

Child Safeguarding Policy



ARS Bangladesh

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Approved by on behalf of Executive board,



Md. Shamsul Alam
Executive Director



Md. Abdul Matin
Chairman

Effective Date

03 October 2020



FORWARDING

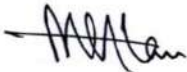
Founded in 1998 by a group of passionate graduates from the University of Dhaka, under the visionary leadership of Md. Shamsul Alam, the Association for Rural Society (ARS) Bangladesh stands as a beacon of hope for disadvantaged communities across the nation. As a non-governmental organization (NGO), ARS Bangladesh is steadfast in its commitment to empowering rural populations, aiming to uplift their socio-economic status and enhance their overall quality of life.

With a comprehensive approach to addressing multifaceted challenges, ARS Bangladesh tackles issues ranging from poverty and illiteracy to health hazards and discrimination. By spearheading initiatives in income generation, education, health, and human rights, the organization strives to foster sustainable development and social justice within communities.

ARS Bangladesh is characterized by its nationwide reach, operating as a non-partisan and non-profit voluntary NGO since its inception on 28 June 1998. Rooted in the mission of enhancing national development, the organization channels its efforts towards improving the socio-economic circumstances of marginalized individuals residing in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh. Central to its mission is the unwavering dedication to creating a positive impact on the lives of the most vulnerable, with particular emphasis on women, children, and persons with disabilities.

ARS- Bangladeshis a people centred organization and believes on structured management both programme and finance. ARS- Bangladesh did concentrate much on whole system of financial and administrative policies for managing the day-to-day affairs of the organization align with long term strategy. The Policy has been revised keeping the existing practices in mind and recommending some other procedures and policies which would give the organization the guidance for managing the finance in a most structured way.

The revision process of this financial Policy has been done with participations of the Senior Staff and Executive Committee. The final draft has been passed duly approved by the Executive Committee held on 01 July 2024. In this Connection I hereby offered and obliged all of you to follow and implement this policy consistently with sincere commitment.

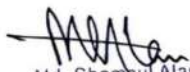


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Executive Director



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A. INTRODUCTION TO CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This policy has been developed in accordance with Article 19, which stipulates that States Parties shall safeguard children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment, or exploitation, including sexual abuse (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 19).

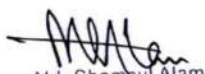
ARS-Bangladesh shares a collective dedication to preventing child abuse and safeguarding children. The mistreatment and exploitation of children occur in all nations and societies worldwide.

This policy articulates shared values, principles, and convictions, outlining the measures to fulfil our pledge in safeguarding children.

B. ARS-BANGLADESH'S COMMITMENT TO PROTECT CHILDREN

Values, Principles, and Beliefs

- 1) In accordance with this convention, ARS-Bangladesh is committed to advancing the rights of all children without differentiation or discrimination based on age, race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or any other status, whether of the child or their family.
- 2) It firmly believes that the conditions of all children must be enhanced by upholding their rights as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
- 3) It is our principle that every child is entitled to a name and nationality from birth, and ARS-Bangladesh is dedicated to promoting this right.
- 4) ARS-Bangladesh asserts that all children should access the benefits of social security, and to ensure this, the organisation will contribute accordingly.
- 5) ARS-Bangladesh holds that all instances of child abuse constitute violations of children's rights.
- 6) The organisation strongly advocates that all children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- 7) Child abuse is unequivocally condemned by ARS-Bangladesh. Instead, it affirms that children are entitled to protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty, and exploitation, and should not be subjected to trafficking in any form.
- 8) We are committed to safeguarding children with whom we work.


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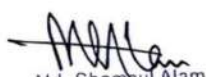
- 9) When collaborating with partners, they are responsible for meeting minimum standards of child protection in their programmes.

Definitions

- a. **“Child”** - ARS-Bangladesh defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years, regardless of the legal age of majority in the country of residence or origin. It is widely acknowledged that children are generally more susceptible to abuse and exploitation due to factors such as age, gender, socio-economic status, developmental stage, and reliance on others.
- b. **“Child Abuse”** - Abuse constitutes a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It may manifest as physical, psychological, financial, or sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other forms of exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development, or dignity of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.

Abuse can be a single occurrence or repeated acts and can be unintentional or deliberate. It frequently involves criminal acts.

- I. **Discriminatory abuse** – abuse driven by a vulnerable person's age, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristic.
- II. **Financial or material abuse** – encompasses theft, fraud, exploitation, coercion regarding wills, property, or inheritance, financial transactions, or the misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.
- III. **Neglect** – the continual failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely leading to significant impairment of their health or development. This may include inadequate provision of food, clothing, shelter, failure to protect from physical or psychological harm or danger, inadequate supervision, or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also encompass neglect or unresponsiveness to a vulnerable person's basic emotional needs.
- IV. **Physical abuse** – encompasses actions such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- V. **Psychological abuse** – comprises emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Examples include denying opportunities for


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expression, deliberately silencing or mocking, imposing inappropriate expectations beyond their capability, serious bullying (including cyberbullying), or exploitation or corruption of a vulnerable person.

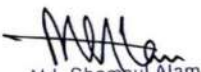
VI. **Sexual abuse** – involves compelling, enticing, or coercing someone to engage in sexual activities, regardless of the individual's awareness. This may involve physical contact, including penetration (e.g., rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. It may also encompass non-contact activities, such as involving a vulnerable person in sexual imagery, observing sexual activities, encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour in children, or grooming a child in anticipation of abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by adults or other children.

VII. **Child Labour:** Child Labour is work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It is working that:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
- interferes with their schooling by:
 - depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
 - obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
 - Requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

If a young person, under the age of 18 is part of an apprenticeship scheme within the statutory law of the country and does not meet any of the above, this would not be considered by ARS-Bangladesh as child labour. However, any partner, supplier, contractor or sub-contractor must inform ARS-Bangladesh of the name of any apprentice who will be directly involved with our work.

For ARS-Bangladesh it is not acceptable for any staff or representatives to engage anyone under the age of 18 to work as domestic help in their place of work or at home. Child labour may also be a form of child slavery. Child slavery is the transfer of a young person (under 18) to another person so that the young person can be exploited.


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C. REPRESENTATIVE OF ARS-BANGLADESH

The Safeguarding Committee of ARS-Bangladesh will serve as the representative, with a child protection focal point from the committee being responsible for overall supervision.

D. EFFORTS OF ARS-BANGLADESH

We will fulfil our commitment to protect children from abuse and discrimination through the following means:

Awareness Development:

Observing that various individuals in our societies lack awareness of children's rights, we will ensure the following through different awareness sessions/events:

- I) All ARS-Bangladesh staff are informed about children's rights and entitlements;
- II) All targeted beneficiaries are informed about child abuse issues and associated risks;
- III) All other stakeholders of the organisation uphold children's rights.

Prevention:

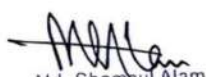
ARS-Bangladesh will ensure, through awareness and best practices, that staff and others minimize risks to children. It will also ensure that all members of society respond appropriately to risks to children. In this regard, the responsible authority should conduct a Risk and Safeguarding assessment before the inception of every project and continue this process quarterly. In cases where children are involved in activities, an event safeguarding checklist must be completed. The safeguarding focal point, along with the child protection focal point, will ensure that all policies and assessments are in place.

Reporting:

ARS-Bangladesh is committed to ensuring that staff and others understand the steps to take when concerns arise regarding the safety of children. If necessary, they will respond promptly to the needs of the children. The project authority should inform the safeguarding focal point and child protection focal point if any incidents occur, and they will act in accordance with ARS-Bangladesh's relevant policies.

Responding:

- 1) ARS-Bangladesh will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children when concerns arise regarding possible abuse. To ensure that the reporting and responding standards are met, all branch offices of ARS-Bangladesh will also:


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- 2) Take any concerns raised seriously according to ARS-Bangladesh's CRM procedures;
- 3) Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns according to the guidelines provided in the Safeguarding policy;
- 4) Provide support to children, staff, or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns;
- 5) Act appropriately and effectively in initiating or cooperating with any subsequent investigation processes;
- 6) Be guided by the principle of the 'best interests of the child' throughout the child protection process;
- 7) Listen to and take seriously the views and wishes of children;
- 8) Work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

E. MEASURES TO ENSURE OUR COMMITMENTS ABOVE ARE MET:

- 1) ARS-Bangladesh will take appropriate measures to reduce infant and child mortality;
- 2) ARS-Bangladesh will ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and healthcare to all children, with a focus on the development of primary healthcare;
- 3) It will contribute to programs to combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary healthcare, through the application of available technology and the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water, taking into consideration environmental pollution risks;
- 4) The organization will dedicate itself to ensuring appropriate prenatal healthcare for mothers;
- 5) ARS-Bangladesh will contribute to ensuring that all segments of society, especially parents and children, are informed, have access to education, and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the benefits of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation, and accident prevention;
- 6) Alongside the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, ARS-Bangladesh recognizes the right of the child to education and will progressively work towards making access to universal primary education available free to all children, encouraging the development of different forms of secondary

education, including general and vocational education, making them accessible to every child, offering financial assistance as needed, making educational and vocational information and guidance available to all children, encouraging regular school attendance, and reducing dropout rates;

To achieve this right, progressively and based on equal opportunity, the organization will:

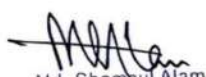
- a. ARS-Bangladesh will play an important role in ensuring the birth registration of newborn children in remote areas;
- b. It will advocate for the reduction and prevention of child marriage, violence against women and children, and child trafficking;
- c. Child rights and welfare issues will be integrated as cross-cutting issues in all other programs and projects operated by ARS-Bangladesh.

F. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE STAFF OF ARS-BANGLADESH:

All staff of ARS-Bangladesh are required to endorse and adhere to this Code of Conduct. This Code is applicable to all representatives of ARS-Bangladesh at all times, including outside of working hours.

Staff and others must never:

- 1) Engage in physical assault or abuse towards children.
- 2) Develop physical or sexual relationships with children.
- 3) Form relationships with children that could be considered exploitative or abusive in any way.
- 4) Behave in manners that could be abusive or put a child at risk of abuse.
- 5) Use language, make suggestions, or provide advice that is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive.
- 6) Exhibit physically inappropriate or sexually provocative behaviour.
- 7) Permit a child or children with whom they work to stay overnight at their residence unsupervised.
- 8) Share a room or bed with a child they work with.
- 9) Undertake tasks for children of a personal nature that they are capable of doing themselves.
- 10) Support or engage in children's behaviour that is illegal, unsafe, or abusive.


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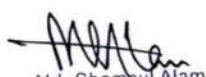


- 11) Engage in actions intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, or emotionally abuse children.
- 12) Discriminate against, treat differently, or show favouritism towards specific children, to the exclusion of others.
- 13) This list is not exhaustive or exclusive. The principle is that staff should refrain from actions or behaviours that may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

It is imperative for all staff and individuals in contact with children to:

- 1) Identify and manage situations that may pose risks.
- 2) Inform the safeguarding committee and child protection focal point if any associated risks are identified.
- 3) Conduct necessary safeguarding & risk assessments and implement mitigation measures.
- 4) Complete a safeguarding event planning checklist whenever children are involved in project activities.
- 5) Plan and organize work and the workplace to minimize risks.
- 6) Be visible when working with children as much as possible.
- 7) Foster a culture of openness to facilitate the raising and discussion of any issues or concerns.
- 8) Foster a sense of accountability among staff to ensure that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour is addressed.
- 9) Communicate with children about their interactions with staff or others and encourage them to voice any concerns.
- 10) Empower children by discussing their rights what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what actions they can take if they encounter a problem.

A Code of Conduct should be contextualized within the Bangladeshi culture and context.


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