at a minimum, a safeguarding clause requiring mandatory reporting to BSSS of any allegations involving trafficking of persons, abuse or exploitation that pertain to programming or staff funded by BSSS.
 - ii. All suppliers and service providers must sign BSSS's Supplier and Service Provider Code of Conduct and adhere to any safeguarding specific terms and conditions within the supplier or service provider contract.
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1. Safe recruitment

For the safe recruitment Advertisement and Job description is given in the internet site. The CVs are invited and selected according to the qualification and experience required. The references are also checked. The selected individuals are called for interview. Job offers made in relation to the identified post will be subject to a self-disclosure, satisfactory clearance from checking of statutory and satisfactory verification of qualification and work History. The candidates will be asked about their previous experience of working with the staff of the organization as well as working with children and vulnerable adults. This can be also asked to the individuals, who have given references. The same can be done for the volunteers as well as consultants recruited.

2. Staff orientation

A member of Safe guarding committee will orient the new Staff on the safe guarding policy and make sure that the new comer understands fully its implications during the work period in the organisation. A contract needs to be signed. The refresher training on Safe guarding policy is done for the staff in each year.

This should be emphasised to the staff and affiliates to report concerns or suspicions of sexual exploitation, abuse, child abuse or trafficking of persons by a fellow aid/NGO worker

VI. REPORTING PROCEDURE

Any employee, who becomes aware of a safeguarding incident whether as witness or being told or being object of it, is encouraged to report it in accordance with the safeguarding policy.

1. Complaints include:

- Prohibited Behaviour or conduct of the Staff
 - a. The prohibition of any sexual relationships between staff and affiliates and beneficiaries that are exploitative (involve improper use of rank/abuse of power)
 - b. The prohibition of facilitating or aiding another humanitarian worker to perform acts of sexual exploitation and/or abuse.
 - c. a prohibition of transactional sex/prostitution (even in countries where this is legal)
 - d. a prohibition of exchanging of assistance that is due to program participants (providing program goods services to beneficiaries in exchange for favours including sexual favours)
- Prohibited Behaviour or conduct of partner organisation staff and associate.
- Misuse of funds, fraud and corruption
- Harassment including sexual exploitation and abuse
- Emotional abuse such as intimidation, humiliation, bullying and mobbing
- Safety and security breach that will harm the organisation and its people

2. Authority to report the complaint.

If any member of staff or volunteer suspects abuse, or if a Staff or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure, or if a person external reports a suspicion or allegation relating to Staff, or its activities, the following steps should be taken:

- Report to the Director of the Organisation
- Or in their absence another member of the Safeguarding Committee
- Telephonic/ whatsApp

3. Complaint Handling Procedure

- If a child or vulnerable adult is being physically, sexually or emotionally abused, it should be reported to Director immediately or to the member of the Safeguarding Committee.
- If a child or vulnerable adult discloses to any BSSS staff about the abuse by someone else the staff should listen, offer support, understand and reassure while explaining that it will be reported to appropriate people.
- Take emergency action if required – contact police/social services/medical services immediately as required if it is an emergency situation
- Record everything that was said, including dates, times of conversation and any incidents disclosed
- staff must refer to concern department
- You must not investigate.

If a BSSS staff, volunteer or anyone else associated with the organisation in some recognisable capacity is found to have committed acts in relation to children or vulnerable adults which are criminal or which contravene in a serious way the principles and standards set out in this policy, Organisation will refer these to the appropriate authorities and will also take disciplinary and/or any other action which may be appropriate to the circumstances, such as termination of contracts and the ending of volunteering relationships.

3. Concerns while witnessing a complaint:

Information offered in confidence should be received on the basis that it will be shared with relevant people in authority. This may include the HR Manager and the members of the safe guarding committee. In case of Children, Parents or care takers also be informed if it is necessary.

4. If a child or vulnerable adult tells that they are being abused;

- Listen to and accept what the child or vulnerable adult says
- Immediate action should be taken for their safety
- Do not confront the alleged abuser
- Take the alleged abuse seriously
- Re-assure the child or vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Let them know you need to tell someone else. Do not promise total confidentiality
- Let the child speak or vulnerable adults freely but do not press for information
- Let the child or vulnerable adult know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.

- Record carefully what you have heard whilst it is still fresh in your mind. Include the date and time of your conversation and any incident disclosed

5. What complaints will not be processed

Complaints related to member organizations staff grievance, performance issues, employment and labour matters, hostile work environment, harassment on the workplace are dealt exclusively by member organizations through appropriate legislation and HR policies and procedures (Refer HR Handbook, grievance policy).

6. Receiving a complaint

Formal complaints should be made in writing or via e-mail to Director. If a complaint is received by telephone or in person, but cannot be dealt with at the time of the conversation, the complainant must be made aware of the CHM including the possibility of making an anonymous complaint. The complainant decides whether to formally submit a complaint or not. Complaints submitted will be opened only by the Director. The complainant will receive notice of receipt within one week.

7. Recording the complaint

Complaints will be recorded onto an internal system. It will have restricted staff access, and will support complaints being logged on receipt, actions tracked and outcomes recorded. The recorded complaint for related to a child within 24 hours needs to be submitted to the district Child Welfare Committee (CWC). Therefore, the Complaint Handling Mechanism should source the reporting template required by the authority. The record of sexual harassment at work place needs to also be submitted to the district authority annually. Thus, logging complains is a legal requirement.

8. Processing the complaint

It is the responsibility of the Director to preliminarily assess the type and nature of the complaint and recommend the most appropriate course of action to be undertaken. This will be reviewed and approved by the Safeguarding Committee which is also a Complaints Handling Committee (CHC). Sensitive complaints will be dealt with as per

the procedure set forth ahead. The roles and responsibilities of BSSS will be determined at that stage.

9. As a general rule:

- Complaints against the staff and associates will be dealt at the level of the head office directly
- The organization has the primary responsibility to appropriately investigate the complaint.
- Complaints that involve Organisation partners that do not have the capacity to Process the complaint will be assessed on a case-by case basis. If necessary

- and when requested by the concerned partner organization, Organisation will work together with the partner organization in carrying-out the investigation while simultaneously strengthening their internal procedures and capacities to deal with complaints
- If a partner organization is unwilling to act upon the complaint, then the organisation will inform the relevant Authority so that the adequate investigation can take place

10. Sensitive complaints

Sensitive complaints will be immediately referred to the Organisation Director Administration who will make the first screening and assessment of the complaint and agree the most appropriate course of action. Complaints contemplating allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse will be shared to only Director, those relating to financial improprieties will also be shared with the Financial Manager and the Program related breaches to the head of the Organisation. The seriousness of the complaint will determine how the investigation should be conducted. Details will be shared on a strictly need to know basis. Sensitive complaints that contemplate a gross violation of the Organisation's Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics, Safeguarding Policy. These complaints follow the strict rule of confidentiality and need-to-know basis so only the essentials of the complaint i.e. the nature of the complaint, the course of action decided and, when ready, the outcome of the procedure. No details will be shared regarding the names of the complainant, accused, victim, witnesses or whistle blowers.

VII. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

The Director will have the primary responsibility to coordinate the investigation. Investigations will be carried out confidentially and only persons that need to know about the complaint will be involved in the process. Complex sensitive complaints will be investigated by external qualified experts from a preselected and verified pool of investigators.

Timeframes for completing the investigation vary depending on their complexity. The aim is to conclude it within the shortest reasonable time ideally not exceeding sixty days from receiving the complaint. The final report will be shared with the Director for review and approval.

The decision on the type of action to be undertaken at the completion of the investigation process will be taken by the Director or if he is the one accused, by the President of the board. Costs associated with investigations initiated as a result of complaints against staff and associates will be covered by the Organization.

Appeals procedure

All complaint has to be resolved in a satisfactory fashion for both the complainant and the organization. If the complainant does not feel satisfied with the outcome s/he can appeal to the Director. This can be done in writing, by letter or email

Confidentiality

All complaints whether sensitive or not should be handled in a confidential manner. In some cases, it can be disclosed to the third party. This can be decided on a case by case basis and as far as possible with the agreement of the Complainant. Confidentiality Paramount to guarantee safety to complainant, whistle blower, witnesses and subject of complaints.

VIII. SUPPORT TO SURVIVORS

No BSSS employee should retaliate in any way against anyone who has raised any concern about harassment, sexual harassment, misconduct or discrimination against any individual.

All BSSS employees have the responsibility for keeping the work environment free of harassment and abuse. Any employee, who becomes aware of a safeguarding incident whether as witness or being told or being object of it, is encouraged to report it in accordance with the safeguarding policy. BSSS will maintain confidentiality in handling the case.

If a member of staff is the subject of an allegation of abuse of a vulnerable adult or a Staff, that staff member will be asked to take leave from their duties until an investigation has been completed or asked to withdraw from their work until an investigation has been completed. BSSS makes clear that suspension does not imply guilt but rather protects all parties whilst an investigation is undertaken.

BSSS's first concern will be to care for the victims emotional, physical, psychological and social wellbeing. It also undertakes to provide support for the alleged victims, witnesses and the alleged abuser whilst an investigation is carried out. It will inform the Police or concern authority depending on the case.

BSSS will ensure to act promptly investigated and addressed and treated with due regard for the privacy of the individuals involved. Any form of retaliation is grounds for disciplinary action including termination.

ANNEXTURES-1

Safeguarding Code of Conduct

An employee will promote its values and principles and protect its reputation by:

- Respecting the basic rights of others by acting fairly, honestly and tactfully, and by treating people with dignity and respect, and respecting the national law and local culture, traditions, customs and practices that are in line with Catholic Social Teaching, moral teaching and UN conventions
- Working actively to protect children and vulnerable adults by complying with Child and Vulnerable adults Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Maintaining high standards of personal and professional conduct
- Protecting the safety and well-being of self and others
- Protecting the organisation's assets and resources
- Reporting any matter that breaks the standards contained in this Code of Conduct
- Maintaining high standards of personal and professional conduct means I will not behave in a way that breaches the code of conduct, undermines my ability to do my job or is likely to bring BSSS into disrepute.

He/ She will not:

- Engage in sexual relations with a child or a vulnerable adult or abuse or exploit a child or a vulnerable adult
- Exchange money, employment, goods, assistance or services for sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour
- Engage in any form of harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation, favouritism or exploitative sexual relations
- Drink alcohol or use any other substances in a way that adversely affects the ability to do job or affects the reputation of the organisation
- Be in possession of, nor profit from the sale of, illegal goods or substances
- Accept bribes or significant gifts (except small tokens of appreciation) from governments, beneficiaries, donors, suppliers or others, which have been offered as a result of my employment
- Undertake business for the supply of goods or services to family, friends or personal contacts or use office assets for personal benefit
- Behave in a way which threatens the security of self or others
- Use the organisation's computer or other equipment to view, download, create or distribute inappropriate material, such as pornography.

Staff, volunteers and relevant others must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children or vulnerable adults
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children or vulnerable adults
- Develop relationships with children or vulnerable adults which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child or a vulnerable adult of abuse.
- Staff and others must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never:
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- Take children or vulnerable adults to your home, especially where they will be alone with you. Have a child/children or vulnerable adult(s) with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child or vulnerable adult with whom they are working
- Do things for children or a vulnerable adult of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children or vulnerable adults which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or vulnerable adults, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favours particular children or vulnerable adults to the exclusion of others

I..... do hereby confirm that I have read, understood and commit myself to comply and to be held accountable for any non-compliance and non-reporting.

I also have read and understood the BSSS Safeguarding policy and procedures document to know about the aspects of safeguarding that relate to my role that I summarize as under in my own words

(Signature)

Date:

Please note: you should keep this copy of the policy for your records. An additional acknowledgement form will also be issued for your signature and which will be kept internally.

The safeguarding mechanism

As a part of an ongoing move to improve accountability towards all those it serves; individuals and communities, and partner organizations, has established a Safe Guarding Committee as part of a Complaints Handling Mechanism (CHM) that is user-friendly, safe and accessible, but is also simple, efficient and effective and does not create undue burden.

The legal basis of this Safe Guarding Policy and Procedure document that is applicable to staff, board members, volunteers, interns, consultants, contractors, and partner organizations staff. The Safe Guarding Committee does not replace individual complaints mechanisms that partner organizations and staff members already have in place. It provides an alternative and complementary channel for managing complaints that can be activated in predetermined circumstances and when certain conditions are met. It recognizes that the primary responsibility to handle complaints remains with partner organizations. Together with the Director the Safe Guarding Committee is instrumental to ensure that all complaints received will be dealt with according to agreed procedure and guidelines.

Objective

To support the Director in making appropriate decisions on complaints received through the Staff/ Volunteers, in accordance with agreed procedures and guidelines.

Composition

The Safe Guarding Committee is composed as follows:

1. The Director; 2. The Assistant Director; 3. One Board member; 4. Two Staff (One Male and One Female)

Responsibilities

- The Safe Guarding Committee is responsible to
- Review the complaint and approve the course of action proposed by the Manager HR.
- Suggest an alternative action if applicable.
- Review and approve the final investigation report or seek additional information if applicable;
- Request an independent investigation following reports which are not deemed satisfactory and/or are not reconsidered for revision by the member organization involved.
- Recommend appropriate disciplinary actions, if applicable. The final decision is taken by the Director.

Meetings

The Director is responsible to organize the meetings of the Safe Guarding Committee. The members of the Safe Guarding Committee are required to prioritize their participation in meetings to make sure that complaints are dealt with in a timely manner.

Reporting line:

If the complaint is against the Director this Complaint Handling Officer reports to the President of the Board. The Director as the Complaint Handling Officer will have a close working relationship with the legal advisor of BSSS.

ANNEXURE 3

Safe Guarding Concern Reporting Form

Confidential

Name of the person Affected	Position	Address, Mobile number and Email	
Nature of Concern	Violation of the Staff/ Adult/ Child	Security breach of Organisation	Other
Complaint Mode (Attach evidence)	Telephone/ Whatsapp	In Person	Letter /e-Mail

Information received Time:

date

Information received by:

Name of the Whistle Blower	Position	Address Telephone and e-Mail

This form along with all relevant documents should be retained security and forwarded to the Director/ in case of Director to the President as soon as possible.

Alleged Victim/ Survivor (Staff, Vulnerable Adult)

Name	Age	Gender	Address	Phone and Email

Name of Parent/ Guardian/ carer

Name	Age	Gender	Address	Phone and Email

Person alleged as responsible

Name	Age	Gender	Address	Phone and Email

Concern

Record details of allegation

Completed by (Signature)

Full Name

Date

Action and Further Information

Record all actions taken, agencies contacted and information/ advice received with time and date.

Signature

Action Taken

Action Taken by Name, address, Phone and e-mail	action	Date

Resolution statement

Is the Concern addressed adequately? (Yes/ No/ Maybe Don't know)

Signature with Date

Complaint	Breach rectifier/ Person against who complaint was made	Safeguard Representative	Expert internal	Expert External

Key Words

Safeguarding, conduct, harassment, bullying, sexual harassment, abuse, exploitation, child labor, trafficking, survivor, confidentiality, investigation, retaliation.

Glossary

- **Affiliate:** Includes any intern or volunteer working in service to **ORGANIZATION** over a period of time, whether paid or unpaid, university interns, and others with a similar type of relationship to **ORGANIZATION**.
- **Child:** anyone under the age of 18 years of age.
- **Partner:** any entity formally engaged by **ORGANIZATION** (under a grant, contract, cash contribution or memorandum of understanding) to implement programmatic deliverables for the purposes of improving outcomes of vulnerable populations.⁶
- **Service Provider:** entity that provides services in exchange for payment, term most frequently used for specific categories of businesses such as consulting, legal advice, and telecommunications.
- **Stalking:** unwanted and/or repeated surveillance by an individual or group toward another person. Stalking behaviors are interrelated to harassment, bullying and intimidation and may include following or monitoring the victim.
- **Supplier:** entity that provides goods or services to another business or directly to the customer.
- **Survivor:** a person who has experienced or has been exposed to a safeguarding concern. "Survivor" is generally preferred in the psychosocial support sector – in contrast to the term victim - because it implies resilience.
- **Survivor-Centered Care:** care that is responsive to a survivor's needs and preferences, and seeks to protect survivors from stigma, discrimination, retaliation or other harmful consequences.

Reporting

19. All **ORGANIZATION** staff, board members, and affiliates are obligated to report any concerns or suspicions of any forms of harassment, abuse and exploitation described above involving **ORGANIZATION** staff, board members, affiliates, partners, program participants, suppliers, service providers or aid workers associated with another organization. The concern may be a result of witnessing the incident, being told of it, or being the object of it.
20. All such required reporters should report all concerns through any of the following channels: *(insert designated reporting channels) e.g.:*
 - *Human resources contact: XXXX*
 - *The Director contact: XXXX*
 - *Safeguarding designated staff contact: XXXX*

⁶Entity may be local non-profit, community-based, faith-based or civil society organization, international non-profit or for-profit, academic institution, local or national government.

- The **ORGANIZATION** anonymous reporting channel: XXXX

21. The reports of alleged safeguarding violations should include as much information as is readily available, such as:
 - Date, time and location of the incident
 - Nature of what happened
 - Any immediate help or actions required
22. Intentional false or malicious reporting may result in disciplinary action.
23. **ORGANIZATION** is committed to ensuring that program participants—and members of communities in which they live—are aware of what staff behaviour is acceptable and how they can raise their concerns or questions in a confidential and secure manner. **ORGANIZATION** will ensure communication is systematic throughout project planning; and community-based feedback, complaints and response mechanisms are available.

Confidentiality

24. **ORGANIZATION** acknowledges and respects the courage and trust associated with reporting allegations of misconduct. To the extent possible, **ORGANIZATION** seeks to maintain the confidentiality of allegations, survivor/victim, reporter, witnesses and subjects of complaint, understanding confidentiality can be critical to safety/security, reputation and well-being.
25. It is important for all reporters to understand, however, that **ORGANIZATION** may be legally mandated to follow up on certain allegations (with donors, or authorities in the case of a potential criminal offense) and that strict confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed due to the organization's moral and/or legal obligation to report and investigate.
26. In instances where there is a legitimate belief that an investigation could put the reporter, survivor, witnesses or anyone else in danger, **ORGANIZATION** will take reasonable steps to protect the safety and security of those perceived to be at risk.

Support to Survivors and Safety/Security

27. **ORGANIZATION** will provide immediate and appropriate support to safeguarding survivors. Support may include specialist psychosocial counselling, a medical or legal referral, support to address security concerns, and/or access to other support, as needed and appropriate.

Investigation

28. *Under no circumstances, should any of **ORGANIZATION** staff assess or investigate an allegation or a reported allegation on their own, outside of standard reporting protocols.*
29. The **ORGANIZATION** will follow up and investigate all safeguarding reports according to its investigation procedure, and legal and statutory obligations.

Non-Retaliation

30. The **ORGANIZATION** and its staff are prohibited from retaliating—in the form of an adverse employment action or harassment—against any individual reporting an allegation in good faith or participating in an investigation. Any form of retaliation may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Adherence:

31. Failure to adhere to the provisions stated above may result in a range of actions and consequences. For staff this could include (but is not limited to): verbal warnings, written warnings, mandatory training or counselling, suspension, and/or termination of employment. Serious misconduct such as sexual abuse and exploitation as well as persistent and severe forms of harassment are cause for immediate termination, in line with the local labour law.
32. Knowingly facilitating or aiding another aid worker to perform acts of exploitation or abuse is strictly prohibited and will be addressed in the same manner as when such an activity is undertaken directly by **ORGANIZATION** staff.

Interpretation and Questions:

33. Questions on the interpretation of this policy—and any other questions—can be directed to XXX

Related Policies and Resources (insert other safeguarding relevant documents) e.g.:

- *Code of Conduct and Ethics*
- *Internal Escalation Procedure*
- *Investigation procedure*

Key Words:

Safeguarding; conduct; harassment; bullying; sexual harassment; abuse; exploitation; child labor; trafficking; survivor; confidentiality; investigation; retaliation.

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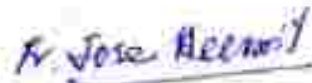
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Survivor-Centered Care: care that is responsive to a survivor's needs and preferences, and seeks to protect survivors from stigma, discrimination, retaliation or other.

Signature of the Board members



Bishop Varghese Thottamkara Soursa, (President)



Fr. Jose Areseril, (Member)



Fr. Paul Koonamparampath, (Member)



Beena Varkey (Member)



Mrs. Mita Mohanty, (Member)



Fr. Cherian Kizhikandayil, (Member)



Roy Antony K. (Director)