



Child Protection Policy

of

Bhutan Media Foundation

Thimphu, Bhutan
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1. Purpose

The Bhutan Media Foundation is dedicated to safeguarding the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of all children engaged with our work. This policy seeks to prevent and address any form of abuse, exploitation, or neglect affecting children in BMF programmes, activities, media content, or collaborations. It is guided by *The Child Care and Protection Act of Bhutan 2011* and other relevant national child protection frameworks.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- 2.1 All BMF staff, consultants, volunteers, interns, and contractors.
- 2.2 All partners, vendors, and media professionals working with or on behalf of BMF.
- 2.3 All BMF activities, including workshops, media productions, field visits, digital platforms, and community engagement.

3. Key Principles

- 3.1 **Best Interest of the Child:** All actions concerning children will prioritize their best interests.
- 3.2 **Zero Tolerance:** BMF maintains zero tolerance for any form of child abuse or exploitation.
- 3.3 **Confidentiality and Dignity:** All information regarding children will be treated confidentially and respectfully.
- 3.4 **Non-Discrimination:** Every child, regardless of gender, background, or ability, has equal rights to protection.
- 3.5 **Do No Harm:** All BMF activities must be designed and implemented to prevent any risk of harm to children.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 *Child:* Any person below the age of 18 years.
- 4.2 *Child Abuse:* All forms of physical or mental violence, injury, neglect, maltreatment, or exploitation, including sexual abuse, as defined in *The Child Care and Protection Act of Bhutan 2011*.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Executive Director: Oversee implementation and designate a Child Protection Focal Person at BMF.

5.2 Child Protection Focal Person: Act as the main contact for concerns, maintain confidential records, and liaise with the National Commission for Women and Children and relevant authorities.

5.3 All Staff and Partners: Understand and follow this Policy, participate in training, and report any concerns immediately.

6. Code of Conduct

All individuals covered by this Policy must:

6.1 Treat children with respect, care, and fairness.

6.2 Never engage in any form of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.

6.3 Avoid being alone with a child in isolated situations.

6.4 Obtain consent from parents/guardians before interviews, photos, or filming involving children.

6.5 Use children's stories, names, and images responsibly—ensuring privacy and dignity.

6.6 Protect children from online harm by following the National Child Online Protection guidelines.

7. Safe Recruitment

7.1 All job advertisements and contracts will include a child protection statement.

7.2 Reference and background checks will be conducted for roles involving interaction with children.

7.3 Roles and responsibilities will include specific child protection obligations.

8. Reporting and Response Procedure

8.1 Immediate Action: Ensure the child's safety first.

8.2 Report: Inform the Child Protection Focal Person immediately (within 24 hours).

8.3 Record: The Child Protection Focal Person documents the concern factually and confidentially.

8.4 Referral: The Child Protection Focal Person refers the case to the NCWC, the police, or relevant agencies as per the Child Care and Protection Act and the SOP.

8.5 Support: Provide the child with appropriate care, protection, and psychosocial support.

8.6 Confidentiality: Maintain strict confidentiality at all stages.

9. Media Content Involving Children

9.1 Obtain written consent from parents/guardians for interviews, photos, or video recordings.

9.2 Do not disclose identifying details of children in sensitive cases.

9.3 Use child-friendly, non-sensational language and ensure dignity in all media coverage.

9.4 Apply online safety measures when sharing content involving children.

10. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

10.1 All reports and records will be securely stored and only accessible to authorised personnel.

10.2 Information will be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis or as required by law.

11. Whistleblowing and Non-Retaliation

11.1 Staff and partners reporting child protection concerns in good faith will be protected from retaliation.

11.2 Any form of intimidation or reprisal will lead to disciplinary action.

12. Disciplinary Measures

Violations of this Policy, including failure to report concerns or misuse of children's information, will result in disciplinary action, including possible termination and legal reporting.

13. Online Safety

The Foundation will adhere to the *Child Online Protection Guidelines for Bhutan* and the *Media Guidelines for Reporting on Women and Children* to safeguard children in all digital content and online interactions.

14. Partnerships and Third Parties

14.1 All partner agreements and vendor contracts must include child protection clauses.

14.2 Partners are required to report any child protection incidents immediately to BMF's Child Protection Focal Person.

14.3 BMF may suspend or terminate partnerships if standards are breached.

15. Monitoring, Review, and Learning

15.1 The Child Protection Focal Person will provide annual updates to the Executive Director and the Board.

15.2 This Policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if there are legal or organisational changes.

16. Referenced Acts and Policies

- Child Care and Protection Act of Bhutan (2011)
- Child Care and Protection Rules and Regulations (2015, Revised)
- Standard Operating Procedures for Child Protection Case Management (NCWC, 2021)
- Guidelines on the Protection of Child Victims and Witnesses in Bhutan (NCWC/UNICEF, 2024)
- NCWC Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Response Guidelines
- Child Online Protection (COP) Guidelines for Bhutan (GovTech/ITU/UNICEF, 2023)
- National Plan of Action for Child Protection (NCWC, 2019–2023)
- Youth Friendly Health Services and Psychosocial Support Guidelines (Ministry of Health)
- Media Guidelines for Reporting on Women and Children (NCWC; BMF)



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