



**Afghanistan Educational & Health Development Aid  
(AEHDA) Organization**

## **Child Protection Policy**

Approved by:

By Chair of BOT

January 01, 2021

## **BACKGROUND**

Afghanistan Educational and Health Development Aids Organization “AEHDA” is a non-profit, non-political, non-sectarian and non-governmental organization registered with Ministry of Economy (MoE) , Health Cluster, Nutrition Cluster, ACBAR , UNGM#903905,UNDP ,UNPORTAL,... etc

AEHDA is a non-profit, non-political, non-sectarian, and non-governmental organization mandated to provide contemporary development services in Education, One Health Approach, Research, Emergency, and development. Additionally, it advocates for vulnerable populations, especially women and children, and emphasizes communication.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Many years of conflict have disintegrated the physical, social and cultural texture of Afghanistan and keep on impacting the lives of children that most of them even don't have access to their basic rights. Child abuse occurs in every country and Afghanistan shows a relatively high incidents rate comparing to the neighboring countries. AEHDA believes that access to rights is central for children. All children, regardless of their age, culture, inability, sex, language, wealth and religious convictions have the privilege to protection from abuse. AEHDA Child Protection Policy is designed to demonstrate a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all, what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this policy are to:

- To provide safety and protection to the children whilst in the care of AEHDA;  
and
- To allow all staff response to the child protection issues positively with more information and confidentiality.

## DEFINITIONS UNDER THIS POLICY

- Child is anyone under the age of 18 years.
- Child Abuse is all forms of physical, psychological and sexual abuses as well as neglect and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.
- Child protection is the responsibilities, measures and activities that AEHDA undertakes to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harms.

## SCOPE OF WORK

This policy deals with the protection of children as defined under the UNCRC and specifically protect the children with whom AEHDA works for any amount of time. AEHDA actions will always be in the best interest of the child. This policy applies to all managerial, administrative and clinical 'staff' including employees, volunteers, interns, board members and other representatives of the organization such as consultants appointed on behalf of AEHDA as well as all the visitors who may come in to contact with children through AEHDA such as donors and journalists or staff who are indirectly in contact with children and have access to information on children such as their names, schools, locations, photographs, health conditions and case studies.

The policy is concerned with the following type of child abuses:

- **Physical Abuse:** including hurting or injuring, causing pain, smothering, drowning or poisoning
- **Sexual Abuse:** including direct or indirect sexual exploitation and involving children in inappropriate sexual activities
- **Psychological Abuse:** Including continuously rejecting children, humiliating them, using cheap words while communicating them or denying their rights
- **Neglect:** Repeatedly lack of appropriate care including love, stimulation, safety, warmth, nourishment and medical attention.

We will ensure that all staff are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks of them to children.

## CHILD PROTECTION MEASURES

The aim of AEHDA is to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. The following measures will be taken in order to provide a safe environment for children:

- Background check applies in recruitment procedures to ensure on suitability for working with children;
- All staff and volunteers have access to a copy of the child protection policy
- All newly recruited staff and volunteers receive briefing on child protection issues;
- Treat all children with respect and dignity, using appropriate language, respect for their privacy;
- Respect the rights, wishes and feelings of the children with whom we are working; Design and organize the workplaces in the best possible option to minimize the risk; The staff as far as possible, should be visible in working with children and be in view of another adult when with a child; that is, don't be alone with a child unless it is unavoidable or the child is in immediate danger. This is for the child's protection and to protect staff from false accusation;
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed;
- Every workplace will have the appropriate contact details to report child abuse; Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behavior does not go unchallenged;
- Be aware of high-risk peer situations e.g. unsupervised mixing of older and younger children;
- Talk to children about staff behavior/ contact with them and encourage them to raise any concerns;
- Encourage and respect children's voices and views;
- Keep the line manager informed of where you are and what you are doing;

- Ensure where there are concerns about children, appropriate action is taken to address those concerns;
- Report suspected and alleged abuse; and
- Keep the information about children confidential.

### **STAFF FORBIDDEN FROM THE FOLLOWING BEHAVIORS**

- Hit or physically assault/ abuse children;
- Develop physical or sexual relationships with children;
- Develop exploitative or abusive relationship with children;
- Act in ways that may put child at risk of abuse;
- Use inappropriate language while interacting with children;
- Behave physically inappropriately including harassing and molesting;
- Kiss, hug or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way;
- Stay with children alone overnight;
- Take a child to their accommodation or encourage meetings outside the programmed activity;
- Share the same bed with children;
- Practice of Bacha Baazi in all AEHDA offices and clinics.
- Do thing for children that they are capable to do it by themselves including bathing, dressing and grooming;
- Discriminate against children or favor particular children as they belong to a particular group;
- Taking photos, film or request personal information if not required for AEHDA activities;
- Using narcotics;
- Drinking Alcohol;
- Condone or participate in a behavior of children which is risky, unsafe or illegal; and
- Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other.

## TRAINING

For effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy, it needs to be understood accurately by all those that the policy applies to. A training will guide staff to:

- Understand the child protection policy;
- Consider their own practices against what is considered good practice;
- Understand the AEHDA procedures for reporting child abuses and other child related concerns;
- Recognize well their responsibilities;
- Respond to a concern expressed by a child; and
- Work safely with children.

## COMMUNICATIONS CONCERN CHILDREN

All communications tools such as AEHDA website and publication which contains photo and text related to the children will not allowed the following points:

- Manipulate or sensationalize text or images;
- Discriminatory and shameful language;
- Images that children are inappropriately clothed;
- Location information that a child can identify with and cause him or her to be put at risk;
- Use real names of children, when communicating sensitive information. For example, HIV status or sexual abuse; and
- All photos of children before publishing or uploading to the website must be taken with the child's permission or his/her parents' permission.

## REPORTING

It is always very difficult to admit that child abuse has taking place within the organization or health facility, specially by people we know and trust them. AEHDA empowers all staff (both at main and field offices) and make it their obligation to report all witnessed, suspected or alleged violations directly to the HR manager at main office level and to the AEHDA provincial authorized committee in provincial level which is consist of Project Manager, Deputy Technical Manager, HR Officer.

The committee will record and act on the issue immediately and confidentially according to the AEHDA policies and to the best interest of the child.

In the case of suspect or actual child abuse, the first priority is always for the safety of the child. AEHDA will take proper action to protect the child from further harm and no child is ever left in an unsafe situation. AEHDA will report or refer the child to the child protection organizations, local social services department or police department which are available within the province and their advice will be followed. In order that everyone has access to the AEHDA provincial authorized committee, their contact number is available on boards in health facilities, directorate of public health, AEHDA provincial office and other public areas.

### **MISCONDUCT OF POLICY**

AEHDA will immediately suspend any employee, consultant, intern or volunteer who violated the Child Protection Policy. AEHDA is fully authorized to take any disciplinary action against any of its staff who have proven guilty, which may include termination and reporting to police. The safety of the child should always be prioritizing in such cases. All information related to child protection will be treated as confidential. The disclosure of personal information about children, including legal cases, will be limited to those employees, contractors, interns and volunteers who need to know.

### **PREVENTION**

AEHDA will take the following preventive measures to prevent the incidents of child abuse:

- We will ensure, through awareness and good practices, that staff minimize the risks to children;
- We will ensure all staff and members are aware of their responsibilities to protect children and able to recognize risk factors; and
- We will implement all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children are minimized.

## OUR COMMITMENT

Members of AEHDA are committed to make a safe environment for children, protect them from abuse and take the necessary actions whenever children are in such condition. This

policy applies equally to all staff and members carrying out work on behalf of AEHDA, irrespective of location or activity. The staff are required to undergo both acceptance of and commitment to our Child Protection Policy.

AEHDA HR Manager is responsible for the day-to-day implementation, supervision and monitoring of the Child Protection Policy in the organization/all offices. The child protection policy has been endorsed by the Board of Trustees and clarify the organization's stance on and commitment to protecting children. Board of Trustees has the overall responsibility to ensure the policy's implementation.