

Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People



Khmer NGO for Education (KHEN)

Reviewed December 2017

Contents

1.	Contents.....	2
2.	Preface.....	3
3.	History Of KHEN.....	4
4.	KHEN’s Vision Statement & Values.....	4
5.	Aims of the Child Protection Policy.....	4
6.	Children & Young People.....	5
7.	Implementation Strategy.....	5
8.	Risk Assessment and Management.....	6
9.	KHEN Staff Code of Conduct.....	7
10.	Reporting System for Suspicion of Child Abuses.....	8
11.	KHEN Reporting System Flowchart.....	10
12.	Legal Duties & Responsibilities.....	11
13.	Review.....	11

Preface

In 2006, the United Nation's study on Violence against children called for greater child protection worldwide after uncovering hidden violence against children due to a range of factors such as fear, family honour and social recognition. The abuse and violence against children should not be ignored. A child is inherently vulnerable and as a consequence of their dependence on adults, steps must be taken to ensure children receive care and protection from violence.

KHEN is determined to provide children with protection against any form of abuse by implementing child rights stipulated in the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC). All staff, volunteers and management at KHEN recognize that the implementation of Child Rights and this begins with a strong enforcement of responsibilities within the organisation. These responsibilities are embodied in this Child Protection Policy (CPP) which is informed by the State Law of Cambodia.

KHEN aspires towards a Cambodian society where access to quality education enables the rights of all children to be recognised and respected.

History of The Organization

KHEN is a Kampuchean non-government, not-for-profit, non-political, non-religious equal opportunity, and Child Safe Organisation. We work to promote child rights, accessible, inclusive & quality education and protection of vulnerable children so that they can develop to their full potential.

With the (MoI) reorganisation, KHEN changed the meaning of its name and reregistered with the Ministry of the Interior of Cambodia. KHEN is now officially recognised as Khmer NGO for Education with the registration number of 662 dated 13th April 2015.

Vision Statement

Our vision is a Kampuchea where the rights of all children are recognised and respected.

KHEN works with all children and their communities in rural and remote areas of Battambang Province to ensure that the rights of all children are fulfilled through access to quality and comprehensive education for a better life.

KHEN's Values:

- Responsiveness
- Quality
- Collaboration
- Accountability

Aims of the Child Protection Policy

Purpose of the Child Protection Policy (CPP)

The child protection policy is developed to protect children against all forms of abuse and exploitation within KHEN and our target areas.

Scope of the Child Safety Policy

This policy is developed and applied to the following stakeholders:

- KHEN – All KHEN's staff
- Volunteers (foreign and domestic)
- Consultants
- Board of Directors
- Donors
- International and local guests
- Visitors
- Interns
- Staff under short-term or long-term contract (trainer, interns)

Children and Young People

Abuse occurs when adults or other children cause harm to children or young people under the age of 18, either physically or in some other way. In the majority of cases, the abuser is someone the child or young person knows well, such as a parent, friend or relative.

There are some groups of children and young people who are particularly vulnerable; children with disabilities are among these, and children from ethnic minority communities if their communities suffer from discrimination. Children who are refugees or asylum seekers, and children living in residential care are also among these groups. Abuse may also take place in families in which there is alcohol or drug abuse, domestic violence, or mental health problems.

***Children** refers to people under the age of 18 (based on UNCRC and the state constitution)*

***Child abuse** is harms that affect physical and mental development of a child*

The Four Types of Abuse

- **Physical abuse:** is actual or likely physical injury to a child, such as hitting, kicking or shaking, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
- **Emotional abuse:** is harm caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment, or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats, not giving care and affection and bullying, resulting in adverse effects on the behaviour and emotional development of a child or young person.
- **Sexual abuse:** occurs if a child or young person is pressured into or forced to take part in any kind of sexual activity, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. Sexual abuse includes incest, rape and fondling. It may also include non-contact activities such as showing pornography or Internet based sexual activity. Sexual abuse may involve siblings or other family members, or persons outside the family.
- **Neglect:** occurs when basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care are not met, or when there is failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in serious impairment of a child's or young person's health or development.

Implementation Strategy

To effectively implement the child protection policy KHEN has set the following strategies:

- Training on child protection policy to all staff
- Disseminating child protection policy to stakeholders
- All staff sign on the policy
- KHEN Introducing the policy to visitors, donors
- Forming key members who protect children
- Enhancing the knowledge of the key members about child protection policy
- Create an effective reporting system about child abuse, referral and support to children
- Applying the policy
- All staff and stakeholders take part in reporting concerns, abuses and exploitation on children.

Risk Assessment and Management

- Set up activity plan and identify risks and then carry out strategies to avoid those risks.
- Continue to track for some unforeseen risks
- Ensure accurate number of staff/children
- Provide enough supervision on staff and their activities
- Minimise chances of isolating a child by any staff member
- Apply open approach to planning with participation
- Educate children about rules/regulations and encourage them to talk of their suspicions and concerns
- Maintain open and understanding environment
- Strengthen staff's code of conduct
- Supervise all staff attentively

There are four points in risk assessment and management as follows:

1. Age/vulnerability or special needs of children
2. Place where activities happen
3. Level of activity management
4. Activities

Examples of Risk Analysis

Project	Activity	Risk	Management
Youth Training	Training	Child coming into contact with undesirable predatory behaviour	Preventing one-on-one interactions between adults and children; Child-safe trained adults only present
School-building	Building of School	Injury to child	Clear signage; Adult-only areas; Use of safety equipment; Removal of dangerous equipment

Tools for risk management

- Identifying Important Activities
- Identifying Challenges
- Assessing Level of Harm
- Employing a Reduction Approach
- Ensuring Supervision

As part of KHEN's commitment to risk management, all risk assessments will be stored for future reference. This will ensure KHEN continually updates their risk management strategies.

KHEN Staff Code of Conduct

All KHEN staff and stakeholders must display respect and appropriate behaviour towards children and be aware of the scope of their duties.

KHEN Staff/Stakeholders will:

- Use appropriate language
- Be role models for children
- Foster independence and critical thinking
- Treat children fairly
- Educate children using positive encouragement techniques
- Respect and implement KHEN's Child Protection Policy
- Ensure CPP has been explained and signed by visitors and stakeholders
- Ensure that children and other stakeholders are aware of the CPP and possess the appropriate skills to respond to potential dangers
- Promote the best interests and safety of children as paramount
- Empower children to form and express opinions through participation in KHEN activities
- Listen to children and if appropriate seek intervention
- Promote the importance of continual education
- Utilise the KHEN reporting system to immediately report any suspicion of abuse
- **Recognise potential partners who are certified child-safe etc legal assistance in a child-safe environment**

KHEN Staff/Stakeholders will not:

- Use any form of intimidation or fear as punishment
- Engage in any form of inappropriate physical contact with a child
- Engage in any form of sexual activity with a child
- Employ the services of any child in a private capacity

KHEN's Policy on Social Media and Photography

Images of children must:

- Highlight the purpose for which the image will be used
- Ask for permission from child and relevant adult (in written form)
- Be used solely for the purposes outlined in the signed consent form.
- Pictures should not disclose location or identifiable details of a child
- Ensure all children pictured are appropriately clothed

Images of children must not:

- Sexualise a child in any manner
- Undermine or devalue a child
- Be used in any private capacity.

Staff Recruitment

Advertisement: Besides stating the requirements of education or responsibilities as defined for each position, KHEN highlights its aims to protect children against all forms of violence and respect child rights. Advertisements, job descriptions and application forms for all posts will include a reference to KHEN's commitment to child protection by way of its CPP. All staff members must read, approve and sign this CPP.

Statement: Applicants must submit a written statement about their behaviors from local authority, ensuring no involvement in any wrong acts against children.

Interview: Candidates will be asked to describe previous experience of working with children and wherever possible a police check will be required. KHEN will also undertake identity checks on candidates appointed to identified posts. Members of the interview committee for any positions will comprise three to five persons consisting of gender balance and one child protection officer in the interview.

References: At least two referees/references will be contacted regarding the candidate's background, behaviour and history with children.

Probation: Candidates successfully selected for a job will have to work under a probation contract of 3 months. They will be oriented on the job and receive induction training on the CPP. If the candidate breaches the policy their contract will be subject to immediate termination and referred to the relevant authorities.

Volunteer Recruitment A parallel practice will operate with volunteers and other unpaid staff. Any volunteers who are recruited or designated for work with schools, young people or children will be asked to complete a disclosure form.

Managerial Responsibility All managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff have understood and signed the CPP. This will be done through regular staff meetings and appraisals, and through provision of annual refresher training for all staff.

Training:

All KHEN's staff in Battambang receive induction training on Child Safeguarding from ChildWise-accredited organization, complemented by annual refresher courses. Knowledge received from this training has been shared with volunteers, students, children, community, teachers, school principal, community leaders, local authority and relevant partners in the target area. Individuals who have been trained must play a role in strategic planning in upholding child protection, enhancing child rights and timely interventions through the reporting system.

Reporting System for Suspicion of Child Abuses

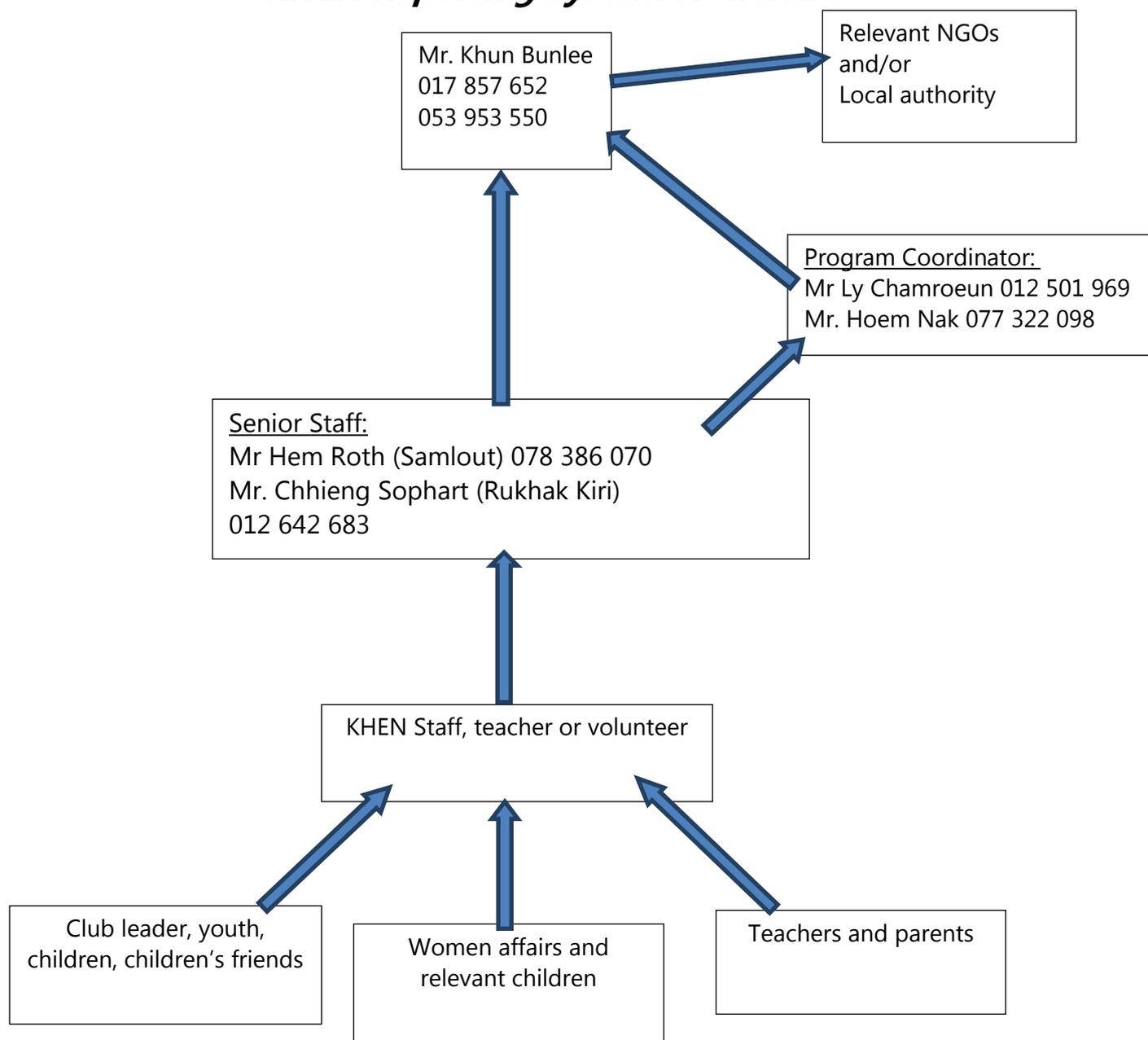
Toolkit for reporting alleged abuse

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult tells you they are being, or have been, abused:

- Listen to and accept what the person says.
- Do not investigate, and do not inform, question or confront the alleged abuser.
- Take the alleged abuse seriously.
- Reassure them person that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Let them know you need to tell someone else. Do not promise total confidentiality.
- Let the person speak freely but do not press for information.
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Record immediately and carefully what you have heard. Include the place, date and time of your conversation and any incident disclosed, the first name of the person only and a brief outline of what was said or what occurred.

The below chart sets out the reporting procedure for concerns regarding the mistreatment of children. Reporting begins with the individual who witnesses the alleged abuse, **who may be a youth worker, a parent or another child**. This person has a duty both moral and legal to report the abuse. The first step in the reporting process is for the individual to alert a staff member or volunteer about what they have seen. The staff member or volunteer will then refer the complaint to senior staff. At this point senior staff may choose to notify the program coordinator. From here the director of KHEN Mr. Khun Bunlee will be notified. If required Mr. Khun Bunlee will notify the relevant NGOs and/or local authority.

KHEN Reporting System Flowchart



KHEN distinguishes between internal and external instances of abuse

Abuse that occurs within the organization

KHEN has clearly stated about the conditions and penalties concerning child abuses in its recruitment and job contract. If KHEN finds any staff member who has breached the conditions stipulated their contract will be terminated immediately, and the case will be reported to relevant authority for further procedures.

Abuse identified outside the organization

KHEN has trained some key persons within its target areas for them to be able to provide interventions and legal assistance in child abuse cases. In addition, KHEN has also formed a list for referrals to network partners such as communities, school principals, teachers, local authority and relevant local institutions in support of child abuse cases.

Legal Duties and Responsibilities

Any individual who engages with children must adhere to KHEN policies and is subject to legal responsibilities requiring:

- Written consent for child's involvement in any activities, for referral and/or stay
- Referral letter to transfer a child to centre or community
- Approval letter for working with children such as for collecting information, interviewing, taking and using children pictures.

As an individual working with KHEN you must remember that you have been entrusted with the responsibility to protect children from harm. This means that:

- 1- *The interests of the child must be paramount*
- 2- *You will not place children in situations where harm may occur*
 - a. *This harm may be physical, psychological or otherwise*
- 3- *You must abide by Cambodian Law when interacting with children, fostering an environment of respect, free of discrimination*
- 4- *You have a duty to nurture the potential of each child by promoting their continuing education*
- 5- *You will create a space that empowers children to express their opinions and concerns.*

Statement to be signed by staff and colleagues

All staff, volunteers and relevant people must read and sign this policy indicating understanding and compliance with KHEN's Child Protection Policy. Any staff member found to be breaching the code of behaviour will be subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in the KHEN staff handbook and staff contracts.

Review

This policy will be updated annually according to feedback provided by donors, government policy and law and practical experience. In addition, monthly follow-up evaluations into the effectiveness of the child protection policy will be conducted.

Evaluating the implementation of the child protection policy will be done through community meetings, with village chiefs, commune leaders, local authority, NGOs and relevant partners. The management committee will evaluate (monthly, trimester, semester) through meetings, reporting and by using check list of questions, observation, discussion with children, community, teachers and students. Real cases and interventions given are noted.

Agreed by:

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