

ASHRAF FOUNDATION

Child Safeguarding Policy



Ashraf Foundation (AF)

Jessore Road, Chougachha Bazar, Jeshore, BANGLADESH.

Telephone # 04224-56645, 56170, Fax # 04224-56645

Mobile # 01711-150419 & 01714-064115

E-mail # ashraffoundation18@gmail.com

Child Safeguarding Policy

Ashraf Foundation (AF)

Compliance and Commitment of the Organization

Ashraf Foundation is committed to practicing and keeping children safe. So, we want to do a zero-tolerance policy for any form of abuse, exploitation, or violence. We take every measure to prevent such incidents and to ensure compliance with United States host-country, and international child welfare and protection laws and standards.

Ashraf Foundation will investigate, act upon, and report suspected safeguarding violations in accordance with the provisions of this policy and Ashraf Foundation's policies for investigating ethics and fraud violations.

Goals of Child Safeguarding Policy

Ashraf Foundation often implements programs designed to benefit children and their families. These programs frequently include activities that could raise the risk of child abuse, exploitation, and neglect. It is our responsibility to protect the children we come in contact with from such harm.

Ashraf Foundation embraces the principles within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as its minimum standards of protection for children reached by its programs. The personal conduct of those engaged in work for **Ashraf Foundation** either as direct staff, consultants, volunteers, or as staff of our partners, contractors, vendors, and subrecipients will be measured against this policy.

Ashraf Foundation has developed this policy to comply with funders' child safeguarding requirements, including DFID standards, and the USAID Child Safeguarding Mandatory Standard Provision. These standards, clauses, and provisions apply to activities that may involve children and award implementation in which personnel may come into contact with children.

Principles of Safeguarding

Ethical practices at **Ashraf Foundation** are guided by the principle that work and business relationships be conducted with the highest level of honesty, integrity, diligence, fairness, trust, and respect. **Ashraf Foundation** safeguarding principles include:

Ashraf Foundation's Principles:

Equality: We will treat all children and adults equally with respect.

Responsibility: We are all responsible for protecting children in our work and daily life. We will demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding in all our interactions with children.

Accountability: We will hold ourselves and others accountable to our safeguarding policies and code of conduct.

Cooperation: We will work closely with government, funders, partner agencies, and beneficiaries to promote a safe environment for children.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality is fundamental to safeguarding, reporting, and investigation processes. We will maintain confidentiality during all stages of a safeguarding investigation, sharing information only on a need-to-know basis. Confidentiality breaches can have serious consequences for all involved in a safeguarding investigation and will result in disciplinary action.

Child-centered approach: In a child-centered approach, the child's wishes, safety, and well-being are prioritized in all matters and procedures. Investigation and response processes will ensure sensitivity and accountability, avoid re-traumatizing children, maintain focus on the child, and ensure support to survivors.

Child awareness: We will ensure that children understand and are aware of child safeguarding and protection processes. Children as participants in investigations: We will ensure that care is taken when children are involved in an investigation and that any investigative interview with a child be undertaken within best practice protocols (e.g., child-centered, child-paced, and conducted or guided by a suitably trained practitioner).

Responsiveness: We will ensure that reporting and investigating processes are conducted in a timely manner.

The Policy will Apply

The **Ashraf Foundation** Child Safeguarding Policy applies to everyone associated with **Ashraf Foundation**, including but not limited to:

- All full-time, part-time, and temporary staff;
- Partner staff;
- Volunteers and interns;
- Consultants;
- Subcontractors and sub-recipients.

Designated Focal Person for Child Safeguarding

Designated child safeguarding focal persons will be identified to support the coordination and implementation of **Ashraf Foundation's** child safeguarding obligations across the organization.

Child Safeguarding Standards of Behavior

These standards of behavior are expected of and apply to all **Ashraf Foundation** staff and associates. Employees, partners, consultants, subcontractors, subrecipients, interns, and volunteers are expected to understand the implications of this code on their language, behavior, actions, and relationships with children.

Ashraf Foundation Child Safeguarding Standards of Behavior are applicable to the treatment of children with whom **Ashraf Foundation** staff and associates come into contact. Any breach or failure to comply with them will be taken seriously by **Ashraf Foundation** and will result in disciplinary action.

The list below is not prescriptive and should be applied in the spirit of providing the highest level of protection and duty of care to children.

When working with children YOU MUST NEVER:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault, harm, or abuse children.
- Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years, regardless of the age of majority/consent or custom locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
- Develop relationships with children that could be in any way considered exploitative or abusive.
- Act in any way that may be abusive or place a child at risk of abuse.

Child Safeguarding Policy of AF

- Use language with or behave toward a child in a way that is inappropriate, offensive, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, or culturally inappropriate.
- Have a child/children with whom we are working stay overnight at your home or other personal accommodation in which you are staying.
- Condone or participate in children's behavior that is illegal, unsafe, or abusive.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children.
- Ignore or fail to report allegations made or concerns expressed by others about children's welfare.
- Use a computer or other electronic device to view, download, distribute, or create indecent or inappropriate images of children.
- Use children's images or information without obtaining proper permission and consent.
- Use computers, social media, mobile phones, video, and digital cameras, or other electronic devices and mediums to exploit, harass or bully children.

Safe Communication

Ensuring safe communication, including the use of social media, is critical in all areas of child safeguarding. **Ashraf Foundation** expects its staff to promote dignity and respect in all communications, and ensure that information and images of children will never be used in a way that lessens the child's safety or dignity. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

Informed consent for use of images and information

We are committed to portraying children respectfully and appropriately. Individuals representing **Ashraf Foundation** must adhere to the organization's guidelines when capturing, storing, displaying, and publishing children's images. Informed consent from the relevant caregiver and informed agreement from the child in question must be secured before using any information about the child in external communications – written, audio, or visual. Consent must be evidenced on a consent form.

Information and communications technology

Ashraf Foundation prohibits the use of its computer systems and networks to exploit, harass, or bully children, or to access, create or distribute inappropriate images of them.

Recruitment

Ashraf Foundation takes preventive steps to reduce the risk of engaging a person who may be unsafe or unsuitable to work with, or be in contact with, children.

Ashraf Foundation has developed guidelines for recruitment to ensure we hire and engage with, the safest and most suitable staff, volunteers, and partners. Such people act in the best interests of children, protect children from all forms of abuse, and share **Ashraf Foundation**'s values. Lack of child-safe recruitment and screening procedures greatly increases the risk of engaging someone who may pose an unacceptable risk of harm (physical, sexual, or emotional) to children.

By promoting child-safe recruitment and screening procedures, **Ashraf Foundation** can attract the best people to work with children, and deter those who seek to join **Ashraf Foundation** because they want to harm children.

By implementing child-safe recruitment and screening procedures, **Ashraf Foundation** aims to create and maintain a child-safe environment, to keep all children safe in the delivery of programs.

For staff who will be working directly with children as part of the scope of their project, **Ashraf Foundation** conducts additional due diligence, including special behavior-based questions during interviews; where legal, completes criminal background checks following all applicable local laws; and/or requiring a special signed disclosure that a staff member has not been charged with child abuse or exploitation offenses.

All **Ashraf Foundation** job descriptions are required to include the following language:

"**Ashraf Foundation** is a child-safe organization, and the safety and wellbeing of children is a priority of our organization. We have robust recruitment procedures to ensure that all staff are suited to work with the children served by our programs."

Training

All staff are required to take the **Ashraf Foundation** Ethics training within 30 days of hire and annually thereafter.

All staff will receive the appropriate level of safeguarding training, and designated child safeguarding focal persons will be trained to the level

Child Safeguarding Policy of AF

commensurate with their responsibilities. **Ashraf Foundation's** safeguarding training will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is up-to-date and relevant.

Reporting

Children rarely speak up when they feel unsafe or are being harmed, especially within organizational or institutional settings. While it is important to encourage children to speak up, **Ashraf Foundation** cannot rely on children to let **Ashraf Foundation** know if a staff member, volunteer, or consultant is harming them or makes them feel unsafe. It is not the child's responsibility to disclose such information.

Any action to respond to or investigate a child safeguarding concern should be guided by what is in the best interest of the child and follow **Ashraf Foundation's** standard ethics investigation process in relation to allegations.

Information about reporting violations of **Ashraf Foundation's** Code of Conduct, as well as this child safeguarding policy, is available internally. We provide several avenues and mechanisms for reporting concerns.

Everyone involved in program activities (ranging from employees to training participants) must be made aware of the **Ashraf Foundation** reporting helpline and how to report safeguarding concerns.

Any suspicion or allegation of a safeguarding violation by **Ashraf Foundation** staff, partners, contractors, vendors, or subrecipients must be reported within 24 hours to the **Ashraf Foundation** Code of Conduct Helpline. The reporter should then communicate the concern to the **Ashraf Foundation** Executive Director (unless that person is implicated in the allegation).

Recognizing the special responsibility of protecting the privacy of a child and the confidentiality of the implicated person, **Ashraf Foundation** discourages communication about the details of child safeguarding concerns via e-mail unless absolutely necessary. If e-mail is necessary, subject headings should be vague and inoffensive, and must be flagged as confidential.

The **Ashraf Foundation** Executive Director should involve the designated safeguarding focal person in the incident response and management process. If a project does not have a safeguarding focal person, they should be in touch with HQ Human Resources.

Child Safeguarding Policy of AF

Responding to children's disclosures of abuse

Because child safeguarding violations involve a minor, **Ashraf Foundation** has developed the below additional guidance to ensure safety and appropriate sensitivity.

If information about child safeguarding violations is disclosed by a child, whether or not the complaint is made by the child survivor themselves, the process of reporting and managing the incident will require additional age-appropriate steps and considerations. **Ashraf Foundation** staff or partners must keep in mind the age of the child or young person and do the following when receiving disclosures made by a child:

- Listen to and support the child.
- Reassure the child that they did the right thing.
- Assess the risk of ongoing abuse.
- Take action to provide all possible help.
- Do not promise something you can't deliver.
- Exercise caution and sensitivity in disclosing information
- Contact the appropriate authorities.

Managing reported incidents

Ashraf Foundation will immediately initiate an investigation of any child safeguarding concern it becomes aware of. This investigation will follow our established policies and processes for all ethics/fraud incident reports. Additionally, for child safeguarding-related incidents, investigations will adhere to the following:

1. Persons reporting the incident and persons who have witnessed inappropriate conduct will be treated respectfully. Statements made by the complainant will be kept in appropriate confidentiality. The complainant will be:

- Interviewed to confirm all relevant facts.
- Given the opportunity to provide relevant facts.
- Given the opportunity to participate in the investigation by providing names/identities of other witnesses and recommending questions to be asked by investigators.

2. Information pertaining to incidents in which children's rights have been violated should be shared on a 'need to know' basis, as deemed by the director of HR at **Ashraf Foundation** HQ in consultation with the Executive Director, and, if involved, the designated child safeguarding focal person.

Child Safeguarding Policy of AF

3. As with all ethics/fraud violations we investigate, reports of child abuse must be treated seriously and impartially, and appropriate confidentiality maintained. However, **Ashraf Foundation** reserves the right to disclose information to other organizations or authorities involving employees terminated on the basis of child safeguarding violations. **Ashraf Foundation** complies with funder requirements for reporting such violations.

An employee who is dismissed as a result of misconduct with a child(ren) is not eligible for rehire.

Safe Programming

Assessment

Every project will be reviewed to determine the level of risk to children. Projects should consult the **Ashraf Foundation** Child Safeguarding Guidelines, which supplements this policy.

Monitoring and review

All projects that could potentially affect children must annually review their programs to ensure that the project scope has not changed to affect children. If, after the annual review, a project is determined to be higher risk, it must follow additional actions as described in the **Ashraf Foundation** Child Safeguarding Guidelines.

Sub-recipients, Subcontractors, Sub-grantees, Consultants, and Other Agents

Ashraf Foundation includes child safeguarding requirements in all contractual documents. At a minimum, **Ashraf Foundation** partners must:

- Comply with United State, host country, and international child welfare and protection laws and standards.
- Comply with the **Ashraf Foundation** Child Safeguarding Standards of Behavior.
- Maintain procedures to prevent and punish child safeguarding violations.
- Immediately report to **Ashraf Foundation** any credible allegations of child abuse, exploitation, or neglect related to the contract.

Ashraf Foundation will monitor and ensure partner compliance in a manner commensurate with the safeguarding risk posed by the activities or partner. **Ashraf Foundation** pre-award assessments will include a review of a partner's ability to comply with safeguarding requirements and the inherent risk in the

Child Safeguarding Policy of AF

project activities that they will be conducting. Monitoring of higher-risk partners and activities will include as applicable compliance in regular reporting, evaluations, and site visits and appropriate safeguarding training of partner staff.

Ashraf Foundation's zero-tolerance for any form of child abuse, exploitation, and neglect extends to the actions of its business partners and their employees. The consequences of a partner's safeguarding violation are explicit and include termination of the contract, along with additional action as required. **Ashraf Foundation** that a partner or a partner employee has committed a safeguarding violation, we will take appropriate action including, but not limited to:

1. Requiring the party to remove an employee or agent from a project.
2. Requiring the party to terminate its relationship with any other contractor, consultant, subcontractor, or sub-recipient found to be in violation.
3. Suspending payments to the party until the violation is remedied.
4. Immediately terminating the party's agreement, grant, or contract.
5. Excluding the party from further work and other opportunities with **Ashraf Foundation**.
6. Reporting the violation to the funder and appropriate authorities.

Implementation

All staff are required to sign a code of conduct that commits them to abide by **Ashraf Foundation** policies and procedures, including this policy and the standards of behavior included herein. this policy and the standards of behavior included herein. Each new employee is oriented to HR policies and procedures, including the code of conduct.

Ashraf Foundation will ensure compliance with child safeguarding standards through the procedures described and referenced throughout this policy and attached appendices. All **Ashraf Foundation** operations are subject to this policy and it will be enforced across all **Ashraf Foundation** locations and activities. **Ashraf Foundation** will take appropriate action against **Ashraf Foundation** employees found to have violated this policy, up to and including termination and referral to local authorities.

Definitions

Child: A person who has not attained age 18, regardless of the age of majority under local law.

Child Safeguarding Policy of AF

Child safeguarding: The responsibility of organizations to make sure their staff, operations, and programs do not harm or expose children to abuse or exploitation.

Child abuse or maltreatment: Any form of physical abuse; emotional ill-treatment; neglect or insufficient supervision; trafficking; or commercial or transactional child labor; and other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, well-being, survival, development, or dignity. Abuse and maltreatment include but are not limited to any act or failure to act that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, or that presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a child.

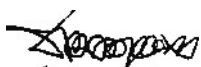
Physical abuse: Actual or potential physical harm of a child resulting from an interaction or lack of interaction that is reasonably within the control of a parent or other person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust in relation to the child.

Sexual abuse: The involvement of a child in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening or gives consent. Activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e., rape) or non-penetrative acts. They also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional abuse or ill treatment: Injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of the child caused by acts, threats of acts, or coercive tactics. Emotional abuse may include, but is not limited to: humiliation, control, isolation, withholding of information, and any other deliberate activity that makes the child feel diminished or embarrassed.

Exploitation: The abuse of a child that involves some form of remuneration or in which the perpetrators benefit in some manner. Exploitation represents a form of coercion and violence that is detrimental to the child's physical or mental health, development, education, or wellbeing.

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet the child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's physical or cognitive development. For example, inadequate care and supervision that leaves a child in a situation where s/he could be harmed.



M. Rasel Ashraf
Executive Director
Ashraf Foundation