

Child Protection Policy

(Amar Trishala Sewa Ashram)

1. Introduction

Amar Trishala Seva Ashram (ATSA) is committed and dedicated to fostering the well-being and protection of children in all its endeavours. This Child Protection Policy serves as a guiding framework to ensure the safety and security of children participating in ATSA's programs, projects, and activities. ATSA recognizes its responsibility to create a nurturing environment where children are respected, valued, and protected from harm, abuse, and exploitation. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders associated with ATSA.

2. Definitions

2.1 Child: For the purposes of this policy, a child refers to any person under the age of 18 years.

2.2 Child Protection: Child protection refers to measures taken to safeguard and protect children from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

2.3 Harm: Harm includes but is not limited to physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological harm inflicted upon a child.

2.4 Abuse: Abuse refers to any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological mistreatment or neglect of a child.

2.5 Exploitation: Exploitation refers to the use of children for personal or financial gain, including but not limited to child labour, trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation.

3. Vision

ATSA envisions a world where every child can grow up in a safe and supportive environment, free from all forms of harm and exploitation. We strive to create communities where children's rights are upheld, their voices are heard, and their well-being is prioritized.

4. Mission

ATSA's mission is to safeguard the rights and dignity of children by implementing robust child protection measures, promoting awareness and education on child rights and protection, and advocating for policies and practices that ensure the safety and well-being of children in all aspects of their lives.

5. Applicability

This Child Protection Policy applies to all staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders associated with ATSA, as well as to any individual or entity engaged in activities or programs involving children under the auspices of ATSA.

6. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines and procedures for preventing and responding to incidents of child abuse, exploitation, and neglect within the scope of ATSA's activities. By outlining our commitment to child protection and delineating roles and responsibilities, this policy aims to create a safe and protective environment for all children associated with ATSA.

7. Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of ATSA's work involving children, including but not limited to:

- Programs and projects directly targeting children.
- Interactions with children in community-based activities.
- Travel arrangements involving children.
- Use of children in media and promotional materials.
- Conduct of staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders in relation to children.

8. Principles of Child Protection

ATSA is guided by the following principles in its approach to child protection:

8.1 Best Interest of the Child: ATSA is committed to prioritizing the best interests of the child in all decision-making processes and actions.

8.2 Non-Discrimination: ATSA ensures that all children, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, or any other status, are treated equally and with dignity and respect.

8.3 Child Participation: ATSA values the participation of children in matters that affect them and ensures their voices are heard and considered in relevant decision-making processes.

8.4 Confidentiality: ATSA maintains strict confidentiality regarding any disclosures or reports of child abuse or exploitation, ensuring the privacy and protection of the child.

8.5 Accountability: ATSA holds all staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders accountable for upholding this Child Protection Policy and reporting any concerns or suspicions of child abuse or exploitation.

9. Policy Guidelines & Implementation

9.1 Working with Children in Programs

All staff and volunteers working directly with children in ATSA programs must undergo thorough background checks and training on child protection principles and procedures. Activities involving children should be conducted in a safe and supervised manner, prioritizing the well-being and safety of the children at all times.

9.2 Travel with Children

Any travel involving children must be authorized and supervised by responsible adults. Adequate provisions for the safety, comfort, and well-being of children must be made during travel, and measures should be in place to prevent any risk of harm or exploitation.

9.3 Use of Children in Media

Children should only be featured in media and promotional materials with the informed consent of their parents or legal guardians. Their dignity, privacy, and rights should be respected at all times, and images or information that could potentially expose them to harm or exploitation should be avoided.

9.4 Code of Conduct

ATSA establishes a code of conduct for all staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders involved in activities with children. This code outlines acceptable behaviour and prohibits any form of harm, abuse, or exploitation of children.

9.5 Do's

- Treat all children with respect, dignity, and kindness.
- Listen to and prioritize the needs and concerns of children.
- Create a safe and supportive environment for children to express themselves.
- Report any concerns or suspicions of child abuse or exploitation promptly and confidentially.

9.6 Don'ts

- Engage in any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological abuse of children.
- Exploit children for personal or financial gain.
- Discriminate against or neglect children based on their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or any other status.
- Use children in any activities or tasks that are inappropriate or potentially harmful to their well-being.

9.7 Recruitment and Screening

ATSA conducts thorough background checks, including criminal record checks and reference checks, for all staff and volunteers working directly with children.

9.8 Training and Capacity Building

ATSA provides comprehensive training on child protection policies and procedures to all staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders involved in programs or activities involving children.

9.9 Reporting Mechanisms

ATSA establishes clear and accessible reporting mechanisms for staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders to report any concerns or suspicions of child abuse or exploitation. Reports will be promptly and confidentially investigated, and appropriate action will be taken in accordance with local laws and regulations.

9.10 Support Services

ATSA provides support services, including counselling and medical assistance, to children who have experienced harm, abuse, or exploitation, and ensures their safety and well-being.

9.11 Commitment

All staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders associated with ATSA are expected to fully commit to upholding the principles and guidelines outlined in this Child Protection Policy. By doing so, we reaffirm our dedication to creating a safe and protective environment for all children.

10. Duty to Report

Any individual who suspects or becomes aware of any form of child abuse, exploitation, or neglect within the scope of ATSA's activities has a duty to report such incidents immediately to the designated child protection focal point or authority. Reports will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will be promptly and thoroughly investigated.

11. Confidentiality

ATSA maintains strict confidentiality regarding any disclosures or reports of child abuse or exploitation, ensuring the privacy and protection of the child. Information related to child protection concerns will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

12. Violations of this Policy

Violations of this Child Protection Policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or termination of partnership with ATSA. ATSA reserves the right to take legal action against individuals or entities found to have breached this policy or engaged in any form of child abuse, exploitation, or neglect.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

ATSA regularly monitors and evaluates the implementation of this Child Protection Policy to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Any necessary revisions or updates to the policy will be made accordingly.

14. Modification and Review of Policy

This Child Protection Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and relevance in light of changing circumstances, laws, and best practices. Any modifications or revisions to the policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders and will be subject to approval by ATSA's governing body.

15. Conclusion

ATSA is committed to upholding the highest standards of child protection and ensuring the safety, well-being, and rights of all children involved in its programs, projects, and activities. By adhering to this Child Protection Policy and fostering a culture of vigilance and accountability, ATSA aims to create a safe and nurturing environment where children can thrive and reach their full potential.

[Date of Adoption: _____]

[Date of Last Revision: _____]

Annexure A – Reporting Form

Annexure A – 1

I, _____ of _____, declare and affirm that I am the parent/legal guardian of the following child:

1. **Name of the child:** : _____
2. **Age of the child** : _____
3. **Native Place (Address)** : _____

4. **Present Address of the child:** _____

5. **Purpose of child's travel** : _____
6. **Details of the person
accompanying child during
travel** : _____
7. **Purpose of taking child's photos and videos:** _____

I consent to:

Travel of my child : ☐

**Taking photos and videos of my child
in compliance with applicable laws** : ☐

In case of any concerns/questions regarding this document, I may be contacted at:

Parent/Legal Guardian's Name

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____