

Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Pragati Gramodyog evam Samaj Kalyan Sansthan (PGS) is committed to safeguarding all children and vulnerable adults from all types of harmful abuse, neglect, and exploitation in any form at all times. We are committed to creating and nurturing an environment where potential risks are easily and immediately identified and managed in a uniform, coherent and comprehensive manner. There must be clear, robust and effective processes and procedures implemented across the organisation at all field offices.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the set of internal facing, business critical, policies, procedures and practice that organisations employ to ensure that their organisations are safe. Safeguarding extends to protecting people, including children and at-risk adults and staff, from harm that arises from coming into contact with the organisation's staff or programmes. In addition, Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding is the responsibility that an organisation ensures that their employees and volunteers, partners, vendors, operations and programmes do no harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults (together referred to as 'vulnerable people' under this policy); that they do not expose them to the risk of discrimination, neglect, harm and abuse; and that any concerns the organisation has about the safety of vulnerable people within the communities in which they work, are dealt with and reported to the appropriate authorities. It is also the responsibility that the organisation has for protecting its employees and volunteers when they are vulnerable, for example, when ill or at risk of harm or abuse.

Definition

Abuse

Abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes does, or fails to do, which directly or indirectly harms or damages the prospect of a safe and healthy development / environment. In addition, it is any action that intentionally harms or injures another person.

RECOGNITION OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of an adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect an adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Vulnerable Adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults.

Types of Abuse:-

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a Vulnerable Adult.

Psychological Abuse

Including in this are, emotional abuse, threats, deprivation of contact, humiliation, intimidation, coercion, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a Vulnerable Adult or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the Vulnerable Adult is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving Vulnerable Adults in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging Vulnerable Adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Financial and material Abuse

Covering exploitation and pressure in connection to will's, property, inheritance or financial transactions.

Neglect or acts of omissions

Included in this are ignoring medical or physical care needs, withholding of medication or adequate nutrition and failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services.

Discriminatory Abuse

Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. It can be a feature of any form of abuse of an adult. It can result from situations that exploit a person's vulnerability by treating the person in a way that excludes them from opportunities they should have as equal citizens, for example, education, health, justice and access to services and protection.

Everyone has the right to be treated equally and express and practice their beliefs and values.

What does Discriminatory Abuse look like?

Symptoms and signs can be, but are not limited to:

1. Unequal treatment due to caste, class, race, gender, religion, age, sexuality, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, belief.
2. Verbal abuse, inappropriate language, slurs (an act of speaking indistinctly so that sounds or words run into one another or a tendency to speak in such a way), harassment and deliberate exclusion
3. Denial of basic human and civil rights e.g. allowing people to follow their own spiritual or cultural beliefs or choice about their own sexuality
4. Failure to meet and take into account religious and cultural needs of an individual
5. Racist graffiti or bringing racist material (magazines, leaflets) into the vulnerable individual's personal and/or professional spaces
6. Lack of choice
7. Lack of privacy and dignity
8. Lack of personal belongings
9. Use of punishment by withholding eatables or general utility materials
10. Tendency for withdrawal and isolation
11. Expression of anger or frustration or fear and anxiety
12. Refused access to services or being excluded inappropriately

13. Verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or inappropriate use of language related to a protected characteristic
14. Denying access to communication aids, not allowing access to an interpreter, signer or lip-reader
15. Harassment or deliberate exclusion on account of caste, class, race, gender, religion, age, sexuality, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, belief.
16. Denying basic rights to healthcare, education, employment and criminal justice relating to caste, class, race, gender, religion, age, sexuality, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, belief.
17. Substandard service provision relating to caste, class, race, gender, religion, age, sexuality, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, belief.

The examples and indicators of discriminatory abuse may take the form of any of the other types of abuse. The difference is that the abuse is motivated by discriminatory attitudes, feelings or behaviour towards an individual.

SCOPE

PGS has put in place this policy to set out clear expectations of behaviours inside and outside the workplace. It is to be used in conjunction with the Code of Conduct and is applicable to:

- All staff contracted by PGS
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to PGS, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians
- All family members and acquaintances of staff members of PGS

PGS staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to fostering and embedding a culture and environment that actively prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a PGS staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member
- All those who work for PGS and/or who represent the organisation in any capacity are required to sign a formal declaration confirming that they have read and understood the policy and agree to comply with its requirements at all times.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with PGS. This policy will be guided by the principles of 'do no harm'. It sets out PGS's approach to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with PGS

- The design and implementation of PGS's programmes and activities

The policy lays out the commitments made by PGS, and informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION (PSEA)

PGS believe all people have a right to live their lives free from sexual violence. PGS will not tolerate its employees, volunteers, consultants, partners or any other representatives associated with the delivery of its work carrying out any form of sexual harassment, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. PGS has Zero Tolerance on SEA, and will comply with international standards on the prevention of SEA, including:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UN Declaration of Human Rights
- UN Secretary General's Bulletin on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

PGS COMMITMENTS ON PSEA

PGS shall maintain specific standards that reiterate and reinforce existing general obligations under the UN Secretary General's bulletin on SEA including:

1. Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse constitute acts of serious misconduct and are therefore grounds for disciplinary measures, including dismissal.
2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally.
3. Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited.
4. Sexual relationships between PGS's staff and beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics, undermine the credibility and integrity of the work of PGS and are prohibited.
5. Where a PGS's staff member develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual exploitation or sexual abuse by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established reporting mechanisms.
6. PGS staff are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Managers at all levels have a particular responsibility to support and develop systems that maintain such an environment.

The standards set out above are not intended to be an exhaustive list. Other types of sexually exploitive or sexually abusive behaviour may be grounds for administrative action or disciplinary measures, including dismissal.

IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT

Implementing the procedures included in this policy requires commitment and oversight at every level of the organisation. Although safeguarding is the responsibility of all representatives of PGS, specific responsibilities are designated to staff at different levels of the organisation to ensure that

safeguarding measures are monitored regularly and that any new risks are identified and addressed promptly. PGS has a designated Safeguarding Committee who is responsible for:

- Receiving all concerns about the conduct of PGS personnel and associated persons that constitute a breach of this policy; where there is a concern/disclosure of harm or abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, whether or not it may be criminal in nature and require notification to external agencies.
- Monitoring the complaints mechanisms
- Maintaining clear records of any concerns that are reported and the actions taken to address these concerns.
- Promoting awareness of the policy and processes throughout the organisation.
- Acting as a source of support and information for all staff on safeguarding issues.
- Ensuring that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of any process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to concerns and subsequent case management are shared on a need to know basis only and must be kept secure at all times.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The Safeguarding Committee comprises of a Safeguarding Officer, a two member committee and an external member. The Safeguarding Committee shall perform its duties with full integrity and abide by the Policy Standards under all circumstances.

Safeguarding Officer/ Safeguarding Focal Point: Ms. Aakanksha Srivastava (Contact No.: +91-8009902168)

Committee: Mrs. Shashi Kala (Contact No.: +91-8009902169) and Mr. Subedar Singh (Contact No.: +91-8009902172)

External: Dr. Kavita Agarwal

PROCEDURAL MECHANISM

Procedure for Lodging a Complaint

A complaint under this policy may be lodged with any member of the Safeguarding Committee. However, if the complaint has been made to PGS, it shall be forwarded to the Safeguarding Committee.

Where an oral complaint is made to employer or PGS or Safeguarding Committee or any of its members, or the Special Officer, it shall be duty of the Safeguarding Committee to reduce the said complaint in writing and read out the complaint to the complainant and obtain the signature thereon of the complainant.

A complaint shall be only after obtaining a written consent of the aggrieved person or, in the case of her/his death, the heirs or legal representative, authorizing the organization or individual to file the complaint on his/her or their behalf.

Procedures before that Safeguarding Committee

On hearing of an allegation or concern, the first action is to ensure that the alleged survivor/victim is safe and has access to appropriate physical and/or psychosocial care. The safety and care of the alleged survivor/victim is critical within the first 24 hours immediately following an incident.

All allegations or concerns shall be recorded immediately and the safeguarding committee must initiate its first sitting within 24 hours of the complaint. The Safeguarding Committee, upon receiving the information in written form, shall draw up an 'Individual Protection Plan' within a period of 3 days.

One receiving a complaint of sexual harassment, the Internal Complaint Committee shall conduct an enquiry into the complaint by interviewing the complainant and defendant and any witness, determining if there are individuals with direct or indirect information regarding the complaint, and, if so, by interviewing them or by obtaining information from such other persons and making such enquiries as it thinks fit.

The Safeguarding Committee shall complete its enquiry within ninety days from the date of complaint, record in writing its finding and take appropriate action on the basis of the findings

During the course of enquiry, the complainant and the defendant shall be called separately to ensure freedom of expression and an atmosphere free of intimidation: Provided that the complainant shall be entitled to accompany one representative during the enquiry.

All the complaints made shall be confidential and it shall be the duty of members of the Safeguarding Committee to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

Responsibilities of PGS staff

Child safeguarding

PGS staff and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Sexually abuse or exploit children
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking

Adult safeguarding

PGS staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults
- Subject an at-risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect

Additionally, PGS staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an PGS staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member

Individuals within the organisation must be alert to the potential abuse of Vulnerable Adults both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of the organisation. The organisation should recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving Vulnerable Adults and where there are concerns about a Vulnerable Adult's welfare. There is an expected responsibility for all members of the organisation to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a Vulnerable Adult by reporting the abuse by members within/outside the organization to the Safeguarding Committee of PGS within 24 hours of the incident.

WHAT TO DO IF VULNERABLE ADULTS TALK TO YOU ABOUT ABUSE OR NEGLECT

It is recognised that a Vulnerable Adult may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations YOU MUST:

1. Listen carefully to the Vulnerable Adult. DO NOT directly question the Vulnerable Adult
2. Give the Vulnerable Adult time and attention.
3. Allow the Vulnerable Adult to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a Vulnerable Adult who is freely recalling significant events.
4. Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the Vulnerable Adult's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed for reporting and evidence.
5. Use the Vulnerable Adult's own words where possible.
6. Reassure the Vulnerable Adult that: they have done the right thing in telling you; they have not done anything wrong;
7. Tell the Vulnerable Adult what you are going to do next and explain that you will need to get help to keep him/her safe.
8. DO NOT ask the Vulnerable Adult to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

CODE OF CONDUCT

As a representative of PGS, I commit to abiding by this Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy which requires all individuals to:

- Maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct.
- Be aware of potential abuses by maintaining dialogue with program participants.
- Encourage program participants to raise concerns about abuse by clarifying the procedure which they should take to do so.
- Affirm the dignity of program participants and such that they are listened to, respected, understood and valued, even when rigid societal structures (caste, class, etc.) or societal norms (gender, age, etc.) suggest otherwise.
- Guarantee that program participants fully understand the nature of their participation in any projects or programs.
- Promote an organisational culture in which abuses do not go unchallenged and complicity in violation of these codes is condemned. Managers have a particular responsibility to support and develop systems that maintain such an environment.
- Organise and plan workplace spaces and activities to minimise risks.
- Implement a reporting procedure which enables staff and associated individuals, as well as associated individuals, to raise concerns about abuse or breach of policy.
- Take seriously any concerns raised about abuse, support any individual who raises such a concern, and comply fully with investigations of abuse.
- Ensure the protection of program participants who may be the subject of this abuse and seriously take into account the needs and wishes of the survivor of abuse.

Limitations on behaviour

Employees and associated individuals must not:

1. Hit or otherwise physically abuse program participants
2. Develop physical/sexual relations with program participants. - Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence
3. Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual favours.
4. Use language or give suggestions which are inappropriate, abusive or offensive with children or program participants.
5. Behave in a sexually provocative manner.
6. Develop inappropriate relationships with program participants that may be considered exploitive. - Sexual exploitation constitute acts of serious misconduct and are therefore grounds for disciplinary measures, including dismissal.
7. Place a program participant in a risky situation.
8. Take a program participant home with you, especially to stay overnight and especially if nobody else will be present.
9. Do things for program participants of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
10. Condone, or participate in, illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviour of program participants
11. Act in a manner which shames, humiliates, belittles or degrades program participants or otherwise perpetrates emotional abuse.
12. Discriminate against or favour particular programme participants to the exclusion of others

13. Use the organisation's computer or other equipment to view, download, create or distribute inappropriate material.

DEFINITIONS

Program participant / beneficiary

Someone who directly receives goods or services from PGS's program. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the NGO serves, and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

Child

A person below the age of 18

Harm

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights

Psychological harm

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

Safeguarding

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes. One donor definition is as follows:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programs, partners and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts program participants and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

Sexual abuse

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

Survivor

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

At risk adult

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

DATA PROTECTION – Ensure that this form, once completed, is stored in a locked file and/or is destroyed once the information is no longer needed.

Complainant information

Full name:	Date of disclosure
Telephone:	Address: (if they want to disclose)

The complaint (Use the complainant's own words and ask questions to get as much important information as possible. At a minimum, the complainant should indicate who, what, how, where and when the complaint is about)

Date of the incident (when): _____

Date of disclosure: _____

Full name of the survivor (who) – fill only if consent is given:

Age of the survivor: _____
Where: _____

What happened: _____

Was the concern:
Observed Reported by a child/adult Reported by a Third Party

If reported by a third party, please state their name & relationship to the child/adult _____

Information about the alleged perpetrator

Name of accused: _____
Position held by accused: _____
Organization for which the accused work(s): _____
Relationship to the survivor: _____

Current residence of the accused (if known): _____

Gender: _____

Physical description of accused: _____

Service provision

Has the survivor been informed of the available medical care?	Yes	No
If yes, has the survivor sought medical treatment after the incident?	Yes	No
If yes, who provided treatment? _____ _____		
If no, provide information to the complainant regarding the nearest medical care and psychosocial support services, or get the consent of the survivor to pass on their details to refer them.		
If a criminal offence has occurred, has the survivor contacted police?	Yes	No
If yes, what has been done? _____ _____ _____		
Has the survivor sought legal advice?	Yes	No

Consent, confidentiality and next steps

Explain to the complainant that you are under an obligation to report allegations of safeguarding and sexual exploitation and abuse to donors but that identifying information about the complainant, the survivor and the name of the alleged perpetrator will not be shared *unless otherwise indicated*.

However, for the purposes of an internal investigation, the name and contact details of the complainant will be necessary.

Complainant consents to sharing name and contact details for investigation purposes:

Yes No

Inform the complainant that the organization conducting the investigation will keep in contact with them to keep them informed of the progress of the complaint.

Name of the Safeguarding Focal Point:

Job title:

Location: