

Caritas Sri Lanka – **SEDEC**

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



Approved by Board of Directors on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY CARITAS SRI LANKA – SEDEC**

Child safe guarding/protection is a top priority policy matter in Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC. The vision of Caritas Sri Lanka is for the realization of a just Sri Lankan Society based on gospel values of love, promoted and protected irrespective of race, caste and religion. St. Mathew has stated Jesus Christ’s zero tolerance concern about offenses on children in chapter 18 of his gospel under the verses 6 and 7 as follows “But whoever shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that millstones were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea”.

To ensure an environment conducive for the actions on child safe guard/protection the principles and essence of the child rights convention of the United Nations is respected by Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC and is able and willing to promote and implement them.

Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC accepts a 'child' as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger. Further non-discrimination to all children is a priority in all of our endeavors whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis. The best interest of children is our primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. It is our opinion that all adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.

Thus Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC respects the children as right holders and all related parties other than children are declared as duty bearers to children. Further we are ready to contribute to create a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. We do not hesitate to advocate on the ways and means to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

The responsibility of this policy falls upon all of Caritas staff (National & Diocesan) and representatives towards children who come into contact with Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC as a result of our activities/projects programs – Children must be safeguarded to the maximum possible extent from deliberate or inadvertent actions and failings that place them at risk of child abuse, sexual exploitation, violence, bullying, injury and any other forms of abuse.

We aim to ensure that everyone associated with Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC is aware of and responds appropriately to issues of child abuse and the sexual exploitation of children. We aim to ensure that anyone who represents this organization behaves appropriately towards children both in work and outside work and never abuses the position of trust that comes with being a part of the Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC.

This policy is to ensure that Staff, partners and other representatives must never:

- Engage in corporal humiliating punishments to children
- Assault, hurt or hit i.e. physically 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 which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive in any way or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised unless exceptional circumstances apply and previous permission has been obtained from their line manager
- Sleep in the same bed as a child with whom they are working
- Sleep in the same room as a child with whom they are working unless exceptional circumstances apply and previous permission has been obtained from their line manager
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do themselves
- Condone, or participate in, behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment or favor to particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Use the images of children without the consent of the parents / guardians
- Conduct any workshop / training sessions with children without the presence of school principal, teacher and parent/guardian.

Breaches in the policy can lead to disciplinary action including possible dismissal. For partners/contractors breaches can lead up to and including termination of relation including contractual & partnership agreement. Where relevant, the appropriate legal or other frameworks as per the national laws will be referred to.

Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC will be proactive on child protection policy and recruit only representatives who are suited to work with children and to apply strict child safe recruitment

practices Strictly we follow and observe that everyone associated with the organization is aware of their obligations and responds appropriately to the issues of child abuse and the sexual exploitation of children. We pronounce hereby that anyone who represents our organization behaves appropriately towards children and never abuses the position of trust that comes with being a member/related party of the Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC. Everyone who represents the organization is obliged to be actively creating a safe environment for children who come into contact with the organization.

In our risks assessments we will ensure all activities and programmes of work including during the response to Humanitarian emergencies are considered about the risks to children which are reduced or removed by all means within our control.

Amended and approved on 05<sup>th</sup> December 2018.



**Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke**  
**National Director**  
**Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC**



**Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Vianney Fernando**  
**Chairman**  
**Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC**