



Child Safeguarding Policy

This policy describes Bhutan Canada Foundation (BCF)'s commitment to child safeguarding in order to ensure that BCF is safe for children. BCF has zero tolerance towards child abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation.

Scope

This policy applies to BCF staff, volunteers, board directors, representatives and any individual or corporate entity who is supported by BCF in establishing relationships or operations in Bhutan (hereafter "BCF personnel").

Definitions

Child abuse constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.¹ Community and societal factors may increase the risk of child abuse, such as gender, ability, and social inequality.²

Child refers to anyone under 18 years of age.

Child safeguarding refers to the actions BCF employs to ensure it is a child safe organization.

Behaviour Protocol Guidelines

BCF personnel must abide by the following behavioural protocols:

1. BCF personnel must treat all children with dignity and respect.
2. BCF personnel shall not use verbal conduct such as derogatory comments or sexual harassment, invitations, exchange money, or use own power and authority to persuade a child to act in sexual ways.
3. BCF personnel shall not make children feel uncomfortable, or use visual items or written communication of a sexual nature.
4. BCF personnel must not intentionally cause physical pain or injury to a child or do any form of child abuse.
5. BCF personnel shall not hire children for child labor.

¹ Krug, Etienne G., editor, et al. *World Report on Violence and Health*. World Health Organization: Geneva, 2002, p 59.

² World Health Organization. "Child maltreatment". 8 June 2020. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/child-maltreatment>



6. BCF personnel must not exchange personal information with children (eg. email, phone number, or social media contacts).
7. BCF personnel shall not post child photos, videos and other personal information of children on social media without consent from a parent, guardian, or school principal.
8. BCF personnel shall dress in a culturally acceptable way when visiting schools. Locally purchased kiras and ghos as well as long skirts and trousers are recommended.
9. Ensure that all confidential information, including reports of violations of these standards by colleagues, obtained from members of the local community or colleagues, is handled properly and with the utmost confidentiality.
10. BCF personnel shall report immediately to a BCF staff member if they notice or suspect any incident of abuse or harm to children. Those who receive these reports will investigate immediately.

Inappropriate behavior toward children, including failure to follow these protocols is grounds for termination and subject to legal action as per applicable laws in Canada and Bhutan. It is BCF's policy to ensure compliance with the child welfare and protection legislation in Bhutan, as outlined in [The Child Care and Protection Act of Bhutan 2011](#), or Canadian law and standards, whichever affords greater protection.

Training

To increase awareness of child protection, BCF personnel are trained relevant to their level of direct contact with children. All personnel are trained on reporting child safeguarding concerns and allegations. For BCF program volunteers, training will occur remotely prior to departure to Bhutan. A follow-up review of the training material will also be undertaken with BCF staff upon arrival in Bhutan.

Reporting

All policy adherents have an obligation to report witnessed or suspected child abuse within 24 hours. Reports should be made to the Executive Director of BCF through email at kent@bhutancanada.org. In cases where abuse involves BCF staff and where whistleblower protection is required, reports should be made by email to the Chair of BCF's Governance Committee at governance@bhutancanada.org.

Related documents

Bhutan Canada Foundation Code of Conduct

Approved by the BCF board on February 24, 2021