



# The Good Shepherd Agricultural Mission's **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**



## **THE GSAM AND CHILDREN**

The Good Shepherd Agricultural Mission (The Mission) is a Christian organization dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. The Mission serves those in need regardless of religion, race, caste, creed, gender or ethnicity.

We uphold children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child protection is everyone's responsibility, and the Mission takes every precaution to make sure this happens for our children.

Our Child Protection Policy affirms our commitment to the welfare of children and stopping abuse and exploitation. This Policy applies to all children on our property.

## **THE SCOPE OF THIS POLICY**

This policy applies to the Good Shepherd Agricultural Mission and all of its subsidiaries, including, but not limited to, the Maxton Strong School, all board members, staff, volunteers, contractors, teachers and visitors. Those who come under this policy must:

- Have a background/police clearance check.
- Provide character references.
- Sign the GSAM Behavior Policy and commit to preventing harm to children.

## **VISITING THE MISSION**

All visits to The Good Shepherd Agricultural Mission must be pre-arranged via the Mission's website:

[www.IndianOrphanage.com/apply](http://www.IndianOrphanage.com/apply)

Due to safety issues and to minimise the impact on the work of the Mission, it is not possible to arrange 'last minute' visits.



## BEHAVIOR PROTOCOLS AND THE MISSION

We support the rights of the child and seek to ensure that children are kept safe when in contact with us. We also want you to feel comfortable and at ease around children and help us build and maintain a safe and empowering environment for all. These behaviour protocols are universal to the Mission and all visitors, volunteers, contractors, board members and staff are expected to comply with them.

### INTERACTING WITH CHILDREN

These protocols must be maintained at all times during your time with us. If at any point questions arise as to whether an interaction is appropriate or not, the question should be raised with a Mission board member:

- Treat all children and their families with respect and dignity, using appropriate language, respect for their privacy and keeping information about them confidential.
- Listen to children. Be sensitive to the signals they send you about how comfortable they are (their language, conversation and physical intimacy) and respond accordingly.
- Stop any interaction with a child if a child says stop, or if the child appears uncomfortable with the interaction.
- Always be in view of another adult when with a child; that is, don't be alone with a child unless it is absolutely unavoidable or the child is in immediate danger. This is for the child's protection and to protect you from false accusation.
- Do not take a child into your accommodation or encourage secret meetings.
- Do not give a child alcohol, cigarettes or drugs.
- Do not become involved sexually or romantically involved with a child whether by direct contact, exposing them to sexual materials or other non-contact sexual activity (grooming).
- Do not slap, hit, physically or emotionally abuse any child. Abuse can happen through your physical actions, words or emotional messages you send.
- Do not exploit children through inappropriate labour.
- Adults are always responsible for their behaviour with a child, even when the child's behaviour can be interpreted as inappropriate (for example, seductive behaviour).
- Raise all concerns, issues and problems as soon as possible with a Mission Board Member.

Non-compliance with the behaviour protocols will be taken very seriously. Where considered necessary or appropriate, non-compliance will be reported to the relevant authorities.

### PHOTOS & STORIES OF CHILDREN

The following minimum standards must be observed to ensure that dignity and the right to personal privacy are respected when taking photos and video of those with whom the Mission works, especially children:

- Always check what photography or filming is appropriate with a Mission staff member before taking photos or video.
- Always ask permission from a child and the Mission staff or child's guardians if you wish to take photos or video, and explain how they will be used.
- Written permission must be taken from the Mission or parents/guardians when a photo/video/story provides information that could be damaging to the subjects dignity, safety or reputation of the child. For example: information about HIV status, involvement in prostitution or abuse.
- Do not portray people as helpless victims. Balance human needs with positive language about what people are doing to help themselves.
- Photos, videos and stories must not use real names of children or real locations, when communicating sensitive information. For example sexual abuse, disease or sickness.

The confidentiality of our children must be treated with the upmost importance.

