



# PLAN INDIA POLICY

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**SAY YES! TO KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE SAFE AND PROTECTED**

Lead	Plan International (India Chapter) Human Resource, Organisational Development and Operations Department
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# APPLICATION

This policy applies to Plan International (India Chapter), and all of its state offices, project offices, partner organization offices and premises, and any other offices, some of which operate as branches and some as subsidiaries;

All of the Plan International (India Chapter), including partner organizations, shall enact their own procedures which must be in line with Plan International (India Chapter) procedures, regulations, or other regulatory documents that enable compliance by its employees (and/or, when appropriate, contractors and other partners) with this policy.

## Girls

Due to our Purpose, this policy, has a particular focus on girls and young women aged up to and including 24 years. Girls may be especially vulnerable and at risk from certain forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence<sup>1</sup>. Violence against girls is not only against the values and principles we uphold as described in this Policy, but also in direct opposition to the aims of our work. As such, we are particularly concerned with ensuring that girls do not experience harm, abuse, exploitation, or any other form of violence as a result of their engagement with us or our programmes, projects, events, and processes. Furthermore, we need to ensure that our safeguarding approach and response to safeguarding concerns are gender responsive.

## Young People

We work with Young People, and therefore the protective scope of this Global policy extends to young people we are supporting or are in contact with, through our youth engagement work. We recognise that young people have particular safeguarding needs requiring distinct consideration. For example, some young people engaging with and attending events supported by a Plan International (India Chapter) may be over the formal age of majority in India (18 years) and so face fewer legal restrictions in what is permissible, but still require protection from violence and we retain a duty of care towards them.

# PURPOSE

Plan International (India Chapter) recognises that violence against children and young people is prevalent throughout the world and in all societies. Violence against children includes physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment and sexual abuse. Furthermore, children and young people may be vulnerable and at risk due to, for example, reasons of gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, disability and age or illness.

Plan International (India Chapter) is fully committed to ending violence against children and young people and acknowledge that we have a duty to promote their gender responsive safeguarding, particularly those with whom we work or are in contact.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- all who work for and engage with us are skilled, confident, understand, and are well supported in meeting their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people from violence and engage positively with them in ways that enhance the achievement of our Purpose;
- we have in place procedures to prevent and deal with the actions/behaviour of our Staff, Associates, Visitors or us as an organisation that result in violence against a child or young person and/or places them at risk of the same; and
- Children and young people we work with are aware, of our responsibilities to prevent and respond to any harm against them arising from actions and behaviours of our Staff, Associates and Visitors, and, the routes for reporting such incidents.

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<sup>1</sup> Boys are also vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation but the overwhelming majority of reported incidents identify girls as the victims.

# POLICY STATEMENT

We are fully committed to the gender responsive safeguarding of all children and young people from all forms of violence. We take very seriously our responsibility and duty to ensure that we, as an organisation, and anyone who represents us does not in any way harm, abuse or commit any other act of violence against children and young people or place them at risk of the same.

We promote child and youth safe practices, approaches, interventions and environments which respects, recognises and responds to the specific safeguarding needs and addresses the protection risks of the differing gender and other identities. We will challenge and do not tolerate inequality, abuse, discrimination or exclusion.

We expediently respond to a child or young person who may be in need of protection and or psycho-social support and intend that their welfare and best interests will at all times be of paramount consideration.

We ensure all who work with and engage with us understand and are supported in their meeting safeguarding roles and responsibilities. We take positive action to prevent anyone who might be a risk to children and young people from becoming involved with us and take stringent measures against any Staff, Associate or Visitor who perpetrates an act of violence against a child.

We promote the active involvement of children and young people in their own protection.

# APPLICABLE REQUIREMENTS

**This Policy is underpinned by the following set of principles that guides its implementation:**

1. All children and young people aged under 18 years have equal rights to protection from all forms of violence as declared in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises fundamental human rights, the dignity, worth and equal rights of people at any age, thus including young people aged 18 to 24 years old.
2. The human rights of children and young people will be respected and applied to all irrespective of age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background, class, any history of conflict with the law or any other aspect of their background or identity. Inequality, exclusion, and discrimination will be challenged and will not be tolerated.
3. All children and young people should be empowered and encouraged to fulfil their potential. Decisions made about children and young people will be made as far as possible with their participation and in their best interest giving full consideration to how such decisions will affect them. Children will be encouraged to express their views which will be given due weight in accordance with their age and level of maturity.
4. We have a responsibility to care for and protect children and young people, especially those that are vulnerable, and make sure they are not harmed.
5. We have particular responsibilities to children and young people with whom we come into contact. No child or young person must suffer harm, intentionally or unintentionally, as a result of their engagement, association or contact with us whether as a sponsored child, a participant in our programmes, projects, events, processes, or youth advisory panels or as part of a fundraising or influencing campaign.
6. We have a responsibility to inform and empower children and young people so that they learn about and are better able to exercise their rights to protection. We will work with children and young people ensuring they understand the essence of this policy, our safeguarding commitment and the means via which they can report policy breaches. We will also involve them in the development of safeguarding measures within Plan International (India Chapter) in accordance with their evolving capacities.

7. We are open and transparent, and will hold ourselves to account for our commitment to safeguard children and young people. Safeguarding concerns will be raised and discussed, poor practice and inappropriate behaviour challenged and addressed, and our safeguarding measures continuously reviewed and strengthened to ensure we remain accountable to children, young people, and their families.
8. We will act on safeguarding concerns, ensuring that our actions are timely, appropriate and centered around the child or young person, taking into account their gender and other specific safeguarding needs and vulnerabilities.
9. We work together in partnership with other agencies to promote the safeguarding of children and young people within organisations engaged with us and in the wider community.
10. Our safeguarding approach recognises and responds to the specific safeguarding risks and needs of the differing gender and other identities. It takes appropriate measures to address gender bias and other forms of discrimination and violence which may arise as a result of these. It supports the empowerment and fosters the inclusion of girls in the safeguarding process, in a manner that promotes equality, equity and ultimately their increased safety and protection.
11. Our safeguarding approach is mainstreamed in all stages of our operations, thematic portfolios, programmes, projects, activities, influencing work, and interventions in both development and humanitarian settings thus ensuring that these are designed and delivered in a manner that does no harm to children and young people.

In light of our commitment and accompanying principles, we give the highest priority to the safety and protection of children and young people.

We will ensure our Staff, Associates, and Visitors are supported to meet their safeguarding responsibilities and requirements, understand the specific risks to children and young people of differing gender and other identities and how they can work and engage in ways that increase the safety and protection of children and young people with whom we are in contact.

Our Safeguarding Implementation standards lays down the requirements for ensuring safeguarding measures are embedded in all parts of our operations and interventions.

### **Sanctions/Contravention/Disciplinary Process**

Breaches of this policy will be investigated in accordance with disciplinary procedures and contractual agreements, or a referral may be made to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country. Breaches may incur sanctions including disciplinary action leading to dismissal, termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements, and where relevant, appropriate legal or other such actions.

If a legitimate concern about the suspected abuse of a child or young person is raised but proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate sanctions will be applied in cases of false and malicious accusations.

# **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **1. All Staff, Associates and Visitors shall:**

- a. commit and contribute to an environment where children and young people feel respected, supported, safe and protected
- b. never act or behave in a manner that results in violence against a child or young person or places a child or young person at risk of violence;
- c. be aware of and adhere to the provisions of Plan International (India Chapter) policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People.

## **2. All Staff shall:**

- a. comply with this Policy, including the Safeguarding Code of Conduct (Annex 1); and
- b. report and respond to safeguarding concerns and breaches of the policy in line with the applicable procedures of Plan International (India Chapter).

3. **Associates and Visitors shall:** Agree, by signing, to complying with the Safeguarding Code of Conduct (Annex 1)
4. **Managers shall ensure that:**
  - a. Children, young people and communities with whom we engage, work or are in contact are made aware of the provisions of this Policy to ensure they have the confidence and ability to report any incidents occurring against children and young people;
  - b. Staff, Associates, and Visitors are aware of the Safeguarding Implementation Standards that are applicable to their role or engagement with us;
  - c. they support and develop systems which maintain an environment which is safe for and prevents violence against children and young people; and
  - d. they are accountable for ensuring that the policy is fully embedded within their areas of responsibility in accordance with the Safeguarding Implementation Standards (Annex 2).
5. **Directors shall ensure that:**
  - a. Plan International (India Chapter) has in place local procedures that are consistent with Global Policy and with the global document *Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Issues* which outlines reporting requirements and the manner in which they are escalated within Plan International (India Chapter). These local procedures should be developed with the assistance of local advisers and updated regularly. The policy and applicable procedures must be made available in local languages and child-friendly formats; and
  - b. Plan International (India Chapter) implements Safeguarding Implementation Standards, the people (Staff, Associates, and Visitors), children and young people with whom they engage, as well as the processes, programmes, projects, events and activities they undertake.
6. **Executive Director shall ensure that:**
  - a. Oversee that Plan International (India Chapter) implements Safeguarding Implementation Standards, in all the processes, programmes, projects, events and activities undertaken in association with Plan International (India Chapter).
7. **Organisations that work with us** in carrying out our programmes, projects, processes, events and/or activities involving children and young people must comply with the Safeguarding Guidelines contained in Annex 2.
8. **Plan International (India Chapter)** shall monitor compliance with the Policy through the mandatory tracking and auditing of the Safeguarding Implementation Standards and Safeguarding Code of Conduct (see Annex 1). Auditing against the standards will be led by Human Resources & Organizational Development Department. In addition, it is to be ensured that the participation of children, young people, staff, associates and visitors be engaged, to review, monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy.

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

### When used in this document:

**“Associate”** refers to a range of contracted paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support Plan International (India Chapter). It includes, among others, board members, volunteers (including community volunteers), interns, sponsors, researchers, donors, consultants and contractors, staff and/or representatives of partner organisations and local governments (when operating in partnership agreement with Plan International (India Chapter)).

**“Child”** in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and for the purposes of this policy, is defined as any person – girl, boy, young woman, young man, and children of other gender identities - under the age of 18 years (UNCRC Article 1). (See definition of Young Person/People or Youth below).

**“Director”** is a Functional Head of a particular function.

**“Executive Director”** is executive head of Plan International (India Chapter)

**“Direct beneficiaries”** are the people who are the target of and who we know will be immediately affected by one or more project outputs; irrespective of whether these are delivered directly by Plan International (India Chapter) or by partners or organisations who are acting on behalf of Plan International (India Chapter).

- Direct beneficiaries are individuals who receive materials, equipment; interventions such as training, awareness raising, mentoring or other personal support.
- Direct beneficiaries may be a single member of a household (for example a mother participating in training on nutrition); or it may be all members in the household (for example, distribution of hygiene kits or malaria nets that the whole family use).

**“Harm”** is any detrimental effect on a child’s or young person’s physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by abuse or exploitation whether intended or unintended.

**“Manager”** refers to a Staff member who has responsibility for line managing or supervising the work of Staff or partners or Associates.

**“Safeguarding children and young people”** is the responsibilities, preventive, responsive and referral measures that we undertake to protect children and young people, ensuring that no child or young person is subject to any form of harm as a result of their association with the organisation. This includes, ensuring that their contact with us and those associated with us and/or their participation in our activities, interventions and operations is safe and where there are concerns over a child or young person’s welfare or where a child or young person has been subject to violence, appropriate and timely actions are taken to address this and incidents are analysed so as to ensure continued learning and system strengthening for Plan International (India Chapter).

**“Safeguarding - Gender Responsive Safeguarding”<sup>2</sup>** is a safeguarding approach that:

- takes full account of gender in considering the specific safeguarding needs of girls, boys and other gender identities;
- integrates safeguarding measures that address protection risks for children and young people (girls, boys, young women, young men, and children of other gender identities) that stem from issues relating to gender bias and discrimination; and
- supports the empowerment and fosters the inclusion of girls, particularly in the safeguarding process, in a manner that promotes equality, equity and ultimately their increased safety and protection

**“Staff”** refers to individuals who receive a regular salary for work in Plan International (India Chapter), as well as individuals paid by or through a Plan International Entity but located in another entity.

**“Violence” against a child or young person** includes all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, emotional ill-treatment or psychological violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, harassment, and commercial or other exploitation of a child or young person. Acts of violence can also take place online through, for example, the web, social media or mobile phones. It may be an intentional act involving the use of physical force or power or it may be failing to act to prevent violence against a child or young person. Violence consists of anything which individuals, groups, institutions or organisations do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child or young person’s wellbeing, dignity and survival and development.

**“Visitor”** refers to a range of persons who are visiting our offices or programmes and may come into contact with children and young people through a Plan International (India Chapter), including journalists, media, researchers, visiting sponsors and celebrities.

**“Young Person/People” or “Youth”** in line with United Nations definitions, include individuals – young women, young men, and young persons of other gender identities - aged 15 years to 24 years old. This group spans the categories of ‘children’, ‘adolescents’ and ‘adults’ but regards young people as having particular safeguarding needs and requiring distinct consideration aside from younger children and older adults.

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<sup>2</sup> A working definition developed by PII Child and Youth Safeguarding Unit which may change on completion of our Gender Responsive Safeguarding toolkit.

# ANNEX 1:

## SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

**Plan International (India Chapter) is committed to creating a safe environment for children and young people. All staff have a duty to uphold the principles of Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People and commit to maintaining an environment that prevents violence against children and young people. Further to this, sexual exploitation and abuse by staff (including those that work in our humanitarian response) constitutes acts of gross misconduct and is therefore grounds for termination of employment.**

### **As such, I agree that I will:**

- a. Adhere to the Plan International (India Chapter) Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People and be open and honest in my dealings with children and young people, their families, and communities participating in programmes, projects, processes, events, and activities.
- b. Treat children and young people in a manner which is respectful of their rights, integrity, and dignity and considers their best interests regardless of age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background, class, or any history of conflict with the law.
- c. Create and maintain an environment which prevents the abuse and exploitation of children and young people ensuring that I am aware of potential risks with regards to my conduct and work, and take appropriate action so as to minimise risks to children and young people.
- d. Contribute to building an environment where children and young people we engage with are:
  - i. respected and empowered to participate in and discuss decision making and interventions for their safeguarding in accordance with their age, maturity and evolving capacities; and
  - ii. well informed on their safeguarding and protection rights and the steps to take if they have a concern.
- e. Display high standards of professional behaviour at all times, providing a positive role model for children and young people.
- f. Comply with all relevant international standards and local legislation in relation to child labour, and refrain from using children and young people aged below 18 years for domestic or other labour, if such work is inappropriate, exploitative or harmful given their age or developmental capacity, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury, exploitation, or violence. In addition, I understand that I must not use children and young people of any age that we work with for domestic or other labour.
- g. Respect the privacy and confidentiality of children and young people associated with Plan International (India Chapter). This means I will:
  - o Never ask for or accept personal contact details or invitations to share personal contact details (this includes email, phone numbers, social media contacts, address, webcam, skype, etc.) from any child or family associated or formerly associated<sup>3</sup> with our work or share my own personal contact details with such individuals except where this has been explicitly authorised by Plan International (India Chapter) and/or for Plan International (India Chapter) business purposes.<sup>4</sup>
  - o Never disclose, or support the disclosure of, information that identifies sponsored families or children, through any medium, unless that disclosure is in accordance with standard Plan International (India Chapter) policies and procedures and/or has the explicit consent of Plan International (India Chapter).<sup>5</sup> Media includes paper, photographs, and social media.
  - o Never make any contact with a child, young person, or family members associated with Plan International (India Chapter) work that is not supervised by a (or another) member of Plan

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<sup>3</sup> Where the child is a sponsored child requests for continued communication upon 'graduation' of the sponsorship (when the sponsored child reaches 18 years) must comply with Plan International (India Chapter) Sponsorship guidelines on the same.

<sup>4</sup> Plan International (India Chapter) will seek informed consent as appropriate from the child or young person.

<sup>5</sup> Plan International (India Chapter) will seek informed consent as appropriate from the child or young person.

- International (India Chapter) Staff. Such contact may include but is not limited to visits and any form of communication via social media, emails, and letters.
- o Always ensure that when on an official or work visit with Plan International (India Chapter) and I wish to take pictures of children and young people associated with the organisation, for personal use, I will:
    - Always consult first with the local Plan International (India Chapter) office so as to make sure that it is ok to take pictures in the local context and that the intended use of the pictures does not conflict with Plan International (India Chapter) policies.
    - Ask permission of the child or young person (or in the case of young children, their parent or guardian) informing them of the specific purpose(s) and intended use (including how and where) and respect their decision to say no making it clear that there will be absolutely no negative repercussions from denying such consent.
    - Ensure the images are respectful and do not impact negatively on their dignity and privacy.
    - Ensure that the use of the images does not put the child or young person at risk of being identified or located.
    - Never upload the images of children and young people associated with Plan International (India Chapter) to non-Plan International (India Chapter) social media pages without the full and explicit consent of Plan International (India Chapter)<sup>6</sup>.
  - h. Report and respond to any concerns, suspicions, incidents or allegations of actual or potential abuse to a child or young person in accordance with applicable procedures of the engaging office.
  - i. Cooperate fully and confidentially in any Plan International (India Chapter) investigation of concerns or allegations of abuse to children and young people.
  - j. Immediately disclose all charges, convictions, and other outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during association with Plan International (India Chapter) that relate to exploitation and abuse of a child or young person.

#### **I will not:**

- a. Abuse or exploit a child or young person or behave in any way that places a child or young person at risk of harm, including through harmful traditional practices such as, for example, forced or child marriage.
- b. Engage in any form of sexual activity or develop physical/sexual relationships with anyone under the age of 18, regardless of the age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.<sup>7</sup>
- c. Engage in sexual relationships with Plan International (India Chapter) youth direct beneficiaries aged 18 to 24 years as these undermine the credibility and integrity of Plan International's work and are based on inherently unequal power dynamics'.<sup>8</sup>
- d. Use physical punishment/discipline or use of physical force of any kind towards children and young people.
- e. Engage young people in any form of sexual activity which involves the exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries<sup>9</sup>
- f. Use language or behave towards a child or young person in a way that is inappropriate, offensive, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- g. Fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch children or young people in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way.

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<sup>6</sup> Plan International (India Chapter) will seek informed consent as appropriate from the child or young person and parents or guardians where applicable.

<sup>7</sup> ST/SGB/2003/13: UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, 2003 (endorsed by Plan International).

<sup>8</sup> We recognise that our incentive Workers and Community Volunteers live in communities where we operate and so on rare occasions, relationships may develop that may be seen as acceptable in the community but would breach this element of the code. However, we expect Incentive Workers and Community Volunteers working in Programme areas to make known to the relevant manager any potentially compromising relationship they are in or considering, that involve a beneficiary who is aged 18 years and above.

<sup>9</sup> ST/SGB/2003/13: UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, 2003 (endorsed by Plan International).

- h. Have a child/children/young person with whom I am in contact in a work related context, stay overnight at my home or any other personal residential location or accommodation.
- i. Sleep in the same room or bed as a child or young person with whom I am in contact in a work related context. Where it is necessary to sleep in proximity with unaccompanied children and young people, I will make sure that another adult is present and it is in line with authorised procedures.
- j. Do things of a personal nature for children or young person, with whom I am in contact in a work related context, (e.g. taking a child/young person to the toilet/bathroom; helping them get un/dressed etc.) that they can do for themselves.
- k. Spend time alone away from others with children and young people with whom I am in contact in a work related context; I will always make sure that another adult is with me and/or I am with the child/young person in an open public place, where others are around and in plain view of others.
- l. Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children or young people.
- m. Act in ways that shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children and young people, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- n. Discriminate against, show differential or preferential behavior towards, or favour particular children and young people to the detriment of them or others.
- o. Develop relationships with, engage in any practice with or develop behaviour towards children and young people which could in any way be deemed or interpreted as exploitive or abusive.
- p. Condone or participate in behaviour of children or young people which is illegal, unsafe, or abusive.
- q. Use computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras, or any such medium to exploit, harass or bully children or young people.
- r. Use computers, mobile phones, or video/digital cameras or other electronic devices, to access, view, create, download, or distribute pornography, especially abusive images of children or young people.

**The above is not an exhaustive list. Staff, Associates, and Visitors should consider all related actions and behavior which may compromise the rights and safeguarding of children and young people.**

## **Personal Conduct outside Work or Engagement with Us**

We do not dictate the belief and value systems by which Staff, Associates, and Visitors conduct their personal lives. However, actions taken by them out of working hours that are seen to contradict this policy will be considered a violation of the policy.

Our Staff, Managers, Associates, and Visitors are required to adhere to principles of this Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People both at work and outside work.

# ANNEX 2: GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING SAFEGUARDING IN PRACTICE

These guidelines outline the requirements for safeguarding children and young people that are applicable to organisations that work with Plan International (India Chapter) in carrying out our programmes involving children and young people.

They are particularly applicable to organisations assessed as having contact with children and young people, working with children and young people, and/or whose projects, programmes, processes, activities, advocacy and influence work impact on children and young people. Organisations funded by a Plan International Entity are expected to build on these guidelines as appropriate based on the nature of their activities and risks to children and young people.

The guidelines illustrate our commitment to support and respect children's and young people's rights to be protected from harm, and to provide a safe and protective environment for children and young people who are involved with any programmes funded by a Plan International (India Chapter).

**The guidelines should be applied in relation to children and/or young people as appropriate, depending on *the group the organisation works with*.**

- 1. Prevention:** Plan International (India Chapter) and associated organisation must take appropriate measures to manage child and/or youth safeguarding risk factors and prevent abuse and exploitation before it occurs. Prevention measures should include organisational safeguarding policies, codes of conduct and associated procedures; the management of safeguarding risks in relation to its operations, activities and interventions; and the production and promotion of 'child and young person friendly' safeguarding information and resources.
- 2. Code of Conduct:** Plan International (India Chapter) and associated organisation is required to ensure that their personnel avoid any behaviour or conduct that compromises the safety and protection of children and/or young people within its activities, operations and programmes. In addition, programmes and activities working directly with children and/or young people or involving direct contact between the same should develop guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour for children and/or young people towards each other. This should be incorporated into policy and practice documents.
- 3. Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination:** Plan International (India Chapter) and associated organisation should ensure that all Safeguarding Children and/or Young People policies and procedures take into account gender equality and non-discrimination requirements. Recognising that girls, boys, young women, young men, and children and young people of different gender identities may face different risks relating to their safety and protection and that all children and/or young people have an equal right to protection, irrespective of: age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background, or class.
- 4. Screening Procedures:** There should be detailed screening procedures for all personnel (including unpaid volunteers) who will come into contact with children and/or young people (directly or indirectly). Screening procedures should be available in each partner organization and updated on a regular basis, wherever possible. Screening procedures may include: certificate of good conduct, police reference checks or equivalent, verification that applicants are not listed in national registries of child offenders; a detailed application and interview process; references who support the applicant's suitability to work with children and/or young people.
- 5. Awareness:** Plan International (India Chapter) and associated organizations should ensure that all personnel, sub-contractors or consultants or affiliates involved with children and young people's programmes are aware of safeguarding risks, policies and procedures; and their safeguarding responsibilities. In addition children and/or young people engaged and their parents, guardians or carers should be informed of the same so that they know what behaviours to expect and how to report any concerns.
- 6. Capacity Building:** Plan International (India Chapter) and associated organisation should develop the capacity of all who work with and for children and/or young people to appropriately prevent, detect, report and respond to safeguarding concerns and particularly as they pertain to differing

gender and other identities. Efforts should be made to ensure organisational policies and practices are understood and can be effectively implemented through mandatory inductions and on-going training courses for all employees and volunteers and other associates.

- 7. Participation of children and/or young people:** Children and/or young people should be actively, meaningfully and ethically involved in the development of safeguarding measures in accordance with their evolving capacities. Children and/or young people must not be treated simply as objects of concern but rather listened to and taken seriously and treated as individual people with their own views.
- 8. Reporting Mechanisms for children and/or young people and Staff:** Mechanisms should be established that enable the safe reporting of safeguarding concerns. Such mechanisms should ensure appropriate escalation of concerns within the organisation, referral to the appropriate authorities and confidentiality. In addition, child and youth reporting mechanisms should be accessible, friendly and sensitive to their differing needs.
- 9. Response and Follow Up:** Plan International (India Chapter) and associated organisations policies and procedures should include appropriate measures to support and protect children and/or young people when concerns arise. All measures taken to respond to a safeguarding concern should take into account the best interest of the child or young person and be sensitive to their differing gender and other identities ensuring they are kept safe and protected. Response measures should be appropriately risk assessed and endeavour to ensure no further harm comes to the child and/or young person as a result of any actions taken by the Organisation.

Concerns should be documented / reported and information kept in accordance with the privacy and confidentiality policies of the Organisation and/or local legislation. In addition, organisational processes should ensure response evaluation and follow up for organisational learning.

Partner organisations should also advise Plan International (India Chapter) of any complaints of abuse to children and/or young people in line with the working agreement.

- 10. Implementation, Monitoring and Review:** The implementation and monitoring the Safeguarding Children and/Young People Policy should be reviewed at regular intervals as determined necessary, preferably at least every three (3) years, where possible.
- 11. Sanction and Discipline of Organisation personnel:** The Organisational policies and procedures should provide for appropriate sanctions and disciplinary measures which ensures children and young people are protected from further potential harm. This may include the immediate suspension of personnel until such time as the allegations are followed up and either substantiated or refuted and/or where personnel is convicted of abusing a child or young person, the said personnel is immediately terminated with cause from his or her position.
- 12. Informed Consent:** The Organisation should provide children and/or young people (and their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) where applicable), with all necessary details (including on any associated risk), to make an informed decision regarding their participation in programmes and activities, including any voice recordings, video or photographs of children and/or young people (including how and where these will be used). Participation and/or usage of information and/or images should only take place after consent is obtained.
- 13. Protection of Personal Information:** Personal information regarding any Child or children and/or young people, whether or not such information is obtained as part of the programmes involving children and/or young people, should be treated confidentially. There should be clear procedures showing the responsibilities within the organisation for accessing and using such data with appropriate authorisations. In addition such data should not be disclosed to any third party, except in accordance with the policies of the organisation or as required by applicable local laws. Personal information includes, but is not limited to, any information that can be linked to or used to identify a Child and/or Young Person.
- 14. Working with partners:** Plan International (India Chapter) should ensure adequate safeguarding assessments are made as part of its due diligence processes when it comes to partnership working. Third party entities that are contracted or supported to work with children must be subject to the same safeguarding principles and approach outlined in the organisations policy and procedures. Vendors, suppliers and other contractors that may be in direct or indirect contact with children must also be subject to appropriate safeguarding measures.