

Sunrise Children’s Association Inc. (SCAI) Australia



Child Protection Policy

“Bringing a brighter future to Nepal’s children in need”



Updated July 2016

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1. Introduction

Who we are and what we do

Sunrise Children’s Association Inc. (SCAI) is a child centric, family based community development organization, focused on breaking the cycle of poverty in the lives of disadvantaged children and families in Nepal, so that children have the opportunity to grow up in safe, nurturing family environments, where they can reach their full potential.

It is reported by Unicef that over 15,000 children in Nepal reside in orphanages, yet up to 85% are not orphans. The trend of children being sent to such institutions for a better life and education continues, and research shows that this can cause long-term psychological damage to a child.

SCAI was registered as a charitable association in Australia in 2005 and as an International Non-government Organisation (INGO) in Nepal in 2007. Since then, SCAI has been focusing on prevention of separation of children from their families, through providing education and livelihood support to hundreds of at risk children and their families.

SCAI also runs a residential care home for children unable to live safely with their own families, relatives, foster families or community care. Children should only be settled in the home as a very last resort, and SCAI is committed to ensuring that all efforts are made to reconnect and reintegrate children wherever possible when in the home.

All of SCAI’s projects are implemented through local Nepalese NGO partners, to encourage the exchange of skills and knowledge with local groups working in affiliated areas. Both SCAI and its NGO partners are non-political and non-religious.

SCAI is fully committed to our Child Protection Policy, which is based on our Vision, Mission, Beliefs and Values, and strongly aligned to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This Policy acknowledges the guidelines set out in the legal national and international legal instruments relating to child rights, including Government of Nepal’s National Child Policy 2012 and the Standards for Operation and Management of Residential Child Care Homes 2012.

2. Our Vision

What we want for the children of Nepal

All children living in an environment where they are protected, nurtured, valued and respected, and have the opportunity to reach their full potential, free from discrimination, violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and poverty.

3. Our Mission

What We Aim to Do

We aim to empower families so they can provide adequate parental care and create safe, nurturing environments, where children’s rights are realised and they can learn, grow and develop into happy, healthy, self-sufficient members of their local and global community.

4. Fundamental Belief

We strongly believe it is in the best interest of the child to be with their biological family, extended family and community wherever possible. A better life and a better education should not be the reasons for separation of children from their families and communities.

Our Values

The principles that guide everything we do

Zero tolerance of child abuse – We firmly believe that every child has the right to be protected against any form of abuse, physical or emotional, whether it be in the family, school or wider community.

Non-discrimination – We do not discriminate against any child or their family based on their religion, gender, ethnic group, background, language, abilities, physical status, economic status, political preference or any other factor.

Child focused – We ensure all policies, guidelines and programs have the **best interest of the child** at heart, to ensure their rights are realised, and they have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Empowerment - Rather than taking over the role of families as primary carers, providers and nurturers, we aim to empower families and communities so they are able to fulfil this essential role, and provide for the children’s physical and emotional needs.

Active participation and partnership – We actively involve the children, families and communities we support and encourage them to identify their needs, and contribute to developing solutions, through open, honest, mutually respectful communication.

Sustainability – We provide training, guidance and support, so families can develop relevant skills to strengthen their family units and economic situations, resulting in greater impact, more valued outcomes, and solutions that are ongoing after our involvement has ceased.

5. Purpose of this Policy

This Child Protection Policy documents a clear set of rules and procedures that are to be followed by all staff, committee, visitors, volunteers and NGO partners, which aim to protect children from all forms of child abuse, exploitation and neglect whilst engaged in our programs, and where possible, in the wider community.

Further this Policy aims to:

- Explain what child rights and child protection mean and other key terms, including survival, participation and development of the children;
- Identify the various types of child abuse;
- Outline the Risk Management Procedures and steps that will be taken to meet our commitment to protect children whilst engaged in our programs, and where possible, in the wider community;
 1. Awareness
 2. Prevention
 3. Reporting
 4. Responding
- Provide a basis for developing Guidelines for all staff, committee members, sponsors, donors, volunteers and visitors for their respective levels of involvement in our work;
- Provide a tool for building awareness and fostering open communication about child rights, child protection and SCAI’s commitment within project communities. Where possible this will include the various roles and

responsibilities families, schools, community members and other stakeholders play as our partners in child protection;

- Provide a tool for making children aware of their rights and their active role in child protection;
- Help staff and other stakeholders identify gaps in their skills, knowledge, or working environment that may prevent them from fully implementing this policy effectively, so the organisations can work together to address these;
- Outline action that will be taken against SCAI or NGO partner associates anyone found in breach of this Policy.

SCAI will consistently monitor all risks concerning the children in our programs and make any necessary changes to the Child Protection Policy, in consultation with relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

6. Definitions

At Risk: An 'at risk' child is any child who is vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This generally includes children from poor families, children who live or work on the street, children who have been orphaned, abandoned, displaced or missing, mentally or physically disabled, or any other child who does not have the same access to protection as those from wealthier environments, or children with constant adult supervision.

Beneficiary: Any person who receives a benefit from SCAI, not including staff. This can be both a financial and non-financial benefit, and may cover children, young adults, families, schools or wider community.

Child: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, defines a 'Child' as a person below the age of 18 years, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger. Under the law of Nepal, the term 'Child' refers to any person under the age of 16 years.

Child Labour: Work undertaken by a child. Children should be protected against work that is harmful or exploitive or that jeopardises their rights, including the right to education, relax and play. The UNCRC does not however prohibit parents from expecting their children to help out in with work in the home that are safe and appropriate to their age, including a family farm or business.

Child Rights: As outlined in the UNCRC, Child's Rights include Non-discrimination; Best interests of the child being the primary concern in all decisions relating to the child; Protection of rights; Parental guidance; Right to life, survival and development; Preservation of identity - registration of name, nationality; Parental care where possible, and where not special care and contact with parents and family; Participation and respect for expression, views and thoughts of the child; Freedom of association; Right to privacy; Access to information; Protection from violence, abuse and exploitation; Adequate standard of living and health care; Education, including learning about own culture, language and religion; Relax, play and social activities; Protecting children against child labour, from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education, Protection against abduction, sale, trafficking, harmful detention or punishment, recruitment in armed conflict; Rehabilitation of child victims and juvenile justice. *See Appendix 2 for Summary of UNCRC.*

Child Protection: Child protection refers to the various methods, such as policies, guidelines, procedures, used to prevent and respond to actual or potential abuse, exploitation or harm against children – whether it be intentional or unintentional.

Code of Conduct: A code of conduct is a set of guidelines deemed to be appropriate and proper behavior for SCAI and implementing partner associates when interacting with children or any beneficiaries or stake holders in SCAI's projects. The code of conduct is designed to protect children but is also intended to protect SCAI and implementing partner associates from false accusations of inappropriate behavior or abuse.

Child Development: Refers to the biological, psychological, and emotional changes that occur between birth and the end of adolescence, as the individual progresses from dependency to increasing autonomy.

Juvenile delinquency: Acts by adolescents that violate the law. These acts aren't called crimes, but rather delinquent acts.

Participation: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to participate in decision-making processes that may be relevant in their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard—within the family, the school or the community. This includes freedom of association, expression and opinions affecting their social, economic, religious, cultural and political life, and the right to be heard. Participation can be facilitated through establishing child clubs or other child friendly environments.

Privacy: Privacy means handling a child's identity, including personal data, information, background, expression, and feelings with discretion and not making certain information public. If any information or images of the child may cause the child any embarrassment, discomfort or put the child at risk in any way, it should be kept private and confidential with nominated staff.

Stakeholders: Includes children, young adults (18 years or over), anyone previously a beneficiary of any of SCAI's programs, families, carers, administration and project staff of any program, child development workers (teachers, social workers, psychologists), government officers, community members, board or committee members, sponsors, donors, journalists, visitors, volunteers or contractors and consultants who provide any service relating to our programs.

Right to Survival and Development: Rights to the resources, skills and contributions necessary for the survival and full development of the child. They include the rights to adequate food, shelter, clean water, formal education, primary health care, leisure and recreation, cultural activities and information about their rights.

7. Types of Child Abuse

Child Abuse: All forms of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation, commercial or otherwise, that result in actual or potential harm to a child. Child abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages their well-being, dignity and prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.

It is important to note that abuse can happen to any child, of either gender, and of any age, and that abuse can be perpetrated not only by adults, but also by other children and young people. This situation must be dealt with very carefully and differently to adults, as a child may not fully understand why he/she has committed an act of abuse, or may not even be aware that they have. Therefore, in this case both children's situations and interests need to be kept in mind.

Physical abuse: the use of physical force that results in actual or potential harm to a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes, but is not exclusive to shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. It can also mean causing physical harm to a child by deliberately causing ill health to a child, or lack of action to prevent this. The incidents may be single or repeated.

Emotional abuse: Inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child, or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate verbal and emotional support. Such acts have a high probability of damaging a child's self-esteem, social competence and development. It may involve:

- Telling a child, or causing a child to feel that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or that they are only there to meet the needs of another person;
- Imposing inappropriate expectations upon him/her (especially for his/her age)
- Exposing a child to the ill-treatment of another
- Bullying (including cyber bullying)
- Threatening to harm, or to remove something from his/her life, or deliberately causing unjustified fear
- Discriminating, blaming, degrading, humiliating, (e.g. asking potentially embarrassing questions, demanding potentially embarrassing action or answers)
- Teasing, making fun of what of what a child says, does or how they communicate
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, or silencing a child who is trying to express their opinions
- Preventing the child participating in normal social interactions
- The exploitation or corruption of a child

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses his or her power to force, entice or involve a child in sexual activity, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The term sexual abuse not only includes acts with contact like fondling genitals or breasts, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by or with any object, but also includes non-contact sexual acts, such as voyeurism, exhibitionism, as well as exposure to pornography. Sexual abuse also includes sexual exploitation, which involves children engaging in sexual activity in exchange for things like drugs, food, shelter, protection, or money.

Exploitation: Exploitation may fall under physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Exploitation is the use of children for someone else's advantage, benefit or profit, often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child. These activities may be to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour, child bondage, prostitution or the use of children in criminal activities.

Neglect: Neglect is the failure to provide a child with basic care (where the person is in a position to do so) for physical, emotional and social development and well-being. Physical neglect includes a lack of adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and supervision to the extent that a child is placed at risk. Emotional neglect is failure to provide a child with the attention and care that they need, which can seriously impact upon a child's development. Social neglect includes isolation and not allowing the child to interact in regular social activities.

Historical Abuse: Abuse is often not reported by children as they may not fully understand that they have been abused at the time it happened. Sometimes children are only aware that they were abused and feel the negative effects of it as they move into adolescence or adulthood. For the long term mental health, it is also important to take cases of historical abuse seriously, and provide them access to psychological care.

8. Risk Management Procedures

We will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse through the following procedures:

8.1 Raising Awareness

We commit to raising awareness about child rights, the problems of child abuse and the risks to children, including juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, early marriage and teenage pregnancy, harmful superstitions, customs or practices, abduction and trafficking and child labour to staff, children, families, and other stakeholders, as well as the various roles and responsibilities that they all play. We will facilitate training, forums for open communication and information sharing, as well as discussions with children, families or staff to voice their concerns confidentially, so we can learn as much as possible about what are often considered taboo subjects, break the silence and give people the opportunity to be heard.

8.2 Prevent abuse through creating safer environments

We commit to providing trained personnel that are equipped to provide guidance to families and schools for creating safe practices and environments for children within the communities we operate. We commit to working in close cooperation with stakeholders at all levels, and to providing children opportunities where they can freely discuss child protection issues, their worries, concerns, fears, and dedicated confidants they can share any confidential matters with.

SCAI will conduct regular risk assessments at all project sites in cooperation with the specific Program Manager(s) from the implementing NGO partner to ensure the below and all Operating Guidelines are relevant and effective at minimizing any risks.

8.2.1 Code of Conduct

All SCAI and implementing NGO associates are required to adhere to the below general Code of Conduct, which outlines the appropriate behavior and manner to be used when dealing with any of SCAI's beneficiaries or stakeholders and visiting any project sites.

- Must introduce themselves and make their purpose known when visiting any of the project sites or beneficiaries;
- Must pre-inform with reasonable time if anyone outside of the usual program staff will be accompanying them;
- Must show respect in the way one speaks, dresses and communicates, and behave in a professional manner that is representative of SCAI and its partners;
- Must respect the beneficiaries' privacy, including timing of calls or visits, so as to not cause avoidable inconvenience or discomfort;
- Must treat everyone equally, with respect and dignity, regardless of religion, gender, ethnic group, background, language, abilities, physical status, economic status, political preference or any other factor. Must not display any signs of favouritism, or make comparisons to others;
- Must communicate openly, honestly and transparently at all times, and not make false promises, threats or give intentionally misleading information;
- Must not give advice or suggestions which are intentionally inappropriate, insensitive, embarrassing, humiliating, belittling or careless;
- Must not engage in any physical, emotional, sexual abuse or exploitation (see Types of Abuse), including yelling, or inappropriate physical contact which may make the beneficiary uncomfortable in any way. This includes wherever possible not frequenting places where there is evidence of child labour, such as local restaurants and tea shops. Abuse of children of any kind, that being under 18 years is not excused by supposed mistake or unknowing about their age.
- Must not ask beneficiaries to assist with any personal matters, including running errands, carrying bags or anything else that is not usually the beneficiaries own responsibility;

- Must not offer personal opinion as advice, or personal funds or belongings to any beneficiaries, unless in an emergency. Proper processes should be followed at all times, and associates should not engage in any social activities with beneficiaries outside of the standard work responsibilities with beneficiaries;
- Must maintain appropriate confidentiality and privacy of beneficiary information;
- Must not stay at the homes of beneficiaries, or vice versa, unless there is a specific need and it is pre-approved by SCAI or respective NGO partner's management (exceptions fall within the residential home's guidelines)
- Must not consume alcohol, cigarettes or any illegal or mind altering substances when with or near any beneficiaries or project sites or during working hours;
- Must endeavor to undertake work in an open place where there is at least 1 other person, and avoid private spaces such as bedrooms and bathrooms, to avoid any misunderstanding or potential accusations against SCAI or partner associates;
- Maintain healthy professional boundaries, to avoid over-attachment to a particular staff, volunteer or other associate;
- Be alert at all times, and be aware of any potential issues arising during any project visits, and report them immediately to the designated Child Protection Team representative.
- In the case where an SCAI or NGO associate witnesses any form of abuse outside of our direct project activities, they should take all measures to report the incidence to concerned authorities, whilst ensuring their personal safety as the first priority.

Inappropriate conduct toward beneficiaries, including negligence, failure to follow the behavioral standards stated above is grounds for discipline, and in severe cases may result in dismissal from employment or placement and/or police notification and legal action.

8.2.2 Personnel Recruitment

Recruitment for all positions, whether staff or volunteer, local or international, must adhere to the screening procedures listed below.

- Be interviewed in person where possible, and via Skype where not, by a minimum of two staff members.
- Demonstrate their commitment to and understanding of child protection, explain thoroughly their experience working with children, and motivation for working with children.
- Provide a minimum of two professional references along with their written application.
- Local staff and volunteers must provide copies of their National Identity Card (or equivalent) and a National Police Certificate.
- International staff and volunteers must provide copies of their Passport, a National Police/Criminal Record Check or Working with Children Check from their home country, and for staff, a Nepal National Police Check.
- Undergo an orientation on the Vision, Mission, Values of the organization, this Child Protection Policy and other Guidelines relevant to their position within the first week of employment.
- Actively participate in counselling by qualified therapists, and training programs run by the organization, which will help staff understand child protection and child rights, how to identify abuse and how to handle it.
- International volunteers must be approved by the Volunteer Coordinator in Australia following a rigorous screening and verification process. In addition to providing the above, the process includes submission and review of the Volunteer Application Form, evidence they have read and understood the

Terms and Conditions in the application, the Volunteering in a Developing Country document, this Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct, reference checks and a personal interview.

8.2.3 Visitors

SCAI warmly welcomes sponsors, donors and other SCAI associates to our projects in Nepal to learn more about what we do, and to see how their donations have been or will be spent. However, we don't generally accept visitors to our children's home, or allow visitors to visit beneficiaries' homes unless there is a specific purpose. It is important to us that we respect the privacy of the children and staff in the residential child care home, as well as beneficiaries in their own homes, and behave in ways that we would expect visitors to behave in our own homes.

Visitors to any project must be pre-approved by SCAI, and be accompanied by a SCAI or implementing partner representative at all times. All Visitors must undergo a briefing prior to their visit, provide a copy of their Passport, and adhere strictly to the Terms and Conditions in the Visitor Agreement Form (Appendix 1).

8.2.4 Implementing Partner NGO's

SCAI will only partner with organisations which are fully aligned to SCAI's Vision, Mission, uphold the same Values and are committed to the protection of children. The partner organizations must:

- Have an adequate written Child Protection Policy, or be fully committed to and adhere to SCAI's Child Protection Policy
- Be registered with the government of Nepal as an NGO, and have current and relevant Rules and Bylaws
- Provide a copy of official registration papers, identification cards and police checks of all committee and staff members to SCAI

8.2.5 Supervision of children

The adequate supervision of children in SCAI's programs is essential in ensuring that children are protected from potential harm, abuse or exploitation. Many of these also serve to protect the staff against false accusations. Where not in the direct control of SCAI or NGO staff, the staff must take all measures to inform the relevant supervisors such as family members, teachers and other persons in a position of full time or temporary guardianship of the importance of adequate supervision.

- Children must never be left alone in the home, school or community.
- Children must never be left alone with a single staff member, unless approved by management, for example when transporting a child to the doctor.
- Bathrooms and change areas must be monitored by designated staff members to ensure that only one child goes into each cubicle or space at a time.
- No adults may enter the toilet cubicle, bathroom or change area with a child, unless otherwise agreed upon with management. Wherever possible, such as for children under 5 years old, another approved staff member should be able to easily access the point to supervise if deemed necessary.
- Rooms such as bedrooms, classrooms should be kept unlocked, unless during times of changing clothes, to allow supervising staff to freely check child's safety at any time.
- Store rooms, classrooms, toilets, office rooms should be supervised, otherwise they may pose a threat to child safety as they tend to be located away from other people, making it difficult to monitor who is in there and what they are doing.

- Children in the vicinity of ponds, lakes, rivers, water storage tanks and other large water sources should be closely observed to prevent drowning.
- Facilities such as schools and residential child care home should have a gate that can be locked, to prevent unknown outsiders from freely entering.
- Family homes should be locked from within at night to ensure that the safety of the children and women is maintained.

Please refer to the **Residential Child Care Home Operational Guidelines** for details of supervision in the home, travelling with children, whilst on community outings, excursions, field trips, and other measures of child protection.

8.2.6 Children in the Community - Work Experience, Vocational Training, Volunteering

SCAI and its implementing partners must take great care to ensure that children and youth are not at risk when undertaking programs in the community. These may include work experience, vocational training, volunteering and well as excursions and field trips. For excursions and field trips, children and youth should never be left without organization staff present.

For work experience, vocational training or volunteering, staff should ensure that the place the children will be spending time in one of the above capacities is registered with the government, can provide some legal documentation such as a registration certificate, and is willing to sign this Child Protection Policy, or other appropriate Agreement approved by SCAI.

For work experience, vocational training or volunteering, where the youth will be unaccompanied by the organisation's staff, the staff must visit the placement site prior to commencement to verify it is suitable and safe. The staff must have contact details of at least 2 senior people, with whom they can liaise and arrange inspections.

The staff must monitor the youth on a weekly basis to ensure they are safe and comfortable, and at least monthly with the staff of the centre or placement site. All records of the placement site and youth's involvement there must be kept in the youth's case file.

8.2.7 Communications

SCAI is committed to protecting children's privacy. All SCAI and implementing partner associates must follow the following guidelines, in order to minimize risks of harm or exploitation associated with SCAI's fundraising, promotional work, donor updates or any other form of communications that involve the beneficiaries.

Permission

- Use of images or personal information about the child must have permission from the child and his/her guardian. Special care must be taken when gaining consent from children to ensure they are not coerced by their parents, guardians or staff. A child may verbally agree or nod their head in agreement, but staff must use their discretion to decide if, despite this, the child wishes his/her image or information to be kept private.
- It must be made clear to all beneficiaries what the information will specifically be used for, and who will have access to it.
- It must be made clear to the child and their families that should they not wish for their photos or any specific personal information be shared in certain ways, that it will not impact on SCAI's support in any way.

- It must be made clear to the child and their family that they are under no obligation to communicate directly with any sponsors or donors (including accepting Facebook friend requests or liasing on Facebook or other forms of social media). If any beneficiaries are contacted directly, they should inform SCAI and implementing partner staff.
- Children or beneficiaries should not be coerced into behaving in a certain way, portraying a false mood or scene, or share anything that makes them feel uncomfortable or on display.

Use of images or personal information

- Images should be respectful and convey the true nature or mood or scene, and not be fabricated in any way.
- Images should not be published of children or other beneficiaries in distress, or when in any situation, such as when ill, where they are not in a clear state of mind to be able to give proper permission or be seen as they'd wish to be.
- Beneficiaries should be dressed appropriately as per their comfort level, and should in no way be conveyed in an aggressive or sexual or otherwise degrading or inappropriate manner.
- All images taken of children and other beneficiaries should be made available to the child and their guardian/ care-taker upon request.
- Images, names or other personal details must not be used for public use, such that anyone outside of SCAI or implementing staff would be able to personally identify them and their location.

8.3 Reporting

Any breach of this Child Protection Policy or any concerns children or other beneficiaries may have should be reported immediately to the designated SCAI and implementing partner representatives, so that appropriate action can be taken.

Fostering open communication and reporting of concerns

- There must be two representatives from SCAI and two from its implementing partner organization that are the designated contact people should any child or beneficiaries wish to report any concerns. Contact numbers of these representatives must be provided to all beneficiaries. These representatives make up the official Child Protection Team.
- The children and beneficiaries must have the chance to nominate these designated representatives based on who they feel most comfortable with.
- A reporting box will also placed at each project site that is run by SCAI and its implementing partner. This will be locked and the designated contact people will check it at least weekly. The reporting boxes provide a safe opportunity for children to report any concerns, including any suspected or known abuse, where they do not feel comfortable making a verbal report. All letters will be collected, and kept on file, and a meeting with these representatives to discuss the appropriate course of action will be held as soon as possible.
- Depending on the project, weekly, fortnightly or monthly meetings will be held with the children by the respective program manager or coordinator, to ensure the child has the opportunity to openly express any concerns. These meetings will encourage sharing of the child's activities and news, achievements and issues they may be facing at school or at home or community. If there is suspected abuse by a family member, appropriate steps will be taken to enable the child to communicate without the presence of the suspected person or other family members that may restrict their free expression.

- All staff must encourage an environment of open communication and sharing. The children must be made clear who they can talk to about any issues they are concerned about, and that there will be no punishment or negative repercussions for them should they do so.
- It must be made clear to children who will be informed about their concern, and that they have the right to nominate if a specific person should not be informed, if that person is one of the designated contact people.

Procedures for documenting concerns and action

- The designated staff receiving the complaint must document the details on the Incident Report Form, which includes date, time, place and details. This must be shared with the Child Protection Team members within 3 days. If the allegation is severe, and particularly if of a sexual nature, it must be reported to the designated contacts as well as the Directors who shall lead the Child Protection Team within 24 hours.
- The information must be kept confidential between the Child Protection Team, and reported to the appointed Legal Advisor, who will provide advice about legal procedures if deemed necessary. This may include reporting to the police or other concerned agencies such as DCWB.
- All reported concerns or allegations must be taken seriously and acted on promptly. To verify claims and to avoid any action taken on potentially false accusations, a careful and confidential investigation process will be undertaken, which may include discussions with the child expressing their concern or making an accusation, witnesses and other evidence as required.
- Action to be taken will be recorded on the case file and followed up by the Child Protection Team members.
- Any staff member who withholds information or does not report it within the given timeframe will be considered an accomplice, and disciplinary action may be taken against this person, which may include suspension or termination.

8.4 Responding

We commit to ensuring that a response is always provided to the child or beneficiary raising the concern or allegation, whether it be considered a large or small issue. What may seem like a small issue to one person may be a significant issue to another, so concerns must be received and processed without judgement. Even if the matter is deemed not serious by the child or the Child Protection Team, a response should be given and recorded. This will help the child to know he/she has a voice that will be heard, respected and taken seriously. The child may just ‘test the waters’ with a smaller issue before uncovering a more serious issue. It also ensures that there is no misunderstanding or repercussions about any false claims against any staff, other beneficiaries or other associates.

The following steps will also be taken:

- An immediate medical check-up following any claims for physical or sexual abuse
- An investigation will be undertaken by the Child Protection Team to confirm details of where, involving whom and how this incident happened
- Children who have been subject to abuse will be referred to counseling, which will last for as long as is deemed appropriate by the attending psychologist or counsellor. Every effort will be made to assist the child in coping with any physical or emotional trauma he or she may be experiencing.
- In cases of a minor offence, whether perpetrated willingly or unwillingly, the perpetrator must also undergo counselling and further training if the Directors deem it necessary.

- Physical safety and other preventative measures will be re-assessed and revised as appropriate to minimize risk of any further incidences.
- In the event of an allegation made in good faith, which is shown to be untrue, no action will be taken against the maker of the allegation. Any malicious allegations are not acceptable.

9. Ensuring we meet our commitments

- All staff and key stakeholders will receive a copy of this Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and relevant Operational Guidelines.
- All staff will be trained on how to ensure this policy is implemented effectively
- Regular meetings will be held with staff and all stakeholders with open, honest, transparent, mutually respectful discussion
- This Child Protection Policy will be reviewed a minimum of once a year by SCAI management, or more frequently if deemed necessary to ensure highest standards in protection. When updated, a new copy will be distributed to all staff and associates and will need to be re-signed.

10. Declaration of Commitment

This policy is to be signed by all SCAI associates and those of NGO partners, including staff, committee members, visitors and volunteers. A signed copy will be given to each associate, with another signed copy kept in the SCAI administrative files.

I declare that:

1. I have read and understand SCAI’s Child Protection Policy
2. I will keep a copy on hand and review it on a regular basis
3. I will comply with the policies and procedures laid out in the SCAI’s Child Protection Policy.
4. I have not been accused or convicted of any offense involving physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children. I will provide an up to date Police Certificate.
5. I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse of children while employed by or engaged with SCAI or any of its partner organisations, I may be suspended or terminated if found guilty through thorough investigation.

Name (Printed) : _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1

Visitor Agreement

SCAI warmly welcomes sponsors, donors and other SCAI associates to our projects in Nepal, however we don't generally accept visitors to our children's home without a specific pre-approved purpose. As it is a residential home, it is important to us that we respect the privacy of the children and staff in the home, and behave in ways that we would expect visitors to behave in our own homes.

Safeguarding the children we support in Nepal against any form of abuse or exploitation is of utmost importance to us, which also means ensuring that all visitors are aware of cultural norms. What may seem normal to foreigners, may cause discomfort, embarrassment or negative impressions in Nepalese society.

Nepalese people, both children and adults are naturally very hospitable and friendly, but it is important that this does not allow you to become 'overfamiliar' during your visit, as this may lead to potentially harmful impacts after you leave. In accordance with this, we have clear policies and procedures that all volunteers and visitors must strictly adhere to.

As a potential visitor to Sunrise home or one of our other projects, we request that you give us at least 1 week notice so we can confirm a mutually suitable date. This is mainly to ensure the visit doesn't disrupt the children and staff and their daily routine or any specific activities such as exams. We kindly request you to read thoroughly, then complete and sign the following Terms and Conditions and bring 2 printed copies with you on your visit, along with 2 copies of your passport (1 copy will be kept with SCAI Nepal, and the other with the local NGO partner). A separate Visitor Agreement form must be completed by each visitor over 18 years.

- I have read and fully understand SCAI's Child Protection Policy and the 'Local Customs' section on pages 3 and 4 of 'SCAI Nepal Volunteer Program 2016' on www.scai.org.au. This is important as it includes things like appropriate greetings, removing shoes at the door etc.
- I will show respect to the children, staff, committee and members of the local community in the way I speak, dress and behave to ensure I act in a culturally sensitive manner at all times e.g. conservative dress with skirts/shorts extending below the knee, no singlet tops and no tight clothing of any kind.
- I will ensure that any gifts I buy or donated items brought to Nepal for the children are pre-approved by SCAI representatives. All donated items will be recorded in the Donation Record book prior to distribution.
- I understand I may not give anything directly to any children or staff at any projects, so we can ensure things are distributed fairly and where most needed.
- I agree that financial donations must go through SCAI unless otherwise agreed by SCAI. This is to ensure effective management of financial records for both SCAI and local NGO partners, and enables SCAI where appropriate to provide receipts.
- I will not seek or accept any accommodation within Sunrise home or with any families, friends or community members that SCAI works with, which has not been pre-arranged by SCAI.
- I will not provide my email address or other contact details directly to any child, staff or committee member of any of SCAI's projects, nor ask directly for any contact details. All visitors are requested to fill in the Visitor Book on arrival which includes your email address should any further communication between children and visitor be agreed upon by management.

I will not hold SCAI or any of SCAI's project partners in Nepal responsible for any injuries, accidents or illnesses that may occur during or resulting from my visit.

I agree that under no circumstances will I be alone with a child that SCAI supports, whether at Sunrise home or one of our other project sites, and that I will interact with the children only in the presence of a staff member. I will not pick up any of the children, or show inappropriate affection to a child/carer, nor visit their bedrooms unless on a guided tour by a staff member.

I agree not to take any child from the home, school or any other project out alone, whether to school, hospital, shopping or any other place, and a minimum of one other adult or staff member must accompany me.

I agree that I must seek permission before taking any photos of the children, and photos may only be taken for personal use, and may not be given to any media or distributed in any public forums including the internet, without prior permission from SCAI and the child.

I agree not to make any promises to the children or staff members with regards to future visits or communication, gifts or any other support as this may lead to disappointment for the child/ person involved.

I will not ask the child any personal questions about their background, or speak about them in their presence.

I understand that smoking of any kind, use of drugs or consumption of alcohol is prohibited at on or near the site of any of SCAI's projects.

I agree to be responsible for getting myself to and from SCAI projects myself and will bear the travel expenses.

I agree to give SCAI a minimum of 3 days notice if I wish to cancel my visit unless in case of emergency.

I agree that if I have any children less than 18 years accompanying me on my visit, I will be fully responsible for them and ensure they stay with me at all times throughout the visit. I will ensure they also adhere to all of the above terms and conditions.

I understand that whilst SCAI and its partners will make every effort to provide me with a rewarding visit on the date agreed upon, they do have the right to cancel your visit at any time should any issues arise at the project site/s which must take priority.

I understand that in the best interest of the children, SCAI or any of its project partners has the right to cancel my visit at any time or immediately dispel me from the project site should any of the Terms and Conditions not be adhered to. In this instance I agree that I will be fully responsible for my own expenses and travel arrangements back to my hotel or place of accommodation.

Name (please print): _____ Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Nationality: _____

Passport Number: _____ Expiry: _____

Contact phone: _____ Email: _____

Name of any persons under 18 years accompanying me: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

