

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Society for Urban, Rural, Economic and Socio Habitation

Thavanampalli -517 131, Chittoor District, A.P., India

1. INTRODUCTION.

Society for Urban, Rural, Economic and Socio Habitation (S.U.R.E.S.H) is firmly committed to establishing and maintaining a zero harm child safe organizational environment across all its programmes, partnerships, and operational environments. The organization recognizes child safeguarding as a fundamental institutional responsibility integrated into governance systems, management processes, programme implementation and community engagement strategies.

This Child Protection Policy provides a comprehensive safeguarding framework aligned with national legal mandates and international child rights standards. It is designed to prevent, identify, respond, and mitigate all forms of child abuse, exploitation, neglect, violence and digital harm. The organization commits to a proactive safeguarding approach prioritizing prevention, early detection, rapid response and survivor centered recovery.

2. OBJECTIVES.

The primary objective of this policy is to ensure complete protection of children from all forms of abuse exploitation neglect and violence by establishing a structured accountable safeguarding system.

1. To institutionalize child safeguarding as a core operational standard ensuring that all programmes are designed and implemented with integrated risk mitigation child safety controls and prevention mechanisms.
2. To enforce a mandatory safeguarding response protocol ensuring all concerns are reported within 24 hours and responded to within 48 hours for immediate protection and timely intervention.
3. To strengthen institutional capacity through continuous safeguarding training structured learning systems and community based awareness programmes that promote child protection at all levels.
4. To integrate comprehensive safeguarding risk assessments into all programme planning processes ensuring identification prevention and mitigation of risks at the design stage itself.
5. To adopt a survivor centered approach ensuring safety care recovery psychosocial support legal referral and long term protection and rehabilitation of affected children.

3.SCOPE.

This policy applies to all individuals and entities associated with S.U.R.E.S.H including full time and part time staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, governing body members, community workers, partner organizations, service providers, donors and visitors. The safeguarding obligations defined under this policy are binding on all stakeholders without exception.

The policy applies across all operational environments including office premises, field locations, community programmes, residential activities, training centres, outreach events, transport arrangements, and all digital communication and online engagement. Safeguarding responsibilities remain continuous and non negotiable regardless of location, role or duration of engagement.

4.DEFINITION OF CHILD.

A child is defined as any individual below the age of eighteen years in accordance with the Juvenile Justice Care and Protection of Children Act 2015 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This definition applies uniformly across all organizational programmes ensuring consistency in safeguarding application and legal compliance.

5.SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES.

S.U.R.E.S.H follows core safeguarding principles guiding all child protection actions and decisions. The best interest of the child is the supreme guiding principle in all decisions and actions. The organization maintains a zero tolerance policy towards any form of child abuse, exploitation, neglect or harm.

A do no harm approach is systematically applied ensuring no programme or activity exposes children to additional risks. The organization promotes meaningful child participation ensuring children are heard, respected, and involved in matters affecting their lives. All safeguarding interventions are survivor centered prioritizing safety, dignity, recovery and reintegration. Confidentiality, transparency and accountability are strictly maintained as core operational standards.

The policy is aligned with global frameworks including Sustainable Development Goals SDG 16 Peace Justice Strong Institutions and Core Humanitarian Standards CHS on Quality and Accountability.

6.CHILD ABUSE CLASSIFICATION.

Child abuse is recognized as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing physical, emotional, sexual, and structural harm. Physical abuse includes intentional bodily harm, corporal punishment, and physical assault. Emotional abuse includes psychological harm such as humiliation, intimidation, isolation and persistent verbal abuse.

Sexual abuse includes any form of exploitation, harassment, coercion, or assault of a child. Neglect refers to failure in providing essential care, supervision, nutrition, education, or medical attention. Child labour and economic exploitation include forced work and deprivation of education. Trafficking includes recruitment, transportation or transfer of children for exploitative purposes.

Digital abuse includes online grooming, cyber harassment, image based exploitation, and unauthorized use of child data. Institutional abuse refers to safeguarding failures within organizational systems including negligence, misconduct and unsafe programme design.

7.SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURE.

S.U.R.E.S.H has established a Child Safeguarding Committee (CSC) to ensure systematic monitoring and enforcement of child protection measures. The committee is responsible for monthly safeguarding reviews, risk analysis, incident monitoring and policy compliance oversight. It ensures safeguarding remains a standing agenda item in governance meetings.

A designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) serves as the central safeguarding authority responsible for receiving reports, managing confidential case files, coordinating emergency responses, and ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards. The CPO reports periodically to the Governing Body ensuring transparency and institutional accountability.

8.CODE OF CONDUCT.

All personnel associated with S.U.R.E.S.H are required to uphold the highest ethical standards in all interactions with children. Staff must maintain professional boundaries at all times and ensure no child is placed in vulnerable or unsupervised situations. Any form of physical, emotional, verbal or psychological harm is strictly prohibited.

All interactions must be conducted in a transparent, respectful, and child sensitive manner. The use of child images and personal data is strictly regulated and permitted only with prior informed consent from guardians. Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately without delay. Violation of this Code of Conduct will result in strict disciplinary action including termination and legal consequences.

9.SAFE RECRUITMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCE SAFEGUARDING SYSTEM.

The organization implements a robust child safe recruitment system ensuring all personnel meet safeguarding standards. This includes mandatory criminal background verification, police clearance certification, reference checks, and behavioral integrity assessments. All candidates are required to sign a Child Safeguarding Declaration prior to engagement.

A structured probation and performance monitoring system is implemented for the initial employment period. Annual safeguarding re verification is conducted ensuring continued compliance.

10.REPORTING RESPONSE AND ESCALATION FRAMEWORK.

S.U.R.E.S.H implements a structured safeguarding response system with strict timelines ensuring rapid protection of children. All concerns must be reported to the Child Protection Officer within two hours of identification. Immediate protective measures are activated within twenty four hours ensuring child safety.

A preliminary assessment is completed within forty eight hours followed by escalation to relevant legal authorities under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) and Juvenile Justice Act where required. The child is provided comprehensive support services including medical care, psychosocial counseling, legal aid and rehabilitation assistance. All cases are documented and closed only after verified safety restoration.

11.RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFEGUARDING CONTROLS.

The organization adopts a structured risk classification system categorizing activities into high, medium, and low risk levels. High risk environments include residential care, field camps and transport activities. Medium risk includes community engagement programmes and low risk includes administrative environments.

Risk mitigation measures include implementation of a two adult supervision rule, structured field monitoring systems, safeguarding audit tools and digital monitoring protocols. A safeguarding risk register is maintained and updated periodically.

12.SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS.

The organization uses measurable safeguarding indicators including 100 percent staff safeguarding training coverage, response time compliance less than forty eight hours, safeguarding audit compliance above ninety percent and full programme level risk assessment integration. Community awareness coverage and incident resolution rates are also tracked systematically.

13.TRAINING LEARNING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT.

S.U.R.E.S.H ensures mandatory safeguarding training for all personnel during induction and annual refresher programmes. Specialized training modules are conducted on child protection laws, digital safety, and emerging safeguarding risks. Community awareness programmes are implemented strengthening grassroots understanding of child protection principles.

14.CHILD PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK.

The organization promotes structured child participation through Child Protection Clubs and community based child forums. These platforms enable children to express views, report concerns and contribute to programme planning and monitoring. Annual child consultations are conducted ensuring meaningful engagement in decision making processes.

15.DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING AND CYBER PROTECTION.

S.U.R.E.S.H implements strict digital safeguarding protocols protecting children from online harm. This includes prohibition of unauthorized image sharing, restriction on geo tagging sensitive locations, encrypted data storage systems, and controlled access to child related information. Online communication platforms are monitored ensuring safe digital engagement.

16.DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SECURITY.

All child related data is classified as highly sensitive and is protected through strict confidentiality protocols. Access is restricted to authorized personnel only. Physical and digital records are securely stored using controlled systems. No disclosure of child identity is permitted under any circumstances unless legally mandated.

17.REFERRAL AND SUPPORT SERVICE NETWORK.

The organization maintains structured linkages with government and non government service providers including child welfare authorities, healthcare systems, legal aid services, psychosocial counseling Centres, and rehabilitation institutions.

18.WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION SYSTEM.

A strong whistleblower protection mechanism is established encouraging reporting safeguarding concerns without fear of retaliation. Confidentiality of reporters is strictly maintained and all complaints are investigated independently.

19.DISCIPLINARY ACTION FRAMEWORK.

Violations of this policy are treated with zero tolerance. Depending on severity disciplinary actions include corrective training, written warnings, suspension, termination and legal prosecution under applicable child protection laws including POCSO Act and Juvenile Justice Act.

20.MONITORING EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM.

The organization conducts structured safeguarding monitoring through monthly internal reviews, quarterly audits, and annual external evaluations. A safeguarding dashboard is maintained tracking compliance indicators and ensuring continuous improvement.

21.DECLARATION.

All stakeholders of S.U.R.E.S.H are required to comply fully with this Child Protection Policy. Any violation will result in strict disciplinary and legal action.

22.APPROVAL AND ADOPTION.

This policy is formally adopted as Version 5.2 by the Governing Body of S.U.R.E.S.H and is effective from the date of approval. It is binding on all associated persons and shall be reviewed annually.

Authorized Signatories. President _____ Secretary _____
Child Protection Officer _____
Official Seal S.U.R.E.S.H.