

Child Safeguarding Protection Policy, Ekta



New Janiguda,
Koraput-764020,
Odisha
Email ID: info@ekta.org.in
Ekta.koraput@gmail.com
Visit us: www.ekta.org.in
Telephone: 06852356081

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1st updated the policy on August, 2023

2nd updated the policy on September, 2025

1. Introduction & Purpose

Ekta is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for all children, ensuring their right to protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence. This policy outlines Ekta's commitment to prevent, report, and respond to safeguarding concerns in alignment with ChildFund India's Child Safeguarding Policy and global safeguarding standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Ekta staff (permanent, temporary, contract)
- Volunteers and interns
- Board members and governing body
- Community-based organizations, partners, and vendors working with Ekta
- Visitors, donors, and supporters interacting with children through Ekta

3. Guiding Principles

- Best interest of the child will be the primary consideration.
- Zero tolerance for child abuse, exploitation, neglect, or harassment.
- Non-discrimination — equal protection irrespective of gender, caste, ethnicity, ability, or social status.
- Transparency & accountability in all child-related activities.
- Confidentiality & whistleblower protection for those reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Participation of children in decisions affecting them, in age-appropriate ways.

4. Definitions

- Child: Any individual under 18 years of age.
- Child Abuse: Physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation (including child labour, trafficking, online abuse).
- Grooming: Building a relationship of trust with a child/caregiver to facilitate abuse.
- Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSEAC): Use of digital platforms to exploit children.

5. Prevention Measures

- Safe Recruitment: Background checks, reference verification, and safeguarding clauses in contracts.
- Training & Awareness: Mandatory induction within 7 days of joining and annual refresher training for all staff, volunteers, and partners.

- Two-Adult Rule: No staff/volunteer will be alone with a child.
- Digital Safety: Protection of children's data, secure use of images/videos with parental consent, strict rules for online interactions.
- Partner Compliance: All partners/vendors must adopt safeguarding policies no less stringent than Ekta's.

6. Code of Conduct

All representatives must:

- Treat children with dignity and respect.
- Obtain parental/guardian consent for child participation, photography, or data use.
- Create safe spaces free from discrimination, harassment, or exploitation.
- Avoid developing relationships with children that are exploitative or abusive.
- Never: hit, humiliate, exploit, engage in sexual activity, or expose children to inappropriate material or environments.

7. Reporting & Response Mechanisms

- Mandatory Reporting: All safeguarding concerns must be reported within 24 hours.
- Reporting Channels:
 - Safeguarding Focal Person (designated at Ekta)
 - Project Coordinator/Manager
 - Ekta Senior Leadership
 - Direct report to ChildFund India through complaints@childfund.org or <http://speakup.childfund.org>
- Whistleblower Protection: No retaliation against individuals reporting concerns in good faith.
- Response Protocol: Victim-centered approach ensuring confidentiality, safety, psychosocial support, and referral to statutory authorities when required.

8. Roles & Responsibilities

- Ekta Staff & Volunteers: Prevent risks, follow the policy, report concerns.
- Safeguarding Focal Person (SFP): Receive and escalate reports, maintain case records, ensure confidentiality.
- Managers/Coordinators: Ensure staff compliance, support training, conduct risk assessments.
- Board & Leadership: Ensure policy implementation, oversight, and accountability.
- Partners & Vendors: Comply with Ekta's safeguarding standards as a condition of engagement.

9. Monitoring & Compliance

- Annual refresher training and capacity building.
- Regular safeguarding audits and risk assessments in all programs.
- Annual review of policy and reporting of incidents to leadership and ChildFund India.

10. Survivor-Centered Approach

- Prioritize care, dignity, and safety of children and survivors.
- Provide referral to legal, medical, and psychosocial services.
- Maintain confidentiality, sharing information only on a need-to-know basis.

11. Disciplinary Measures

Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, including termination, blacklisting, legal reporting, or withdrawal of partnership agreements.

12. Policy Review & Adoption

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in line with ChildFund India's Safeguarding Policy and international standards. All staff, partners, and stakeholders must sign acknowledgment of receipt and compliance.

Acknowledgment of Receipt & Compliance

I have read and understood the Ekta – Child Safeguarding & Protection Policy. I agree to comply with its principles, reporting requirements, and code of conduct.

1st Approval of the policies by the Board: 1st November 2024