

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

2021



LittleBigHelp  
India Trust



LittleBigHelp works to create better opportunities for vulnerable children and women in West Bengal, India. We work to secure basic child rights such as education and protection, along with women’s empowerment through skill development – each and every day. We cannot help everybody, but our belief is that everybody can help some. And your support will get us a long way!

Through 22 different projects LittleBigHelp provides direct support to more than 1200 vulnerable children and women, and indirectly to more than 1300 vulnerable families.

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## **1. Introduction**

LittleBigHelp works to create better opportunities for vulnerable children and women in West Bengal, India. We work to secure basic child rights such as education and protection, along with women’s empowerment through skill development.

### **LittleBigHelp’s Mission and Vision:**

#### **Our Mission:**

We change your little help into a big help for people in need.

#### **Our Vision:**

We cannot help everybody – but we can help some. And we do it!

## 2. Aim of the Child Protection Policy

The Child Rights Charter 2003 of India specifically states “*All children have a right to be protected against neglect, maltreatment, injury, trafficking, sexual and physical abuse of all kinds, corporal punishment, torture, exploitation, violence and degrading treatment.*”

LittleBigHelp’s Child Protection Policy sets out our principles and commitment to protect the children we work with.

LittleBigHelp (LBH) is committed to protecting children from physical and mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect and exploitation and to promoting children’s rights as set out in the Article 19 of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and to promoting Indian Law that supports the adherence of Child Rights, within the capacity and scope of the organisation.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (Section 17) states, “*no teacher in any primary school shall inflict physical/corporal punishment or cause mental harassment on any child under his/her control, while transacting lessons or interacting in any learning situation.*”

Here, ‘physical punishment’ denotes “any action of intentionally causing pain or injury to a child, including caning or hitting him with any hard object, or spanking, smacking, slapping or pinching him, or pulling his hair, or any other act which results in physical injury to him.” Further, ‘mental harassment’ here implies “any deliberate and motivated imposition of mental pressure on a child not meant for or detrimental to his academic and psychological well being, and for any other collateral purposes including victimizing a child deliberately and include sarcasm meant to hurt or lower the child’s dignity in front of others;”

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) shall be the guiding principle for implementing basic rights for all children below the age of 18 years. The Government of India acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of the child in 1992, and has also ratified the two Optional Protocols in 2007–

- (1) Involvement of children in Armed conflict
- (2) Sale of children, child prostitution & child pornography

There are also other laws pertaining to children in India such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) 2000, Amendment Act 2006 and The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act) 1986. By the amendment with effect from 10th October 2006, it has extended the ban on employment of children below the age of 14 years in the area of:

1. Domestic help and in *dhabas*
2. Restaurants, hotels and the hospitality sectors.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (amended Act of 44 of 1986) also provide guidelines for safety and security of children.

This Policy is in conformity with the above laws, LittleBigHelp Mission Statement and core values on Child Protection.

We commit to informing and promoting child protection in local communities and at local government level. LittleBigHelp works to develop the understanding, implementation and adherence to this policy by all those associated.

### **3. Who this policy applies to**

Protecting children from mental and physical violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation is the responsibility of all those associated with LittleBigHelp including:

- Team members and external educators;
- Board members in Denmark and in India;
- Volunteers;
- Consultants;
- Partner organisations;
- Donors;
- All visitors to LittleBigHelp's projects;
- Schools;
- Clubs;
- Law enforcement agencies (Police, RPF, CWC);
- Doctors;
- Coaching centres;
- Guardians;
- Local community

The above individuals will be referred to as 'Representatives' throughout this policy.

All Representatives will be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy upon their engagement with LBH and LBH is responsible for introducing and implementing the CPP at all levels and to Representatives.

All Representatives are, after the induction by LBH, responsible for having a thorough understanding of LittleBigHelp's Child Protection Policy and procedures and complying with the policy to ensure the protection of all children with whom LBH is working. They should sign a copy of the CPP in agreement.

Any breach of this policy will be dealt with by LBH's Child Protection Officer and, appropriate steps will be taken by LBH Management. A breach can lead to disciplinary action and/or termination of employment and/or partnership/relation with LittleBigHelp.

### **4. Core principles for protecting the children we work with**

We believe that all children have a set of rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which we therefore follow in LittleBigHelp, and which is attached at the end of this Child Protection Policy.

All children have the right to protection from abuse and exploitation. They should be consulted and asked for advice when developing and implementing our projects on a day to day basis with the aim of promoting and securing the children's basic rights.

LittleBigHelp has a responsibility to care for the children with whom we work and a duty to react/act to improve upon the well-being, protection and dignity of the child especially through the promotion of their rights.

## **5. Responsibility of the Representative in contact with children**

**5.1.** When planning a project visit for any Representative, an introduction and briefing of the Policy will be given;

- Representatives working on the project sites – by the respective Project Manager
- Representatives not working on the project sites – by the LBH Management

It is the responsibility of the Representative to:

- a) read and understand the Child Protection Policy and
- b) clarify any concerns or gaps in knowledge with LBH prior to the project visit

**5.2.** A LBH Representative in direct contact with children, including on a project visit, is representing LBH and is expected to behave appropriately and uphold LBH's child protection policy, guidelines and procedures including the code of conduct.

**5.3.** If a child makes any allegations of abuse to a Representative, it is the responsibility of the individual to refer to LBH's child protection procedures.

**5.4.** If a Representative has any queries or concerns about child protection, they should consult LBH's Child Protection Officer.

## **6. Child Protection Officer**

### **6.1. The aim and role of the Child Protection Officer and Project Child Protection Facilitator:**

One Project Child Protection Facilitator (PCPF) will be appointed in each LittleBigHelp child related project. The PCPF will report to the Child Protection Officer who will be in charge of reporting and monitoring on child protection issues and to inform LBH Management – the Founder and the Programme Director and Program Manager, of any violations of the Child Protection Policy (CPP) on the same day as a suspected/actual incident is reported.

Children can report any suspected/actual abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation of him/herself or any other child at the project to the PCPF or to the CPO directly. In the case that the child reports to any other team member, that team member has the responsibility of immediately informing the PCPF regarding the incidence.

Likewise any team member, volunteer, consultant, donor, partner, or visitor, is required to report any suspected/actual child abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation of any child at the project to the CPO. He/she is also required to report himself/herself to the CPO in case of any violation of the CPP committed by himself/herself. This may for example have been necessary in self-defence.

It is mandatory for any allegation, belief or suspicion of child abuse (past or present) as defined in this CPP to be reported immediately. If a person knowingly chooses not to report an incident

(including an incident as a result of self-defence), then they will be subject to disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment.

## **6.2. Responsibilities and tasks**

The CPO will visit all the LittleBigHelp child related projects: Boys' Home, Girls' Home, Community Centres, every month. When visiting the projects, the CPO will discuss with both the children and the Project Child Protection Facilitator (PCPF) whether any incidences are to be reported. The CPO should be impartial and respond with common sense when hearing complaints and accusations by understanding the larger picture before making any judgements or reaching any conclusions. Prior to the visits, there should be a clear communication between the Project Manager, the Counsellor, and the CPO regarding a convenient time for the visits and meetings with the children and PCPF.

A child or person reporting an incident must be taken seriously and listened to carefully. Once an allegation is made there should be an immediate response that protects the child from further potential abuse or victimization.

A standard formula has been developed for reporting any violations of the CPP committed by any signatory of the CPP and is attached below. Once a suspected/actual incident has been reported, the CPO is responsible for immediately forwarding the report to LBH management (the Founder, Programme Director and Program Manager) and ensuring that the complainant receives a receipt of submission signed by the LBH Management within 24 hours.

A separate standard formula has been developed for Representatives of the CPP who are reporting themselves after a violation of the CPP. Once an incident has been reported, the CPO is responsible for immediately forwarding the report to LBH management (the Founder and Programme Director and Program Manager).

## **6.3. How the Child Protection Officer and Project Child Protection Facilitator is chosen**

LBH Management will appoint the LBH CPO who must have a sound knowledge and understanding of the LBH CPP including what LBH considers to be acceptable disciplinary action. Corporal punishment is unacceptable in LBH while positive discipline is promoted. The PCPF will be chosen by the Project Manager and Programme Director.

## **7. Handling of and investigation of reported suspected/actual incidents:**

All Representatives have an obligation to immediately report suspected/actual child abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation to LBH's PCPF/CPO. Any case reported to the PCPO will be forwarded to the CPO. LBH management will respond immediately if/when any suspected/actual report/incident of child abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation occurs.

At all times LBH Management will act in the best interests of the child. This may involve the temporary suspension of the alleged perpetrator while an investigation takes place. Any team member who has been temporarily suspended will receive full pay and is entitled to a fair and just process including appropriate information about the investigation process. No assumptions are to be made regarding guilt or innocence, with the investigation process remaining confidential until a decision has been reached by LBH Management. Regardless of the decision

made, the process must be documented and filed, with all printed and electronic matter being kept in a secure and confidential place at all times.

Internal investigations as outlined above will undertake a confidential, thorough, impartial and prompt process. The investigation team may include an external expert investigator/s if deemed appropriate. The investigation may consist of interviews with witnesses and others as appropriate, collection of information about the alleged conduct, gathering of documentation, or other procedures as appropriate. The individual alleged to have violated LBH's CPP would have the opportunity to present his or her view of the events in question. LBH will hold its determination until the investigation is completed.





### 7.1. Standard Formula for Reporting Violations committed by CPP signatories

Project:	
Name of Complainant:	
Age and gender:	
Name of alleged victim (if different from complainant):	
Age and gender of victim:	
Has the alleged victim given consent to the completion of this form?	YES _____ NO _____
Date of incident(s):	
Time of incident(s):	
Location of incident(s):	
Physical & emotional state of victim (Describe any cuts, bruises, lacerations, behaviour, and mood):  Include pictures if there are any physical signs of abuse.	
Witnesses' names (if any):	
Brief description of incident(s) (attach extra pages if necessary):	
Name of accused person(s):	
Age and gender of accused person(s):	
Job title of accused person(s):	
Organisation accused person(s) works for:	

What immediate security measures have been undertaken for the victim?	
Has the complainant been informed about the organisation's procedures for dealing with complaints?	YES_____ NO_____
Date report forwarded to LBH management:	

THE COMPLAINANT WILL WITHIN 24 HOURS OF SUBMITTING THIS REPORT RECEIVE A RECEIPT SIGNED BY THE LBH MANAGEMENT. IF YOU DO NOT, PLEASE CONTACT LBH MANAGEMENT DIRECTLY.

LBH supports those who report suspected/actual child abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation.

**Date, location and signature by complainant:**

**Date, location and signature by Child Protection Officer:**

## 7.2. Standard Formula for Reporting Violations committed by the complainant

Project:	
Name of Complainant:	
Age and gender of complainant:	
Name of victim:	
Age and gender of victim:	
Date of incident(s):	
Time of incident(s):	
Location of incident(s):	
Physical & emotional state of victim (Describe any cuts, bruises, lacerations (an include pictures), behaviour, and mood):	
Witnesses' names (if any):	
Brief description of incident(s) (attach extra pages if necessary):	
Date report forwarded to LBH management:	

THE COMPLAINANT WILL WITHIN 24 HOURS OF SUBMITTING THIS REPORT RECEIVE A RECEIPT SIGNED BY THE LBH MANAGEMENT. IF YOU DO NOT, PLEASE CONTACT LBH MANAGEMENT DIRECTLY. LBH supports those who report suspected/actual child abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation.

**Date, location and signature by complainant:**

**Date, location and signature by Child Protection Officer:**

## **8. Prevention/Information**

### **8.1. Behavior Protocols of LittleBigHelp:**

- Personnel including team members, volunteers, interns, visitors and consultants will establish an atmosphere conducive for the development of children through their word, deed and demeanour. This includes listening to children and showing respect to them.
- Team members, interns, consultants, volunteers and visitors including sponsors will respect the local cultural context and behave appropriately with children in the communities as per the behaviour protocols.
- Personnel including team members, volunteers, interns, visitors and consultants will not allow project children to visit their homes under any pretext without the prior knowledge and agreement of the higher authority.
- Project children are not permitted to stay overnight in the home of LittleBigHelp personnel at any time.
- Team members will not employ children as domestic workers in their homes.
- Personnel including team members, interns, volunteers, consultants and visitors will not spend time alone with a child or children. There will always be another adult ("two adult rule" principle) who will be able to see the interaction. The exception to this may be in the event where personnel are employed as professionally recognized trained counsellors.
- Personnel including staff, interns, volunteers, consultants and visitors are always responsible for the interaction between an adult and a child even when it appears that a child is acting in a provocative manner.

### **8.2. Recruitment/engagement of new persons:**

LittleBigHelp will not permit a person to work with children if that person has a proven record of child abuse or violations. Any new person working with LBH will be questioned on child protection issues and child rights during interviews to ensure suitability for working with children and young adults.

- Recruit team member, only after obtaining adequate background verification from references and LBH own sources for any history of child exploitation neglect and abuse.
- Ascertain their aptitude, interest and sensitivity in working with children and their previous work with children.
- Enhance capacities of team members working with children in projects, to effectively deal with issues of child rights and advocacy, to promote rights of children and to provide protection from exploitation, neglect and abuse.
- Ensure that all work and activities of team members, supports the protection of all in communities from any form of exploitation, neglect and abuse.

**8.3.** Any Representatives who will have contact with children and/or access to sensitive information on children will:

(a): Require a criminal record proving that the Representative has no records of violation of children's rights (for Danish Representatives) or a Disclosure and Barring checks (for UK Representatives).

(b): Hand over at least two written references to LBH Management (for Indian Representatives) from professional and personal referees who have known the Representative for at least two years.

- (c): Introduction and briefing of the Policy to any Representative will be given;
- Representatives working on the project sites – by the respective Project Manager
  - Representatives not working on the project sites – by the LBH Management

**8.4.** The organisation's proactive role is to ensure that it promotes the prevention of child abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation. LBH does this through raising awareness of child protection amongst all LBH Representatives via:

- (a): Giving all Representatives a copy of this Child Protection Policy
- (b): Giving all Representatives a copy of any updates to this policy
- (c): Organising workshops and trainings for Representatives involved with, and working on, the projects

**8.5.** LBH Fosters a collaborative approach to child protection, working with our partner organisations and others to share best practice and support the development of theirs and our child protection policies, practices and programmes.

**8.6.** LBH raises awareness of child protection issues amongst the community in which we are working by organising awareness camps and by informing the guardians about their responsibilities to protect and respect their children.

**8.7.** LBH recognises the importance of children's participation in the design and implementation of our child protection policy, practices and programmes, helping our organisation to identify and meet children's needs.

**8.8.** LBH raises awareness of child protection issues amongst the children we are working with by incorporating these into the teaching, standards and interaction with the children in all our projects in a child friendly and easily understandable format.

**8.9.** LBH carries out on-going monitoring of the effectiveness of our Child Protection Policy, practices and program.

## **9. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality between the child and you is crucial and anything said or done by the child on and outside of the project site should remain within LBH. If there is any suspected/actual physical or mental child abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation to a child, even if the child has asked for the information to remain confidential, it is mandatory for you to report your concern to LBH's Child Protection Officer. You should tell the child you will be reporting what they have said, to whom and why.

### **Do not promise to keep secrets**

At the earliest opportunity, tell the child/young person that:

- You acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you.
- You will be sharing this information only with people who understand this area and who can help. There are secrets which are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if people are to be helped and protected from further on-going hurt. By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the child/young person, you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything (or, indeed,

anything) there and then. However, it is better to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the child/young person's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely that the child/young person will return to you at another time.

## **10. Responding to a child/young person who discloses abuse**

A child or young person may disclose to a team member or volunteer that they have been or are being harmed or abused. Children/young people will often have different ways of communicating that they are being abused. If a child or young person hints at or tells a team or volunteer that he or she is being harmed by someone, be it a parent/carer, another adult or by another child/young person (peer abuse), it should be treated in a sensitive way.

Remember, a child/young person may disclose abuse to you as a trusted adult at any time during your work with them. It is important that you are aware and prepared for this.

Be as calm and natural as possible.

- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked. Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the child/young person.
- Remember, the child or young person may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child/young person has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to.
- Do not pressurise the child/young person. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief.
- Accept what the child or young person has to say – false disclosures are very rare.
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child/young person quite possibly may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to them. It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards the alleged perpetrator while talking with the child/young person.
- It may be necessary to reassure the child/young person that your feelings towards him or her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what they have disclosed.
- Reassure the child/young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you.

### **When asking questions**

- Questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification only.
- Avoid leading questions, such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse. Such questions and suggestions could complicate the official investigation.

## **11. Talking to parents/guardians about child protection or welfare concerns**

Team/volunteers may feel uncomfortable approaching a parent about a concern. You may have to discuss a concern about the welfare or protection of a child/young person or an issue which relates to the child/ young person's developmental needs. The following best practice tips may be useful:

- Make sure parents/guardians have prior awareness of your guiding principles, procedures and duties to protecting children.

- Be straightforward and clearly explain the nature of the concern or issue, e.g. by using facts and records of observations made.
- Think about the time and place to have the conversation. Find a time when parents/guardians are not in a hurry.
- Find a place that is quiet and allows privacy.
- Consider arranging to meet parents/guardians.
- Consider who is the best person/who are the best people to have the conversation with the parents/guardians.
- Use a calm and gentle tone, consider the language used.
- Start with positive comments and observations about the child/young person.
- Ensure that the parents/guardians know that you care about the welfare of their child and recognize their strengths.
- Refer to how the situation may be affecting the child/young person.
- Start with positive comments and observations about the parents/guardians. Most parents/guardians are trying to do their best for their children and will appreciate your acknowledgement of how challenging parenting can be at times.
- Give the parents/guardians an opportunity to talk; ask them for an explanation and acknowledge their feelings.
- Take the approach that you are working together to address any issues in the best interests of the child/young person.
- Don't blame, don't get defensive and don't take things personally.
- Ensure that you are supportive but also address the issue.
- Refer to your child protection policy procedures for support.
- Offer possible solutions, where appropriate.
- Advise parents/guardians how you plan to follow up and keep them informed and involved, where appropriate. Where it is not possible to contact the parents/guardians to discuss a concern you may need to discuss the concern with the CWC or LBH duty team members.
- Remember if a report needs to be made to LBH, do not delay.

## 12. LittleBigHelp Code of Conduct

The code of conduct should be interpreted in a spirit of transparency and common sense, with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration. Acceptance, respect, and inclusion are central in the work we do.

### 12.1. Behaviour

**Do not:** perform any physical punishment of the children at any given situation. In LBH it is unacceptable to use corporal punishment or any action that inflicts physical pain on the child. Instead we encourage positive discipline.

**Do:** deal with all disputes and disagreements with, and between, the children and you in a calm manner ensuring a resolution of the conflict and an understanding of the child so that his/her interests are safeguarded and protected.

**Do:** remain impartial when interacting with the children.

**Do not:** discriminate or favour a child for any reason on grounds of race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, caste, sexuality or political persuasion.

**Do:** always work for the common good of all the children on the projects.

**Do:** work for the physical and mental development of the children through play, interaction, and conversations.

**Do:** respect and consider any cultural, religious, socio-economic or other differences of the children and yourself.

**Do:** conduct yourself in a responsible and respectful manner in the environments where LBH is working and please support the good relationships that we have with the local communities.

**Do not:** swear, insult, or perform any other disrespectful behaviour towards staff, children, and local community in the presence of the children both during and after working hours.

**Do not:** offer your personal gadgets like Mobile phone, Headphone, Bluetooth speaker etc. to the children as this may carry a different message to other children who didn't get access to these things.

**Do:** promote 'self defence' for all the children

**Do:** be alert to make the visitors aware about the dos and don'ts regarding Child Protection Policy. Each Child Protection Policy team member should be well conversant about the CPP of the organization.

**Do:** promote Community based 'Child Protection Committee' as described in the Integrated Child Protection Scheme(ICPS) in each community centre/s run by LBH.

**Do not:** Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;

**Do not:** Make sexually suggestive comments or actions to a child, even as a joke;

**Do not:** Assist a child in tasks that he or she can do unaided (such as taking them to the toilet, bathing or changing clothes), unless help is requested, in which case the 'Two Adult Rule' applies;

**Do not:** Spend time alone with a child, away from others, behind closed doors or in a secluded area (see 'Two Adult Rule' above);

**Do not:** Take a child to their home or visit a child at their home where they may be alone with that child, or sleep in the same room, without another adult present;

**Do not:** Sleep in the same bed as a child or allow a child to stay overnight at their home unsupervised, when not related to that child;

**Do not:** Take a child alone in a vehicle unless it's absolutely necessary and with parental and managerial consent.

## 12.2. Sexual behaviour

**Do not:** kiss, hug, fondle, rub, or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way; sleep in the same bed as a child; do things of a personal nature that a child could do for him/herself, including dressing, bathing, and grooming; encourage any crushes by a child.



### 12.3. Psychosocial behaviour

**Do:** be aware of the vulnerability inherent in adult-child relationships and avoid taking any advantage this may provide.

**Do not:** use language that may mentally or emotionally harm any child; suggest or encourage inappropriate behaviour of any kind; show discrimination on grounds of race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, or political persuasion.

### 12.4. Alcohol and Drugs

**Do not:** use alcohol and drugs in any form around the children.

**Do not:** smoke in front of or around the children, nor should smoking be encouraged to the children at any time.

### 12.5. Photos and Social Networks

Taking photos at LBH projects is prohibited unless prior arrangements have been made with the Project Manager. If permission has been granted then:

**Do not:** take and/or publish on social media any inappropriate photos of the children, such as wearing no clothes or in any situation that may seem uncomfortable to the child.

**Do not:** make friends with the children on Facebook or any other social media. In regards to emails, these can be sent to LBH Management who will then share with the children. This is to avoid any preferences and prioritising of the children and to prevent any potential jealousy amongst the children.

**Do not:** post stories on any social media with a picture of child/children stating his/her/their name(s).

**Do not:** mention or publicise personal stories and details in relation to any name of the child to protect the privacy and the rights of the children.

**Do:** depending on your agreement with LBH, post pictures from the projects whilst always indicating the correct name of the LittleBigHelp project. Informing about the work of LBH is of course allowed (in accordance with your agreement with LBH) but can be described in no further details in regards to the children.

### 12.6. Communications about Children and Photographs

**Do:** Ensure that all communication material on children in the form of pictures/captions are decent, dignified and respectful, and will not present children as victims, nor will exaggerate/glamorize poverty at the cost of the child. They will abide by LBH communications reporting standards with regards to vulnerable children.

**Do:** Ensure LBH web sites do not use images of children without formal permission of the LBH office for the project and the parents/guardians of the child. Written permission should be obtained.

**Do:** Ensure child personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of child in the projects should not be used on LBH websites or in any other form of communication about a child.

**Do:** Ensure individuals or organizations requesting the use of LBH resource such as videos or photographs should be required to sign an agreement with the appropriate personnel as to the proper use of such materials.

### **12.7. Clothing**

**Do not:** wear see-through clothing.

**Do:** dress appropriately and respect the culture and practices of areas that we work in. Non-Indian clothing is allowed if it respects local culture in Kolkata.

**Do:** wear clothes that cover your legs from the knees and above.

**Do:** cover your shoulders and chest – preferably wearing a long sleeved shirt.

### **12.8. Gifts and Donations**

**Do not:** give the children supported by LBH any money, gifts or unhealthy food without the consent of the Project Manager. LBH does not accept any cooking offered from external persons.

### **12.9. Minimising risk situations**

**Try to:** avoid placing yourself in a compromising or vulnerable position; be accompanied by a second adult at all times; report any concerns to LittleBigHelp's Child Protection Officer.

**Try not to:** be alone with a child. Do not arrange to meet a child outside of project hours without LBH being present; show favouritism or spend excessive amounts of time with one child.

### **12.10. Dismissal**

LittleBigHelp will be in its right to take actions including dismissal and legal proceedings, if any of the above points are not respected or any misconduct around the children and related to the projects and the work of LBH is found.

## **16. Child Protection Policy & Procedures and Code of Conduct Undertaking**

I, .....acknowledge that as a person affiliated with LittleBigHelp I understand, and will adhere to, the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, which has been given to me to read and understand thoroughly.

I agree to comply with the Policy and Code of Conduct. I understand that a breach of the LittleBigHelp Child Protection Policy and/or Code of Conduct are grounds for disciplinary action and may lead to dismissal from employment/engagement with LittleBigHelp and possibly result in legal proceedings.

.....

Name

Organisation/Role

.....

Signed

Date

This undertaking is to be signed by:

LittleBigHelp Representative

.....

Signed (Name and Role)      Date

## **Annexure – I**

### **Code of Conduct for Short-Term Visitors**

Welcome to LittleBigHelp (LBH). We look forward to showing you our projects and for you to get the opportunity to meet with the team and the wonderful children at the projects.

1. As a visitor to any LittleBigHelp project you have the responsibility of reading this “Code of Conduct for Short-Term Visitors”
2. A LBH visitor in direct contact with children, including on a project visit, is representing LBH and is expected to behave appropriately and uphold the following rules and guidelines to protect the children at the projects.

#### **1. Behaviour**

**Do not:** perform any physical punishment of the children at any given situation. In LBH it is unacceptable to use corporal punishment or any action that inflicts physical pain on the child. Instead we encourage positive discipline.

**Do:** conduct yourself in a responsible and respectful manner in the environments where LBH is working and please support the good relationships that we have with the local communities.

**Do not:** swear, insult, or perform any other disrespectful behaviour towards the team, children, and local community (slum community, football club, local schools etc.) in the presence of the children both during and after working hours.

**Do not:** smoke in front of or around the children, nor should smoking be encouraged to the children at any time.

#### **2. Photos and Social Networks**

Taking photos at LBH projects is prohibited unless prior arrangements have been made with the Project Manager. If permission has been granted then:

**Do not:** take and/or publish on social media any inappropriate photos of the children, such as wearing no clothes or in any situation that may seem uncomfortable to the child.

**Do not:** post stories on any social media with a picture of a child/children stating his/her/their name(s).

**Do not:** mention or publicise personal stories and details in relation to any name of the child to protect the privacy and the rights of the children.

**Do not:** make friends with the children on Facebook or any other social media. In regards to emails, these can be sent to LBH Management who will then share with the children. This is to avoid any preferences and prioritising of the children and to prevent any potential jealousy amongst the children.

**Do:** depending on your agreement with LBH, post pictures from the projects whilst always indicating the correct name of the LittleBigHelp project. Informing about the work of LBH is of course allowed (in accordance with your agreement with LBH) but can be described in no further details in regards to the children.

### 3. Clothing

**Do not:** wear see-through clothing.

**Do:** dress appropriately and respect the culture and practices of the areas that we work in. Non-Indian clothing is allowed if it respects local culture in Kolkata.

**Do:** wear clothes that cover your legs from the knees and above.

**Do:** cover your shoulders and chest – preferably wearing a long sleeved shirt.

### 4. Gifts and Donations

**Do not:** give the children supported by LBH any money, gifts or unhealthy food without the consent of the Project Manager. LBH does not accept any cooking offered from external persons.

**Thank you for your consideration.**

**Enjoy your visit.**

**LittleBigHelp Team**



## Annexure – II

### Operating guidelines to deal with runaway or absconding children<sup>1</sup>

If a child is threatening to run away from the shelter home, no matter whether the child is serious, or is he/she is just testing your reactions, in this situation the following guidelines may be helpful. Runaway children are at a serious risk; dangers of a homeless life (such as drugs, alcohol, illnesses, prostitution, physical abuse and beatings, problems with police, death) and consequences children face living on their own are usually far worse than the problems they ran away from.

The suffering of runaway children can be avoided with education, counselling, patience, love and a will to overcome and resolve whatever problems they may have.

#### **Helpful guidelines on how to deal with runaway children:**

- i. **Listening:** Recognize the best time and friendly atmosphere, and encourage the child to open up. Listen to what they have to say. Don't judge them, ridicule them or try to force your opinions upon them – simply take time, show patience and listen. Focus on the child's feelings rather than on your own.
- ii. **Avoid the heat of argument:** Caregivers get scared of possible consequences from what their runaway child might do. Too much emotion can lead to losing control during the conversation and hurtful things said in the heat of argument are later hard to overcome.
- iii. **You have the power of positive influence:** Remember, no matter how it may seem to you, children are deeply connected to their peer group or team members and you can still influence them in many ways to better the problematic situation. Try to stay calm. Pause and take time to figure out constructive ways to address the issues rather than say insulting things out of anger you will regret later.
- iv. **Making the child feel loved and wanted is crucial:** It's very dangerous if the child feels that the team members have given up on them. Out of despair, runaway children might do dangerous things they otherwise never would.
- v. **Finding a middle ground:** Your child is developing and discovering her/his own identity. Caregiver should recognize that; if children never "get their way" and do things the way they want, it may leave them feeling powerless and desperate. This creates a build-up of negative emotions and dangerous overreactions.
- vi. **Take threats of running away seriously, but don't allow manipulation:** Saying things like "You wouldn't dare" or "You'll be right back" are the worst things a caregiver can do in dealing with runaway children. Take time to create a loving, caring and understanding atmosphere. However, sometimes a child says they will run away just as leverage to get their way. Be patient and talk to them; try to figure out what is behind the threats. Emphasize that it's ok to have different opinions and you respect theirs. Explain that running away will not solve problems and the risks of homeless life are not worth it. No matter how serious problems are, there are always solutions that to lead a better and happier life.

<sup>1</sup>Acknowledgement: BILJANA ADAMOVIC

<http://kidsfirstcommunity.com/family-concerns/parents-guide-what-to-do-and-how-to-deal-with-runaway-kids/>

- vii. **Seek help from others:** Sometimes, while working to resolve problems, it may be productive to take some time apart. The child can stay a few days at a family or some other responsible person you both trust. Seek counselling – professionals will support overcoming problems with constructive advice.
- viii. Try your best to remain calm.

**If you are calm, you will be more able to remember important things that will help you find your child.**

Ask your child's friends for clues where he/she may be. In most cases, **at least one friend has information.**

This policy has been reviewed and recommended for approval:

**Arijit Bhatta**

Manager – Counselling and Child Protection Officer, LittleBigHelp India Trust

This policy is reviewed and approved by

**Rebekka Madsen**

Programme Manager, LittleBigHelp (Denmark)

This policy is reviewed and approved by

**Debasish Guha**

Programme Director, LittleBigHelp

**Acknowledgement:**

1. Tusla - Child Safeguarding – A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice
2. World Vision Child Protection Operating Guideline
3. The child safeguarding policy of CBM
4. Child Protection Guide, Save the Children
5. GeniusQuotes.net