

## **Child Safety and Protection Policy**

Haadibadi believes that child safety is a society-wide responsibility. We believe that it is unacceptable for a child or young adult to experience any kind of abuse and recognize our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children by a commitment to a practice that protects them.

### **Purpose of the Policy**

Every child has a right to feel safe and secure at our community libraries, and all management, staff and volunteers have the responsibility to ensure that this protection is provided. This policy provides guidelines, procedures and a framework of best practices to be adopted to make the library a safe place for a child to use and enjoy, and in the event a child may be experiencing or, is at risk of, harm. The policy applies to all staff, management, volunteers, the student council, and anyone else working with or on behalf of Haadibadi.

### **General guidelines to be followed by all Management, Staff and Volunteers for ensuring child safety:**

- Always treat children with respect and dignity
- Always listen to what a child is saying and value them as individuals.
- Always use appropriate language with children, and challenge the use of inappropriate language by any young person or adult, while working with children.
- Always ensure that another member of staff/volunteer listens and/or observes, when you are in a difficult or sensitive situation involving a child.
- Avoid being alone with a child.
- One-to-one meeting with a child should take place openly and in public view.
- If the one-to-one meeting with a child requires privacy, always ensure that someone from the staff/management is informed of the meeting and its whereabouts.
- Comfort a child who is obviously distressed, but always remain in public view.
- Never initiate physical contact with a child.
- Never engage in sexually provocative actions or speech or rough physical games.
- Never do things of a personal nature that the child can do for themselves, for example, accompany to the toilet, or assist in adjusting their clothes. If a situation arises, where, for example, a child has limited mobility or motor skills, ensure that another person from the staff/management is present alongside to deal with the situation.
- Never allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind with a child.
- Always report incidents or concerns related to child safety immediately to the Child Protection Committee.

### **Unsupervised or unaccompanied children**

- All children below the age of 6 should be accompanied by a parent, care, an older sibling or another, suitable and responsible adult, unless they have obtained permission to visit the library unaccompanied from their parent/guardian. The community libraries should display a sign to this effect and all publicity related to children's activities should include this statement.
- If a young child is unsupervised/unaccompanied and you are concerned for their safety:
  - Ask the child if their parent, or older sibling are aware that they are here and if they are expecting/waiting for them.
  - Try to contact the child's parents, older siblings and check records of the child to get their address and contact information.

- Record the response of the parents or care appropriately.
  - Avoid being left alone with a child; try to ensure that other volunteers/staff/management are present when dealing with an unaccompanied child, and remain in public view.
- Under no circumstances should staff or volunteer take a child to the staff/volunteer's home.
- However, the library is a safer place for children than the streets, so while following the suggested course of action, the staff should allow the children to remain in the library during library hours if the child wishes to.

### **Dealing with unacceptable behavior**

- Remind the child/children or young people concerned that they, like adults, have to behave considerately towards other members, volunteers and staff of the library.
- Communicate with children and young persons on an individual basis. Avoid blanket condemnation and eviction of the whole group, wherever possible.
- Deal with challenging and unacceptable behavior calmly and quietly and avoid putting other children, volunteers and staff in any public danger.
- If staff or volunteers witness a child being bullied, or if a child complains of being bullied in the library, volunteers and staff have a duty to do whatever they can to stop it. The aggressive or abusive child should be told that their behavior is not acceptable. If necessary, staff should insist that they leave the premises.
- Children and young people should be asked to leave the library only if the behavior is not resolved, and only as a temporary measure.  
Incidents of unacceptable or challenging behavior may be recorded and reported to the Child Protection Committee.

### **Child Protection**

- All trustees, steering committee members, staff and long-term volunteers of Haadibadi will go through criminal background checks in accordance with the current law and procedures.
- All trustees, steering committee members, staff and volunteers must acquaint themselves with the Child Safety and Protection Policy and agree to follow it throughout their tenure at Haadibadi.
- Child protection awareness training for the trustees/staff/volunteers and the student council should be carried out from time to time.
- Publicize the details of the Child Protection Committee, with their name and contact information, child protection helplines and the local police station on the notice board in the library premises and on the organisation's website.
- If any staff or volunteer have serious concerns regarding the welfare of a child or if they suspect abuse is taking place, they should inform the Child Protection Committee.
- In case of an emergency, please contact the child protection helplines or the local police station.
- If a child tells you they are or have been abused (discloses abuse):
  - Take the child seriously and tell them so.
  - Allow the child to say what has happened to them, but do not ask leading questions.
  - Make a note of what the child says.
  - Tell the child that you are glad they told you.
  - Reassure the child that what happened is not their fault.
  - Be honest with the child and tell them who you have to contact and why.
  - Keep the child informed of what you are doing.
  - Contact the Child Protection Committee to decide the course of action.
- Parents or persons with parental responsibility and careers should be assured that their children are involved with a credible organisation by informing them of the child safety and protection

policy, by publicizing information on the notice board and online, and providing the designated child protection staff's name.