



## **Safeguarding policy for visitors to the Goodwill Children's Homes**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child shall be the guiding principles for implementing basic rights for all children below the age of 18 years in Goodwill Children's Homes (GCH). The Government of India acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of a child in 1992, and also ratified the Optional Protocol in 2007. The 2015 statutory UK government document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KSCiE) is followed by educational establishments in the UK and all educational establishments visiting GCH will have a Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct for students and staff.

Goodwill believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to a practice which protects them.

***Designated Goodwill Children's Home's Child Protection Officer is:***

***Francis Xavier***

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The way of life is different in the communities we work with in India and many of the children live in extreme poverty where they may appear to have signs of abuse. For this reason, it is hard to follow the same protocols as in the UK. This Policy Document is only focused on if you are in India and have concerns relating to the abuse of a child/children in the communities we are linked with.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working or volunteering at GCH, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. **However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.**

### What is child abuse?

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes child abuse. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do, or fail to do, which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development into adulthood. Abuse could be physical, sexual, neglect or emotional.

## Goodwill Children's Homes Safeguarding Policy (India)

GCH have a detailed Safeguarding Policy and each Home has a designated Safeguarding Officer.

### Child Welfare Officers for GCH India (as of 2018)

K. Perumal	Child Welfare Organiser - Thandigudi Home	Mobile: 0091- 9486230344 No landline Email: <a href="mailto:thandigudigoodwill@gmail.com">thandigudigoodwill@gmail.com</a> (Sub: Attn Perumal)	Thandigudi
R.M.Selvam	Coordinator - Tribal Outreach Programme (TORP)	Mobile: 0091- 9486375580 Landline: 0091-04542262360 Email: <a href="mailto:rmselva@gmail.com">rmselva@gmail.com</a> (Sub: Attn Selvam)	K.C. Patti
V. Vimalaranjitham	Child Welfare Organiser PVP Girls Home	Mobile: 0091- 8220945087 No landline Email: <a href="mailto:goodwillpvp@gmail.com">goodwillpvp@gmail.com</a> (Sub: Attn Vimala)	Pattiveeranpatti
Mr.Balamurugan	Child Welfare Organiser SPT Boys Home	Mobile: 0091-9047631454 Email: <a href="mailto:goodwillsanarpatti@gmail.com">goodwillsanarpatti@gmail.com</a> (Sub: Attn Bala )	Sanarpatti
Francis Xavier	<b>Field Officer</b>	Mobile: +91 8903542601 No landline Email: <a href="mailto:goodwill.tamilnadu@gmail.com">goodwill.tamilnadu@gmail.com</a> (Sub: Attn Francis)	<b>Goodwill Central Office</b> Dindigul

Safeguarding issues are reported to the GCH Committee

### How to respond to allegation, signs or suspicions of abuse within the Goodwill Children's Homes

GCH (UK) will assure all staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague, Indian ground staff or International staff volunteer is, or may be, abusing a child or young person.

Procedure:

1. Please ensure the child's safety is paramount.

2. Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff, Indian ground staff or international volunteer should be reported to GCH Child Welfare Officer of the Home (see table above). They who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
3. Keep a record of information and type up everything relating to the incident (incl. date and time) and as much detail as possible *Email to President of GCH India or nominated Child Welfare Trustee and copy to UK office.*
4. Our UK Chairman, Dr David Neill, will keep you informed of the outcome.
5. If GCH Child Protection Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact one of the other Child Protection Officers.
6. Maintain confidentiality on a **need to know** basis only.
7. If the GCH Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Indian Committee , President – Dr Nanjapa and the Committee.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff, other worker or volunteer there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision

#### How to respond to a child telling you about abuse

If you are concerned, or if a child says something to you, it is important to listen and, as difficult as this may be, not to show shock or upset.

- Listen!
- Respond to the child with calmness and kindness, regardless of how you may be feeling in reality.
- Accept how the child feels.
- Allow the child to talk about what has happened as many times as they wish to. Children tend to say things gradually over a period of time. An initial disclosure to you is often a child's way of testing your response and whether it is safe to tell.
- Thank the child for telling you. Remind them that you will help keep them safe.
- Reassure the child that what happened was not okay, that you believe them and that they are not in trouble.
- Accept what the child says
- Don't put words into the child's mouth. Ask general questions only (e.g. tell me about that?)
- Don't pressure the child to continue or ask them for more details than they are ready to give.
- Don't question the child in a way that will introduce new words, phrases, or concepts into their minds.

- Don't "correct" or influence the child's information (i.e. "why didn't you tell me sooner"; "why did you let him do it?")
- Don't challenge, confront, or criticise the child's information even if the information seems unlikely or there are obvious errors. Remember, children are sometimes unable to give accurate timescales or dates.
- Try to get the message across that talking is OK. If the child does not mention what has happened again, you can make a general reference to what they have said and use this opportunity to reassure him or her that it is OK to talk about it.

### **Keep a written record**

Accurately write down what the child has told you, what you said, and the date. This may be used as part of your statement or as evidence in court. It also reassures the child that you have heard them, that what they have said is important, and you are taking it seriously.

### **Talking to others**

- It is important to respect the child's right to privacy while balancing this with the need to discuss their disclosure with others.
- Gently explain to the child that what they have said needs to be shared by you with another trusted adult. Explain that this is the job of adults and it is how they help keep children safe.
- Explain to the child that he or she has done the right thing to tell and that they will may have to tell their story to someone else whose job it is to talk to children about these issues.

### ***Allegations of previous abuse***

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).

When such an allegation is made, GCH should follow the procedures detailed under "*How to respond to allegations of abuse, signs or suspicions of abuse (page 3)*" and report the matter to the social services or police.

This is because other children, either within or outside our work, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

### ***Bullying is suspected***

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.

- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the GCH Child Protection Officer and wherever the bullying is occurring.

### **Next steps**

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully's parents or carer if you feel it is appropriate.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress if appropriate.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

### **Guidelines when visiting Goodwill Children's Homes**

The Goodwill policy for Safeguarding Children and Young People must always be followed. All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

### **Incidents that must be reported and recorded**

If any of the following occur, you should report this immediately to the designated GCH Child Protection Officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the house parents or housemothers of the child are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt someone
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a participant appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a participant misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

### **Safer Staff and Volunteers - recruitment, induction, continuous development and supervision**

Keeping children and young people safe is a priority for GCH. To minimise risks and to ensure the safety of children and young people we have implemented current safe recruitment, training and retention arrangements and written safeguarding policies and procedures.

GCH recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form or provide us with a CV. The application form/CV will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service when undertaking unregulated 'regular' activity with children and young people. If a DBS is not required, GCH will make sure not to leave that person alone with a child or young person.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children where possible. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact and email. For international volunteers email is sufficient.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving license with photo).
- *All staff and volunteers will receive an induction/pre-departure workshop/pack involving safeguarding procedures for the organisation and their role in reporting any concerns or where to seek advice.*
- All visiting groups or individuals will receive a **Code of Conduct**. This will be sent and signed that it has been read alongside Personal information including a copy of DBS and/or References.
- Sponsors will be allowed to meet their sponsored child in the presence of a Goodwill employee.
- All policies and procedures will be available from the GCH office on request.

### **Good practice**

Always working in an open environment (e.g.avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).

- Treating all young people/vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate physical and personal distance with participants (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Where possible, personal conversations should take place somewhere that is visible to other people, whenever possible; there should be more than one visitor with a Goodwill student.
- Physical contact i.e. Do not be afraid to return a hug initiated by a young person, this is a sign of trust and the young person should not be rejected. Any contact should be appropriate. Patting a child on the head in India is not encouraged as it is regarded as a sacred part of the body by some.
- Do not invade the privacy of young people unnecessarily. You should knock before entering bedrooms and it is advised to enter the accommodation of the same sex only.
- Making all activities, fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Group leader.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurances.
- Ensuring that if mixed groups are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.

- Ensuring that at residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people

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