

EL SHADDAI CHARITABLE TRUST

**CHILD SAFEGUARD POLICY
(EL SHADDAI CHARITABLE TRUST)**

Doc. No.: PL - 01

Rev. No.: 02

Rev. Date: 05/05/2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

B. POLICY GUIDELINES - CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

C. AWARENESS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

D. GUIDELINES ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

E. REPORTING AND RESPONDING

F. PROCEDURE - STAFF/VOLIUNTEERS RECRUITMENT

G. COMMUNICATION ABOUT CHILDREN

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Designation

Managing Director

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EL SHADDAI CHARITABLE TRUST

CHILD SAFEGUARD POLICY (EL SHADDAI CHARITABLE TRUST)	Doc. No.: PL - 01
--	--------------------------

Rev. No.: 02	Rev. Date: 05/05/2021
---------------------	------------------------------

El Shaddai Charitable Trust affirms that children are persons with rights. Through this policy, El Shaddai Charitable Trust expresses its determination and commitment to prevent any type of abuse of children and ensure a safe, happy, peaceful and protected environment for every child to grow and develop to realise their full potential.

The policy covers all persons, volunteers and staff, becoming binding for all those associated with El Shaddai, in **protecting, promoting and securing** the rights of all children at all the times, at all levels and in whatever capacity one operates. El Shaddai Charitable Trust has a ZERO TOLERANCE towards any forms of child abuse. The above persons are expected to show commitment to the policy and follow the guidelines and procedures of the Child Safeguard Policy in their involvement with El Shaddai.

A. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1. According to the convention on the rights of the child (CRC), a **child** is a person who is has not attained the age of 18 years unless under the relevant applicable law to the child, majority is attained earlier. In the context of El Shaddai, a child is being benefited from our homes, schools, slum schools, centre, shelters, etc.

2. **Child Protection** is a term that describes policies, standards, and practices that seek to protect children from harm- physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual or any other negligence. Harm can be caused by child's In-charges, care workers, teachers, staff and volunteers who are directly working with children. It may also include staff who may not be involved directly with childcare but working in the organization; and visitors, outsiders who come in contact with children.

B. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICYGUIDELINES

a. **Child abuse** is a state of emotional, physical, economic and sexual maltreatment administered to a person below the age of eighteen and is a globally prevalent phenomenon. Child abuse has serious physical and psycho-social consequences which adversely affect the health and overall well-being of a child.

b. El Shaddai, as part of its objectives, run a number of homes in whom children are provided care and education.

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CHILD SAFEGUARD POLICY (EL SHADDAI CHARITABLE TRUST)	Doc. No.: PL - 01
--	--------------------------

Rev. No.: 02	Rev. Date: 05/05/2021
---------------------	------------------------------

c. The “**Child Abuse prevention policy**” is being adopted in El Shaddai to prevent child abuse and to deal with incidents of child abuse, if any, in its homes, schools and other places.

In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires: “Child Abuse” (source of reference: Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India) means:

i. Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is the inflicting of physical injury upon a child. This may include burning, hitting, punching, shaking, kicking, beating or otherwise harming a child.

ii. Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse is inappropriate sexual behavior with a child. It includes fondling a child's genitals, making the child fondle the adult's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism and sexual exploitation.

iii. Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is also known as verbal abuse, mental abuse, and psychological maltreatment. It includes acts or the failure to act, by teachers or In - charges/caretakers that have caused or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental trauma. This can include teachers/Incharges/caretakers using extreme and/or unusual forms of punishment, such as confinement in a closet or dark room or being tied to a chair for long periods of time or threatening or terrorizing a child. Less severe acts, but no less damaging, are belittling or rejecting treatment, using disrespectful terms to describe the child.

iv. Neglect: It is the failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Neglect can be physical, educational, or emotional. Physical neglect can include not providing adequate food or clothing, appropriate medical care, supervision, or proper weather protection (heat or cold) for the child residing in El Shaddai’s homes, centres, shelters and schools.

C. AWARENESS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

We will ensure that all staff and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children. Raise awareness of child abuse and its risks for staff and partners.

El Shaddai Charitable Trust responds to child abuse concerns keeping the following principles in mind:

1. The development of an open and responsive culture in all El Shaddai Charitable Trust and Partner programs and within the communities we work with is essential for protecting children.

2. **Safety and security of the child is paramount.** Hence, all steps necessary for the same would be ensured by El Shaddai Charitable Trust.

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CHILD SAFEGUARD POLICY (EL SHADDAI CHARITABLE TRUST)	Doc. No.: PL - 01
--	--------------------------

Rev. No.: 02	Rev. Date: 05/05/2021
---------------------	------------------------------

3. All El Shaddai Charitable Trust, programs and initiatives shall maintain an open culture where staff, children, parents or guardians feel comfortable to express concerns about child protection issues and issues of dealing with children and the concerns will be taken seriously and treated sensitively.

4. All El Shaddai Charitable Trust, programs and initiatives will organize regular awareness raising programs to enhance the awareness, understanding and acceptance of the Child Safeguard Policy and develop attitudes and behavior that are congruent with the intentions and objectives of this policy.

5. All further steps to address the child abuse concerns would be in the **best interest of the child**.

6. All investigation into suspected or actual child abuse cases would be **strictly confidential and on a need to know basis**.

7. A person thought, but not yet proven to be responsible for the actions that are the subject of the concern, incident or complaint that is being reported will be referred to as the *Alleged Perpetrator*.

D. GUIDELINES ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Guidelines to be implemented in schools, centers, slum schools, day care centres, homes and shelters where education or learning are being impacted by employees of El Shaddai:

a. Children are not to be subjected to corporal punishment and steps to be ensured that they receive education in an environment of freedom and dignity, free from fear.

b. **Corporal punishment** involves, rapping on the knuckles, running on the school ground, kneeling down for hours, standing up for long hours, sitting like a chair, and beaten with a scale, pinched and slapped, child sexual abuse, torture, locking up children alone in classrooms, 'electric shock' and all other acts leading to insult, humiliation, physical and mental injury, and even death.

c. All children are to be informed through campaigns and publicity drives that they have a right to speak against corporal punishment and bring it to the notice of the authorities. They must be given confidence to make complaints and not to accept punishment as a 'normal' activity of the school.

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--	--------------------------

Rev. No.: 02	Rev. Date: 05/05/2021
---------------------	------------------------------

d. El Shaddai has a forum (Children Management Meeting - CMM) where children can express their views. The authorized person has to conduct monthly CMM in the children's home to review the complaints and take action.

e. The CMM's are to be encouraged to act immediately on any complaints made by children without postponement of the issue and wait for a more grave injury to be caused. In other words, the CMM's need not use their discretion to decide on the grievousness of the complaint.

f. A suggestion box where children can drop their complaints, even if anonymous is provided for in each school/home/shelters/centres.

g. Parents as well as children are to be empowered to speak out against corporal punishment without any fear that it would have adverse effect on children's participation in schools.

E. REPORTING AND RESPONDING:

El Shaddai Charitable Trust takes all concerns raised seriously, be it in El Shaddai Charitable Trust, community development program or other initiatives and takes appropriate action. El Shaddai Charitable Trust has defined clear reporting and responding procedures, internal communication lines, and the roles and responsibilities of all persons involved.

Set up and adhere to a clear and simple reporting procedure –we will ensure that staff, volunteers and associates and others are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.

Ensure clear action is taken when child abuse is suspected or reported - we will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

Reporting child protection concerns is not an easy thing to do but it is vitally important that everyone understands the need for this to happen as soon as an incident occurs or a concern

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---------------------	------------------------------

comes to light, especially if it involves a Staff, Volunteer or Associate of El Shaddai Charitable Trust.

If any staff member is aware of or suspects any child abuse issue in the institution, he /she is duty bound to report it to the appropriate authority. As it is a mandatory requirement, failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.

Staff members should speak up on any case of abusive behaviour to the appropriate authorities, without gossip mongering (encouraging) or indulging in behaviour that could adversely affect the dignity, character or reputation of the persons concerned.

All forms of child abuse are taken seriously, without exception in all El Shaddai Charitable Trust programs, and are to be responded according to the gravity of the offence. El Shaddai Charitable Trust ensures that there is always a response, regardless of whether the abuse committed is considered large or small. By responding we guarantee that a transparent and fair procedure is followed, so that nobody is falsely convicted and the rights of everyone involved are protected.

As prescribed by law, the institutions, programs or other initiatives of the El Shaddai Charitable Trust will fully cooperate with legal authorities in case of any allegation of child abuse against anyone working in the institutions and will support any ensuing investigation by any recognized authority.

F. STAFF/VOLIUNTEERS RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

a. Employees with direct or regular contact with children shall undergo a screening procedure to check for any child abuse related or any other terrible crime record.

b. The job interview should include specific questions at the first stage on child protection issues to review the applicant's attitude, experience and approach to working with children relevant to the post applied for.

c. During recruitment and induction that the candidate should be clearly told that a Child Safeguard Policy exists and he/she shall be required to be abiding by it.

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---------------------	------------------------------

d. Along with the appointment letter a copy of the Child Safeguard Policy shall be given to the new employee to read and go through it.

All El Shaddai Charitable Trust Institutions, programs and initiatives will ensure that all staff/volunteers and anyone associated with it have understood the Child Safeguard Policy and signs a copy of the same in acceptance and acknowledgement. While signing and executing the Employment Contract the employee declares and agrees that he/she has read the Child Policy and has understood the same and shall abide by the same at all count.

All staff and volunteers involved in any way in any El Shaddai Charitable Trust Institution, program or initiative would be assessed for their Level of Contact with children, based on the frequency, duration, nature and scope of their involvement with children. Accordingly, each would be guided and made aware of the inherent risks and perceptions regarding safe conduct with children as well as helped with safe practices, feedback and help regarding appropriate conduct in any interaction with children.

All initiatives and programs of El Shaddai Charitable Trust should have specific and frequent orientations, inductions and information-sharing sessions so that all concerned are aware of and acknowledge the importance of child protection as a foundational aspect of the culture of each initiative or program.

G. COMMUNICATION ABOUT CHILDREN

a. In its communication and fundraising strategy, El Shaddai may use images and recordings of children and field texts. El Shaddai has a responsibility towards the children that are portrayed and should ensure that children are treated with dignity as human beings with rights, by avoiding the following:

- Inaccurate representation of children through words and images
- Communication that shames, degrades or victimizes children
- Taking pictures or statements from children without informed consent
- Depicting children in sexually provocative poses

CHILD PROTECTION IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY AND DRIVEN BY DUTY OF CARE

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