



# BOARD's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

*From the Executive Committee's Desk.....*

*Dear Parents and guardians,*

The safety and well-being of our children are our highest priority. When children feel safe and happy, they are better able to learn, grow, and thrive.

In line with our core values and vision, Bureau of Obligate and Accompanier for Rural Development (BOARD) has developed a comprehensive Child Protection Policy. This policy, supported by our dedicated Child Protection Unit, guides both our staff and parents on matters of health, safety, and care for children involved in our programs and activities. By enrolling your child at BOARD, you agree to collaborate with us and adhere to the policies set forth by our Executive Committee.

BOARD's Child Protection Policy sets clear standards to ensure that all children are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve at all times. The policy is in alignment with international standards, including the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and Indian law. The Constitution of India guarantees the protection of the rights of children and ensures that they are protected from harm.

BOARD also complies with the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, which prohibits corporal punishment. We are fully committed to working closely with our community to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of the children under our care, as they learn and grow in a secure and supportive environment. To achieve this, BOARD is committed to providing:

- Age-appropriate lessons to help children understand personal safety, their needs and their rights.
- Information sessions for parents to better understand our programs, policies, and their role in supporting these efforts.
- Triennial reviews of the policy to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and stakeholders are well-informed and follow the outlined guidelines.

At BOARD, we believe in the power of collaboration to ensure that all children are safe, informed about their rights, and equipped with the tools for personal responsibility. We deeply appreciate your ongoing support. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Child Protection Committee.

I am pleased to present this Child Protection Policy to all our supporters and stakeholders, with the expectation that it will be followed in both spirit and action. The safety, education, and overall development of our children are our collective responsibility, and we are committed to upholding these standards.

At BOARD, we believe in working together to ensure that our children are safe, aware of their rights, and responsible for their actions. We appreciate your support. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Child Protection Committee.

Now, I am happy to present this child protection policy to all our supporters and stakeholders to be followed in letter and spirit. It is not a matter of protection from all type of offences and ensuring their proper education and development.

I wish all of you every success in this important task. May we continue to work together for the well-being of our children?

Yours sincerely,

Managing Trustee

# BUREAU OF OBLIGATE AND ACCOMPAINER FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

At & P.O: Shahjahanpur, Dist. – Patna, Bihar (India), PIN -801305

Date of Approval by Executive Committee	2 <sup>nd</sup> October'2019
Effective Date	1 <sup>st</sup> January' 2020
Review Date (after 3 years from Effective Date)	14 <sup>th</sup> February'2023
Next Review Date	26 <sup>th</sup> January' 2026

## INTRODUCTION

BOARD is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children involved in our programs and activities. This Child Safeguarding Policy outlines our commitment, guiding principles, and procedures for preventing and addressing child abuse, exploitation, and neglect in the context of our operations in Bihar. We expect all individuals and groups affiliated with the BOARD community to act with integrity and take responsibility for keeping children safe. Whether you are a staff member, service or activity partner, volunteer, intern, guest, parent, or visitor, we expect you to support and prioritize the well-being of our child beneficiaries at all times.

## PURPOSE

BOARD recognizes that violence is widespread globally and impacts all societies. Children and adults, particularly those with intersecting identities such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, age, or illness, are at increased risk of violence.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure all staff, associates, and visitors understand their responsibility to prevent violence and protect children and program participants from harm.
- Raise awareness of the consequences of policy violations.
- Uphold BOARD's commitment to the highest standards of conduct, with zero tolerance for inaction on safeguarding issues.
- Ensure children and participants are informed about the policy and the channels for reporting harm caused by staff, associates, or visitors.
- Establish clear procedures for reporting and addressing child safeguarding concerns.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- **All employees, volunteers, associates, and visitors of BOARD:** Everyone associated with BOARD must adhere to this policy to maintain a safe environment for children and program participants.
- **Partners, vendors, and other stakeholders involved in our programs:** All external entities engaged with BOARD are expected to comply with this policy when working with or on behalf of BOARD.
- **All activities conducted by or on behalf of BOARD in Bihar:** This policy covers all programs and initiatives conducted by BOARD, both on-premises and in the community, involving children or program participants.

## KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Child:** Any person under the age of 18 years, as per national and international child protection standards.
- **Child Abuse:** Any form of mistreatment or harm to a child, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

- **Safeguarding:** The actions and measures taken to ensure health, well-being, and rights of children are protected from harm, abuse, or exploitation.
- **Neglect:** The failure to provide for a child’s basic needs, including food, shelter, medical care, education, and emotional support.
- **Exploitation:** The use of a child for labour, commercial sexual purposes, or any other form of coercion that benefits an adult or organization.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any sexual activity involving a child, including inappropriate touching, exploitation, or any form of sexual coercion.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Harmful behaviour that negatively impacts a child’s emotional well-being, such as verbal abuse, threats, or humiliation.
- **Physical Abuse:** Any act of violence that causes physical injury or harm to a child, such as hitting, beating, or burning.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

Our safeguarding policy is grounded in core principles that guide BOARD’s commitment to protecting children and vulnerable individuals in all our programs and initiatives:

1. **Best Interests of the Child:** The safety and welfare of the child are our highest priority. BOARD ensures that every action and decision made is centered around the child’s physical, emotional, and psychological well-being, promoting their growth and protection.
2. **Non-Discrimination:** BOARD believes all children, regardless of gender, caste, religion, disability, or socio-economic status, have equal rights to protection. We work to ensure that our programs are inclusive and accessible to every child and vulnerable individual in need.
3. **Participation:** We recognize children’s right to actively engage in decisions that affect their lives. Children's voices are heard and considered in the implementation of the program, ensuring their sense of empowerment.
4. **Accountability:** We establish clear roles and responsibilities for safeguarding at all levels. All BOARD staff, volunteers, and partners are accountable for their role in protecting children and vulnerable individuals, ensuring transparency and effective action in case of concerns.
5. **Respect and Dignity:** Every individual, including children and staff, is entitled to be treated with respect. We value the dignity, opinions, and rights of all members of our community, fostering an environment of mutual respect.
6. **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** BOARD enforces a strict zero-tolerance policy for any form of abuse, exploitation, or neglect. We are committed to taking swift and decisive action when abuse is suspected or reported, ensuring the safety of all individuals.
7. **Inclusive Protection:** Safeguarding is for everyone, with comprehensive protection services provided especially to people from vulnerable or marginalized groups.
8. **Empowerment:** We empower children, families, and communities to speak out against harm. BOARD strives to create a supportive environment where concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation.
9. **Confidentiality:** BOARD maintains the confidentiality of individuals involved in safeguarding. We handle disclosures with sensitivity and confidentiality, ensuring transparency with authorities in line with legal and ethical standards.

By adhering to these principles, BOARD works to create a safe, inclusive and protective environment for children & vulnerable individuals in Bihar, where their rights are safeguarded and their voices are heard.

## SAFEGUARDING RURAL CHILDREN IN BIHAR: FOCUSING ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Children in rural Bihar face significant challenges due to socio-economic barriers, limited access to education, healthcare, and support systems, and heightened vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. BOARD's safeguarding policy is designed to address these challenges, ensuring that children from rural communities receive the protection and care they deserve.

1. **Addressing Rural Vulnerabilities:** Children in rural Bihar often encounter issues such as child labour, early marriage, lack of educational resources, and limited awareness of their rights. BOARD's safeguarding initiatives work to raise awareness and provide targeted interventions to protect rural children from harm.
2. **Access to Support and Resources:** BOARD recognizes the geographical and infrastructural challenges in rural areas. We ensure that children and families have access to the services, health care and education they need, no matter where they are, by providing that protection to address gaps.
3. **Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity:** Understanding local customs and norms, BOARD ensures that child protection efforts respect cultural practices while prioritizing children's rights. We collaborate with community leaders and stakeholders to promote awareness of child protection in the local context.
4. **Community Empowerment:** BOARD empowers rural communities by training and aware them to safeguard children. By strengthening local capacities to identify risks factors and reporting concerns, we foster sustainable protection systems and encourage community ownership of child welfare.
5. **Access to Education and Awareness:** Education plays an important role in preventing abuse and exploitation. BOARD promotes education to ensure that rural children are aware of their rights and know how can to seek help from everyone.

By adapting these principles to the needs of rural Bihar, BOARD ensures its safeguarding efforts are relevant, effective, and inclusive, reaching even the most marginalized children.

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

At BOARD, safeguarding children is a shared responsibility. All representatives are bound by a strict Code of Conduct to ensure the highest standards of child protection. Our Code of Conduct includes the following key principles:

- **Respect and Dignity:** Treat children with respect and uphold their rights.
- **Avoid Harmful Behaviour:** Refrain from any actions that may harm, exploit, or put children at risk in any way.
- **Prompt Reporting of Concerns:** Report any safeguarding concerns immediately to ensure timely intervention and support.
- **Informed Consent:** Obtain consent from children and their parents or guardians before involving them in any activities, ensuring that children are fully aware of their participation and its purpose.

Our Code of Conduct is committed to ensuring that every child in rural Bihar has access to the safety, respect and opportunities they deserve.

### ***Breach of Trust and Ethical Violations:***

*All BOARD representatives are expected to demonstrate the highest level of integrity and confidence in their actions and decisions. Any breach of trust – including misuse of confidential information, conflict of interest, or any form of unethical conduct will be considered a serious violation of this Code. Such violations will be thoroughly investigated in accordance with the BOARD's established reporting procedures and disciplinary protocols. Any resulting action will be consistent with the principles of fairness and transparency, ensuring a process that protects the rights of all parties involved.*

## REPORTING AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES

At BOARD, the protection of children and vulnerable individuals is our highest priority. We are committed to addressing any concerns related to abuse, exploitation, or neglect with the utmost urgency, thoroughness, and sensitivity. In rural Bihar, where access to resources is limited, it is crucial that we ensure a clear, accessible and confidential reporting system that meets the needs of the community while safeguarding the dignity, safety, and well-being of vulnerable individuals. The following steps outline our process for reporting and responding to safety concerns:

1. **Reporting Channels:** Any concerns regarding safeguarding, such as suspicions or allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, must be reported immediately to BOARD's designated Child Protection Officer (CPO). CPO is responsible for managing the safeguarding process, ensuring that appropriate actions are taken, and providing guidance throughout the investigation. Reports can be made through the following confidential and accessible channels:

- **Phone:** Call CPO directly at the provided contact number.
- **Email:** Send a confidential report to CPO's official email.
- **In Person:** Visit the designated safeguarding officer.

These reporting methods ensure accessibility and confidentiality. CPO will handle all reports with discretion, prioritizing the safety and privacy of all involved. All staff and representatives have a duty to report any suspected child abuse or safeguarding concern directly to CPO. If CPO is unavailable, the matter should be discussed with the Child Protection Committee.

### **Reporting Breaches of Trust**

*Any allegations or suspicions of breaches of trust—whether committed by BOARD members, staff, associates, or visitors—must be reported immediately. A breach of trust may include actions such as misuse of confidential information, conflicts of interest, or unethical behaviour that undermines the organization's integrity.*

*Reports of breaches of trust can be made through the same designated channels as above, will ensuring both confidentiality and protection for the reporter. BOARD will investigate these concerns in the line with the Reporting and Response Procedures, taking all necessary steps to protect all parties involved.*

*In some cases, the matter will be referred to the relevant statutory authorities for further investigation. Throughout the process, precautionary measures will be implemented to safeguard the rights of the individuals involved and to ensure a fair and transparent investigation. These measures will not disciplinary actions or assumptions of guilt, but steps to ensure the integrity and safety of the process.*

2. **Investigation:** Once a concern is reported, it will be treated with the utmost seriousness and investigated without delay. The investigation will be conducted by the designated safeguarding officers; adhering to the Safeguarding Policy of BOARD to ensure fairness, transparency, and confidentiality. Throughout the process, the welfare of the child or vulnerable individual involved will remain the top priority.

3. **Action:** Appropriate action will be taken based on the findings of the investigation to ensure safety, well-being, and dignity of the affected individual. The actions may include, but are not limited to:

- **Immediate Support and Protection:** Ensuring that the affected individual receives immediate care, support, and protection as needed, which may include access to medical, psychological, or legal services.
- **Reporting to Authorities:** If necessary, the issue will be reported to local authorities, such as the police or child protection services, to ensure the safety and well-being of the individual and to comply with legal requirements.
- **Disciplinary Action within BOARD office:** If any staff member, volunteer, or representative of BOARD is found to have violated safeguarding policies or the Code of Conduct, appropriate

disciplinary action will be taken. This may include suspension, termination of employment, or other corrective measures in line with BOARD's internal policies and procedures.

#### **4. Immediate Reporting of Abuse**

If any staff member, volunteer, or community member suspects or witnesses any form of abuse, exploitation, or neglect, it is their duty to immediately report the concern to the designated safeguarding officer. Timely reporting is important to address the situation as quickly as possible, reducing the possibility of further harm and ensure the immediate protection and assistance of the affected child or vulnerable person.

BOARD is committed to creating an environment where concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation, and where swift action taken to safeguard those in our care. All reports will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and urgency, following the established safeguarding protocols to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable individuals.

#### **5. Confidential Investigations**

Confidentiality is a cornerstone of BOARD's reporting and response procedures. To protect the safety and privacy of all individuals involved, information related to safeguarding concerns will be shared only on a need-to-know basis. This ensures that the identities of those making reports and those under investigation are kept secure, unless disclosure is required by law or necessary to ensure the safety of the individuals involved.

BOARD will take any breach of confidentiality very seriously. Any unauthorized disclosure of information will be thoroughly investigated and addressed in accordance with BOARD's internal policies. The integrity of the investigation process is of utmost importance, and BOARD is committed to maintaining confidentiality to protect all parties while upholding the principles of justice and transparency.

#### **6. Support for Affected Individuals**

Throughout the reporting and response process, BOARD is committed to ensuring that affected individuals receive the necessary support to address their physical, emotional, and legal needs. This includes providing access to counselling services, medical assistance, and legal aid, as required.

BOARD will support extends not only to the victim but also to individual making the report, as well as their families, to ensure they are informed and supported throughout the process. We recognize the importance of a holistic approach to safeguarding and are dedicated to offering comprehensive care that promotes healing, safety, and well-being for all involved.

BOARD regularly seeks assistance from local professionals and provides appropriate support to beneficiaries, ensuring that the dignity & rights of affected individuals are respected at every stage.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

BOARD is committed to regularly checking and improving its efforts to protect children in rural and semi-urban areas. We make sure that our policies are followed by everyone involved, including staff, volunteers, and partners. This helps us create a safe environment for children in villages and rural-urban communities. We assess how well safeguarding measures are being put into practice and look for areas that need improvement. By talking to community members, parents, and children, we gather important feedback to make our protection efforts stronger. BOARD works to ensure that all involved maintain the highest standards of child protection, responding quickly to any concerns or risks. Our goal is to continuously improve our work to keep children safe and supported in their communities.

## LEGAL FREMEWORK

This policy follows the child protection laws in India to ensure the safety and well-being of children in rural and urban areas. These laws include:

- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.
- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
- Relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code.

Following these laws, we ensure that children in rural and urban communities are protected from harm and their rights are respected.

## POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every Triennial or whenever necessary to make sure it continues to meet the needs of rural and urban children and remains effective in protecting them. We will ensure that relevant and addresses any new challenges or changes in our safeguarding policy.

### Approval



Naresh Chandra Verma  
(Authorized Signatory)  
Managing Trustee

Date: 14/02/2023

## ANNEX

### SAFEGUARDING and CHILD PROTECTION POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – Sample

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_, confirm that I have received, read, and understood the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (SCPP)** of Bureau of Obligate and Accompanier for Rural Development (BOARD).

I agree to follow all the guidelines outlined in the safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and accept responsibility for my actions. I understand that I will be held morally and legally accountable for any violations.

By signing below, I agree to comply with this policy as a condition of my role with the organization. I understand that any violation of this policy in my direct or indirect interactions with children may result in termination of employment/association, and/or other appropriate disciplinary and legal actions.

Signed:

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[Full Name of Staff/Partner]

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[Position/Role]

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Head of the Organization and Seal

**ANNEX**  
**Referral Form – Sample**

Child's name:	Case no:
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<b>Referral details:</b>		
Time:	Date:	Place:
Name:		
Address:		
Contact no.:		
Occupation:		
Relationship to Child:		
<b>Child's details (where available):</b>		
Name:	Father/Mother/Guardian's name:	
Age:	Date of birth:	Gender:
Address:		
Religion:	Language spoken:	Any Disability:
School:	Class:	Teacher:
Programs attend:	Place:	
Program In charge:	Program funded by:	
Identity no.:		
Identity no:	Status/whose legal responsibility:	

<b>Details of Concern: What, Who, Where, When (in Child's words if possible)</b>

<b>Alleged Perpetrator's details (If known):</b>		
Name:		
Address:		
Age:	Date of birth:	Gender:
Employment details:	Nature of Job:	
Identification no. if employer of partner agency:		
Current location of alleged perpetrator:		



**Current safety measures of child including their location:**

**Has emergency medical attention been required?**

**Provided by:**

**Who else knows of concern? Please give details.**

Organization:

Family members or other individuals:

**Action taken to date** e.g. Refer to police, children's services, social welfare, other. (Give contact details, date and time of action)

**Referral taken by Program manager, Coordinator, Program officer, etc. (where possible)**

Name:

Position and Location:

Date:

Signature:

**Action to be taken**

**Decision made by CPO or Directors of BOARD for immediate action as agreed in Child Safeguarding Policy?** (Please give details who is to do what and when and also give names and contact details of people to be contacted)

Referral to police (if not, why not?) Yes / No

Referral to Local Authority for child protection /welfare Yes / No

Other action required to ensure child not at further risk from alleged perpetrator:

Referral for medical treatment/ to meet health needs Yes / No

Signature of Person arranging above action

**Discussion Outcome:**

**Follow up Actions:**