

Tompeang Russey Khmer Association
Child Protection Policy
September, 2012

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I. Child Protection Policy
1) Introduction

Child abuse is a global phenomenon and occurs in all countries and in all societies. It can involve physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect of children. Tompeang Russey Khmer Association (TRK) has written, and will implement, this policy to prevent abuse of children under our care and to protect our staff from false accusations.

At TRK, the child's best interests are our primary concern. We believe that:

- children have the right to a happy, healthy and secure childhood;
- the abuse of children is an abuse of their rights;
- child abuse is never acceptable.

Accordingly, TRK will ensure that all staffs, volunteers and visitors:

- are aware of the problem of child abuse;
- safeguard children from abuse through good practice;
- report all concerns about possible abuse;
- respond appropriately and quickly when abuse is discovered or suspected.

TRK is committed to upholding Cambodian law in issues of abuse and exploitation, and to adherence to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In a country where children are the largest demographic group, and where child-sex tourism, child rape and child abuse is on the rise, TRK staffs and volunteers will do everything in their power to protect the children in the children's home and our wider projects from further abuse.

2) Purpose

TRK commits to implement the procedures set forth herein, with the intent to;

- safeguard the children/youth of our association from abuse and neglect.
- respond to all allegations in a fair and compassionate manner.
- protect staffs and volunteers from potential false allegations of abuse.

The policy outlines practical steps to increase TRK's capacity to manage and reduce risks of child abuse. While it is not possible to eliminate risk entirely, much can be done to reduce opportunities for child abuse.

I. Procedures to Support the Child Protection Policy

1) Definition of Abuse

[This definition of abuse is in accordance with the training and guidance offered by Chab Dai Coalition.]

Child abuse is an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust which is not accidental and which harms, or threatens to harm, a child's physical or mental health or welfare.

Child: A child is anyone under the age of 18.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action that results, or could result, in injury to a child. It can include punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. It is different than reasonable discipline.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse is when a child is used for the sexual pleasure of an adult or older child. It can include sexual intercourse, exposing a child's private areas, indecent remarks, touching for sexual pleasure or allowing a child to look at pornography.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. It can include constant criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring, or isolating the child. It also includes failure by the caregiver to provide the child with love, emotional support and guidance.

Spiritual Abuse: Spiritual abuse is the misuse of power and trust by someone in a position of spiritual power and authority (whether organization, institution, church or family), with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating, or dominating a child. It results in spiritual harm to a child and can be linked to other abuse, such as physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Neglect: Neglect is failure to meet a child's basic need for food, clothing, shelter, sleep, medical attention, education and protection from harm.

2) Recruitment and Screening Procedures

TRK will implement a staff recruitment process to ensure that the children in its care are protected from potential abusers.

The application process for new staff will include:

- The examination of a full CV, that includes all work experience, education, and a personal history.
- Two reference checks; preferably done by telephone or face-to-face meeting.
- A face-to-face interview.
- Applicants from other countries will submit a clear criminal record check from their country of residence.
- National applicants will submit additional references, preferably from their commune leader, instead of a criminal record check.
- Signing the association's Child Protection Policy, and participation in child protection orientation with the association's designated person, _____.

If an applicant is found to have a history of abuse, they will automatically be excluded from consideration for employment.

3) Operational and Behavioural Guidelines

All staffs will be aware of this policy and the changes made to it and will implement it in all of TRK's programs. Staffs will treat all the children with dignity and respect, and will encourage them to teach each other with respect as well.

All staff will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Staff will treat all children with respect regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, background, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- Private meetings will be done in a room with windows and the door will remain open.
- Sleeping arrangements: Staff will not sleep in a child's bed with him/her. Children are not permitted into bedrooms of the opposite gender. Very young children (usually under 5) may sleep in the same room as children of a different gender who are in the same age category.
- Physical touch:
 - Staffs and children should not touch other children in an inappropriate way.
 - Inappropriate displays of affection:
 - Do not kiss a child or ask them to kiss you;
 - Do not engage in long hugging or tickling;
 - Do not hold a child's face when disciplining him/her;
 - Do not carry older children and do not allow them to sit on your lap;
 - Avoid prolonged physical contact with any child.
 - All touch must be done in view of others.
- When a staff helps a younger child bathe, she should leave the door unlocked. She/he should only touch the child when necessary to help the child clean.

- Staff will not use physical punishment in disciplining the children. Staff will not take away things necessary to survival as a form of discipline (for example, food, shelter, love).
- Staff will not use language that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Staff will refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labor which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, or which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities.
- Staff will immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures.

TRK will also seek to ensure the following behaviors are adhered to in order to prevent child-on-child abuse:

- No more than one child is allowed into the same toilet cubicle at any one time;
- Two or more boys or girls should not lie in or on the same bed together;
- Children are not permitted to speak to one another using sexually explicit language.

Failure of staff to adhere to the above procedures will result in staff discipline. Disciplinary measures include: reduction of salary for a limited period, exclusion from the workplace, prosecution. These measures will be implemented in direct relation to the seriousness of the offense. TRK is an association that committed to the policy of restorative justice and holds forgiveness as one of our defining characteristics. However, because the welfare of the child in our association is paramount, we will not risk offenders working in direct contact with children.

4) Visitor Guidelines

TRK welcomes volunteers and visitors. We affirm the value of their presence in our workplace. However, visitors must adhere to the following procedures:

- All visitors, volunteers and short-term staff must read and sign the Visitor's Child Protection Policy before working with children at TRK.
- Visitors, volunteers and short-term staff will be expected to follow all the behavioural guidelines in this policy.
- They will be supervised at all times by a member of staff.

5) Communications

TRK recognizes that the Internet is increasingly being used by those seeking to abuse children and that photographs are sometimes doctored to create further abuse of children. Accordingly, we are committed to limiting the associated risks by applying the following principles:

- All staff and visitors will adhere to the communications policy as outlined in the visitor's document.

- Visitors and volunteers are prohibited from publishing the children's identities on the internet and the specific geographic location of our children should never be disclosed online.

6) Reporting and Responding to Abuse

If anyone in the association suspects abuse or hears of an allegation of abuse, they have a moral and legal responsibility to report it.

- The allegation should be reported directly to the designated staff member.
- Confidentiality will be upheld and disclosure will only be on a "need-to-know" basis.
- Records of the allegation and procedures will be kept on file confidentially, and these will be kept in a secure location. The designated person and the person reporting the abuse will fill out a Suspected Abuse Report Form.
- Other organizations will be consulted for advice in the case of suspected abuse; the police will be involved depending on the situation; if the suspected abuser is a foreigner, their embassy will be notified.
- Throughout the whole process, both the victim and the accused will be treated with dignity and respect.
- Outside counseling will be provided for the victim of abuse.
- A member of staff will be appointed to deal with the media; other staff will not communicate with the media. Failure to comply with this will result in staff disciplining.
- The suspected perpetrator may be temporarily suspended of duties while an investigation is taking place.

All TRK staffs understand that a violation of the Child Protection Policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from their job.

7) Training, Monitoring and Evaluation

- New staff will receive child protection training before being put in a position of trust.
- Staff will receive training on child protection on an annual basis.
- Attendance will be taken at each training and kept on file. Staff who miss training for any reason will be provided with a 'catch up' training session at the earliest possible time.
- The children in TRK's programs will be educated about the Child Protection Policy and copies of the policy will be posted throughout the facility.
- This policy will be revised and adapted to the needs of the program once every three years. The next evaluation of the policy will be done in 2014.

8) Statement of Commitment

To be signed by all TRK team members:-

A copy will be kept on file in the TRK administrative office.

I declare that:

- I have read and understand the TRK Child Protection Policy.
- I will work within the procedures and protocols as laid out in this policy.
- I have not been accused or convicted of any offense involving physical or sexual abuse of children.
- I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse of children while engaged in TRK activities, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities.

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Appendix:
Form for Reporting Abuse Incidents

Site:	
Date Reported:	
Outline of Incident: (including date of the incident)	
Immediate Response of designated staff member:	
Further Action to be Taken:	
Reported By:	
Date:	
Signed:	