

Caritas Sri Lanka – **SEDEC**

Safeguarding policy

Approved by Board of Directors on 12th March 2019



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Policy Statement

The policy statement outlines Caritas Sri Lanka's commitment to recognize the intrinsic dignity and rights of the people, especially vulnerable groups, irrespective of any form of discrimination and sets out preventive measures to minimize the risk of harms to those reliant on our aid interventions or member of the wider community, particularly the risk to children and vulnerable adults. In a social relationship with relevant to aid interventions exploitation especially vulnerable groups on the basis of power or unfairly taking advantage of another person with dependency is imminent. There is inherent risk of exploitation or causing harm on the basis of the power the person holds. Caritas Sri Lanka is committed to support the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, one of the key concerns – and the need to protect them from abuse will override any other principles. Creating an inclusive, safer, shielding environment for those who come in contact with us is a necessity and we are committed to ensure 'Our Staff' do not abuse their power, that our activities do not expose anyone to harm. Caritas Sri Lanka is committed to ensure that it acts upon its commitment on the safe guarding policy

Key Safeguarding Principles

- Creating a dignified environment for those who come in to contact with us and enabling their rights to be preserved without causing any harm and safeguarding in the event of a perceived or actual breach of safeguarding policy
- Holding perpetrators to account: Sexual exploitation and abuse are considered to be the acts of serious misconduct and be subject for disciplinary measures for staff, including dismissal.
- The principle of the best interest of the survivor is the primary consideration in all safeguarding matters.
- In the event of perceived breach of conduct support will be made available to survivors

Who is a child, young person, and adult at risk?

Child/ Young Person

- A child is anyone under the age of 18. Child/Adult could refer to the persons that we are having direct contact within our programs. All children irrespective of age, disabilities, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse.

Vulnerable Adult

- A vulnerable adult (international development context) is a person who is 18 years of age or over, and who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and due to other reasons who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- Our Staff include employed staff, volunteers, trustees, consultants and any other person who is asked or authorized to carry out work for, or represent,
- Safeguarding is the responsibility of all our staff of Caritas Network. Safeguarding measures seek to prevent situations where individuals can use their position of power, to abuse or exploit another person.
- A child is anyone under the age of 18. This is irrespective of local country definitions, including legal definitions, of when a child reaches adulthood.
- A vulnerable adult (international development context) is a person who is 18 years of age or over, and who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and due to other reasons who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.
- Abuse is defined as any action that intentionally harms or injures another person. In short, someone who purposefully harms another in any way is committing abuse in many forms, such as: physical or verbal maltreatment, injury, assault, violation, rape, unjust practices, crimes.
- Exploitation the action or fact of treating someone unfairly in order to benefit from their work.
- Harm: Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights
- Psychological harm: Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation
- Sexual abuse: The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Sexual exploitation : The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a 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.
- Survivor: The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.
- Victim: a person harmed, injured, or killed as a result of a crime, accident, or other event or action.
- Whistleblowing: A disclosure by a person about serious malpractice carried out by Staff in Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC

Policy scope

This policy applies to the network of Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) and clearly outlines the commitment of CSL in preventing/ lowering the risk of our representatives abusing power and causing harm to any programme participant or member of the wider community, particularly the risk to children and vulnerable adults. This covers the entire project activities carrying out in Sri Lanka with the network of Caritas Sri Lanka. The policy clearly outlines measures taken in ensuring the prevention and response to safeguarding concerns or allegations. The policy does not cover any form of abuse or harm that takes place within a community which are also being addressed through the form of specific projects. This policy does not cover bullying or harassment in the workplace which occurs when differences in power are abused between staff members of the same agency, even though these issues may be interrelated. These are governed by internal HR policies.

Associated Policies

- Code of Behavior requires all staff, volunteers, and consultants to conduct themselves in a manner that preserves the dignity, respect and equality of every individual.
- Child Protection Policy do not expose children to risk
- Complaints Handling Policy communicates the mechanisms for managing, responding to and monitoring complaints. Staff and volunteers are obligated to report any suspected sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment of others.
- Associated HR policies: recruitment policy - subject to a reference checks complete Code of Behavior induction
- Whistleblowing: A disclosure by a person about serious malpractice carried out by Staff in Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC
- Establishment of policies, and continuous monitoring of their proper implementation


Roles & responsibilities


- CSL safe guarding officer is the senior executive manager and this comprises a team of members from the organization who will support monitoring of the progress of cases
- The team provide directions to the management
- Ensure that the practices are adopted are in line with the legislative changes
- Create risk minimizing plans
- Risk assessment and ensure implementation and review of the actions identified by the risk assessment;
- Providing appropriate information when making referrals to external agencies (such as the Police) in all cases of suspected abuse of children or vulnerable adults.
- Safe guarding team ensure that staff, workers, volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults are familiar with the contents of the policy and its application before any new or changed activity/event;
- Protect personal data of children and vulnerable adults by processing and storing it in accordance with data protection policy
- Ensure data is accessible only to authorized individuals
- Ensure that stakeholders are aware in raising a complain

Reporting and management of the safeguarding concerns or allegations

- Reporting can be raised to Safe guarding team. The contact person for this is senior executive manager
- Reporting can also be made via complaint handling mechanism
- Safe guarding committee meeting is held within 24 hours
- Investigation could also be internal and external which is under discretion of the safe guarding team
- Update the progress of the case to relevant parties when and if necessary
- Confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- Refer any reports involving criminal activity to the relevant authorities responsible for investigation
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to the due process
- Will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy
- Will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations
- Any breach of this policy should be reported to Senior Executive Manager

Approved by the Board of Management on 12th March 2019.


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