



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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1. Introduction

Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation believes that every child has the right to feel safe and to be protected from harm. We understand it is our responsibility to provide safe environments for children in all of our work. This Policy has been developed to ensure our members and volunteers behave appropriately at all times when working with children. With this in mind the Child Protection Policy will be revised biannually.

We aim to set an example in the community by making sure our members and volunteers behave appropriately at all times when working with children and treat all children in a respectful, non-violent and caring manner.

Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation is committed to implementing and maintaining child protection measures to the highest standard. These include that:

- We will not allow any person to work with children if they are an **unacceptable risk** to children's safety or wellbeing (refer 6. Recruitment and Reference Checking)
- As part of their **contract**, Members and volunteers must agree to follow all of **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation** policies, including the Child Protection Policy (refer 7. Employee Contracts, 9. Risk Assessment)
- Members and volunteers will receive basic **training** on this Policy, in particular on the Codes of Conduct and Incident Reporting Process (refer 8. Employee Training)
- **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation** will review and assess any **risks** to children during both the planning and running of any activities (refer 9. Risk Assessment)
- All **allegations** of child abuse will be **thoroughly investigated** and treated with the highest levels of confidentiality and sensitivity (refer 12. Incident Reporting Process)

2. Guiding Principles of this Policy

This Policy is based upon the following basic values:

- We believe that **every child** has the right to be safe and protected from harm
- We do not accept **any** form of behaviour that we see as harmful to children
- We **lead by example** in treating children in a positive, non-violent and caring manner
- We encourage children to **contribute** their own thoughts and ideas about what's important for their own wellbeing

3. Reference laws

This Policy has been developed in accordance with international standards such as the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**, and Indonesia's **National Child Protection Act, Law No. 23, (2002)**. This essentially means zero tolerance to any form of violence against children.

4. Scope

Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation defines a child as anyone **under the age of 18 years**. This Policy applies to **anyone engaged with children** when working with **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation**, including:

- Members (for the purpose of this Policy the term, Members, includes any future employees)
- Volunteers
- Visitors

We will also **promote** the ideas in this Policy through our work with local partners and encourage them to develop their own child safe practices.

5. Definitions

Children: for the purposes of this Policy, a child as any individual under the age of 18.

Child abuse: the physical, sexual or emotional mistreatment or neglect of a child. Both boys and girls can be the victim of child abuse, and this can be

inflicted by men, women and other children. It also includes commercial or other exploitation. It results in actual or potential harm to a child's health, development or dignity;

- **Physical abuse:** the intentional causing of physical harm to a child. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, biting, strangling, poisoning or any other form of physical violence
- **Emotional abuse:** non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment towards a child. Behaviour by adults towards children that erodes social competence and self-esteem, and that has a negative effect on a child's mental and emotional well-being. These behaviours can include threatening, bullying, ridiculing, belittling, name-calling or isolating
- **Neglect or negligent treatment:** the failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, education, supervision, physical and emotional development and/or protection from foreseeable harm. This needs to be considered within the context of their family/home situation.
- **Sexual abuse:** when a person in a position of responsibility, trust or power over a child involves the child in sexual activity. Sexually abusive behaviours can involve kissing, fondling genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration (by a penis, finger or any other object), fondling breasts, voyeurism (violating the privacy of unclothed children), exhibitionism (exposing private body parts to a child), or involving the child in pornography. Both boys and girls can be victims of child sexual abuse.
- **Domestic violence:** assaultive and/or coercive behaviours that occur within the family environment or domestic (home) environment which can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and/or economic coercion.
- **Child exploitation:** when a child is used in activities for the commercial benefit of others in a way that is harmful to the child's physical, social or mental development. This includes being forced to work at times which interfere with the time available for his/her education and recreational activities, or being forced to perform sexual or other acts for payment.

6. Recruitment and Reference Checking

Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation will not knowingly permit any person to be employed if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.

When electing new members, volunteers or others (i.e. personnel) who will have contact with children as part of their work, **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation** will:

- Verbally contact at least **two referees** (by phone or in person) to ask whether they recommend the person
- **Ask questions** during interviews to see how they will respond to child protection concerns
- Request the applicants state whether they have been charged with any **child-related crimes**
- Sign a **declaration** stating that they have not been charged with any child related crimes

7. Employee Contracts

On commencement with **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation**, all members/volunteers must sign a Member/Volunteer Contract which includes the following statement:

*“Before signing this contract I have read and signed **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation Child Protection Code of Conduct for Members and Volunteers**, and the **Member/Volunteer Declaration**. I understand that I may be dismissed, suspended or transferred to other duties if I am under investigation or found to not comply with the Child Protection Code of Conduct.”*

8. Member/Volunteer Training

Upon commencement of work with **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation**, new members and volunteers will meet with the Director or appointed member to go through the Child Protection Policy in detail, to ensure it is well understood and to have any questions answered.

This will include talking about examples of situations where the employee could potentially be required to apply the guidelines provided in the Code of Conduct document (as part of a risk assessment – see below). For example: *You will be required to take the children on a clean-up exercise on their village*

beach each week. You need to keep in mind item 5 of the Code of Conduct for Members/Volunteers – ensure another adult is present.

A group training session will also be repeated with all members and volunteers at the **beginning of each school year** and/or at the time the Child Protection Policy is revised.

9. Risk Assessment

In order to identify any possible risks to children during **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation** activities, risk assessments will be incorporated into:

- **Class / activity plans** – identifying and listing any possible dangers to children as part of our daily plans, and how they can be avoided
- **Member/Volunteer contracts** – upon commencement of work, risk assessments will be undertaken for each member's position, and a risk review included in their contract
- **Program development** documents – as we develop plans for new programs we will consider how the program might put children at risk and, in view of this, we will revise **Sumatran Sea Turtle Child Protection Policy** every two years.

10. Child Protection Code of Conduct for Members and Volunteers

This is an agreement which must be read carefully and signed by **all members** and **volunteers** upon commencing work with **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation**.

It outlines the behaviours that are expected, and those that are not permitted, while engaged in **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation** activities.

In summary, it requires that members and volunteers treat children **respectfully, without violence** or **abuse** of any kind, use **digital media** appropriately, and to disclose if they are/were charged with any **crimes** relating to children.

11. Child Protection Code of Conduct for Visitors

As we are frequently visited by passing **tourists, guests** from other areas of Indonesia and other **short-term visitors**, we have developed a simplified Code of Conduct which is **specific to these people**.

These policies have been developed for **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation**, and include **dressing** appropriately, treating the children in a **respectful and friendly** manner, and refraining from requesting **contact** with the children outside of the classroom/activity.

12. Incident Reporting Process

WHAT should be reported?

- Any **suspicion of child abuse or exploitation** by members, volunteers, visitors or participants (including students) in **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation** activities.
- **Inappropriate use** of social media, phones, photographic equipment or computers including evidence of **child pornography** or any evidence of **inappropriate contact with children**.

How should I RESPOND to a child/children if they tell me they have been abused?

- It is very important that you **keep calm** and give the child your **full attention**
- Let the child **take his/her time**, and to **use his/her own words**
- Reassure the child that they are doing the **right thing** by telling you about the incident
- **Important:** *Do not confront the person who has allegedly abused the child.*

WHO should I report to?

- Report immediately to the **Director** or nominated Member

HOW should I report the incident?

- This can be done **verbally** or by **submitting an Incident Report Form**
- If the incident is reported verbally, the form should be filled in by the Director or nominated Member receiving the report
- **Note:** *All information provided in a report will be treated confidentially and professionally.*

Procedure for NON-CRITICAL incident allegations

A **non-critical allegation** of child abuse is one which **does not pose immediate risk** to a child supposing the allegation was true. These incidents may well be critical in nature but the time frame for responding is not as immediate; *an example is finding evidence that a member or volunteer is accessing child pornography online.*

1. The incident will be **documented** and **investigated**;
2. The incident will be investigated with full respect for the **privacy of the accused** and the alleged **victim** and information will be dispersed on a “need to know” basis with the primary concern being the rights and welfare of the people involved;
3. The **accused** person will be given an opportunity to **express their views/opinions/version of facts**;
4. The **views of the alleged child victim** will be considered in light of the documented evidence;
5. Where the incident is reasonably proven to have occurred, appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken, including, but not limited to:
 - Warning; and/or
 - Suspension; and/or
 - Dismissal

The disciplinary measure will depend on the nature and severity of the offence and will be at the discretion of the Director or Board of **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation**, and will be fully documented.

Procedure for CRITICAL ALLEGATIONS

A **critical allegation** is an allegation whereby there may be an **immediate risk** to the welfare of a child should the allegation be found true; *an example is witnessing inappropriate sexual activity.*

1. Where the allegation involves a **violation of the laws** of the country in which the incident occurs, the incident will immediately be **reported** to appropriate authorities and the person will be suspended from membership or voluntary employment pending an investigation;
2. All efforts will be taken to ensure the **confidentiality** and **rights** of the **accused person** and information related to the incident will only be shared on a “need to know basis”;

3. If the incident involves a **breach** of the **Code of Conduct** (but is not a violation of national laws), the accused person may be **suspended** pending an investigation;
4. Where a breach of the Code of Conduct is found to have occurred, **all circumstances will be considered** and the appropriate action will be taken;
5. Where an allegation is found to be **false or unfounded**, all efforts will be taken to ensure the rights of the accused person is upheld;
6. Where allegations amount to a **violation of laws** of the country in which the incident took place, privacy will no longer be applicable unless deemed necessary to uphold the rights of the victim;
7. Where appropriate, in investigations, **Sumatran Sea Turtle Conservation** will consider and take into account **legal advice** as well as advice from any responsible authorities.

If you have any questions about the reporting process or procedures please contact SSTC Director.