

PEEPAL FOUNDATION SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

VERSION: 1.0

Approval by the Board: 5th April 2025

Effective date: 6th April 2025

Next Review by date: Three years from effective date

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all Peepal Foundation staff, Board members, and all others involved in the work of Peepal Foundation including, but not limited to, volunteers, interns, consultants, service providers, member organizations, and partners.

Purpose of the Policy

The safeguarding policy is established to ensure that any children and youth who come into direct contact with Peepal Foundation or its member organizations or any other people as part of Peepal Foundation's programmes feel safe and comfortable.

Peepal Foundation will ensure systems to mitigate/minimize any risk to children/youth participating in its events/programmes from any deliberate or unintentional actions that could cause harm by Peepal Foundation's staff, representatives, partners, volunteers, or contractors.

Peepal Foundation fully acknowledges the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and youth and will embed, communicate, and sensitize all safeguarding measures clearly to staff, partners, and members in a language they understand.

Peepal Foundation will encourage and create platforms for equal, active, and effective participation of youth from diverse backgrounds irrespective of age, socio-economic status, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, identity, or sexual orientation.

The Senior Management Team of Peepal Foundation will ensure the policy is circulated, understood, and implemented by all staff, member organizations, interns, consultants, and associates to take every necessary action to keep children and youth safe and protected.

Key Safeguarding Commitments Include:

- Designating a safeguarding focal person for all programmes and events involving children/youth.

- Allocating resources for training staff, consultants, and vendors who come into contact with children/youth to follow safeguarding principles and procedures.
- Assigning a designated Board Member responsible for child/youth safeguarding oversight through proactive monitoring.
- Implementing appropriate responses to any alleged breaches of this policy.
- Providing minimum safeguarding standards to ensure consistent safeguarding across Peepal Foundation and its network members.

Safeguarding Commitments to Children/Youth

- Ensure equal participation opportunities for all children/youth regardless of age, gender, abilities, sexual orientation, or vulnerability.
- Value and listen to all children/youth and young people.
- Ensure all staff and associates understand their responsibility to prevent and report any form of abuse or sexual exploitation.
- Ensure children/youth are clothed and represented with dignity in any photographs/videos, with no identifying information shared without informed consent.
- Investigate any safeguarding concerns raised against Peepal Foundation staff, member organizations, volunteers, or consultants through a safeguarding committee constituted by the Senior Management Team, with decisions including possible suspension or termination.

Policy Statement

- Child: Anyone under 18 years of age.
- Youth: Anyone aged 19–24 years.
- This policy covers all forms of child abuse including sexual, physical, emotional abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Peepal Foundation has zero tolerance for any abuse or exploitation by staff, partners, or representatives.
- Safeguarding procedures and the Peepal Foundation Code of Conduct apply to all operations and programmes.
- All staff must receive safeguarding induction and training within one month of recruitment, with ongoing training to maintain high standards.
- All staff and representatives must demonstrate the highest standards of behavior towards children/youth and understand their duty to prevent, report, and respond to safeguarding concerns immediately.

- Risk assessments will be conducted for all programmes/events involving children/youth, categorizing risks and planning mitigation or aborting activities if risks are high.
- Reporting procedures will be communicated widely to ensure maximum safety and security of participants.
- The policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required.

Definitions (Key Terms)

- Safeguarding: Keeping children/youth safe from intentional or unintentional harm by Peepal Foundation staff or associates.
- Child Abuse: Any act or failure to act that harms a child's development or safety.
- Physical Abuse: Non-accidental physical harm or injury to a child/youth.
- Emotional Abuse: Harm to a child/youth's emotional or psychological development.
- Neglect: Failure to provide adequate care or a safe environment.
- Sexual Abuse: Involvement of a child in sexual activities, including contact and non-contact abuse.
- Exploitation and Child Labour: Abuse involving coercion or trafficking of children for exploitative activities.

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