

Bakultali Mahila Sangshad (BMS)

BMS SAFEGUARDING POLICY



Bakultali Mahila Sangshad (BMS)

Post: Joymonirhat, Upazila: Bhurungamari

District: Kurigram.

Mobile # 01734685454 or 01761533328

E-mail: bakultali.m.s@gmail.com

WhatsApp:-01761533328

Our Commitment:-

We believe that humans are created by God in His image; we should use our abilities, skills and resources for God's purposes. In the eyes of God, all people are equal – this is the core principle of BMS's safety. BMS is committed to ensuring a safe and trusting environment for everyone involved in its work.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that no one, especially our beneficiaries, employees, volunteers, consultants and contractors (our community), is harmed in any way because of their association with or involvement with BMS.

BMS has a zero tolerance policy for serious misconduct. BMS will not tolerate any act of violence, abuse, harassment or exploitation by any of its employees, volunteers or consultants.

Personal Responsibility:-

We all have a responsibility to prevent and report any physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, etc. of any member of our community. The welfare of every member of the community must be given the utmost importance. Regardless of that member's gender, race, disability, sexuality, or belief, they have the right to be protected from abuse. There are no exceptions to this.

As a member of the BMS family, if you have a concern about something, or if someone tells you about a concern, it is your responsibility to raise it in accordance with the organization's policy. It is not your responsibility to determine whether an incident of violence, harassment or exploitation has occurred; or whether the incident violated the safety policy. That is the responsibility of the Safety Manager.

Policy Development:-

This policy applies to all those contracted, associated, commissioned to work with or for BMS at any level. BMS expects each member to have their own code of conduct or similar system to minimize any exploitation, harassment, or other discriminatory behavior.

All BMS staff or volunteers should be aware of the requirements of this policy. They should also have a clear understanding of what to do if they have any concerns.

1. Scope:-

1.1. This is a global organizational policy that can be adjusted to the local laws of the relevant country as needed. If the laws of Bangladesh provide something better than this policy, it must be adopted.

1.2. Although this is an internal policy, we expect everyone at BMS to follow the main principles of this policy. In addition, everyone will comply with any specific compliance requirements in the relevant agreement on security issues.

2. Principles of the Policy:-

The principles of this policy are taken from key international and regional instruments, standards such as the International Standards for Child Protection, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

BMS is committed to the following:-

- BMS will uphold the integrity of all its beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and others involved in the work of the organization, ensuring their well-being. Ensuring everyone has the same right to be protected from any harm.
- Ensure that concerns or complaints are taken seriously, properly investigated and acted upon.
- Ensure that all BMS staff, volunteers, contractors or any representatives are familiar with this policy and are aware of their responsibilities under it.
- All staff and volunteers will receive training on safeguarding.
- Ensure that all measures are taken to protect the best interests of the person at risk.
- Ensure that survivors of abuse receive all necessary support and that the alleged perpetrator is held accountable.
- Ensure that our recruitment process is robust enough to ensure that no one with clear signs of risk is ever recruited.
- Ensure that victims of abuse are treated appropriately in accordance with local law.
- Relevant donors should also be informed.
- BMS programmes will be designed and delivered in a way that is safe for all and based on the principle of 'do no harm to anyone'.

3. Definitions-**3.1. Vulnerability:-**

A variety of social and contextual factors contribute to people being vulnerable. These include discrimination and marginalization (e.g., in some cases, women and girls are also disadvantaged in terms of their power and dignity), social isolation (including lack of access to information), environmental degradation (e.g., land degradation), climate change, poverty, land degradation, poor governance, ethnicity, class, community, and religious or political affiliation.

3.2. Child:-

Regardless of local definitions, a child is defined as any human being under the age of 18.

3.3. Adult at risk:-

An adult at risk is also sometimes referred to as a vulnerable adult. An adult at risk is someone who, due to age, illness, mental or other disability, is in need of care but is unable to care for themselves. Vulnerable adults can also be considered vulnerable adults if they are unable to protect themselves from significant harm or abuse.

3.4. Abuse:-

Anyone who causes harm to another may be a victim of abuse. Even if we fail to prevent harm, we are complicit in the abuse-

We follow the principles set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child across the board to protect everyone in our community. And we consider the definition of abuse in Article 19 as a fundamental step in our approach.

Article 19 states:-

- Responsible persons shall take all appropriate legal, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, in the same way that parents, legal guardians, or any other person responsible for the care of the child have the care of the child.

- Such protective measures should provide for the provision of appropriate and effective measures to provide the necessary support to children and those responsible for their care. Other means of prevention such as identification, reporting, referral, investigation, etc. should also be provided. In addition, any cases of child abuse should be followed up appropriately for judicial action.

The same should also be done for adults as mentioned in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular as stated in Article 5.

Article 5 states:-

No one shall be subjected to torture. No one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The following may be included in the definition of torture (but are not limited to):

Physical torture or bodily harm means deliberately hitting, kicking, pushing, etc. If there is reasonable suspicion or evidence that someone saw such an incident happening and did not prevent it or deliberately avoided it, then the person who avoided it is also guilty of the same crime.

Emotional torture means repeated or severe mental abuse, neglect, painful punishment, intimidation, failure to provide appropriate care, etc., which has a negative impact on the behavioral and mental development of that person.

Sexual assault refers to the rape or incest of a person (religiously prohibited sexual relations between relatives or blood relatives), or to the use of a person to perform various types of sexual acts, including pornography. Accepting sexual favors from someone in exchange for a benefit or advantage; such as receiving sexual favors in exchange for goods, food, or money, is considered sexual assault.

Neglect refers to the failure to meet a person's basic needs, such as food, warmth, and medical care. Or if appropriate measures are not taken to protect a person from danger, and as a result, if the person suffers serious physical harm, their development is hindered, then this will also be considered neglect.

Sexual harassment refers to unwanted sexual behavior that violates the dignity of a person, puts the person in an intimidating, humiliating, or degrading situation, or creates a hostile or degrading environment for the person.

You do not need to object to someone's behavior in advance just because it may be considered unwanted.

The following may constitute sexual harassment:

Sexual comments or jokes

- Unwanted sexual conduct, touching, and physical conduct including various forms of sexual assault
- Displaying sexually explicit images, photographs, or drawings
- Sending sexually explicit texts or emails.

4. Reporting-

4.1. What to do if you suspect harassment:-

You must report any actual, potential, or suspected incidents of harassment immediately. Where appropriate, you will report them to your representative. They will immediately report the matter to the Security Department. The Security Department will then ensure that the matter is properly investigated. (Alternative reporting procedures are outlined below.)

Reporting or notification is required in the following written cases:-

- If harassment is observed, or if such a thing is suspected.
- If someone raises an allegation of harassment.
- If someone discloses an incident of harassment.

4.2. It is important to note that the representatives' responsibility is to report the incident to the appropriate authorities, unless it is urgent, and it is not their job to decide whether or not harassment has occurred. Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality and to report information to the appropriate persons.

4.3. When someone raises a concern, a report should be made as soon as possible (within 24 hours if possible). Any written records received must be kept securely in a locked place or in a confidential electronic folder.

Under no circumstances should any staff member go directly to deal with the incident of harassment. An investigation team should be formed with the assistance of the Security Department.

4.4. Security Department

If the person raising a security concern believes that there is an unresolved issue or that there has been an unreasonable delay in responding to the concern or taking the necessary action; Or if he wants to raise a concern against any officer of the Security Department, he can contact the Head of BMS.

4.5. Your information will be kept confidential. You are not required to provide any personal details. However, such information will help us to take appropriate action on your concern and will also help you to inform us of the outcome. If you wish to keep your identity confidential, it will not be disclosed without your consent, unless there is a legal requirement.

5. Our Response / Action Process-

5.1. If an employee or anyone else is found to have violated the BMS Code of Conduct and Safety Policy, BMS can and will take the necessary disciplinary action against them.

5.2. It may also be found that an employee's conduct has violated the Code of Conduct, but is not considered a criminal offense under the laws of Bangladesh. In such cases, BMS may consider providing other assistance to that employee.

5.3. Identifying information about safety should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. If someone comes forward in good faith to report an incident of concern, the employee raising the concern about serious misconduct should be given maximum protection to ensure that they are not harmed or subjected to any other harmful behavior. Making a false complaint knowingly will be considered a serious criminal offense.

5.4. The Safeguards Department will ensure that reports are sent to the relevant donor group and applicable statutory authorities.

5.5. Providing support to victims of abuse:-

BMS is committed to providing psychological care and support to any person associated with or in contact with BMS who has been affected by abuse.

6. Recruitment-

6.1. It is our policy that no person will be able to work at BMS if they:-

- have been convicted of an offence against a child or children or have been formally cautioned by the police in this regard; or
- have been convicted of an offence against an adult or have been formally cautioned by the police in this regard; or

6.2. BMS will ensure that all staff are recruited, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with Government guidelines for safe recruitment. This process will ensure that:-

- There is a written description of the duties to be performed by the person being recruited.
- The applicant has completed the application form including a security undertaking.
- Shortlisted candidates have been interviewed.
- Security issues have been discussed during interviews with applicants for positions that will involve working with children, vulnerable adults or the beneficiary community.
- Two references have been obtained from the applicant, including the last employer.
- The applicant has completed a DBS check (where possible and applicable) or local equivalent.
- Where applicable, a suitability check has been carried out.
- An appropriate training programme has been undertaken for the successful applicant.
- The applicant has completed an apprenticeship.
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's security policy and knows how to report or raise concerns.

6.3. Code of Conduct and Responsibilities:-

All BMS staff, consultants, volunteers and representatives must adhere to the Code of Conduct. The following points are noted on safety issues:

As a representative of BMS, I must-

- 6.3.1. Ensure the highest standards of personal and professional conduct, consistent with the beliefs, values and aims of BMS.
- 6.3.2. I will treat all colleagues fairly and with respect and dignity. And I will be receptive to the professional opinions of others.
- 6.3.3. I will ensure that my personal conduct does not undermine the values of BMS, and does not interfere with the performance of the duties for which I have been appointed.
- 6.3.4. I will not say or do anything that will damage the reputation of BMS or bring disrepute to the charity.
- 6.3.5. As a representative of BMS, I will not abuse my position to accept any personal favors or favours from anyone in exchange for any assistance from this organisation.
- 6.3.6. I will not engage in commercial sexual transactions. According to the values of this Code of Conduct, a transaction means the exchange of money, goods, services or any favor with any person.
- 6.3.7. I will be careful not to abuse the power I have over me. I will believe that such behavior can undermine the integrity and credibility of BMS' work.
- 6.3.8. I will not give money, employment opportunities, jobs, goods or services to anyone in exchange for sexual relations or sexual favors. I will not behave in a derogatory, insulting or exploitative manner towards anyone in exchange for sexual relations or sexual favors.
- 6.3.9. I will not engage in sexual relations with children (defined as those under the age of 18).
- 6.3.10. I will ensure that my behavior and relationships are not exploitative, insulting or corrupt.
- 6.3.11. I will respect the rights of all people, including the rights of children. I will not sexually harass or exploit any person, regardless of their age.

Responsibilities for Children and Adults at Risk:-**BMS representatives must not:**

- Physically assault, injure or abuse children or adults at risk.
 - Have physical/sexual contact with children or adults at risk.
 - Have any contact with children or adults at risk that could be considered abusive or exploitative in any way.
 - Do anything or be in a position that could lead to a child, young person or adult at risk being accused of sexual abuse. For example, hugging a child, young person or adult, or touching the body in a way that could be considered abusive as described in this Code of Conduct.
 - Spend time alone with children or adults at risk. Activities should be planned in such a way that more than one person is present at the workplace. Or at least the workplace is within sight and hearing of other people. Ensure that another adult is supervising the worksite activities wherever possible.
 - Taking children/adults at risk alone in a vehicle, even for short trips.
 - Behaving in a way that is considered abusive or that puts them at risk of abuse.
 - Using inappropriate, derogatory or abusive language, gestures or advice.
 - Offering food, clothing, money, employment, favours etc. in exchange for sexual favours.
 - Showing favouritism towards any person in exchange for sexual favours.
- Doing anything that embarrasses, humiliates, insults or belittles children or adults at risk.

Each representative must:-

- Treat everyone with respect, recognising their right to privacy.
- Be aware of and address situations that may pose a risk.
- Plan and organize any program in a way that minimizes risk.
- Avoid unruly behavior such as tantrums, tantrums, etc.
- When planning a residential program, ensure that adults and children sleep separately. Do not sleep in the same room as children or adults who are at risk.
- Remember that others may misunderstand your intentions, no matter how good your intentions may be.
- Adults should be careful not to put themselves in a questionable position. If a child or adult tempts another, the adult will always be held responsible.

7. Fundraising and other collaborative activities:-

7.1. 'Supportive fundraising' refers to the activities of individuals, communities, individuals and foundations in spontaneous support of the work of BMS in Bangladesh. BMS has a commitment to fundraising policies: 'Fundraising and Responding to Vulnerable People' and 'Supportive Fundraising' policies.

7.2. In addition to the safety training, all staff and volunteers are trained on these policies.

8. Governance and Monitoring:-

8.1. The Audit Committee oversees the safety policy. This committee receives confidential reports on various incidents.

8.2. The Safeguarding Governance Department ensures that BMS meets its legal requirements. They also oversee the implementation of action plans to further integrate the policy into all areas of BMS work.