



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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NAFIS recognizes its duty of care for children and its obligation to initiate and implement child-friendly programs in its interventions. It upholds these commitments through making all staff and member organizations aware of its child protection policy and their respective responsibilities stipulated in the policy and requiring all staff and partners of NAFIS to adhere to the policy.

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1. Introduction

Background

NAFIS has the vision for fighting all forms of violence against women and children, NAFIS would like to realize a country where women and girls are free from violence and painful practices. NAFIS endeavors to empower marginalized groups like women to participate in decisions affecting their lives and have united stand against GBV, especially FGM/C.

In all its program interventions and in working with children, NAFIS believes that any form of child abuse and exploitation are unacceptable and should not be tolerated. It has the responsibility to make sure that all children in its program intervention areas are safe and protected from abuse, exploitation and maltreatment. NAFIS recognizes its duty of care for children and its obligation to initiate and implement child-friendly programs in its interventions. It upholds these commitments through making all staff and member organizations aware of its child protection policy and their respective responsibilities stipulated in the policy and requiring all staff and partners of NAFIS to adhere to the policy.

1.1. Objectives and Scope of the Child Protection Policy

Though NAFIS firmly believes that the needs and dignity of children should be met and respected in its entirety without any prejudice, it is apparent that imminent risks of its program and project activities to the wellbeing and dignity of children are not well recognized and appropriate system not put in place to address such risks. In other words, NAFIS lacks clear rules and procedures to guide organizational, staff and partners' behaviour and practices regarding protection of children from abuse and maltreatment that might result from relationships of staff, volunteers, donors and project visitors with children. Clear system is required to maintain optimal sensitivity and accountability to intentional and unintentional harms inflicted upon children in the process of doing our usual activities and hence, being fully aware of the risks associated with our engagement with children and designing mechanisms of avoiding the risks and managing maltreatment cases for better benefit and wellbeing of children.

Therefore, it has come to be imperative for NAFIS to have a clear guideline that promotes accountability and transparency of staff and others in relation to working with children so that vulnerability reduced and children are kept safe. Hence, development of child protection

policy is an essential step forward in the move to ensure protection of children from harm and abuse. The child protection policy serves two basic purposes

- ▶ To minimize risks of harm and abuse to children; and protects NAFIS's reputation and staff and others who may in contact with children from unaccepted allegations and complaints.
- ▶ To provide a practical guide to prevent child abuse in relation to its program/project and to demonstrate its commitment to protect children from harm and abuse. It also has the aim to educate staff and others about child abuse so that clear responsibility existed when it comes to preventing child abuse and managing child abuse concerns.

The Policy Applies to:

- ✓ Permanent NAFIS staff, volunteers, staff of member organizations who implement NAFIS grants.
- ✓ Commissioned consultants and/or researchers
- ✓ Journalists and reporters

1.2. Policy Statement

NAFIS and its employees are committed to:

- Ensuring the safety, dignity and wellbeing of all children at all times and recognize their responsibility to care for and protect children from all forms of abuse, harm and exploitation.
- Urge its member organizations to care for children seriously and makes sure all the time that its programs and projects provide safest benefits and environment for children. To this end, NAFIS makes sure that risks that may lead to harm and abuse are identified and managed accordingly.
- Raise awareness among its staff and partners on child protection to create clarity and understanding on child protection procedures and responsibilities.
- Develop and institutionalize appropriate instruments for prevention of abuse and maltreatment, managing abuse and maltreatment cases when it occurs, and monitoring implementation of the child protection policy.

1.3. Legal Framework of Somaliland Child protection

In the Republic Somaliland, there are three law that protect children and safeguard child rights; Shari'ah Law, Constitutional Law, and Customary (traditional) Law. It is in these laws that NAFIS preserves the rights of children and protects children from all harm.

1.3.1. Shari'ah Law:

According to Article 5 of the Constitution of The Republic of Somaliland, Islam is the religion of the state. The laws of the nation shall be grounded on and shall not be contrary to Islamic Sharia.

The country abides by the Islamic Shafi'i School of Law which regulates the status of persons including children at civil and criminal levels and provides full protection of children.

The constitution of the republic of Somaliland guarantees:

- ▶ Equality of Citizens (article 8)
- ▶ Education and Promotion of Youth and Sports (article 15)
- ▶ Health Care (Article 17)
- ▶ Care of the Vulnerable of Society (Article 19)
- ▶ A right to health (Art 17)
- ▶ promotion of knowledge, literature, arts, cultures (Art 16)

NAFIS also will respect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor and related national laws are the moral and legal foundations of its commitment to work with its partners, to protect children and ensure their well-being in the projects it supports.

1.4. Definition of child and types of child abuses

For the purpose of this policy, "child abuse" is any action that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development.

For the purpose of this policy, *a child is defined as any person below the age of 15 years according the constitution of Somaliland.*

Child protection is defined as the responsibilities and preventative and responsive measures and activities to be undertaken to protect children ensuring that no Child is subject to Child abuse as a result of their association with us, their contact with staff, Associates and visitors and/or their participation in any activity, including our projects and programs. Types of Child Abuse:

- ▶ Physical abuse – “is actual or potential physical harm to a child or a failure to live up to the responsibility to protect a child from physical injury”. (*KNH's CPP*)
- ▶ Sexual abuse – is where a child is physically involved in sexual activity such as sexual penetration of the child’s vagina, anal, mouth and vice versa. Enticing the child to sexual activity and showing the child graphics or listen to sounds of sexual nature in order to excite them.
- ▶ Neglect – is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, where serious impairment of the child’s health may development.
- ▶ Emotional abuse - is any [persistent] ill treatment of a child, which causes severe and persistent effects on the child’s emotional development. This includes persistent verbal attacks on child, where the words may cause the child to feel that s/he is worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as s/he meets the needs of another person. Causing a child to feel, constantly, frightened or in danger and, therefore, never able to express him/herself.

2. Preventive Measures

2.1. Code of Conduct (CC)

NAFIS Network's employees, volunteers, visitors, partners, and parents are expected to following the network's CC. This is to ensure that both the child at the project areas and employees are protected.

2.1.1. NAFIS employees or volunteers, partners, consultants and others should never:

- ▶ Exercise physical and/or emotional violence to children;
- ▶ Develop physical or sexual relationship with children;
- ▶ Develop any relation which seems exploitive or abusive with children ;
- ▶ Act in a ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;
- ▶ Engage, encourage or support abuse in any terms;
- ▶ Use corporal punishment;
- ▶ Provoke towards any malpractice or addiction;
- ▶ Give any information regarding any child, sensitive incident;
- ▶ Take pictures and/or case stories without the consensus of children and concerned authorities and pictures should be taken appropriately (not when children are in a bath room or naked);
- ▶ Use abusive languages and slang;
- ▶ Stigmatize or humiliate children;
- ▶ Wear clothes that are not appropriate with the local community context;
- ▶ Do not invite the child to your home or any other private property

2.2. Human resources

2.2.1. Preventative measures in personnel policy

In the effort to ensure a safe environment for children NAFIS is aware that a conscientious hiring and selection procedure does not provide 100-percent protection against potential abusers, but it can serve to dissuade people who seek to gain access to children via NAFIS in bad faith.

2.2.1. Recruiting and selecting employees

All employees have an obligation to actively contribute to creating a culture of safety not only for the children who are supported by NAFIS, but also for themselves and the organization.

Job advertisements

All of NAFIS'S Job advertisements contain NAFIS's clearly formulated commitment to protecting children

Application procedure

All incoming applications are checked against clearly defined criteria using a checklist. In the interview, the candidates are assessed according to the following interview guideline.

Interview guideline

The interview, regardless of the position that needs to be filled, contains the following paragraphs that must be complied with:

- ▶ Explanation and check of the application documents for frequent changes of careers tracks or jobs without an obvious reason
- ▶ Questions about the person's interest in the working environment and the posted job
- ▶ Questions about the candidates' attitude toward NAFIS's child protection measures.
- ▶ Questions about any other ideas the candidates might have about child protection or comments on examples of critical cases

Hiring

All new employees and contracting consultants receive the Child Protection Policy and are required to comply with the principles outlined within it.

2.3. Communication Standards

Defining communication protocols regarding Children

- ▶ Images of children not to be taken while they are taking bath or changing clothes. They are to be properly clothed;
- ▶ Allow children to give their own account without interfering or asking leading questions;
- ▶ In case of case studies name of child has to be changed as well as no personal information to identify location of child to be given;
- ▶ There must be accurate representation of the statement made by staff and children;
- ▶ Never sensationalize and manipulate text and images and emphasis to be given on dignity of child;
- ▶ The media will interact only with the organization head or unit heads or designated staff deputed by the heads;
- ▶ Prior information has to be given regarding date of publication/telecast/broadcast for management and children as well as all responsible bodies;
- ▶ The staff should not encourage viewing, downloading and distributing inappropriate materials such as pornography to children; and other staff or partner

3. CASE MANAGEMENT

NAFIS has an institutional system for dealing with and prosecuting cases of suspected child abuse and maltreatment. The goal of the case management system is to enable an appropriate and speedy investigation of any given case and to identify cases of abuse and maltreatment early on. It should also be ensured that the affected children are protected and that they are offered access to special support in order to guard against any further injury to them. Decision makers in the child protection system are provided with the frame of reference and the flow of information to relevant parties is ensured. NAFIS case management structure and parties are elaborated as Child protection focal person and child protection committee.

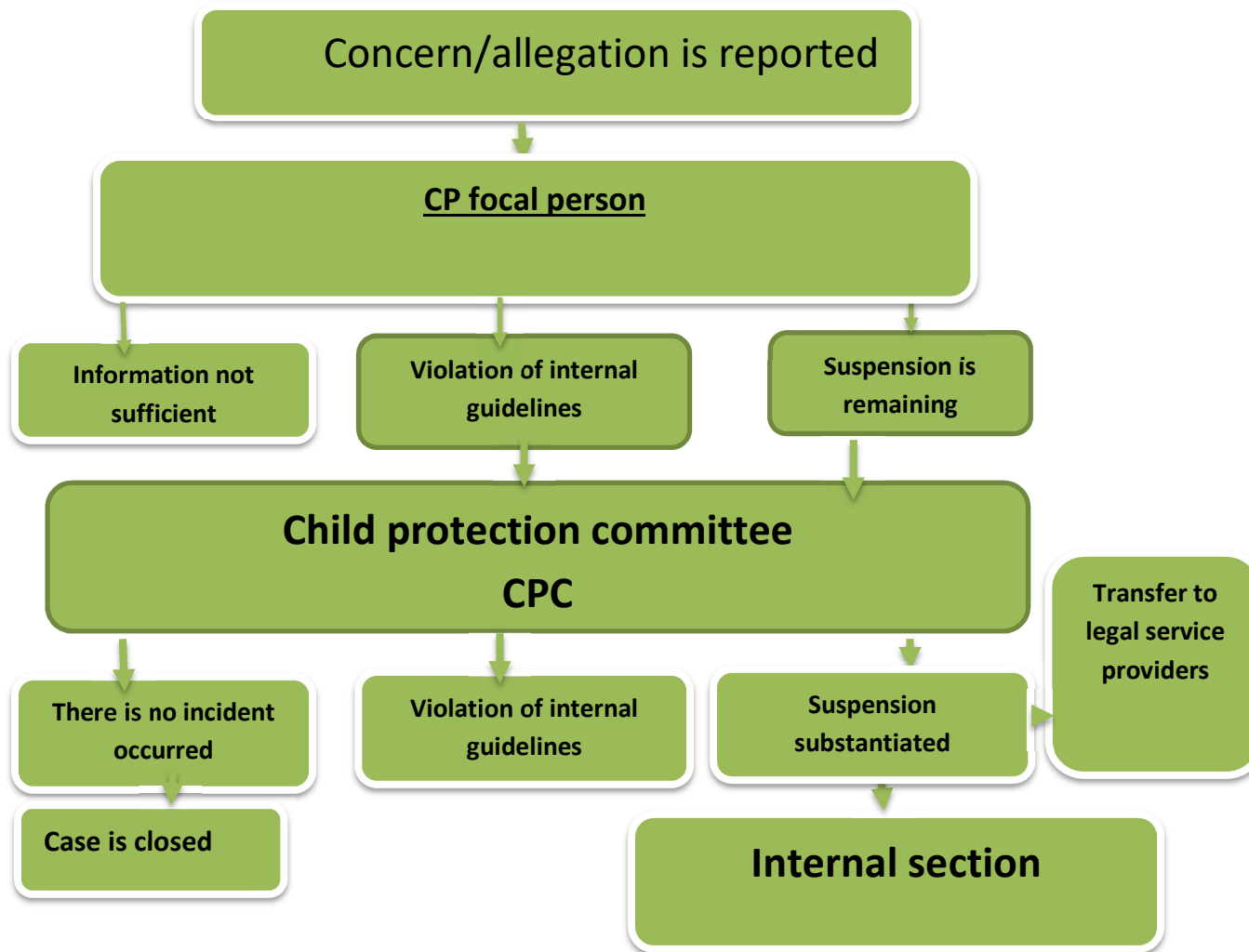
3.1. Responsibilities of Child Protection Focal Person

- ▶ Be the first point of contact for personnel/staff, member organizations, parents and children/young people where concerns about children's welfare, poor practice or child abuse arise;
- ▶ Ensures that the reported cases of suspected abuse and maltreatment are thoroughly investigated, prosecuted and appropriately documented;
- ▶ document each case of suspected abuse in writing up until it is closed and also ensure that the child protection policy is put into practice;
- ▶ Participate in the development and implementation of policies and procedures for inter- organization work to protect children;
- ▶ Ensure that appropriate records are maintained, appropriate agencies are notified and NAFIS procedures are followed;
- ▶ Maintain contact details for local Services providers;
- ▶ Ensure synergy and integration among the different institutions and professionals involved in child protection;
- ▶ Promote NAFIS best practice guidance and codes of conduct within the member organization;

3.1.2. Responsibilities of child Protection Committee;

- ▶ Receive complaints and report to concerned body by consulting the child protection focal person ;
- ▶ Ensures that the reported cases of suspected abuse and maltreatment are thoroughly investigated, prosecuted and appropriately documented;
- ▶ Participate in bottom-up discussions that will inform policy formulation and implementation;
- ▶ Follow – up on cases reported to the police and other service providers to ensure that appropriate actions is taken on the case;
- ▶ Encourage and help develop effective working relationship between the member organisations and professionals involved in child protection, based on trust and mutual understanding.

Figure 1: NAFIS NETWORK CASE MANAGEMENT



4. Documentation and Development

4.1. Follow-up/monitoring and evaluation:

The monitoring activities will make sure that the child protection policy is effectively and efficiently implemented at all levels of the organization. This process will be an input to measure the impact of the child protection policy in safe guarding and protecting children. The result of the M&E also used for the revision and updating of the policy with respect to specific period and situations experienced. NAFIS and partners will ensure meaningful participation of children in planning monitoring and evaluation of the Child Protection Policy.

4.2. Policy implementation strategy and review

NAFIS will apply the following strategy in order to implement the policy;

- ▶ Internalizing Child Protection Policy: NAFIS will make sure the well understanding and commitment of the organization senior management (General Assembly/member organizations, Board and Management staff on the policy. Awareness raising and induction trainings are the main activities to be done for creating common understanding. The policy document also put available to be accessed for all concerned.
- ▶ Establishing Reporting Structure: child protection at the organization level is realized through establishing focal person and child protection committee at each project level and its coordination office. Child protection policy awareness provision and handling cases of child abuse is managed by this structure.
- ▶ Integration of CPP in project cycle management: Child protection issues must considered in the organization project development, monitoring and evaluation process
- ▶ Child participation: As one of the values of the organization “community Participation”, children participation in every aspect of development which concerns their life is important. Therefore, NAFIS is committed to make sure the functional participation of children and preparing child friendly version of this policy.

The child protection policy will be reviewed every two years or whenever there is a need to make a major change in the organization or any legislation regarding the child protection. Since this is the first policy regarding child protection, its effectiveness and efficiency will be assessed in the process and its gaps and shortages considered for further development of the policy.