

Proud to be

**THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S
INTERNATIONAL AWARD**
In Sri Lanka



Child Protection Policy & Procedures

**NATIONAL YOUTH AWARDS DIVISION OF NATIONAL YOUTH
SERVICES COUNCIL OF SRI LANKA**

1. **Name of Regulation** : Child Protection Policy
2. **Purpose of Regulation** : To inform the staff & volunteers of National Youth Awards Division (NYAD) also known as the National Youth Awards Authority (NYAA) of National Youth Services Council (NYSC) - Sri Lanka of their responsibilities when working with the children and to ensure their (Children's) safety & security from insult, injury, intimidation, harassment, abuse or any other damage physical or mental.
3. **Approval given to this Regulation by** : Executive Council of the National Youth Services Council / Board of Directors of the National Youth Awards Division of NYSC.
4. **Responsibility for the update of the Regulations:** National Director / Administration Manager
5. **Date of Approval** : 26th August 2016
6. **Proposed date of Review** : August 2018
7. **Introduction:**
 - A child is defined as a young person under the age of 18 years (National Child Protection Authority Act, No. 50 of 1998) for the purpose of this policy document
 - The term 'Children' will be used to describe all children & young people under the age of 18 years involved in the NYAD led activities whether at the NYAD premises, Award Units or any other location
 - The term 'staff' will be used to describe people who are employed on a contract of employment at the National Youth Awards Division / Authority or the National Youth Services Council including those who are working on voluntary / unpaid basis
 - The term ' Policy ' refers to the Child Protection Policy of NYAD/ NYAA of NYSC
 - Staff are expected to follow & implement the policy using given guidelines when organizing or conducting activities involving children. This is expected to ensure safety & protection of children engaged in NYAD / NYAA and also of the own staff where applicable
 - For all activities & events involving children at least one member of staff should lead, raise awareness of the policy & its guidelines among other staff and where applicable children, teachers. Trainers, parents accompanying children, care staff accompanying children with physical disabilities, mental health, learning difficulties, special needs or any other special circumstance

- In case of staff likely to engage in one - to - one basis, it is imperative that he or she is appropriately trained in child protection
- The lead member of staff referred to in this policy is the National Director and the Project Officer / Coordinator or in his absence Administration Manger / Assistant Director of the organiasation (NYAA)
- All Award Units should appoint a lead member for the implementation of the Policy
- All Units of NYAD should work to a separate professional code of conduct / practice that aligns with this policy

8. Children's Rights

All children have specific need s and rights;

- The need for physical care and attention
- The need for intellectual stimulation
- The need for emotional love and security
- The need for social contact and relationships
- The right to have their needs met and safeguarded
- The right to be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- The right to be protected from discrimination
- The right to be treated as an individual
- The right to be treated with respect

9. National Youth Awards Division Child Protection Policy

In relation to children NYAD will ensure that;

- The welfare of the children is paramount
- All children whatever their age, gender, culture, language, race, disability (if any), religion, and / or sexual identity have the right to be protected from abuse & harassment of any nature
- All complaints, allegations or suspicions of abuse will be treated seriously and actions will be initiated or taken swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff do have responsibility to report to the appropriate child protection lead member or staff.

10. Policy Statement

National Youth Awards division / Authority staff have a professional duty to take such steps where necessary, in the circumstances of a properly constituted organization, are responsible & reasonable to see that the child / children is / are safe from harm or harassment while participating in the activities or events conducted by the National Youth Awards Division or its Units or Agents (if any). All children have a right for protection and the needs of particularly vulnerable children such as disabled or with special needs to be taken into account.

National Youth Awards Division will ensure that the safety, security and protection of children involved or engaged in its activities and events through adherence to the Child Protection guideline it has adopted.

11. Policy Aims:

The main aim of the National Youth Awards Division is to promote good / best practices ;

- To Provide children and young people with appropriate & adequate safety and protection during the participation in the activities and events conducted by them, their Units or agents
- To allow all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

12. Policy Implementation

National Youth Awards Division Child Protection Policy will be properly & correctly implemented by adhering to the policy guidelines contained in this policy document. All staff working with children and young people must comply with the policy in conjunction with the NYAD's Code of conduct / practice and failing which disciplinary action may be taken under the NYAD disciplinary procedure.

The guideline will cover three main areas;

- Staff recruitment, support and training
- Staff conduct
- Child protection procedures

13. Staff recruitment, support and training

For staff working with children and young people NYAD's safe recruitment will be ensured by checking their suitability to work with children (this includes existing staff);

- At the initial recruitment to NYAD, an application will be completed. This application form will elicit information regarding an applicant's past.
- Pre - activity training (Responsibly of the organization) including ;
 - *Activity / event requirements and responsibilities clarified.
 - *Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified
 - * Staff signed up to the Code of Conduct / practices and the Child Protection Policy
- Staff selected on their suitability for the activity requirements and responsibilities and their ability to demonstrate that they can work safely with children (As determined in their application form and the pre – activity training).

Where staff will take significant responsibility for safeguarding children during activities / events (Where teachers, parents of care staff are not present and therefore, taking the significant responsibility) they will / may be required to complete Criminal Record Check / Police clearance.

All appropriate staff will receive a copy of this Child Protection Policy from the National Director / Administration Manager.

Awareness of Child Protection issues will continue to be addressed through on - going training.

14. Staff Conduct

All staff should demonstrate exemplary behavior in order to protect themselves from allegations of misconduct. Staff should maintain their standards of behavior as Role Models.

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

15. Good practice means;

- Always work in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets. Never allow yourself to be left alone with a participant. There may be rare occasions when a confidential interview or one - to - one meeting is necessary and in such circumstances, the interview should be conducted in a room with an open door or visual access. Where this is not possible, the member of staff should try to ensure that another adult nearby. Try to avoid gratuitous physical contact with a participant. (There may be occasions where distressed participant needs comfort which may include physical comforting and staff use their discretion to ensure that it is appropriate & not unnecessary or unjustified contact.) Be cautious about physical contact in games as much as possible. Where physical contact is unavoidable (E.G. Demonstrate equipment or a particular exercise or move) staff should be aware of the limits which such contact should take place and of the possibility of misinterpretation of such contact.
- Treat all children equally and with respect & dignity. NYAD will take every positive action to eliminate discrimination against any person or group of people. Staff should ensure that children are protected from discrimination on any grounds, including ability and challenge discrimination comments and behavior. Activities should be designed to include all children and to promote attitudes towards differences.
- Be clear about what the objectives of the activity are before it begins and always put the welfare of each child first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Never contradict instructions given by Project Coordinator or any other member of staff.
- Maintaining safer and appropriate distance with children (e.g. It is not appropriate for staff to have an intimate relationship with a child or share a room with them during residential activities).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision making process
- Ensure that if children of mixed genders are to be supervised, they should be accompanied by a male and female staff. But, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensuring that at residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms unless it is essential (i.e. Sickness. Adopt the procedures set out above in relation to private interviews). Staff should never invite children to their rooms.

- Be an excellent role model and conduct yourself in a manner that sets a good example to participants. Never smoke or consume liquor / alcohol during sessions and whilst responsible for children.
- Giving positive, enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Never use physical force against a participant, unless it constitutes reasonable restraint to protect him / her or another person or to protect property. If it is necessary to restrain a participant in case he / she is an immediate danger to him / her (themselves) or others or to property, then the minimum level of force should be used for the shortest amount of time. Remain calm and get the attention of and support of other staff. The incident must be recorded in writing with a witness statement (wherever possible), immediately afterwards.
- Never use physical treatment
- Securing parental consent in writing in case the need arises to administer emergency First - Aid and / or Medical treatment if the participant is under the age of 16 years. Such First - Aid given should be recorded in writing and brought to the notice of the Senior member of staff who will inform the parent or the carer (in case of disabled children).
- Keeping the written records of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any medical treatment given.
- Requesting written consent of parents if the child is to be transported by a private vehicle of staff.
- Always refer any problems to the child protection lead member.
- Question any unknown adult who enters the premises where the activities are conducted and attempts to engage with the children.

16. Practices that should not be sanctioned

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games of any nature.
- Sharing a room with a child.
- Using of any inappropriate language or behavior by children and this should always be challenged.
- Sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Making a child cry as a form of control.
- Allegations or complaints made by a child to go unrecorded or not acted upon.

- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home or arranged meeting off the official venue

17. Use of Photographic or Filming equipment

Written prior consent must be obtained to take or use photographs or video footage. Parents should be made aware of when, where and how the photographs or images should be used in order to give their consent for same. This includes comprehensive information regarding the use of images (Print, multi - media, broadcast) and the purpose (Promotion, publicity, evaluation, audit & review). An indication where possible of whom the audience will be such as general public, participating children & their families, other organisations and institutes.

18. Child Protection Procedures

National Youth Awards Division will follow the procedures set out by the Child Protection Policy as follows;

- Ensure the organization has a lead member of staff for child protection with adequate & appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure every member of staff knows the name of the lead staff responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff understands their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the lead staff member. However, staff should bear in mind that they are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.
- Ensure that parents do have an understanding of the responsibility placed on NYAD and its staff for child protection by setting out its obligations on the NYAD website and other documents available from NYAD.
- Develop effective links with relevant Units & agencies and cooperate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters.
- Keep written records of all matters related to children, even if there is no need to refer the matter immediately. Ensure all records are kept securely in locked locations.
- Adopt a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.

19.What is abuse?

Child abuse A term used to describe a range of ways in which people, usually adults harm children. Often the adult is a person who is known and trusted by the child.

Child abuse is neglect, physical injury, and sexual abuse or emotional abuse inflicted knowingly not prevented, which causes significant harm or even death.

20.Awareness of actual or likely occurrence of abuse

There are a number of ways in which abuse becomes apparent;

- Child discloses abuse
- Someone else discloses that a child has told him / her or he / she strongly believes that a child has been or is being abused
- At A child may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
- A child's behavior may indicate that it is likely that he /she is being abused
- Behavior of a member of staff or in the way in which h /she relates to a child causes concern

21.Issues of Disclosure

Becoming aware of abuse can cause a multitude of emotional reactions, which are persona to each individual. Whatever the reaction and however the abuse has become apparent, actual or suspected, it must be responded to in the correct manner in accordance with the procedures outlined here. Even if the truth of the disclosure is uncertain, an appropriate response has to be made. A response according to the procedure outlined here will be supported by the lead member of staff and ultimately by the NYAD.

22.Action to be taken upon suspicion or disclosure

There are some basic principles in reacting to suspicion, allegations and / or disclosures.

23.What to do & What not to do

- Stay calm
- Do not panic
- Do not over react. It is extremely unlikely that the participant is in immediate danger
- Listen, hear & believe
- Do not probe for more information
- Questioning the participant may affect how the participant's disclosure is received at a later date
- Give time to the persons to say what they want
- Do not make assumptions, do not paraphrase and do not offer alternative explanations
- Reassure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling
- Explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed
- Do not promise confidentiality to keep secrets or that everything will be ok (it might not)
- Act immediately in keeping with the procedures in this policy
- Do not try to deal with it yourself
- Record in writing as near as verbatim (in own words) as possible what was said as possible
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Report to the lead member of staff
- Do not gossip with colleagues about what has been said to you
- Record your report
- Do not make a child repeat a story unnecessarily
- It is the duty of anyone who works with children to report disclosure of abuse
- It is not for staff to decide whether or not a suspicion or allegation is true. All suspicions or allegations must be taken seriously and dealt with according to the procedure

24. Responsibility

Staff made aware of suspicions, allegations or actual abuse, are responsible to take the appropriate action according to this procedure.

- The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or who is told of is to report it and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously whilst adhering to the dos and don'ts above.
- The incident should be reported immediately to the lead member of staff who is then responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse.

Staff should never try to deal with a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse by him/ herself.

Reporting suspected, alleged, or actual incidents of abuse.

25. Statutory Child Protection Procedures

What happens next is entirely up to the relevant statutory agencies (i.e. Department of Probation & Child Care Services and Department of Social Services) .

Adequate information passed on to the above agencies may lead to suspicion, allegation or actual incident, being dealt with quickly according to the law or it may lead to through checks with several other organization (Law enforcement agencies) or possibly a child protection conference.

26. Recording suspected or actual incidents

No matter what happens to a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse, (Whether or not it is processed through a statutory agency or not), all details must be recorded.

27. The following information will be important in recording an incident;

- The date & time of disclosure of incident of suspicion, allegation or actual abuse
- Details given to you about the above
- An indication of the parties involved
- Details of the action taken by you & the organization
- Details of to whom (Agency) and when the incident is reported

If the incident has not been reported due to any reason to the relevant statutory agency, full explanations as to why it was not reported must be documented.

Recording should be factual, and no reference made to your own subjective opinions.

Record should be kept completely confidential and secure (locked away) and only be shared with those who need to know about the suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse.

The equality and diversity policy will go hand in hand with the Child Protection Policy of the National Youth Awards Division of the National Youth Services Council in treating, working and dealing in all matters connected to or related to the children including physical and mental disabilities.

Prepared by :

Signature :
Name : Tissa Samarasinghe
Designation : National Director
Date : 01st August 2016

Approved by the Board of Directors of the National Youth Services Council on 26/08/2016