



Uttaran

Child Protection Policy

Community Mobilization

Poverty Eradication

Environmental Justice

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Update-1 Date: July 2013 Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Dr Nazrul Islam Chairman
Recommended by	Haridas Malakar Coordinator (Finance and Accounts)	
Update-2 Date: July 2017 Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Sarder Md. Rezaul Karim Chairman
Recommended by	Haridas Malakar Coordinator (Finance and Accounts)	
Update-3 Date: 31 March,2021 Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Sarder Md. Rezaul Karim Chairman
Recommended by	Haridas Malakar Coordinator (Finance and Accounts)	
Update-4 Date: January-2026 Approved by on behalf of executive board	Shahidul Islam Director	Sarder Md. Rezaul Karim Chairman
Recommended by	Hasina Parvin, Project Coordinator	

1. BACKGROUND

Uttaran, a leading non-governmental organization (NGO) in the southwestern region of Bangladesh, was established in 1985. The organization is committed to building a society based on equality of gender, class, and caste by empowering disadvantaged people to address their social, environmental, health, economic, and cultural challenges. Uttaran places strong emphasis on creating a safe and enabling environment where children are fully protected from all forms of discrimination, neglect, physical and sexual abuse, and violence. Through the implementation of diverse development and humanitarian projects, Uttaran reaches a large number of beneficiaries, including vulnerable children. To ensure their safety and well-being, the organization has developed a comprehensive Child Protection Policy.

2. INTRODUCTION

Children are among the most vulnerable members of society, and their protection is a shared responsibility of families, communities, and organizations. Every child has the right to grow up in a safe, caring, and supportive environment, free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination. Recognizing this fundamental right, our organization is fully committed to safeguarding the dignity, well-being, and rights of all children who come into contact with our programmes, services, and activities.

This Child Protection Policy outlines our commitment to creating and maintaining an environment where children are respected, valued, and protected at all times. It provides a clear framework to guide the conduct and responsibilities of all staff, volunteers, consultants, and partners, and establishes procedures for preventing, reporting, and responding to any concerns related to child abuse, exploitation, or harm. The policy emphasizes that the best interests of the child must always remain the primary consideration in all decisions and actions.

Our approach to child protection is grounded in the principles of dignity, respect, transparency, and accountability. We recognize that safeguarding children is not only a legal and ethical obligation but also a moral responsibility. Accordingly, this policy is aligned with international standards, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and relevant national laws and regulations on child welfare and protection.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- Ensure that all children are protected from physical, emotional, and sexual harm in every setting and activity.
- Promote awareness, understanding, and shared responsibility for child protection among staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders.
- Establish and maintain clear, confidential, and accessible reporting and response mechanisms for all child protection concerns.
- Foster a culture of accountability, vigilance, and transparency in all interactions involving children.

By committing to these principles and actions, the organization aims to empower children, uphold their rights, and create a safe and protective environment that enables them to thrive, learn, and develop to their fullest potential.

4. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm in all Uttaran programmes, activities, and operations. It reflects Uttaran's commitment to safeguarding the rights, dignity, and well-being of children at all times.

This policy sets out the core principles, guidelines, and obligations that guide Uttaran staff, volunteers, management, partners, and other stakeholders in understanding their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to child protection concerns.

Specifically, this policy outlines Uttaran's:

- Scope of responsibility and accountability in preventing and responding to child abuse and exploitation
- Guiding principles for child protection and safeguarding
- Behavioural standards and expectations when working with or around children, as defined in the Child Protection Code of Conduct
- Clear procedures for reporting, responding to, and managing child protection concerns and incidents
- Risk management approaches to identify, assess, and reduce child protection risks
- Requirements for awareness-raising, capacity building, and training on child protection
- Measures and minimum standards for working safely with partners, contractors, and other external actors
- Definitions of key child protection and safeguarding terms used throughout the policy

This policy applies to all individuals and entities engaged with Uttaran and is intended to ensure a consistent, effective, and child-centred approach to safeguarding across all areas of work.

5. GUIDING POLICIES AND FRAMEWORK

- a. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989, which establishes clear principles to protect all children.
- b. UN Declaration on Social and Legal Principles Relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption, Nationally and Internationally, 1986.
- c. UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, 1959.
- d. National Policy on Children, 1994, for the protection of child rights.
- e. The Hague Convention of 29 May 1993 on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

6. DEFINITIONS

6.1 Child

For the purposes of this document, a “child” is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children.

6.2 Child Abuse

According to the World Health Organization, ‘child abuse’ or ‘maltreatment’ constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development, or dignity, in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.

6.3 Child Rights

Children’s rights are the human rights of children, with particular attention to the protection and care afforded to minors. These include the right to association with both parents, the right to a human identity, and access to basic needs such as food, universal state-provided education, health care, and age-appropriate criminal justice protections. Children are also entitled to equal protection of their civil rights and freedom from discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, disability, color, or other characteristics.

6.4 Child Protection

Child Protection is a broad term that combines philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures; which protects children under care and custody of an organization and individual associated with that organization (in performing institutional roles and responsibilities) from all sorts of harms and exploitation, particularly sexual, physical and psychosocial violence and cruelty.

6.5 Child Participation

Anyone below the age of 18 taking part in a process or playing a role in a process at his/her level, according to their evolving capacities - children and young people thinking for themselves, expressing their views effectively, and interacting in a positive way with other people; involving children in the decisions which affect their lives, the lives of the community and the larger society in which they live.

Child Participation can also be defined as ‘Child participation is about children having the opportunity to express their view, influence decision making process to achieve change. It is the informed process and willing involvement of all children, including the most marginalized and different ages and abilities children.’

6.6 Direct Contact with Children

Being physically present with children in the context of the organization’s activities, whether the contact is occasional or regular, short-term or long-term.

6.7 Indirect Contact with Children

- Having access to information about children through the organization's work, such as names, locations (including addresses), photographs, case studies, or other personal details.
- Providing funding or support to organizations that work directly with children.

6.8 Unaccompanied and Family Separation

Children who are separated from their primary caregivers as a direct result of a disaster, placing them at increased risk of child trafficking, engagement in hazardous labor, juvenile crime, and other forms of exploitation.

6.9 Sexual Exploitation and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Against Children

The risk of sexual abuse, exploitation, or gender-based violence targeting children, particularly adolescent girls and boys, which is often heightened during emergencies or natural disasters.

6.10 Psychosocial Distress and Mental Health Issues

Emotional or psychological challenges faced by children after a disaster, which may manifest as anxiety, excessive attention-seeking, bedwetting, behavioral changes, withdrawal, or other significant alterations in personality and functioning.

6.11 Physical Harm

The risk of injury or death to children during disasters, with marginalized groups including children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and women being particularly vulnerable.

6.12 Involvement of Children for Political Purposes

Situations in which children are exploited for political or violent activities, such as carrying ammunition or participating in acts of terrorism, exposing them to extreme risks including death, injury, psychological trauma, and engagement in criminal activity.

6.13 Deprivation of Basic Needs

The lack of access to essential resources such as food, clean water, shelter, healthcare, and education that children may face during disasters, leading to significant hardship and increased vulnerability.

7. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles guide Uttaran in the implementation of its Child Protection Policy:

- **Zero Tolerance**

Uttaran maintains a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence. Such acts are strictly prohibited under all circumstances.

- **Child Rights and Best Interests of the Child**

All children have the inherent right to protection from abuse, exploitation, and harm, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, socio-economic status, family background, or any other status.

All decisions and actions concerning children shall be guided by the principle of the best interests of the child.

- **Shared Responsibility**

Child protection is a shared responsibility of all Uttaran staff, management, volunteers, partners, contractors, and associates. Everyone has a duty to behave responsibly and to report any actual, suspected, or potential child protection concerns.

- **Risk Management and “Do No Harm”**

While it may not be possible to eliminate all risks, Uttaran is committed to the principle of “do no harm” in all organizational operations. Uttaran will proactively identify, assess, monitor, and mitigate child protection risks in its programmes, activities, and workplaces.

- **Procedural Fairness and Confidentiality**

Uttaran will respond to all child protection concerns and allegations with fairness, confidentiality, impartiality, and sensitivity, ensuring that the rights, dignity, and safety of children, survivors, and all involved parties are respected throughout the process.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

- Uttaran Management shall appoint a Child Protection Focal Point responsible for coordinating child protection measures and receiving reports, complaints, or allegations of child rights violations at all levels of the organization.
- All staff, volunteers, partners, and associates shall be informed of the identity and contact details of the Child Protection Focal Point to ensure timely and accessible reporting.
- This policy shall clearly define reporting timelines, recognizing that child protection concerns must be addressed immediately.
- Reporting mechanisms shall be safe, confidential, accessible, and easy to understand for all relevant stakeholders.
- Both confirmed incidents and suspected or potential risks to children must be reported without delay.
- Individuals who report concerns in good faith shall be protected from retaliation, discrimination, or adverse consequences.
- Reports made with malicious intent or knowingly false allegations shall be managed in accordance with organizational disciplinary procedures, while ensuring due process.
- Uttaran enforces a zero-tolerance policy toward any violation of children’s rights.

- Any staff member, volunteer, partner, or associate found to have violated this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or contractual engagement.

9. SCOPE

This Child Protection Policy applies to all individuals and entities representing, working with, or associated with Uttaran, whether in a permanent, temporary, or voluntary capacity. It is intended to ensure that everyone connected with Uttaran upholds the highest standards of child protection.

The policy applies to, but is not limited to:

- Members of the General Board and Executive Board
- Staff at all levels, including full-time, part-time, and temporary employees
- Volunteers engaged in Uttaran activities, programmes, or events
- Contractors, subcontractors, and consultants providing services to or working on behalf of Uttaran
- Partners, including local and international organizations collaborating with Uttaran
- Visitors to Uttaran offices, project sites, or programme activities
- Any other individuals or groups who come into contact with children while working with, representing, or under the supervision of Uttaran

This policy ensures that all of the above are aware of their responsibilities to protect children and are held accountable for their actions or omissions in relation to child safeguarding.

10. CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT

All Uttaran staff and partner organizations working with children are required to sign and adhere to this Code of Conduct.

What Must Never Be Done

1. Do not physically punish, hit, abuse, or verbally insult children in any way.
2. Do not do anything that humiliates, shames, or degrades a child.
3. Do not show favoritism or bias toward any particular child.
4. Do not use language, gestures, or behavior that is offensive, insulting, or inappropriate toward children.
5. Do not spend extended periods alone with a child.
6. Do not involve children in any relationship or activity that exploits, harms, or abuses them.
7. Do not engage in any sexual activity with a child.
8. Do not engage in sexual activity with anyone under 18 years of age, even if local laws allow a lower age of consent.
9. Do not show children any pornographic or explicit material.
10. Do not involve children in illegal, unsafe, or exploitative activities.
11. While working:
 - Do not ignore others using illegal drugs.
 - Do not consume alcohol or drugs while interacting with or responsible for children.
12. Do not sleep in the same room as a child without parental or guardian consent.

13. Do not invite children met through work to your home or allow them to visit without supervision.
14. Do not transport a child alone in a vehicle.
15. Do not enter a child's home without the presence of a responsible adult.
16. Do not use personal email, social media, phones, or other private communication methods to contact children. Always use official office communication channels, and copy parents or guardians on correspondence.
17. Do not take photos of children involved in Uttaran programs without prior consent, keeping safety and privacy in mind.
18. Do not keep information about child abuse or exploitation secret; always report concerns as per policy.

What Must Be Done

1. Treat children with respect, listen attentively, empower them, and include them in program planning wherever possible.
2. Be aware of situations that may put children at risk and take appropriate preventive action.
3. Ensure interactions with children are transparent and visible; avoid being alone with a child out of sight of others.
4. Staff responsible for working with children must wear appropriate attire for their role.
5. Maintain accountability among colleagues to prevent misconduct or potential abuse.
6. Report any child protection concerns, incidents, or initiatives to the Child Protection Focal Point or line manager.
7. Observe carefully and do not discuss incidents or suspected cases of abuse outside official channels. Maintain confidentiality regarding individuals involved.
8. Follow the Child Protection Checklist for Events and Travel whenever children are present at programs, trips, or events.
9. Encourage teachers to create a positive classroom environment and use this Code of Conduct to prevent harassment. Teachers should also use online resources on child protection and anti-harassment practices.

11. RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

- **Program and Event Risk Assessment**
 - ✓ Uttaran will assess potential risks to children when implementing any program, project, or event.
 - ✓ Risk management strategies will be incorporated into the monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure ongoing assessment and mitigation.
- **Communication and Information Technology**
 - ✓ When communicating with children through information technologies (e.g., online platforms, social media, or digital tools), Uttaran will assess all potential security and protection risks.
 - ✓ Appropriate safety and security measures will be implemented to mitigate these risks.
 - ✓ These measures will be integrated into the monitoring and evaluation framework of the respective project.

- **Participation in Campaigns, Media, and Advocacy**
 - ✓ Prior consent from children and their caregivers must be obtained before their participation in campaigns, media events, consultations, or advocacy activities.
 - ✓ It must be ensured that children and their caregivers are not exposed to exploitation, danger, or undue risk during these activities.
 - ✓ Adequate control and protective measures will be established and documented, with clear instructions to ensure safe participation.

12. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF

- Uttaran ensures its commitment to child protection is integrated into the staff recruitment and selection process.
- A standardized recruitment process will be followed for all employees, board members, officers, interns, and volunteers whether paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time, temporary or long-term who have responsibilities for program implementation or any direct or indirect contact with children.
- The recruitment process aims to:
 - ✓ Hire the most qualified and suitable staff to work with children according to the specific requirements of the role.
 - ✓ Deter potential child abusers from applying and ensure they are not recruited into the organization.
- **Uttaran ensures the following during recruitment:**
 - ✓ No convicted child abuser is employed to work with children, and convicted child abusers are discouraged from applying.
 - ✓ Staff are suitable for the position in terms of qualifications, attitude, and skills.
 - ✓ The best candidate is selected by assessing applicants against predetermined essential and desirable skills.
 - ✓ Each recruitment process evaluates candidates' suitability regarding child protection responsibilities.
 - ✓ All candidates are evaluated based on equal opportunity principles.
 - ✓ Measures are in place to discourage child abusers from applying, reflecting Uttaran's accountability and transparency regarding child protection.

13. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

All Managing Board Members and personnel (staff, volunteers, contractors, and subcontractors) of Uttaran who may have contact with, or are working with, children must:

- Be aware of and comply with the requirements of the Child Protection Policy.
- Participate in child protection induction and regular awareness training, which includes:
 - ✓ Their obligations under the Policy and the Child Protection Code of Conduct.
 - ✓ How to identify, prevent, and report concerns or allegations of child abuse.
- Participate in additional or specialized child protection training or briefings as required, for example, training specific to emergency response contexts.

- Sign a form acknowledging that they have received training/ orientation, understand the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, and agree to abide by them; a copy of this signed form will be maintained in their personal file.
- Uttaran will maintain a training/orientation attendance record for all personnel who have completed child protection training.

14. VISITORS (IF THEY WORK DIRECTLY WITH CHILDREN)

Uttaran’s visitors may include, but are not limited to:

- Partner staff, volunteers, contractors, and subcontractors
- Personnel from other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Individuals working for local or international media organizations, including freelance journalists or photographers

All visitors to Uttaran offices, field projects, programs, or activities must read and sign the Uttaran Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct before interacting with children. Visitors to Uttaran-facilitated project or emergency response locations must always be accompanied by Uttaran staff, partner staff, or designated volunteers. As required, visitors will receive briefings on additional child protection policies and requirements specific to a location, program, or activity for example, briefings related to emergency responses or media visits.

15. WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Uttaran takes its obligations to protect children seriously and works closely with partners to ensure child protection is maintained in all partnership activities and programs. When collaborating with partner agencies on projects that involve contact with or work directly with children, Uttaran will:

- Include child protection in the partner appraisal process to assess the partner’s status as a child-safe organization.
- Support partners in strengthening their capacity to protect children within shared programs, where necessary.
- Include child protection compliance clauses in all partnership agreements, contracts, and memoranda of understanding, specifying standards and obligations.
- Actively monitor the implementation of agreed child protection measures and ensure compliance with child protection obligations and standards.
- Collaborate with partners to conduct child protection risk assessments for all programs and activities involving children, ensuring that identified risks are mitigated and monitored throughout the project cycle.
- Establish agreed reporting mechanisms, if necessary, to enable the safe and timely reporting of child protection concerns in projects delivered in partnership with Uttaran.

16. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

It is mandatory for all Uttaran representatives under the scope of this policy to report any concerns or allegations of child abuse or exploitation involving a child or a representative associated with Uttaran.

Others, including members of the community and visitors, may also make complaints of child abuse to Uttaran.

Uttaran is committed to ensuring that the safety, well-being, dignity, and rights of the child remain the overriding concern at all times.

In Managing a Child Protection Complaint, Uttaran Will:

- Handle all reports of child abuse in accordance with this Policy.
- Make every effort to protect the rights and safety of the child throughout any investigation.
- Treat all reports seriously and ensure that all parties are treated fairly.
- Respond to child abuse reports in a confidential, fair, and timely manner.
- Protect the interests of anyone reporting in good faith.

Child Friendly reporting will be ensured as per the Policy. To ensure the child friendly reporting channel, Uttaran will ensure:

Involving Children

Children’s participation in designing child-friendly reporting and complaint mechanisms helps ensure accessibility, relevance, and effectiveness. Uttaran will consult children to understand how reporting mechanisms can be made more accessible, how complaints should be handled, and how information and feedback should be shared. Methods may include surveys, focus group discussions especially with marginalized children and consultations through child or youth groups.

Staff Capacity and Training

Uttaran will ensure that relevant staff receive regular training on child-centred approaches, ethical engagement with children, safeguarding, interviewing techniques, and referral pathways. Training will be provided both during staff induction and through continuous capacity-building initiatives.

Partnerships

Partnerships with civil society organizations, schools, media, and child-focused institutions will be strengthened to promote awareness of child-friendly reporting mechanisms, support children in accessing them, and enhance staff training and outreach efforts.

Who to Report To

Members of the community can report a complaint through any Uttaran representative or system that best suits them. Once a complaint is received, it must be elevated to Both:

- Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) Focal Point
Note: Examples of Uttaran systems include the Complaints mobile number. The CEA Focal Point ensures that complain is properly recorded.

What to Report

- Any suspected, witnessed, disclosed, or reported cases of child abuse
- Potential risks or harm to a child
- Any breach or possible breach of the Child Protection Code of Conduct

When to Report

- If a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent care, notify the appropriate authorities such as police or medical services immediately.
- Complaints should be elevated using the Child Protection Incident Form, ideally immediately, or at the latest within 24 hours.

Acting on the Notification**The Focal Point is responsible for:**

- Recording accurate and complete information
- Working closely with HR to identify actual or potential risks to the child
- Determining the nature and seriousness of the allegation
- Developing and implementing an Action Plan to ensure the child's immediate and ongoing safety

The Action Plan may include but is not limited to:

- Reporting the matter to local police and/or child protection authorities
- Ensuring referral and support services for the child
- Managing the matter internally in accordance with Uttaran policies and procedures (if the allegation does not constitute a criminal offense)

Consequences of Breach of the Policy or Child Protection Code of Conduct**Uttaran Personnel:**

Disciplinary procedures will be implemented according to Uttaran policies, which may include:

- Employees: Dismissal
- Volunteers: Termination of services
- Managing Board or Committee Members: Removal from office

Contractors and Subcontractors:

- Contractors who are sole traders: Termination of contract
- Personnel employed by a contractor/subcontractor: Direction to the contractor to terminate the individual's services and/or terminate the contractor/subcontractor contract

Visitors:

- Visitors may be directed to leave the relevant activity or premises

Additional Measures:

Depending on the nature of the allegation, legal action or criminal investigation and prosecution may follow.

Case-by-Case Investigation:

Each report will be investigated individually, and responses will reflect the severity of the allegation. Not all cases will require reporting to authorities or termination. For example, low-level breaches of the Child Protection Code of Conduct may result in:

- Re-training in child protection
- Increased supervision for a defined period

Confidentiality

- All information regarding a child protection report will be handled professionally and confidentially.
- Information will only be shared on a “need to know” basis, when required by law, or when reporting to police or child protection authorities.
- Anyone making a child protection report is expected to follow organizational procedures regarding confidentiality to ensure the safety and fair treatment of all parties involved.

17. POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

- Management is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy, with support from the management team.
- This policy will be formally reviewed at least once every three years to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.
- The policy may be reviewed more frequently in response to changes in national or international standards, legal or regulatory requirements, or organizational needs, to ensure it remains current, effective, and appropriate.


Chairman
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Secretary
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Uttaran

Child Protection Policy Orientation

I Acknowledge That I Have Received an Orientation on Uttaran Child Protection Policy. I Have Understood the Contents of the Orientation and I Shall Obey the Policy Always In My Private and Professional Life.

(আমি উত্তরণ এর চাইল্ড প্রোটেকশন পলিসির উপর ওরিয়েন্টেশন পেয়েছি। ওরিয়েন্টেশনে যে বিষয়গুলো তুলে ধরা হয়েছে আমি তা ভালভাবে বুঝতে পেরেছি। এ পলিসি আমি আমার ব্যক্তিগত ও কর্মজীবনে সব সময় মেনে চলবো)

Received by/ নাম ও স্বাক্ষরঃ-----

Organization Name/সংস্থার নামঃ-----

Designation/ পদবীঃ-----

Date/ তারিখঃ-----


Chairman
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