

# **CHILD FRIENDLY MEDIA POLICY**

## GOAL

**ENSURE HIGH ETHICAL VALUES IN MEDIA INCLUDING SAFE & FAIR TREATMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

## ISSUES

1) The organisation is often in a situation of public education and needs to provide advance guidance to its staff working with the public or in a position to produce media and educational materials.

2) The members of the media are often faced with children in capturing and managing information. Children and young people are also an important part of the audience. Children are often eager to contribute to media output but many lack the judgment necessary to assess the longer-term impact it may have on their lives.

There are a few steps to provide staff with easy and applicable child protection guidelines. This policy template hopes to help media and organisations working in the development sector and in the media in this regard.

## STANDARD POLICY STATEMENT

Given the above and in recognition of its commitment to quality information education and communication, the staff of the organisation acknowledges both its right of freedom of expression and its obligation to act in a professional way and to adhere to strict ethical principles and international standards of conduct, specifically to:

- Respect the right of the public to be informed as a fundamental value in building an open, transparent and democratic society
- Apply the need for fairness to everyone: whether the person concerned is a public figure or an ordinary citizen, he/she has the right to be dealt with in a fair way.
- Respect standards of taste and decency; exercise sensitivity for the welfare of minors; do not intrude into private grief and distress unless justified by public interest considerations.
- Not use the media position for personal gain or to assert influence on others.
- Not be influenced by vested interests, whether they are commercial, political, governmental or non-governmental.
- Be honest, fair, impartial, independent, respect the rights of others, respect human rights, constantly pursue accuracy, be tolerant, put a high value on individuals' honor, maintain decency, have strong values, and, exercise moderation and common sense.
- Cultivate and defend the public right to receive information about issues of public interest.
- Be responsible and constantly mindful not to impair public interests.
- Inform, educate, entertain and enrich the lives of readers, listeners, viewers or browsers.

**‘All children and young people,  
regardless of age, disability, gender, racial  
or ethnic origin, religious belief and sexual identity  
have a right to protection from harm or abuse.**

**Their interests and safety must take priority over any  
editorial requirement.’**

## **CHILD FRIENDLY POLICY STATEMENT**

Media personnel and contractors must ensure that the physical and emotional welfare and the dignity of children / young people are protected during the making and broadcast of media and online content, irrespective of any consent given by them or by a parent / guardian.

Media personnel and contractors must ensure that children and young people are not caused unnecessary anxiety or distress by their involvement in media outputs, activities or broadcasts. Their involvement must be clearly editorially justified and support should be given to them where necessary.

Media personnel and contractors must balance the responsibility to protect children and young people from unsuitable content with their rights to freedom of expression and freedom to receive information.

Any material produced must be suitable for a general audience including children unless specified for a target audience, and care taken in its distribution and format. Parental guidance notice may be required in these cases.

## STANDARD EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

- Respect copyright of audio, visual materials and reports from other sources
- Protect confidential sources of sensitive information.
- Not accept money, paid trips, gifts or bribes from sources he/she covers. Accepting gifts compromises impartiality, or the appearance thereof.
- Be accountable, for your actions - Admit errors, correct them and apologize when necessary. Rectify any information found or likely to be harmfully inaccurate.
- Not manipulate audio, video or interactive information for illegal or unethical purposes.
- Not allow personal beliefs or commitments to undermine accuracy, fairness and independence.

## STANDARD EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

- Not libel, slander, or engage in malicious misinterpretation.
- Not originate and reject material that encourages discrimination on the grounds of race, color, creed, gender, language, political affiliations, social origins, physical or mental condition, or sexual orientation.
- Not distort the meaning of people's words by distorting quotations or their sequence.
- Not, as a rule, obtain information through undercover means such as false identity, hidden microphones and cameras, spying, infiltrating, or misleading reasons about the news coverage.
- Not violate people's right to privacy or endanger their lives. Not intrude into private grief and distress, unless justified by public interest considerations.
- Try to ensure that life threatening, anti-social or criminal behavior does not encourage copycat actions.

## **CHILD FRIENDLY EDITORIAL PROCEDURES**

The staff and contractors are expected to exercise good parental judgment at all times when dealing with children and or broadcasting information to children.

Children have the right to know the truth – unless it is clearly defined that the information may affect them in a negative way.

The staff and contractors must obtain the consent of the child or young person and respect any refusal to take part in the media activities. In deciding whether a child can give consent, the stage of development and degree of understanding as well as their age should be taken into account.

The staff and contractors must ensure that when necessary, the parent/guardian give informed consent.

## **CHILD FRIENDLY EDITORIAL PROCEDURES**

The staff and contractors should not normally identify children when featuring illegal or criminal behavior and respect anonymity and confidentiality.

It is advisable to have a third party present, such as a relative, family friend, or teacher, when sensitive issues are being discussed with a child

In the course of our work if the staff and contractors of the organization suspect a child may be at risk, or are alerted by a young person to a child welfare issue (including allegations against staff) the situation must be referred immediately to the management or person in charge - who can help manage the situation with the relevant authorities.

Staff needs to be informed of the tell-tale signs of abuse and how to recognize them.

## **SANCTIONS**

- Any staff or contractor not abiding by the policy needs to be informed rapidly and can be dismissed on the assessment of the case by management.
- Any staff or contractor not abiding by the policy will be dismissed if the staff or contractor repeats the behavior despite warnings from management.
- Staff will be dismissed automatically if proved to commit harassing, violent or threatening behavior or engaging in illegal activities that harm children.

## **PROCEDURES**

- The organization agrees to inform all staff and contractors and to have readily available detailed information on the related policies in the office.
- The staff and contractors of the organisation must agree and abide by the various policies prior to engaging in media activities and in particular those that involve children and specially children with disabilities.
- Specific guidelines may be provided by the management for specific projects.

## **EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT:**

This agreement is made between contracting (A) and the contracted (B) parties:

Mr. /Ms \_\_\_\_\_ (B)

Party B agrees to follow the conditions and regulations stated in this document.

Party B (name/title):

Signed as agreed:

Date / Location

Party A (name/title):

This agreement was discussed and agreed as valid from the signed date.

Party A (name / title):

Signed as agreed:

Date / Location

This agreement can be extended on the decision of the management.

**“ Everyone has the right to the freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”.**

**The Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)**



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