

Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) is a non-governmental organisation working from grassroots to the international level on diverse areas such as consumer protection, good governance, economic regulations and international trade. It is also engaged in working with the underprivileged at the grass roots and promotes the wellbeing of all children whose lives are directly impacted through its initiatives.

CUTS has a commitment to prevent child abuse and promote protection of children/young people. This policy sets our common values, principles, beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken in fulfilling our commitment to protect children/young people.

All children and young people aged under 18 years have equal rights to protection from all forms of violence as declared in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child.

The human rights of children and young people will be respected and applied to all irrespective of age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background, class, any history of conflict with the law or any other aspect of their background or identity. Inequality, exclusion, and discrimination will be challenged and will not be tolerated.

## **Our values, principles & beliefs**

At CUTS, we believe that all children/young people regardless of age, gender, disability or ethnic origin have a right to be protected from any kind of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. We aim to create “child safe” environment, where children/young people are protected and empowered and where employees/staff is skilled, competent & well supported in meeting their protection responsibilities.

As a reflection of our commitment to the vision and considering the fact that children/young people are often vulnerable to abuse and exploitation CUTS places highest importance to protection and safety of children/young people in all its dealings.

Consequently, all employees/staff of CUTS will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Treat all children/young people with respect and dignity. Maintain highest standards of professionalism in dealing with children/young people
- No personal engagement with children/young people outside the purview of professional work
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of children/young people associated through work/projects
- Do not use language or behavior towards children/young people which is abusive, hostile or in any form that makes them uncomfortable
- Do not behave physically in a manner with children/young people which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Do not use physical punishment/discipline or use of physical force of any kind towards children/young people

- No sexual intercourse or participate in any sexual activity with children/young people
- Do not use technology/ electronic devices to harass or stalk children/young people or to access child pornography through any medium;
- Do things of a personal nature for children/young people in a work related context (e.g. taking a child/young people to the toilet/bathroom; helping them get un/dressed etc.) that they can do for themselves;
- Report any suspicion, allegation or witness of child abuse/exploitation within the organisation or in project areas
- Cooperate fully and maintain confidentiality in any investigation of concerns or allegations of abuse to children and young people
- Immediately disclose to line/reporting manager with copy to HR department; all charges, convictions, and other outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during association with CUTS that relates to exploitation and abuse of a child or young people.

The above is not an exhaustive list and is merely indicative. All employees/staff should consider all related actions and behaviour which may compromise the rights and safeguarding of children and young people.

CUTS commits to comply with all partnership standards for child protection designed to safeguard children/young people from exploitation, neglect, sexual and physical abuse. CUTS will regularly examine the need to reduce the risk to children/young people in all its programmes.

Therefore, these guidelines for Child Protection are intended to keep children/young people safe from possible abuse and exploitation by employees/staff with who they are in contact.

When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet the guidelines of protection for children/young people in their programmes.

We will meet our commitment to protect children/young people from abuse through the following means:

**Awareness:** Ensure that all employees/staff are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children/young people.

**Prevention:** Ensure, through awareness and good practice, that employees/staff minimise the risks to children/young people.

**Reporting:** Ensure that all employees/staff are clear with what steps have to be taken as and when concerns arise regarding the safety of children/young people.

**Responding:** Ensure that action is taken to support and protect children/young people where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

**Our benchmark standard:**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) shall be the guiding principle for implementing basic rights for all children below the age of 18 years. The Government of India acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of the child in 1992, and has also ratified the two Optional Protocol in 2007– (1) Involvement of children in Armed conflict (2) Sale of children, child prostitution & child pornography.

**The Policy has been adopted and integrated into our Project/Programmes.**