

RIGHT TO ACCESS NEPAL (RAN)

Kathmandu, Nepal

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2015

Revised 2024

(Adapted & Standardized Operational Policy)

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Right to Access Nepal (RAN) is dedicated to the protection, promotion, and support of children and young people at risk across Nepal. Building upon established child rights frameworks, RAN operates with a commitment to child-centric principles, ensuring the safety, dignity, and holistic development of all children with whom the organization, its staff, and associated personnel come into contact.

RAN works directly with communities, local institutions, civil society, and government bodies to advocate for policies and practices that guarantee the protection and fundamental rights of children as enshrined in national legal frameworks and international treaties. To maintain these standards within its own structure and operations, RAN has established this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (CPSP) to govern all organizational activities, projects, facilities, and partnerships.

1.2 Vision

To build a just, prosperous, and inclusive society where all children enjoy their fundamental human rights and where the state, alongside empowered civil society, takes full responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfill these rights.

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1.3 Mission

To translate the constitutional rights and spirit of Nepal into actionable protection, dignity, empowerment, and development for children through strategic partnerships with children, civil society actors, private institutions, and state agencies.

1.4 Child Protection Policy Statement

- **1.4.1** RAN recognizes the inalienable rights of every child with whom the organization works to survival, safe development, and complete protection from all forms of neglect, harm, abuse, exploitation, and violence.
- **1.4.2** Expresses RAN's full commitment to the overall well-being and safety of all children coming into contact with RAN staff, facilities, initiatives, and institutions.
- **1.4.3** Ensures child rights are systematically respected, promoted, and safeguarded within the organization as well as across all community-level and in-house projects, activities, and programs.
- **1.4.4** Lays out clear practices, guidelines, reporting mechanisms, and accountability structures to guarantee child safety and zero tolerance toward abuse.

1.5 Purpose of the Policy

This policy provides a centralized framework to:

- **1.5.1** Guide and regulate all RAN staff members, volunteers, consultants, and representatives to maintain child-centric perspectives and behaviors oriented toward child safety and well-being.
- **1.5.2** Influence and monitor the integration of child protection standards into organizational strategies, administrative structures, project design, execution, and monitoring/evaluation.
- **1.5.3** Guide RAN in making decisions regarding association, joint ventures, and partnerships with external organizations, networks, donors, and government entities.



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1.6 Scope of Application

- **1.6.1** This policy applies universally to all full-time, part-time, temporary, and contractual staff members of RAN, including all offices, programs, field centers, helplines, transition homes, and community interventions managed or administered by RAN.
- **1.6.2** It extends fully to board members, trustees, consultants, interns, volunteers, donor representatives, and any official or unofficial visitors associated with RAN.
- **1.6.3** The scope encompasses all organizational procedures including recruitment, daily project operations, field monitoring, media/data handling, incident reporting, and institutional governance.

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS, PRINCIPLES, AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Key Definitions

- **Child:** A human being below the age of 18 years (Article 1, UNCRC). In the context of this policy, it refers to all children who interact directly or indirectly with RAN personnel, programs, facilities, or community projects.
- **Child Abuse:** 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.
- **Child Protection:** The beliefs, values, practices, guidelines, and administrative procedures applied to safeguard children from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- **Child Grooming:** The deliberate act of establishing an emotional bond and trust with a child (and sometimes their family) to lower their guard in preparation for sexual activity or exploitation.
- **Personnel / Staff:** All individuals employed full-time or part-time, engaged on a consultancy or contract basis, serving as board members/trustees, or working as interns/volunteers within RAN.
- **Core Worker / Child Carer:** Staff whose primary duty involves direct contact or individual care of children, or who hold direct administrative and supervisory authority over child care environments.

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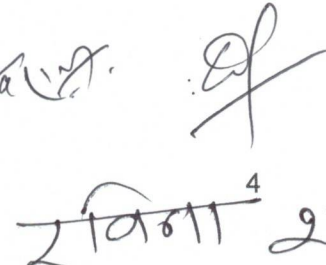


- **Persons with Indirect Contact:** Individuals (including donor representatives, IT managers, data entry personnel, and auditors) who have access to children's names, images, records, or case files without direct physical oversight.
- **Emotional / Psychological Abuse:** Ill-treatment causing emotional trauma, including persistent criticism, belittling, humiliation, excessive demands, isolation, or making a child feel worthless.
- **Exploitation:** The misuse or manipulation of a child's vulnerability, labor, or image for another individual's or organization's advantage, gratification, or financial gain.
- **Neglect:** Chronic or severe failure to meet a child's basic physical, medical, educational, emotional, or psychological needs essential for healthy development.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Involving or forcing a child into sexual activity, whether penetrative or non-penetrative, physical or non-physical (e.g., exposure to sexual imagery or behavior), where the child cannot give informed legal consent.
- **Physical Abuse / Violence:** Intentional use of physical force or power against a child resulting in actual or potential harm, including hitting, shaking, burning, hair pulling, or imposing cruel and unnatural physical tasks.
- **Zero-Tolerance:** Strict non-acceptance of any form of abuse, violence, or exploitation against children, mandating immediate formal inquiry and disciplinary/legal action in every alleged case.

2.2 Core Principles and Values

- **2.2.1 Child Rights & Constitutional Protections:** All constitutional rights guaranteed to citizens of Nepal apply fully to children. Children shall not be deprived of or restricted in enjoying these rights.
- **2.2.2 Best Interests of the Child:** The best interests, safety, equity, and dignity of the child shall serve as the primary consideration in all actions, care plans, and administrative decisions taken by RAN.
- **2.2.3 Child Participation & Inclusion:** Safe, non-discriminatory, and child-friendly spaces shall be created to facilitate meaningful consultation and expression of views by children in matters affecting them.






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- **2.2.4 Family-Based Care Priority:** Family-based environments are recognized as optimal for child development. Institutional placement shall be utilized only as a temporary transitional measure when family restoration is proven unsafe or unviable.
- **2.2.5 Zero-Tolerance & Confidentiality:** Any suspicion or disclosure of child abuse will be acted upon immediately through standard reporting protocols while upholding absolute standards of confidentiality.

2.3 Legal Framework

This policy is firmly grounded in:

- The Constitution of Nepal (2015), particularly Article 39 (Fundamental Rights of Children), Article 51(j) (Policies regarding child well-being), and Article 18 (Right to Equality).
- The Act Relating to Children (2018 / 2075) of Nepal.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), with emphasis on Articles 2 (Non-discrimination), 3 (Best interests of the child), 6 (Survival and development), 12 (Participation), 19 (Protection from violence), and 32–37 (Protection from exploitation, abuse, and torture).
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

SECTION 3: SAFE WORKING PRACTICES

3.1 Prevention and Duty of Care

- **3.1.1 Awareness & Orientation:** All staff, volunteers, consultants, and partners must receive orientation on this policy upon joining RAN and sign a declaration of compliance.
- **3.1.2 Child Awareness:** Children in RAN programs/facilities shall receive accessible, child-friendly orientation on their rights, personal safety boundaries, and how to report concerns to designated officers.
- **3.1.3 Conduct and Demeanor:** Staff shall maintain high professional standards. The use of alcohol, tobacco, offensive language, or inappropriate dress code in the presence of children or within RAN facilities is strictly prohibited.



- **3.1.4 Physical Contact Guidelines:** Physical contact must be strictly non-sexual, culturally appropriate, age-appropriate, limited in duration, and driven entirely by the child's emotional/physical needs in open, visible environments.
- **3.1.5 One-on-One Interactions:** Avoid isolated, unmonitored one-on-one situations between an adult and a child. Meetings must occur in visible, transparent settings.
- **3.1.6 Intimate Care:** Assistance with bathing, dressing, or toileting (for young children or children with disabilities) must be outlined in written care plans, performed with maximum respect for privacy, and conducted with designated female/male staff appropriately.
- **3.1.7 Medical Administration:** Medications shall only be administered by qualified or designated personnel following documented medical prescriptions.
- **3.1.8 Transportation Safety:** Transporting children must be pre-authorized, using safe and insured vehicles, without exceeding legal capacity, and ideally accompanied by at least two adults.
- **3.1.9 Gifts and Favoritism:** Giving individual gifts or personal financial favors to specific children is strictly forbidden to prevent division and perceived favoritism. Official distribution of gifts must be standardized and transparent.

3.2 Discipline Standards (Zero-Tolerance for Corporal Punishment)

- **3.2.1** RAN strictly prohibits corporal punishment, physical force, verbal humiliation, solitary confinement, or psychological intimidation under any circumstances.
- **3.2.2** Disciplinary measures must be positive, educational, restorative, and age-appropriate, developed through child-friendly dialogue and institutional guidelines.
- **3.2.3** In rare crisis situations involving severe acting-out behavior where a child poses an immediate danger to themselves or others, physical restraint may only be applied minimally by trained personnel to ensure safety, followed by immediate documentation and reporting.

3.3 Recruitment and Human Resources Governance

- **3.3.1 Mandatory CPP Statement in Job Ads:** All employment and consultancy announcements must explicitly state RAN's commitment to child protection and rigorous vetting.

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- **3.3.2 Comprehensive Vetting:** Standard recruitment requires multi-person structured interviews, at least two verified professional/character references, self-declarations of no criminal history regarding minors, and background verification.
- **3.3.3 Alternative Vetting Pathways:** For field or non-traditional staff, structured interviews, community reference checks, and supervised probation/shadowing plans are mandatory.
- **3.3.4 Induction & Refresher Training:** Mandatory orientation on the CPSP must be completed within 30 days of appointment. Annual mandatory refresher training is required for all personnel.

3.4 Use of Child Information, Media, and Digital Safety

- **3.4.1 Dignity in Representation:** RAN prohibits publishing images or information showing children in vulnerable, distressed, or degrading situations.
- **3.4.2 Consent Requirements:** Written informed consent (from the child and parent/legal guardian) is mandatory prior to taking or publishing photos, videos, or case studies.
- **3.4.3 Anonymity & Privacy:** Fictitious names, altered non-identifying details, and generalized locations must be used in public reports and media materials to prevent individual identification.
- **3.4.4 Digital Security:** Digital records containing sensitive personal data, medical histories, or legal case files of children must be password-protected and accessible strictly on a need-to-know basis.
- **3.4.5 Social Media Boundaries:** Staff, volunteers, and donors are strictly prohibited from adding, contacting, or interacting with program children through personal social media accounts.

3.5 Ethical Sponsorship and Donor Engagement

- **3.5.1 Avoidance of Exploitative Fundraising:** RAN does not use sensationalized or tear-jerking content for fundraising.
- **3.5.2 No Individual Child-Donor Matching:** Donors shall support general funds, programs, or community initiatives rather than establishing exclusive one-on-one relationships with specific children.

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- **3.5.3 Supervised Visits:** Donor or sponsor visits to facilities/projects require prior clearance from RAN leadership and must be fully supervised by designated RAN staff.

SECTION 4: INCIDENT REPORTING AND RESPONSE MECHANISMS

4.1 Structure and Key Responsibilities

- **4.1.1 Child Protection Champions (CPCs):** Designated adult focal points (and where appropriate, trained youth representatives) present in every RAN facility and regional office to receive child protection concerns.
- **4.1.2 Child Protection Committee (CPC):** A 3-member committee comprising senior management, protection experts, and an external independent child rights specialist responsible for oversight and lead investigations.
- **4.1.3 Designated Person for Child Protection:** A named executive officer on the CPC acting as the primary liaison for reports, case management, and coordination with legal/medical authorities.
- **4.1.4 Appeals Committee:** A distinct 3-member body (comprising board and management representatives) to review investigation procedures in case of formal appeals against CPC findings.

4.2 Incident Reporting Procedure

- **4.2.1 Immediate Safeguarding:** Upon receiving a report or suspicion of abuse, the first responder's immediate priority is ensuring the physical and psychological safety of the child.
- **4.2.2 Mandatory Standardized Reporting:** The staff member must complete the Standard Child Protection Reporting Form within 24 hours and submit it directly to the Designated Person.
- **4.2.3 Confidentiality:** Information shall be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis. Whistleblowers and reporters are fully protected from administrative retaliation.

4.3 Investigation and Disciplinary Protocols

- **4.3.1 Preliminary Review:** The Designated Person and Executive Director shall initiate a preliminary assessment within 48 hours of report submission.

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APPENDIX 1: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Full Term
RAN	Right to Access Nepal
CPSP	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
CPC	Child Protection Committee / Child Protection Champion
FIR	First Information Report
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
WHO	World Health Organization

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APPENDIX 2: STATEMENT OF CONSENT AND COMPLIANCE

Read the statements carefully and check the corresponding boxes. Sign the statement after verifying all conditions. It is mandatory to complete and submit this signed form within one month of joining Right to Access Nepal (RAN).

- ☐ I have read completely (or had read and explained to me) the Right to Access Nepal (RAN) Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- ☐ I have sought and received clarification on any clauses or provisions that were unclear, and I fully understand the policy requirements.
- ☐ I understand that protecting child rights is fundamental to RAN's mission and that lack of awareness is not an acceptable excuse for non-compliance.
- ☐ I agree to uphold all provisions of this policy during my employment/engagement with RAN, both within organizational premises and during field activities.
- ☐ I accept my individual responsibility to report any observed or suspected child abuse, neglect, or policy violations immediately using official reporting protocols.
- ☐ I accept that RAN reserves the right to conduct full internal and legal investigations into any reported policy breaches and take necessary administrative or disciplinary actions.
- ☐ I understand that RAN will refer any suspected criminal misconduct to relevant law enforcement agencies in Nepal.

Name of Personnel: _____

Position / Title: _____

Duty Station / Office: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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APPENDIX 3: STANDARD CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Confidential Document - For Official Internal Administration Only

Section / Field	Details / Information
A. Reporter Information	Name: Title/Role: Phone/Email: Date of Report:
B. Mode of Communication	☐ Telephone Call ☐ Email ☐ Written Letter ☐ In-Person ☐ Other
C. Child Details	Full Name: Date of Birth / Age: Gender: Address / Location: Parents/Guardian Name & Contact: Disability/Special Needs (if any):
D. Person of Interest (Accused)	Full Name: Title / Relationship to Child: Contact Details: Known Prior Incidents (Yes/No):
E. Incident Details	Date and Time of Incident: Location of Incident: Number of Children Involved: Names of Witnesses (if any):
F. Narrative Description	Provide a clear, factual, detailed description of the incident/concern (attach additional sheets, medical reports, or photographs if available):

Signature of Reporting Person: _____ Date: _____

Received By (Designated Protection Officer): _____ Date: _____

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