

MASHAL



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**20- C Patliputra colony, P.O- Patliputra colony,
Patna- 8000 013, Bihar- India
Contact No- +91- 6001227831**

Policy Year- 20th November 2021.

Revised Edition- II & Year- (12th July 2025)

Valid till- (30th July 2028)

Foreword by the President

Children are at the heart of everything we do at MASHAL. Their safety, dignity, and well-being are not just priorities—they are sacred responsibilities. As an organization committed to empowering marginalized communities, we recognize that true development is impossible without ensuring that every child grows up in a secure, nurturing, and protective environment.

This Child Protection Policy is a reflection of our values and our unwavering commitment to uphold the rights of every child we encounter through our programs and partnerships. It provides a clear framework for preventing harm, responding to concerns, and fostering a culture of accountability and care. Whether we are working in schools, communities, or health centers, this policy ensures that our actions are guided by compassion, vigilance, and respect.

We understand that child protection is not the responsibility of a few—it is a collective duty. Every staff member, volunteer, visitor, and partner has a role to play in creating safe spaces where children can thrive. Through training, awareness, and strong systems of reporting and response, we aim to build an organization where safeguarding is second nature.

I call upon each of you to embrace this policy not just as a guideline, but as a moral imperative. Let us work together to ensure that no child is ever left vulnerable, unheard, or unprotected. Because when we protect children, we protect the future.



Sister Mary Alice,
President,
MASHAL
12.07.2025



Table of Content

	Page No.
1. Introduction	04
1.1. Preamble	04
1.2. Vision	04
1.3. Mission	04
1.4. Scope	04
1.5. Policy Statement	05
1.6. Definitions	05
1.7. Roles and Responsibilities	07
2. Prevention	08
2.1. Risk Assessment and Management	08
2.2. Child-safe recruitment	08
2.3. Code of Conduct	09
2.4. Training and staff Development	10
2.5. IT and Online Safety	11
2.6. Child-safe Communication	11
3. Reporting and Responding to Child Safeguarding Concerns	13
4. Implementation, Monitoring and review of this Policy	13
5. Annexes	
Annex 1: Child Protection Policy reporting and recording format	14
Annex II: Declaration for Staff and Consultants of Mashal	16
Annex III: Guidelines for using images of children	17
Annex iv: Risk assessment tool safeguarding children	20
Annex v. Child Safeguarding/Protection Policy Monitoring Template	24
Annex vi. Institutional Response Format for Reported Concern	28
Annex vii. Code of Conduct for the Partners	31
Annex viii. Code of Conduct for the staff	33

Glossary:

Abbreviation	Full Form
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ANT	The Action Northeast Trust
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CPO	Child Protection Officer
CPP	Child Protection Policy
CSP	Child Safeguarding Policy
CWC	Child Welfare Committee
DKA	der Katholischen Jungschar
GB	Governing Board
GOI	Government of India
IT	Information Technology
MWCD	Ministry of Women and Child Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPT	PowerPoint Presentation
SND	Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame (parent body of MASHAL)
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

Mashal, a registered charitable society, is committed to accompany and to enable the marginalized communities to affirm and uphold their rights and dignity. It works in the field of people's empowerment, holistic health and development. In all its interventions it follows rights/gender- based approaches.

The rights, safety and protection of children is of paramount importance to Mashal. As set out in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), every child has the right to a life free of violence and abuse. As a part of our responsibility for the safety and protection of children, Mashal has brought out this Child Protection Policy. Mashal's Child Protection Policy is also aligned with the values and framework of the Indian Constitution, key national policies (including National Policy for Children 2013), legislations¹ and programming.

To formulate this policy in a holistic manner, Mashal has taken certain inspiring contents from the Child Protection Policies of Caritas India, Oak Foundation and the ANT and has received support from DKA Austria for making it very relevant and focused, for which we remain grateful.

Prior to the formalization of this policy, Mashal conducted a comprehensive risk analysis that actively involved all project stakeholders, including staff and partners, to ensure a holistic understanding of child safety. This process focused on identifying potential vulnerabilities within the organization's staffing, programming, and operations, allowing for the development of targeted management actions.

1.1. Preamble:

MASHAL reaffirms its philosophy and values that children are persons with rights. The policy thus becomes binding for all those associated with the organization, in *protecting, promoting and securing* the rights of all children at all the times, at all levels and in whatever capacity one operates. Hence, any form of child abuse or violation of child rights will not be tolerated. By adopting Child Protection Policy, MASHAL intends to streamline all her interventions and make it child sensitive.

1.2. Vision:

All children live in inclusive and protective environment where their Dignity and Rights are respected.

1.3. Mission:

To generate environment in the communities and society that is safe, secured and conducive to the all-round development of all its children irrespective of gender, age, disability, caste, social categories, creed, religion, or economic position.

¹ This includes The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015, The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 and The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education 2009.

1.4. Scope

Generating protective and safe environment and protecting a child from any type of abuse is the moral responsibility of MASHAL within the operational areas where MASHAL's programs are implemented. When the child abuse cases get reported to MASHAL from within its operational areas, it is the duty of MASHAL to address the issue in accordance with the CPP. In case of report of child abuse from areas other than operational, if it comes to her knowledge, it will have the moral responsibility to direct the same to referral services for the victim to concerned Child protection bodies or bodies within the Juvenile Justice system.

This policy applies to:

- All staff employed or engaged by Mashal, including paid full time or part-time staff
- AGM and GB Members of Mashal
- Volunteers, interns, visitors and other contracted personnel, including consultants and any other person who interacts with children through Mashal and its units, who have been defined as working with children.

1.5. Policy Statement

MASHAL is committed to creating and maintaining an environment, which is conducive to promotion of the rights of all children. Thereby, it is also committed to prevent and deal with all kinds of abuses and exploitation of children. Hence,

- MASHAL is committed to actively prevent child abuse.
- MASHAL takes positive action to prevent child abusers becoming involved in any way in her operation and takes stringent measures to prevent partners from employing child abusers.

1.6. Definitions:

Child

A "juvenile" or "child" means a person below the age of 18, as per section S.2 (35) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. This is in conformity with UNCRC, 1989 (Article 1).

Child Protection:

Child Protection refers to the responsibility of Mashal to ensure that its staff, operations and programs do no harm to children; and that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse. Any concern the organization has about the safety within communities in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities.

All the four major rights of children as enshrined in United Nation Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) viz. Right to Survival; Right to Development; Right to Protection; Right to Participation shall be protected and secured.

Child Abuse²:

Child abuse is a state of emotional, physical, economic and sexual maltreatment meted out to a person below the age of eighteen years. (WHO) Child abuse is a violation of the basic human rights of a child. Child abuse has serious physical and psycho-social consequences which adversely affect the health and overall well-being of a child.

Child abuse refers to the intended, unintended or perceived maltreatment of the child, whether habitual or not, including any act, deed or word that debases, degrades or demeans the intrinsic worth and dignity of a child.

Child Sexual Abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who, by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power; the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but not limited to:

1. the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
2. the exploitative use of child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
3. the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials; and
4. following or gazing upon children with sexual intent or passing comments with sexual content or show any pornography to the child

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

Contact with children means working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve any interaction with children, no matter how minimal due to the nature of the work environment. This includes indirect interaction with children in the community.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that adversely affects his or her self-perception and development.

It includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potential, and in the context of the society in which the child dwells. There may also be acts toward 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. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment (WHO, 1999).

Neglect and negligent treatment are the intentional or unintentional inattention or omission on the part of the family or caregiver to provide for the health and development

² Adapted from Study on Child Abuse: India 2007, MWCD, GOI

of the child in all aspects in the context of resources reasonably available to them and which causes, or has the potential of causing, harm to the child's health or development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as feasible.

Physical Abuse is the actual or potential physical harm caused by an action or lack of action, which is reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

Corporal punishment means any behaviour such as slapping a child, hitting with a stick or using any other form of disciplining that can injure a child or cause emotional abuse.

Working with children means being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid work.

1.7. Roles and Responsibilities:

MASHAL will respond to all child abuse concerns keeping the following principle in mind:

1. Safety and security of the child is paramount. Hence, all steps necessary would be ensured by MASHAL.
2. All further steps to address the child abuse concerns would be in the best interest of the child.
3. All investigation into suspected or actual child abuse cases would be strictly confidential and, on a need, to know basis.

All Mashal staff are responsible for adhering to this policy. Establishing clear governance and accountability mechanisms is critical to successful implementation. Therefore, the policy will be owned by the 'Administration' and the President will bear the ultimate responsibility, as delegated by the Board, for its overall implementation.

All Staff

Each member of the staff agrees to familiarize themselves with this policy and comply with fully with its standards and its chapter of code of conduct specifically. Staff are required to be aware of risks to children and be vigilant. Staff are also responsible to report any concern about the safety of children as per the reporting procedure in Annexure 1 and to participate fully in any safeguarding inquiry if requested. Furthermore, staff are to participate in annual trainings on child safeguarding.

Board Members

Board members will be briefed on the implementation of the policy at all levels of the organization. The President will be accountable for the overall implementation of the policy and regular submission of reports on progress. Board members have the final sign-off on the policy.

President

The President, assisted by the Secretary and Program Coordinator, will manage the process of implementation and will report regularly on progress to the Board members and to staff.

Management

Management includes President, Secretary, Unit in-charges, Heads of Programs and those with supervisory responsibilities. They are responsible for the promotion of good practice supporting the safeguarding of children within their programs and ensuring staff compliance with this policy.

Programme staff

Programme staff are responsible for the promotion of good safeguarding practices in their fields.

Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for the management of the reporting procedure. This includes regular monitoring or reporting channels and following the steps of the reporting procedure including the reporting framework. The Secretary commits to responding appropriately and referring safeguarding concerns promptly to the relevant authorities as required. The Secretary will participate in specific trainings to the able to fulfill her role appropriately.

2. PREVENTION

Prevention is the cornerstone of the protection and safeguarding of children. Mashal commits to preventing harm to children through the following areas:

2.1. Risk Assessment and Management

Mashal regularly carries out risk assessments with its staffing, programming and operations and develops appropriate actions to manage identified risks. A format that can be used for activity related risk assessment is provided in the Annexure.

2.2. Child-safe recruitment

Mashal recognizes that creating safe environments for children starts with the appointment of suitably qualified staff who have the needed competencies to carry out their duties in an effective and safe manner. The staff recruitment processes in Mashal aim to be in the best interests of children and will reflect our commitment to protect children and prevent abuse.

- i. All the applicants will be required to undergo relevant vetting processes (which may include criminal background checks) and the staff will sign a declaration stating that there is no known reason or event that would render them unsuitable for the post etc.
- ii. Applicants will also be required to submit the names of two referees who will be asked to provide references, including the referee's considered view on the candidate's suitability to be in contact with children.
- iii. The successful applicant will only be offered a position subject to (a) suitable references; (b) proof of qualifications; (c) relevant clearance procedures and (d) positive proof of identification.

2.3. Code of Conduct

MASHAL commits herself to creating and maintaining an environment which promotes its core values and prevents abuse and sexual exploitation. MASHAL's staff, units and partners are expected to contribute to building a harmonious workplace based on team spirit, mutual respect and understanding. All staff and partners are expected to uphold the dignity of those we serve, by ensuring that their personal and professional conduct with clear boundaries, is of the highest standard at all times in a manner consistent with their role as Mashal representatives and a positive role model to children.

MASHAL strongly condemns all kinds of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse and exploitation. These constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment. All relevant legal steps will be taken corresponding to the legal and social conditions of the local situation.

All those covered by the policy commit to respecting, promoting, upholding and protecting, at all times, the rights of the child as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and in Indian legal and other instruments as applicable. Anyone found to be in breach of the code of conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or termination of employment. Following practices will be upheld by Mashal at all times:

- Always treat children with respect regardless of their sex, ethnic or social origin, language, religious or other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or other status.
- Use language or behavior towards children that is at all times appropriate and in no way harassing, abusive, sexually provocative or demeaning.
- Encourage children to share their opinions and experiences and listen to them attentively.
- Do not show favoritism towards any particular child or children. Giving gifts to select children is not allowed, unless there are any specific grounds for it and this has been cleared by senior authority in the organization.
- Sexual activity with children is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.

- Engaging children in any form of sexual activity, including paying for sexual services is unacceptable. This includes getting sexual favors in exchange of assistance that is due to them.
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children.
- Children should not be asked or invited into personal spaces/homes unless it is absolutely necessary and should be accompanied by a senior authority.
- Inappropriate use of any computers, mobile phones, video/digital cameras or other electronic devices, including to access, view, create, download or distribute online sex abuse images of children, is prohibited.
- Physical punishment or discipline or use of inappropriate physical force of any kind towards children is prohibited.
- The use of children for domestic or other labor is prohibited since it is inappropriate for the child's age or developmental capacity; interferes with the time available for education and recreational activities: or places him or her at significant risk of injury, exploitation or abuse.
- Immediately report any concerns, suspicions, incidents or allegations of actual or potential child abuse or any breaches of this policy in accordance with appropriate Procedures and to the Executive Director.
- MASHAL's staff must comply with all relevant country's legislations, for example, The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 including various provisions regarding children in Indian Constitution. Various International instruments like UNCRC Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juvenile Justice, 1985 (the Beijing Rules) and United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (1990) and others be complied with.

The basic guidelines for interacting with children in this code of conduct apply to donors and visitors as well as any other adult who engage with children through Mashal and all its units.

Personal conduct outside work or engagement with Mashal

Actions taken outside working hours that are seen to contradict this policy will be considered a violation of the policy. Mashal employees are required to adhere to the Principles of the Child Protection policy both at work and outside work. Common sense will prevail in applying this to staff's private lives.

2.4. Training and staff Development

Awareness and sensitization: For the policy to be well understood and effectively implemented, it is essential that there are high levels of awareness and knowledge

regarding the policy and that staff and others are clear, confident and competent in putting the policy into practice. Mashal therefore commits to:

- disseminate and promote the policy in a range of ways. Copies of the policy will be made available and accessible to all stakeholders both in hard copy and electronically.
- produce local language versions so that the policy is understood by all relevant parties.
- the development of an open and responsive culture in all MASHAL and units' programmes and within the communities we work with, that is essential for safeguarding children. We as an organization and as individual co-workers need the courage to break the silence and taboo of discussing child abuse.
- a reporting procedure will be provided to ensure that any breach of the policy will be dealt with in an appropriate manner and per the national legal frameworks.
- regular briefings and trainings will be provided and it will be incorporated into standard induction processes for all staff. Orientation and training on the policy will be compulsory and will be carried out annually. Newly recruited staff will receive induction sessions on the policy within a week of joining and will participate in the next available training.
- further training will be provided for staff with specific responsibilities under this policy. These groups would include anyone working directly with children. Training will be provided to managers and staff designated to receive and respond to complaints and protection incidents will support those staff in making effective and appropriate responses.
- in villages and Home for Girls in Distress, the children will be made aware of the provisions of the policy.

2.5. IT and Online Safety

- Mashal will conduct workshops to make parents, staff and children aware of the sensitive and inappropriate contents such as pornography, violence and self-harm, illegal content (including obscenity, sensitive language etc.) that children may face while accessing the internet or communicating with people online
- Mashal will create awareness among the parents, guardians and children about the chances that while playing online games or using social media, children may be lured into online relationships or be enticed or blackmailed for sexual favors or share intimate images and that they may become victims of cyber bullying and cyber stalking, online threatening, non-consensual pornography etc. so as to ensure safety of children accessing internet.
- Mashal/ICEC will guide staff in understanding the boundaries of their engagement with children over mobile and internet. Any violations/unprofessional conduct will be taken seriously.

2.6. Child-safe Communication

The public use of images and stories of children can pose potential protection-related risks to them. It is therefore important to have the child's best interests at heart when

using their images and stories. This entails respecting their dignity and rights, including the right to privacy and their right to be heard. Consent should always be gained before taking images of children. Mashal staff should ensure that:

- any images taken are approved by the parents or those responsible for the children and that the staff have gained the written or verbal consent of children and their caregivers;
- images or stories do not reveal the identity or location of the child;
- care is taken to preserve the identity of vulnerable children; and
- images depicting children that are taken during site visits are not used on staff's personal social media accounts.

More detailed guidelines on the use of images and stories of children are found in Annex III.

3. Reporting and Responding to Child Safeguarding Concerns

Mashal is committed to responding to all reports of indications, including rumors, that suggest a child may be harmed or at risk of harm. The safety of child(ren) must be of paramount concern at all times.

The Director of Mashal is responsible for ensuring that the reporting procedure outlined below is followed, so that suspected cases of abuse and/ or breaches of the Child Protection policy by the staff are responded to appropriately and referred promptly to the relevant authorities as required.

- The Executive Director will receive all reports, through email (mashalpatna@gmail.com) telephone, in-person or through a member of staff. The first information should be provided in-person or over telephone to the President and Director concerned as early as possible and latest within a maximum of 4 hours of the incident. Written information should be provided within 24 hours. Immediately upon receipt of the information, the Director will notify the Child Protection Committee of Mashal and proceed with the necessary actions that will ensure that incidents are dealt with appropriately.
- The first step of any reported incident is to ensure the safety of the child(ren) concerned.
- All the reports and concerns should be recorded using the form in Annex I. The Executive Director will be responsible for gathering information.
- MASHAL is committed to ensuring that the protection of survivors and whistleblowers remains a priority at every stage of the reporting process.
- No person who makes a report in good faith will be subject to retaliation. Reports can be made on anonymous basis also.
- Investigations will be handled by the Director and a designated team (known as Child Protection Committee) comprising of a professional lawyer, 2 social workers, fairly and consistent with the principles of natural justice (i.e. rule against bias and the right to a fair hearing). The Child Protection Committee can be put in place for a period of three years by the Management. This will ensure

continuity. The members can be retained for another term as well. Investigations will be objective, transparent, and will be guided by external professional expertise and support when required. In instances of suspected sexual abuse or other serious violation, the investigation team will guide the Executive Director in informing the police and initiating due processes. The entire process will be well documented.

- Disciplinary measures such as suspension, termination and also legal action will be taken as a consequence of the breach of the policy where warranted. It will be proportionate and justifiable to the nature of the breach. Situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis prior to applying sanctions proportionate to the breach. In case the abuser is associated with an institution/body/organization – they will be informed. Ties/contracts may be discontinued in case of no action on their part. If the person who violates some provision of the Policy is a Sister of the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame, the parent body of Mashal, the matter will be referred to the administration of SND and action will be taken as per the policy of the SND. The Executive Director will be mindful in situations where legal proceedings have been initiated and cooperate as needed. Also, here, the decisions of the court/special court/Child Welfare Committee will hold greater bearing.
- The reporting mechanisms and referral pathways will be widely publicized and accessible.

Reporting Format for Mashal Staff is given in Annex I.

4. Implementation, Monitoring and review of this Policy

Mashal will ensure that implementation of the Child Protection Policy is subject to regular monitoring and will review the policy every three years (although changes may be made prior to formal review, should legal, policy or practice changes suggest this is necessary). Resources required (human, financial and time) to support the implementation of this policy will be made available on a yearly basis.

A Child Safeguarding/Protection Policy Monitoring Template given in Annexure V will be used to assess the implementation of the policy annually. The Secretary of the Society shall be responsible for timely update of the template.

Reports on progress towards full implementation of the policy will be presented by the President to the Board on an annual basis. These reports will include updates and a summary of progress as well as key successes, challenges and obstacles to implementation. The reports will also include any breaches of the policy, subsequent actions and outcomes so that the nature and frequency of protection incidents can be monitored over time and identified gaps responded to.

5. Annexes

Annex 1: Child Protection Policy reporting and recording format

Part I- About You (Informer)

Name:
Your Role in MASHAL
Details of any other organization involved.....
Your relationship to the concerned child

(Your identity as an informer will be kept confidential. In spite of that if you may, for personal reasons, not want to disclose your identity, you are requested to cooperate fully in sharing the rest of the following information.)

Part II-About the child

Sex.....
Age.....
Address.....
Who does the child or young person live with?.....

Part III-About your concern

Please give as much detail as you can regarding your concern of abuse or danger to a child.

E.g. of details could be related to;

- a) Did the child disclose abuse?
.....
- b) Was abuse observed or suspected?
.....
- c) Nature of concerns/allegation
.....
- d) Date, time, & place of any incident(s)
.....
- e) Observation made by you (Child’s Emotional status, physical evidence)
.....
- f) Write down/share exactly what the child said and what you said
.....
- g) Any other relevant information
.....
- h) Were other children involved, aware?
.....

i) Have you reported this to the parents or caregiver or any other child protection personnel or agencies?
.....

j) Time and date of reporting
.....

k) Person(s) to whom report was made
.....

l) Advice given
.....

m) Action taken.
.....

Alleged Perpetrators details: *(complete as much as possible if known)*

Name: _____

Nationality _____

Address/Current Location: _____

Language/s spoken _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____

Relationship to victim: _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Any other details (including physical description):

Current Safety of the child? *(Include any immediate safety concerns such as access of perpetrator to the safety within the family, any emergency needs)*

Has any emergency medical or other support been required? If so, what was provided, when and by whom?

(Include any immediate safety concerns such as access of perpetrator to the safety within the family, any emergency needs)

Does the report of presentation of the child (if present) suggest emergency medical attention is needed?

Who else knows? (e.g. other agencies, family members, other individuals)

Actions taken to date? (e.g. referral to the police, social welfare etc.)

Completed by (name and sign):
Date

Signed off by
(reporter): Date

Annex II: Declaration for Staff and Consultants of Mashal

To be appended to contract of employment or consultancy

- I have read and understood Mashal’s Child Protection Policy and accompanying Procedures and Guidance.
- I agree to abide by Mashal’s Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- I also declare that I have disclosed to Mashal any issue which could give rise to any child protection concern — real or perceived — regarding my suitability for employment or consultancy. I confirm that I have no criminal prosecutions pending, nor have I been previously convicted of any offence involving inappropriate conduct with children.
- I understand that any violation of the Code of Conduct or other provisions of the Policy will lead to consequences including suspension, termination and legal action where warranted.

Name: Designation: Date:

Signature:

Declaration for Visitors, Donors and Others Engaging with Children through Mashal

I have read and understood:

Mashal’s Child Protection Policy (in full)-----Code of Conduct with Children-----

(Please put a tick mark on the option)

I agree to abide by the same. I understand that any violation of the same can lead to consequences including legal action where warranted.

Name:

Designation:

Date:

Signature:

Annex III: Guidelines for using images of children

Risks

The public use of images and stories of children poses potential protection-related risks such as:

- Images containing personal information can be used as a means of identifying children, making contact with them at a distance or even tracing them to where they live.
 - Images may be altered or adapted for inappropriate use.
 - Displaying and using inappropriate images, stories etc., or images and stories for which consent and permission have not been obtained is unethical and may lead to increased organisational risks, such as reputational damage. Hence
1. Personal information about a child (such as full name and date of birth or full names of family members) and information that could be used to identify his/her specific location within a country (such as village or community, school, parish, etc.) should not be used, especially where this is linked to an image. The maximum information given about a child should be first name and name of the district in which they live.
 2. Children that have experienced violence, exploitation, have been otherwise abused or are in some way particularly vulnerable or at risk if identified, should not have their faces displayed or in any other way be represented in a way that may lead to their identification. In addition, their real names should be changed, and this change be indicated. Other identifying details should also be changed.
 3. Images of children in states of undress should not present them in poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or in ways that impact negatively on their dignity or privacy.
 4. All images and stories, along with accompanying details of individuals, should be used and kept according to relevant data and privacy laws.
It is recommended that:
 - Images are stored securely (e.g. lockable safe/ cabinet, electronic files password protected, limited access etc.); and images are destroyed two years after the date on the consent form unless further consent is agreed.

Consent

5. The informed, oral or written (wherever possible) consent of the child and parent/guardian should always be obtained before a photograph or image of a child is taken and used, and its intended and/or possible use(s) explained. The implications of using images, including risks and possible negative consequences, especially where images used on websites should also be fully explained.

Child-friendly consent forms should be used for obtaining consent from children and, where possible, the child and family should be shown the image before it is published. The consent form given below shall be used for getting consent from concerned persons and the forms should be documented in Unit offices and scanned copy sent to Mashal Office at mashal@gmail.com.

CONSENT FORMAT FOR NARRATIVES/CASE STUDIES, PICTURES, AUDIO & VIDEO

We request your permission to interview and take photographs, videos and audio. The material may be used internally (within the organisation) and externally (with those who support us, in website or in some publication). We would like to assure you that the words, images, audio and video will always be used only after careful thought and in a respectful manner. If you agree, please provide your signature or thumb print as indicated below.

I understand the information provided to me. I give my consent for the following to be used by the organisation. (Please place a tick mark on the categories as needed.)

My story/comments in words Photographs..... Video.....
Audio.....

Name of the person:

Address:

Giving consent for self..... Giving consent for child/children.....

(Please place a tick mark on the categories as needed.)

If giving consent for child/children

Name of the child/children:

Relationship with child/children:

Signature/thumb print:

Date:

6. Group photographs: as with individual photographs, it should be explained to the group what the photographs will be used for and consent sought from individuals in the group. Any individuals who wish to opt out should be allowed to do so.

7. General photographs: where using images of children in crowd scenes where it may be difficult or impossible to get consents, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Would the children attending the event expect photographs to be taken?
- Would children in the photograph probably consider themselves to be in a public place, with no expectation of privacy?
- Is it unlikely that anyone would object to the photograph being taken? (An individual could be in a public place but may not want any images of them being used.)

Where photographs are being taken at a planned event, as far as possible individuals should be told in advance that cameras will be used and how the photos will be used, in order that they can opt out of the event or notify organizers that they do not wish to be featured in any photographs.

Guidelines for use of photographers/writers contracted by Mashal

8. Independent photographers and writers commissioned by Mashal are considered as contractors/consultants and as such are subject to the policy.

Reporting concerns

9. Concerns regarding inappropriate use of the images of children should be reported to the Executive Director as detailed in Chapter 3 of this policy.

Annex IV: RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

This tool is to assist staff to minimize potential risks to children. It includes an example of risk management systems for different types of activities/events; however, these examples are not comprehensive and should be used only as a guide. A blank template is included to assist the President and Secretary with support from program Coordinator and Unit Coordinators to complete their own children's risk assessment for individual activities/events.

The following process categorizes events into three types, based on the anticipated audience/activities profile:

Definitions:

HIGH = Significant risks warranting serious attention

MEDIUM = Less significant but could still be disruptive and result in upset or have the potential for escalation, should they occur;

LOW = Risks that are unlikely to occur and are of relatively low significance but still require monitoring as may have potential to escalate in likelihood and/or impact

Green indicates (Low risk) an adult-orientated event that is not designed to attract children. The audience profile would predominantly be adults with a limited number of accompanied children, if any, attending. It is recommended that events of this type should have, as a minimum, the type of basic safeguarding measures set out below.

Yellow indicates (Medium risk) an event that is designed to attract a mixed audience, including families and unaccompanied children. It is recommended that this type of event should have safeguarding measures that are enhanced by the function of designated child safeguarding focal point.

Red indicates (High risk) events are designed to attract children and families and may attract unaccompanied children. They may involve the provision of children’s recreation, tutoring, or activities involving one to one unsupervised contact with staff, or activities involving other supervisory duties. It is recommended that this type of event should have an enhanced level of safeguarding measures including the assignment of Children’s Safe guards.

EXAMPLES OF RISK AND RISK MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Event Profile	Potential Risks Of Children	Suggested Risk Management Options
<p>COMMUNITY Events aimed at adults who may be accompanied by children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unsupervised • accidental harm exposure to dangerous or inappropriate behavior (e.g. strong or offensive language, violence) • Children exposed to unsuitable information and media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled access to the event: eg. no unaccompanied children. • minimum 2 staff assigned to monitor the event area • first Aid Available for emergency • all staff participating in the event to be vigilant and briefed of potential risks and response procedure if a safeguarding issue arises • Compliance to child safeguarding policy
<p>COMMUNITY General interest event attracting all age groups. May attract unaccompanied children. Non controlled admission. Event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lost or unsupervised • at risk of criminal or sexual Predators. • Accidental harm exposure to dangerous or inappropriate behaviour (eg strong or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled access to the event: eg. no unaccompanied children. • minimum 4 staff assigned to monitor the event area • first aid available for emergency • all staff participating in the event to be vigilant and briefed

<p>covers large area.</p>	<p>offensive language, violence).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children exposed to unsuitable Information and media. 	<p>of potential risks and response procedure if a safeguarding issue arises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance to child protection policy • Co-ordinator is assigned works in coordination with staff responsible for monitoring the event area.
<p>COMMUNITY/SCHOOLS</p> <p>Events primarily organised for children in a group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lost or unsupervised • at risk of criminal or sexual predators • accidental harm exposure to dangerous or inappropriate behavior (e.g. strong or offensive language, violence) • Children exposed to unsuitable information and media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • posters/notice displayed to remind adults their responsibilities • schedule children’s activities to enable realistic monitoring if limited number of children’s safeguards available • first Aid available for emergency • Basic supplies such as snacks and water are available. • briefings for staff responsible for supervising children, and facilitating children’s play/activity
<p>OUTSIDE HOME/SCHOOL/COMMUNITY</p> <p>Activities primarily designed for children which involves travelling out of home/school/community under the care and supervision of staff. Eg. educational tour to the nearest city/town, overnight trip, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inappropriate physical contact with a child at risk of sexual predators • Rumors and speculations on the child's dignity or discrediting staff behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid working alone and spending excessive time with a child and be aware of situations which may present risks. • parental consent form • At least 2 parents from among the children participate in the trip. • compliance to child safeguarding policy, code of conduct - adult to children behaviour • Minimum 2 staff assigned for supervising children and monitoring safeguarding. • first aid available for emergency • Basic supplies such as snacks and water are available. • All staff participating in the event to be vigilant and briefed of potential risks and response

		<p>procedure if a safeguarding issue arises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinator is assigned works in coordination with staff responsible for supervising and safeguarding children. • Information leaflets/booklets available to children and staff with contacts details of child protection agencies in case of emergencies.
<p>INDIVIDUAL CONTACT Activities primarily designed for children which involves individual contact with children such as home visits, mobilising children in the community for sessions on recreation and educational activities. Unsupervised contact with adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inappropriate physical contact with a child at risk of sexual predators • Rumors and speculations on the child's dignity or discrediting staff behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid working alone and spending excessive time with a child and be aware of situations which may present risks. • Compliance to child safeguarding policy, code of conduct - adult to children behaviour.

Risk assessment table

Activity (When, where)	Audience Profile	Potential Risks of Children	Risk Levels	Safeguarding Measures operating to minimise risk	Further action required/ comments
			H/M/L/		

Activity-Based Risk Assessment Form

Name of the organisation:

Venue/Location:

Name of the Activity	Activity in Details	What are the potential Areas of Risk?	What level of Risk do you think? Red/Yellow/Green	Who might be at Risk and how?	Can this risk be managed?	If yes how?	Who will be responsible?

Annex V: Child Safeguarding/Protection Policy Monitoring Template

No	Activity for Monitoring	Indicators	Status (For each indicator, please mention the status in terms of Yes/No, numbers or in any other manner as mentioned)	Remarks
1	Child Safeguarding/Protection Policy Exists	1.1 Policy document available (Y/N) 1.2 Policy approved by the Governing Body/Executive Committee or Council/Trustees (Y/N)	1.1 1.2	
2	Publication of the Child Safeguarding/Protection Policy	2.1 Organisation has a Policy sharing plan covering who it will share it with, how, how and at what frequency (Y/N) 2.2 Policy is available on the organisational website (Y/N) 2.3 Key sections of the Policy are displayed/stuck on notice boards on premises, centres where children come etc (Y/N) 2.4 Policy is available as a PPT (Y/N) 2.5 Policy is available in local language	2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4 2.5 2.6	

		(Y/N) 2.6 There is a child friendly version of the Policy (Y/N)		
3	Organisational Recruitment	3.1 Number of posts advertised in a year (also : please mention the year) 3.2 Number of advertisements for posts in that year which mention that organisation has CPP/CSP policy 3.3 Organisation has a shortlisting of posts which involve high and/or sensitive contact with children (this list is available with senior management/HR) (Y/N) 3.4 Number of reference checks done for applicants particularly for posts which involve high and/or sensitive contact with children 3.5 Number of new staff joining in a year 3.6 Number of new staff signing the declaration	3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 3.6	
4	Orientation and Refreshers of Staff/Volunteers/Visitors/Guests/Service providers on Child Safeguarding/Protection Policy	4.1 Number of staff who were given an orientation on CPP/CSP as part of induction in a year 4.2 Level of staff undergoing orientation on CPP/CSP (i.e. frontline worker/community mobiliser/supervisor/centre-in charge/manager...) 4.3 Number of reports (with photo) available of the induction 4.4 Total number of volunteers in a year 4.5 Number of volunteers given an orientation on CPP/CSP 4.6 Number of signed declarations/code of conduct received from volunteers 4.7 Total number of interns in a year 4.5 Number of interns given an orientation on CPP/CSP 4.6 Number of signed declarations/code of conduct received from interns 4.7 Number of orientations given to visitors in a year 4.8 Number of signed declarations/code of conduct received from *visitors/guests *donors 4.9 Number of refresher training	4.1 4.2 4.3 4.4 4.5 4.6 4.7 4.8 4.9 4.10 4.11	

		organised on CPP/CSP for staff 4.10 Number of reports (with photo) available of the training 4.11 List platforms/opportunities used during the year to continue the dialogue on CPP/CSP within the organisation		
5	Orientation and involvement of children and families in CPP/CSP	5.1 Total number of children's groups/centres where children come in a year 5.2 Number of children's groups/centres where children come in a year oriented on key aspects of CPP/CSP 5.3 Number of children's groups/centres where children involved in developing code of conduct for themselves and also how they would like to engage with the organisation 5.4 Number of parents/caregivers oriented on key aspects of the CPP/CSP in a year 5.5 Report/s of such orientation available Y/N	5.1 5.2 5.3 5.4 5.5	
6	Appointment and functioning of Focal Point/CP Officer/Core Committee/Child Protection Committee	6.1 Number of persons appointed in such positions 6.2 Core Committee provided clear roles and responsibilities Y/N 6.3 Number of cases placed before the CPO/CPC in a year 6.4 Status of cases at the end of the year 6.5 Average time taken for CPO/CC to respond 6.6 Nature and number of cases where police was involved 6.6 Core committee/CPC meets only when there is a case (Y/N) 6.7 Minutes of meetings undertaken by the core committee/CPC available (Y/N) 6.7 CPO submits a report on their work at the end of the year which includes learning and challenges (Y/N)	6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4 6.5 6.6 6.7	
7	Utilisation of CPP/CSP in organisational	7.1 Child protection risk assessment and mitigation initiated in ongoing projects/programmes (Y/N)	7.1 7.2 7.3	

	programming	<p>7.2 Date at which first CP risk assessment done in the organisation</p> <p>7.3 Child protection risk assessment and mitigation integrated in all new project proposals Y/N</p> <p>7.4 Project/programme heads keep track of measures undertaken to address risks identified in risk assessments Y/N</p> <p>7.5 Guidelines/instructions on being child safe and child friendly integrated in working with children in community, centre, school and other settings Y/N</p> <p>7.5 Project staff are aware of child protection responsibilities within their role (Y/N)</p>	<p>7.4</p> <p>7.5</p>	
8	Fund Allocation for effective implementation of the policy	<p>8.1 Amount and possible source of funds needed for effective implementation of Policy calculated at beginning of year – for training/orientation/any other related activity (Y/N)</p> <p>8.2 Amount of funds allocated for the Policy (also: for what specific purpose in a year)</p> <p>8.3 Amount of funds utilized for the purpose in a year.</p>	<p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p>	
9	Inclusion in and through Child Safeguarding/Protection Policy	<p>9.1 Organisation has understanding of and shortlisting of situations/categories of children who, often, typically get excluded from organisational activities (due to remoteness of location/sex/disability/HIV & AIDS/sexual orientation /others) (Y/N)</p> <p>9.2 Organisation is making attempts to include children with disability in its work. (This may be linked to organisational priorities also) (Y/N)</p> <p>9.3 Organisation is making effort to understand and address issues around sexuality for children and supporting those with varied orientations. (Y/N)</p> <p>9.4 Organisation is making an effort to ensure that it does not perpetuate any caste, class, community and religion-based stereotypes and discrimination when working with children and their</p>	<p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.4</p>	

		communities (Y/N)		
10	Engaging with external stakeholders within communities and others on Child Safeguarding/Protection Policy	<p>10.1 Shortlisting of local stakeholders who should be aware of the organisational Policy or key aspects of it done (for instance: key community groups that work closely with the organisation) (Y/N)</p> <p>10.2 Number of such identified stakeholders contacted and copies of Policy/key aspects from the Policy shared with them</p> <p>10.3 Discussions on key aspects of CPP/CSP integrated in activities with identified stakeholders (Y/N)</p> <p>10.4 Number of other key external stakeholders aware that organisation has a Child Safeguarding/Protection Policy (for instance: District Child Protection Unit, Child Welfare Committee, any key NGO networking bodies etc)</p>	10.1 10.2 10.3 10.4	
11	Review of CPP/CSP	<p>11.1 Periodicity of the Review as mentioned in the Policy – 1 year/3 years/5 years/any other</p> <p>11.2 Date of last review of Policy</p> <p>11.3 Profile of people involved in review (particularly across the organization) in the review</p> <p>11.4 Number, sex and age of children’s representatives involved in the review</p> <p>11.5 Review included representation of children in official communication and publications (Y/N)</p> <p>11.6 Review included how staff engages with the children in online and offline spaces (Y/N)</p> <p>11.7 Any changes made in infrastructure, organisational policies and procedures following any child protection violation complaint/concern (This could be based on review recommendations or on something that occurred during the implementation of the Policy) (Y/N)</p> <p>11.8 A note available on such changes made (Y/N)</p>	11.1 11.2 11.3 11.4 11.5 11.6 11.7 11.8	

Annexure VI: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE FORMAT FOR REPORTED CONCERN OR RISK RELATED TO VIOLATION OF THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Date incident/risk report received:	
Incident/concern reference number:	
Name of the affected child/children:	
To whom was the alleged incident/risk reported to	

Responses Undertaken

1. First response

Done by:

Actions taken:

Name of person filling section 1:

Signature:

Date and time:

2. Enquiry

Conducted by:

Enquiry started on:

Enquiry completed by:

Findings and Recommendation:

Whether complaint reported to:

Police: Y/N

Child Welfare Committee: Y/N

Any other body: Y/N

If the response in any of the above is Yes, please provide date of reporting and update. Please attach complaint/reporting letter and any other document that was shared with them.

Name of person filling section 2:

Signature:

Date and time:

3. Further Actions

Support provided to child and others (i.e. family as needed):

Any referrals:

Legal proceedings status (as relevant):

Any new/continuing need:

Action taken against perpetrator/s:

Name of person filling section 3:

Signature:

Date and time:

4. Termination of inputs and support (Closure)

Date: Who took decision:

Status of child including in terms of safety and wellbeing:

Name of person filling section 4:

Signature:

Date and time:

6. Conclusion:

Through this policy MASHAL and her partners will ensure the protection of children with whom and where they work and at the same time those that come to their knowledge.

2nd version approved by the Governing Board on 12.07.2025 and is valid for next 3 years i.e. upto 30.07.2028

Alice

Sister Mary Alice
President
MASHAL



Chinnamma

Chinnamma KC,
Secretary
Mashal



MASHAL

ANNEXURE- VI

Child Protection Operational Guideline

Code of Conduct-Partners

To protect children from abuse and sexual exploitation

MASHAL commits itself to creating and maintaining an environment which promotes its core values and prevents abuse and sexual exploitation. MASHAL and its units/partners are expected to contribute to building a harmonious workplace based on team spirit, mutual respect and understanding. Hence MASHAL's partners are expected to uphold the dignity of those we serve, by ensuring that their personal and professional conduct with clear boundaries, is of the highest standard at all times in a manner consistent with their identity as MASHAL's partners and a positive role model to children.

MASHAL strongly condemns all kinds of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse and exploitation. These constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of partnership.

MASHAL's Code of Conduct requires all MASHAL's partners to comply with the following behavioral protocols and expectations:

1. Treat children with respect regardless of Caste, gender, language, religion, political, national, ethnic or social origin, disability, birth or other status and recognizing their right to personal privacy.
2. Partners may not engage in any form of physical punishment/discipline of children, harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation, favoritism or exploitative sexual relations.
3. Physical contact (touching) with children should only be in response to the need of the child and with their permission. Ensure your actions are open and non-secretive. Do not do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves and

do not hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way (Remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned).

4. Refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage.
5. Do not use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language when speaking with a child. Never make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun.
6. Be aware of situations that may present risks and pro-actively develop strategies to create safeguards to protect the interests, safety and wellbeing of children.
7. Partners must comply with all relevant country's legislations in relation to children, for example Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 as amended in 2006, Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 including various provisions regarding children in Indian Constitution. Various International instruments like UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juvenile Justice, 1985 (the Beijing Rules) and United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (1990) and others be complied with.

I have carefully read the Code of Conduct and discussed its contents with others in the organization in order to understand it clearly. I must comply with the Child Protect Policy of MASHAL and I am aware that MASHAL expects my organization to uphold at all times the standards of behaviour described in the code of conduct.

I also understand that non-compliance can result into termination of partnership.

Signed by: _____ Date ___ / ___ / ___
Name: (please print) _____

Witnessed: _____ Date ___ / ___ / ___
Name (please print) _____



MASHAL

ANNEXURE- V

Child Protection Operational Guideline

Code of Conduct-Staff

To protect children from abuse and sexual exploitation

MASHAL commits herself to creating and maintaining an environment which promotes its core values and prevents abuse and sexual exploitation. MASHAL's staff and partners are expected to contribute to building a harmonious workplace based on team spirit, mutual respect and understanding. All MASHAL's staff and partners are expected to uphold the dignity of those we serve, by ensuring that their personal and professional conduct with clear boundaries, is of the highest standard at all times in a manner consistent with their role as Caritas representatives and a positive role model to children.

MASHAL strongly condemns all kinds of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse and exploitation. These constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment. All relevant legal steps will be taken corresponding to the legal and social conditions of the local situation.

MASHAL's Code of Conduct requires all MASHAL's staff to comply with the following behavioral protocols and expectations:

1. Treat children with respect regardless of Caste, gender, language, religion, political, national, ethnic or social origin, disability, birth or other status and recognizing their right to personal privacy.
2. MASHAL's staff may not engage in any form of physical punishment/discipline of children, harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation, favoritism or exploitative sexual relations.
3. Physical contact (touching) with children should only be in response to the need of the child and with their permission. Ensure your actions are open and non-secretive. Do not do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves and

do not hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way (Remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned).

4. Refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage.
5. Do not use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language when speaking with a child. Never make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun.
6. Be aware of situations that may present risks and proactively develop strategies to create safeguards to protect the interests, safety and wellbeing of children.
7. MASHAL's staff must comply with all relevant country's legislations, for an example Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 as amended in 2006, Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 including various provisions regarding children in Indian Constitution. Various International instruments like UNCRC Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juvenile Justice, 1985 (the Beijing Rules) and United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (1990) and others be complied with.*
8. MASHAL's staff are expected to behave in accordance with MASHAL's values at all times.

I have carefully read the Code of Conduct and agree that I understand that the onus is on me, as a person engaged by MASHAL, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse when implementing MASHAL programs.

Signed by: _____ Date ___/___/___
Name: (please print) _____

Witnessed: _____ Date ___/___/___
Name (please print) _____