



អង្គការគ្រូគ្រូស្នាក់នៅស្ម័គ្រចិត្តជួយបង្រៀន Homestay Volunteer Teachers Org (HVTO)

HVTO Child Protection Policy statement

We have a duty of care to safeguard all children we support. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled and disadvantaged children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be addressed.

HVTO is a child Safe and Child Friendly Organization... we have adopted a Child Protection Policy in line with the UN Convention on the Right/s of the Child.

Definitions: Throughout this document:

‘**Child**’ refers to any young person in the care, supervision or contact of an employee or volunteer of HVTO under the age of 18, as defined by the United Nation’

Convention of the Rights of the Child

The appropriate HVTO official is deemed to be: The HVTO Onsite Coordinator or HVTO employee or directors.

Child Protection Policy

Children around the world are at risk from exploitation, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, neglect and other forms of inappropriate interactions perpetrated by adults and older children. Children are especially at risk in global south as they adapt to rapid changes, movements of people, a lack of robustness in the legal process and booming inbound tourism industry.

HVTO are committed to protecting children from any form of exploitation or abuse.

We are especially aware of the constant risks and remain vigilant to threats arising towards children. All employees will be trained in child protection issues such as awareness, identification and where to seek additional help and volunteers will be informed of relevant child protection issues prior to their placement with us.

In addition, we have adopted the following Child Protection Policy that must be read and signed by all persons employed by or offering their services as subcontractors and or voluntary services to us. The signing and observation of the policy form an integral part of any contract of employment or written or verbal agreement between HVTO and our volunteer.

Article 19 of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programs to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement. (<http://www.unicef.org>) setting the Standards, the United Kingdom's guidelines on child protection for international Non Government Organization's (NGOs), Standard 1 states:

Any International NGO should have a child protection policy if its direct or indirect beneficiaries include individuals under the age of 18. ([Http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Topics/Child%20Protection%20Policy](http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Topics/Child%20Protection%20Policy). PDF)

To conform to the UNCRC and the setting the Standard guidelines, HVTO has endorsed this child Protection Policy.

Aims of he Child Protection Policy

We are committed to the protection of all the children it works for. The welfare of the child is paramount. The Major aims of the HVTO child Protection Policy are to convey that:

- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, **have the right to protection from abuse and exploitation.**
- We are committed to ensuring children are provided with a safe and protective environment at all HVTO locations.
- All staff and volunteers are equipped to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.
- All staff and volunteers working with HVTO have a responsibility to uphold the Child Protection Policy and report any concerns to:
The Programming Manager or President and ensure the concerns are reported to the appropriate authorities
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, appropriately and formally recorded.

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Introduction

Child exploitation and abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to explore and understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with our judgment about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, at school and on the street. Those who exploit children include parents and other family members, community members, teachers, tourists and volunteers/staff with different support organizations. Some Individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. A volunteer, worker or teacher within HVTO will have regular contact with children and is an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases involving child protection issues or of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

Forms of child exploitation/abuse

Exploitation of children and young people can take place in many forms. These include:

- **Sexual Abuse:** Forcing or coercing a child into: any sexual act including physical contact of penetrative or non-penetrative (such as oral sex) nature; partaking or watching of pornographic material/sexual acts; encouraging children to behave in a sexually inappropriate way.
- **Physical Abuse:** Includes any act that physically harms a child including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Any negative emotional ill treatment of a child causing them to feel inadequate, unloved, unworthy, frightened or in danger. This can include verbal abuse, imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations on the child or restricting their participation in age appropriate activities/normal social interaction.
- **Neglect:** Is the persistent failure/denial to meet a child's physical and psychological needs. This can take the form of failing to provide food and water, shelter, supervision and medical care and/or failing to protect a child from physical, sexual or emotional harm or danger. In the global south, poverty is persistent and all consuming, rendering many families unable to provide many of these necessities to their children. This inability is not deliberate and of course is different in nature to deliberate neglect. Then HVTO, along with many NGOs are working towards improving the living standard for all the children we support. Staff and volunteers with HVTO must ensure all their actions are directed towards this aim, and must ensure that they themselves do not perpetrate any neglectful acts while children are in their care. If a staff member or volunteer is particularly concerned for certain children they must speak with the HVTO coordinator or director.

Remember: Abuse and exploitation of children can be perpetrated by many different people: Tourists and volunteers/staff of various organizations working with children; Parents and other Family members; Community members, teachers etc...

Recruitment of HVTO staff and volunteers

HVTO recognizes that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children

Pre-volunteering/employment checks will include the following:

- All volunteers/staff must read, demonstrate that they understand and sign the HVTO Child Protection Policy in front of the HVTO official prior to commencing work.
- **All volunteers/staff must declare any past child protection breaches/criminal record.**
- Appropriate references/referees must be given if/when requested by HVTO.
- All volunteers/ staff must answer any appropriate questions asked by officials of HVTO. Information gathered will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.

- The Evidence of identity (passport for international volunteers) must be shown to the nominated HVTO official, who will take a photocopy/scan or the passport and your entry visa (for international volunteers) prior to commencing the volunteer or employee placement.
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Interview and induction regarding child protection issue.

All HVTO employees and volunteers are required to undergo a brief meeting with the relevant HVTO official prior to commencing work during which:

- The HVTO child Protection Policy will be read and signed (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures) in front of the onsite coordinator.
- The identity is confirmed (and copies of passport and Cambodian entry visa will be made)
- The job requirements and responsibilities will be clarified.
- Child protection procedures are reviewed.

Child Protection Responsibility for HVTO volunteers and staff

In addition to pre-volunteering/employment checks, volunteers and staff of HVTO should:

- Analyze their own practice against established good practice, and ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Ask for advice/help from the relevant HVTO representative if they are unsure of any aspects of child protection.
- Recognize their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child.

Good practice guidelines for all staff and volunteers

All personnel of HVTO should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behavior in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations with children.
- Treating all children and young people equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each child first.
- Maintaining a safe, appropriate and respectful distance with children.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making and communication.
- Striving to make all contact with children fun, enjoyable and fair.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support or play is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines in this document.
- Being an excellent role model- this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people and appropriate dress.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive communication, play and feedback.
- Recognizing the developmental needs and capacity of children – avoiding any instructions beyond their capability.

- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

Practices never sanctioned by HVTO

The following are never sanctioned. Under no circumstances must you:

- Engage in any inappropriate conduct with children.
- Be alone with less than three children at any time
- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including over the top horseplay.
- Spend time alone with children away from others.
- Escort less than three children at a time in any vehicle (unless in any emergency situation)
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Invite or allow children to enter your accommodation.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate HVTO representative and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the children and principals of the schools are informed if appropriate.

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If he/she seems unusually distressed in any manner.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done with the result that the situation could be construed to be in contravention of this Child protection Policy.
- If you suspect any form of child exploitation is occurring, regardless of the suspected perpetrator.

Abuse and exploitation

There is evidence that some people may use opportunities where they are in close contact with children as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage. All staff and volunteers with HVTO should seek prior permission from the relevant HVTO representative or project partner if they intend to take photos/video at the school and the resulting images or video must be made available for review by the relevant representative on request.

Inappropriate activity

Sensitivity is encouraged with regard to taking individual or close up photos or video of any children, both with respect to the intrusiveness of the action and the duration. Shorter duration volunteers especially should remember that while this may be a unique opportunity for them to record images it is unhelpful for the children to be photographed time and again on a regular basis.

Staff and volunteers should be vigilant while at any HVTO or partner site and any concerns should to be reported to the relevant representative.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working/volunteering with HVTO to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. The responsibility extends only to acting on any reasonable concerns and communicating these to the relevant authority.

Whistleblower Protection

HVTO assured all staff and volunteers that it will fully support anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that abuse or exploitation is or may be taking place.

Accused person protection

HVTO assured all staff and volunteers that all details of any accusation will be kept strictly confidential and relayed only on a need to know basis to the relevant authorities. Further, that whilst respecting the need to protect children, full regard for the rights of the individual and the possibility of error in the reporting of concerns will be assured.

If a disclosure is made to you, the following procedure should be followed:

- Remain calm and try to assume a non-judgmental attitude.
- Do not question children directly/further beyond that which they have (or third party has) told you.
- Do not make any promises but do tell the child or third party what your responsibility is and what you will do.
- Even if encouraged by the child or third party to 'not tell anyone' you have a duty to report concerns to the relevant authority. You must explain to the informer what your responsibility is and what you have to do, as stated in this policy.
- Make detailed notes about any allegation/suspicion and;
- Report your concerns as soon as possible to the relevant representative who will then contact the appropriate authorities or;
- Contact the authorities yourself if concerns need immediate/alternative attention or you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue with the HVTO representative.
- Fill out the HVTO Incident Reporting Form as soon as possible.
- Seek a formal debriefing for yourself through the HVTO representative.
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Information needed by the authorities and the police about suspected abuse:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made as close to the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following if known:

- The Child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioral changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents

- The child's account, if it was given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or ChildSafe services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

Where there is a misconduct complaint against or a disregard for HVTO child protection Policy by anyone working within the organization the following actions may take place:

- Immediate removal of the suspected person from the relevant HVTO or partner premises pending further investigation
- A report to the appropriate authorities.
- a criminal investigation and prosecution with the support of HVTO

Confidentiality

Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned regardless of the outcome of the situation. Information will be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Criminal Record Declaration

AS STATED IN THE CHILD PROTECTON POLICY, BECAUSE OF THE SENITIVE NATURE OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN, **YOU ARE REQUIRED TO DISCLOSE DETAILS OF ANY CRIMINAL RECORD.** ONLY RELEVANT CONVICTIONS AND OTHER INFORMATION WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT SO DISCLOSURE NEED NOT NECESSARILY BE A BAR TO VOLUNTEERING OR WORKING WITH HVTO. **YOU MUST ALSO DECLARE THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OF HVTO AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY AND APHOLD THE POLICY THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF YOUR PLACEMENT.**

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