



FPASL

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & SAFETY
GUIDELINES FOR YOUNG PERSONS AND
VULNERABLE ADULTS**

|| Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka ||

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Policy Outline Summary

The purpose of this policy is to promote good practices by creating a safe environment for children and empowering all stakeholders associated with the organization, who come into contact with children, to ensure child protection by designing a framework to respond in case of any violation of child protection and establishing preventive mechanisms.

FPA Sri Lanka is committed to create a safe environment for children to protect them from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and ensure their participation in decisions that affect them. FPA acknowledges its expectation, that its employees and others who work with FPA have a child's best interest at the heart of their engagement with the institution.

In order to create a safe environment, FPA is responsible to develop effective policies and procedures and orientate and train all staff, volunteers, consultants and anyone associated with the organization to understand their responsibility and behavior towards children.

Policy Vision

Create a safe, protective and friendly organization, where children are protected from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation, which recognizes children's voices and responds to their concerns against protection issues.

Policy Statement

The policy is committed to safeguard children from harm and abuse by creating a safe and protective environment in FPA Sri Lanka establishments and take appropriate steps to address violations as outlined in the policy. All decisions and actions will be taken in accordance to the guiding principles.

Definitions

Child: A child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years. *As defined by UNCRC (Article 1)*

Child abuse or Maltreatment *All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.*

Physical Abuse *Physical abuse is when a person purposefully injures or threatens to cause physical harm to a child. This may be a single or repeated incident. This includes corporal punishment. This may include, but is not limited to: hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, or suffocating.*

Emotional Abuse *Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child which can cause severe impact on the child’s emotional development. This could include making a child feel worthless or unloved, inadequate or not valued. There may also be acts towards the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling denigrating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.*

Neglect *It involves the deliberate, persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs of health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions. This is in the context of resources being reasonably available to the family or caretakers and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, and likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health and development. Neglect can also be caused through the omission or the failure to act or protect.*

Abandonment: *A practice which is of great concern and which can disproportionately affect, amongst others, children out of wedlock and children with disabilities in some societies.*

Physical neglect: *Failure to protect a child from harm, including through lack of supervision, or failure to provide the child with basic necessities including adequate food, shelter, clothing and basic medical care.*

Psychological or emotional neglect: *Lack of any emotional support and love, chronic inattention to the child, caregivers being ‘psychologically unavailable’ by overlooking young children’s cues and signals, and exposure to intimate partner violence, drugs or alcohol abuse.*

Sexual Abuse *It involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in physical sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not they are aware of or consent to what is happening. This definition also holds whether or not there has been physical contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated or consented to, the behavior. This may include but is not limited to: indecent touching, penetration and sexual torture, using sexually explicit language towards a child and showing children pornographic material, the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any sexual activity, and the use of a child in prostitution or other sexual practices.*

Exploitation *Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child’s physical or mental health, education, or spiritual, moral or social-emotional development.*

Institutional Guiding Principles on Child Protection Policy

1. **Zero tolerance** of any form of abuse whether direct or indirect
2. Respect the right to privacy and **confidentiality**
3. Respect for dignity, liberty and freedom
4. Recognition of the **best interests of children**
5. Sharing responsibilities for protection of children by ALL
6. Understanding and engaging as per the evolving capacity of children

Scope of the Policy

Applies to all associated with FPA Sri Lanka

- *All staff of FPA Sri Lanka (permanent, locum basis and contractual)*
- *All other contractual staff e.g. Consultants*
- *All volunteers and general membership of FPA Sri Lanka*
- *All Board Members (National Council and TAC committees)*
- *All persons who are interacting with the purpose of any information collection*

Positive Behaviour towards Children

Everyone falling under the scope of the policy –

MUST DO

- Be proactive in safeguarding the rights of children and be responsible in promoting ethical practice to prevent abuse and harm among children where FPA works with and for.
- Never abuse and/or exploit a child or act/ behave in any way that places a child at risk of harm.
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and its procedures. No action will be taken against a reporter if the investigation outcome is unfounded about the suspected child abuse raised by the reporter.
- Create a safe and child friendly environment where children are respected and the opportunity to discuss the violation of their rights is allowed/possible.
- Respond to a child who may have been abused as per local policy procedure.

- Ensure to get consent from children and parents or care givers before taking images (Photo/Videos etc...) and present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive way.
- Take child protection seriously and take action against violation of the policy and hold accountable those who violate the policy as per the investigation outcome. This should be in line and linked with national laws, processes and regulations and in line with FPA Sri Lanka HR Policy.

MUST NOT DO

- Disclosure of personal information on children and families in accordance with FPA Sri Lanka policies and procedures. (Personal information of children is limited to those who need to know only). It ensures respect for children's right to privacy and confidentiality and protects children from those who may use information about them to cause them harm.

Confidentiality

1. All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse within the institution should only be shared with the designate child protection focal point, further on a need to know basis to the nominated people (only for the enquiry purpose), in the interests of the child.
2. However, giving information to any other person will be taken as a breach of the confidentiality clause. Further information will be shared only by the committee who is undertaking the investigation or decision over the incident.
3. The person who is submitting a report to the committee should inform a parent/guardian unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place the child at further risk. A decision not to inform a parent/guardian should be recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.
4. In case of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and it is not possible to make contact with the appropriate authority, the child protection policy focal point should be contacted immediately. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending an institutional intervention.

FPA Sri Lanka Management & SMT

It shall be the responsibility of the National Council (NC), Senior Management Team (SMT), Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director and the Directors to develop and implement policies in their own local context in accordance with local laws and FPA Sri Lanka policy framework. SMT is responsible to provide suitable guidelines and procedures to meet principles set out in this policy. Any deviation from FPA Sri Lanka Policy must have prior formal approval from SMT.



"Protection of Children is the Core Value for FPASL and all Associates"

Personal Conduct

In order to maintain the organizational reputation, the FPA commits to ensure that everyone in the scope of the policy maintains a high standard of behaviour towards children within both their professional and personal lives. The organization will not accept any unlawful conduct or activity related to any violation as defined in the policy towards children.

Designated Focal Point for the Policy

FPA Sri Lanka will have a designated Focal Point (Protection Officer) to ensure compliance of the policy and to lead the grievance procedure and the mechanism for redress. This Protection Officer will be **elected /selected by the FPA Sri Lanka** for a fixed term of three years.

Policy Revision

Understanding the changing working environment of FPA Sri Lanka, with growing interventions, the policy and related documents will be revised after a term of three years.

Further Information The policy should be read in conjunction with the documents stated below which can be given as Annexures.

Behavioural protocols – code of conduct

Standard Operation Procedures:

1. Personnel Recruitment
2. Education and Training
3. Behaviour Protocols
4. Management Structure
5. Communication guidelines
6. Reporting and Responding
7. Ramification of Misconduct
8. Safe Participation of Children
9. Child Protection in Emergency
10. Child Protection in ICT (Information, Communication & Technology)
11. Monitoring & Evaluation

Signature

Approval authorities

SECTION B

Safety Guidelines for Young Persons & Vulnerable Adults

Guideline for Young Persons & Vulnerable Adults

Background

1. The purpose of this guideline is to provide a set of guiding principles and minimum standards for creating a safe environment for young people and vulnerable adults at all levels of FPA Sri Lanka.
2. IPPF’s declaration on Sexual Rights is grounded in core international Human Rights instruments, authoritative interpretations of international standards and additional entitlements related to human sexuality. Ensuring sexual rights for all includes a commitment to freedom and protection from harm.
3. For the purposes of its own programmatic work and data collection, the FPA defines ‘young people’ as everyone aged 10 to 24. This policy covers the age group 0-18 yrs. in Child Protection Policy and young people (18-24 yrs.) and vulnerable adults in the intervention guidelines.
4. FPA Sri Lanka understands that the rights and protections envisaged to people above eighteen (18) but less than twenty four (24) years, as a matter of international and national commitments, sometimes differ from the rights of adults. These differences relate to all aspects of human rights but require particular approaches with regard to sexual rights.
5. FPA Sri Lanka is increasingly working with vulnerable adults, which include those who identify themselves as unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation. Vulnerable adults are also those who may be more at risk of abuse and exploitation due to factors such as, for example, gender, mental health issues, learning or physical disabilities, age, sexual orientation, or as a result of the impact of natural disasters and conflicts¹.

Definitions of Abuse – See Child Protection Policy for the reference

Scope of Guideline – As applicable in Child Protection Policy

¹It is widely recognised that children are generally more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to their age, status, developmental stage, and reliance on others. Vulnerable adult refers to a person, 18 years and above, who may be regarded as susceptible to harm and at increased risk due to personal circumstances, the context they are in or as a result of social and other inequalities and as a result or in addition, are not in a position to adequately protect themselves.

This guideline must be seen as an extension of the Child Protection Policy, as there may be provisions that might not be legally binding for Young Persons (18-24 yrs.) but are important perspectives to provide safety to young persons and vulnerable adults.

Guiding principles

1. FPA Sri Lanka recognizes that, as rights-holders, young people and vulnerable adults are entitled to access sexual and reproductive health information and services and to do so in ways that keep them safe from abuse or exploitation.
2. The FPA does not tolerate any type of abuse or exploitation towards a young person or vulnerable adult and commits to ensuring that all staff and associates (see Scope) are made aware of, and supported in, their responsibilities to prevent abuse and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults.
3. The FPA recognizes that the denial of young people’s and vulnerable adults’ sexual rights, particularly their rights to participation and expression, is in part responsible for their vulnerability.
4. The FPA considers that adults, parents, guardians, carers, service providers, educators and others who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are duty-bearers in relation to their sexual rights and have a responsibility to ensure that the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults are met.
5. The FPA believes that creating a safe environment for all young people and vulnerable adults requires the cooperation of all staff members and volunteers.

Safety Guidelines (Operational)

- [a] Safe recruitment and screening processes, including criminal record checks (where available), targeted interview questions and verbal referee checks for all staff members and volunteers who will be working with children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- [b] A Protection Code of Conduct must be signed by all mentioned under the scope of the policy of FPA Sri Lanka.
- [c] A provision in all employment contracts for the FPA stating that the organisation has the right to take disciplinary action, including dismissal against personnel who breach the Protection Code of Conduct.

- [d] A documented complaints management procedure that is publicised widely, (including young people and vulnerable adults), to provide for effective reporting and responding to improper behaviour and conduct of all the personnel under the scope of the Child Protection Policy.
 - [e] Regular provision of training for all staff members and volunteers on creating a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults, including induction training for new staff members and volunteers;
 - [f] Measures are put in place to ensure partners, grantees, consultants etc. that work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are operating in line with FPA Sri Lanka 's principles and standards on protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
 - [g] Provision for policy review at least every three years.
6. Additionally, as FPA Sri Lanka provides sexual and reproductive health services to young people and vulnerable adults, ensures that service delivery points are safe environments that, at a minimum, have guidance for health professionals on their legal, professional and ethical obligations to report suspected abuse or exploitation of a vulnerable client; to respect their right to privacy; and to obtain their informed consent.

Implementation and compliance

7. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Director of FPA Sri Lanka to ensure that policies & guidelines that meet the above-mentioned minimum standards are in place and are implemented accordingly.