

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (CPP)

POLICY NO: HR/2020/10	
Status: <b>APPROVED</b>	Implementation date: 13 December 2020
Board Resolution No: TM/BR/2020/009	Approved Date: 13 December 2020
AMENDMENT/ REVIEW	
Status: -	Implementation date: -
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## 1. Introduction

TM is committed to uphold the rights of children in consideration of our international obligations and local regulations and manage and mitigate child protection risks across our organization. TM has a zero-tolerance approach to child exploitation and abuse and shall treat all allegations and incidents seriously.

This policy applies to our own organisation and extends to those we work with. This policy is developed based on best practices and standards followed by TI chapters and supports the provisions of the Protection of the Rights of Children in Maldives (Act No: 19/2019) and other relevant regulations in the Maldives.

## 2. Definitions, scope and applicability

The policy will be applicable to all TM Board members, staff, volunteers, interns and any other external party or organization that TM works with. This includes, independent contractors and consultants as well organizations and service providers, grantees and sub-grantees.

This policy will also apply to all personnel involved in activities undertaken at community level by TM, including TM staff, facilitators, trainers and participants.

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

- **Children:** children who are under 18 years of age from Gregorian calendar after their birth.
- **Abuse:** any form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect or ill-treatment, whether by a person in a family relationship with a child or any other person(s) not known or unrelated to the child.
- **Child exploitation:** Any actual or attempted act to commit or coerce a person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a child, including but not limited to, possessing, controlling, producing and distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material, grooming, or using a minor for profit, sexual gratification or some other personal or financial advantage.
- **Child exploitation material:** material, irrespective of its form, which is classified as child abuse material or child pornography material.
- **Child pornography:** Any representation of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes.
- **Child pornography material:** Any material depicting minors engaged in, or appears to be engaged in, a sexual pose or sexual activity, or is in presence of a person who is engaged in, or appears to be engaged in, a sexual pose or activity.
- **Child labour:** work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and dignity, and is harmful to their physical, mental, social development or morally dangerous.

TM recognizes that successful enforcement of this policy requires a collective responsibility and commitment from all its members, staff and other partners. Any individual, member, staff or partner found in breach of this policy will be subjected to strict disciplinary actions, such as dismissal from employment, loss of membership or blacklisted as a TM partner.

### 3. Guiding principles

TM will uphold the following principles with respect to protecting the rights of children:

- **Safeguarding children:** TM will uphold all the rights of children who come into contact with the TM, directly or indirectly, as defined by the Child Rights Protection

Act (Law No: 19/2019). TM will also ensure that all our partners, associates and affiliates have a similar obligation to safeguard the well-being of children.

- Zero tolerance: TM will have zero tolerance for child exploitation and abuse, , and will take all allegations of such conduct seriously, including reporting to the relevant authorities and ensuring that the matter is dealt with in accordance with the law. TM expects all our partners, associates and affiliates to uphold these obligations.
- Proactive prevention measures: TM will take steps to promote positive action and behaviour within our organization and foster an organizational culture that promotes and protects the rights of children.
- Timely Action: TM understands our legal and moral obligation to contact relevant authorities in instances of allegations or suspicion of child exploitation and abuse and will take timely action to respond to any such cases.

#### **4. Responsibilities of members, staff, volunteers, and interns**

In line with TM's commitment to creating a safe working environment, TM's Board, members, staff, volunteers, and interns are expected to observe the following minimum standards of behaviour:

- Refrain from any form of actions that can be construed as engaging in child exploitation, abuse or violation of child rights and demonstrate commitment to the prevention of such acts.
- Familiarize themselves with this policy and demonstrate commitment to uphold this policy.
- Ensure that they do not assist or encourage others to engage in such acts.
- Report allegation of incidents without delay.
- Maintain commitment to uphold and promote a culture of protecting children's rights.

#### **5. Responsibilities of external partners**

All our external partners, both individuals and organizations, are required to abide by CPP policies or have their own CPP policies and guidelines in place.

In cases where TM partners do not have written or specified CPP policies or guidelines in place, they should ensure and provide guarantee to TM that necessary controls are

in place to manage and monitor the CPP or alternatively, agree to adopt and uphold TM's CPP policy during the partnership/project/program duration. The sample pledge to be signed by TM's partners in the latter instance is provided in Annex 2.

## **6. Risk Assessment**

### **6.1 Incorporating CPP in joint programs, projects and activities**

TM will take a risk-based approach prior to commencement of each project and program. We will assess the context and extent to which our contractors, consultants and grantees and sub-grantees have CPP policies in place or abide by CPP guidelines and categorize risk level accordingly.

### **6.2 Incorporating CPP in recruitment process**

If a position at TM requires direct contact with children or is likely to have a high interaction with children, TM will conduct extra background checks with relevant authorities to verify whether the incumbent has any previous records or offenses. TM's Recruitment Policy will provide detail further vetting processes for screening and interviewing prospective candidates for positions that requires high level of interaction within community and especially with children.

## **7. Employing children as staff, volunteers and interns**

In accordance with the Employment Act of the Maldives, TM will not employ minors under the age of 16 (sixteen), except in connection with trainings associated with their education or department.

Children between the ages 16 (sixteen) to 18 (eighteen) can apply to TM for part-time or short-term recruitments or to undergo vocational trainings as volunteers and interns. In such cases, TM will obtain written approval from their legal guardians. In addition, TM will respect and uphold the following conditions outlined in the Employment Act of the Maldives:

- Avoid engaging minors in any work or conditions that may have detrimental effects to their health, safety, education and conduct
- Refrain from assigning or engaging any work that should be carried out during school hours of the minor.

- Ensure that minors are not required to work after 11pm at night

## **8. Reporting**

It is mandatory to report all incidents (including suspected incidents) of child exploitation and abuse. Reports can be lodged directly with the relevant authorities (Child and Family Protection Service or the Maldives Police Service) or sent to TM's Executive Director (ED). If the allegations are directed at ED, the incident can be reported directly to any member of TM's Board or lodged with the relevant authorities in the Maldives. A summary on the reporting process is outlined in Annex 1.

Reporting can be done anonymously and should be submitted to ED via letter or email with the following information.

- Name of the alleged offender (if known)
- Name of the alleged victim (if the complaint is made by a third party)
- Description of the alleged incident(s) (with dates and locations where possible)

ED/Board may initiate documenting allegations of child exploitation and abuse, at their own initiative, without a reference to a formal allegation. Such initiatives should however be supported with a written brief compiled by ED/Board noting their observations or information obtained on alleged incidents.

It is the responsibility of ED/Board to ensure that these reports are formally lodged with the relevant authorities of the Maldives (Child and Family Protection Service or the Maldives Police Service). Following the conclusion of investigations by the relevant authorities, any individual, member, staff or partner found in breach of this policy will be subjected to strict disciplinary actions, such as dismissal from employment, loss of membership or blacklisted as a TM partner.

## **9. Confidentiality**

All reports lodged under this policy will be treated confidentially, and will be only divulged to the relevant authorities of the Maldives (Child and Family Protection Service or the Maldives Police Service in accordance with the Protection of the Rights of Children in Maldives.

## **10. Communicating the policy**

ED/Board and TM management have the responsibility to uphold this policy and create culture that promotes the obligations and principles of this policy. It is also the responsibility of ED, TM Board and management to ensure that this policy is properly communicated to all our internal and external stakeholders, including the communities we work with, prior to commencement of each project, program or activity.

## **11. Training on the policy**

ED will ensure that this policy is disseminated widely among all persons covered under the scope of this policy. In this regard, ED will provide trainings and awareness to TM staff, volunteers, interns and members on regular basis, at least twice a year. New recruits will be provided training during their initial induction. In addition, prior to starting a new program or project, TM will ensure that this policy is properly communicated to all TM partners.

## **12. Complementary policies**

This policy is complemented by the following TM's policies:

- TM's Code of Conduct
- TM's Policy on Workplace Harassment, Bullying, Anti-discrimination and Abuse of Authority
- TM's Whistleblower Policy
- TM's Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment Policy (PSEAH)
- TM's recruitment policy
- TM's internship policy
- TM's volunteer policy

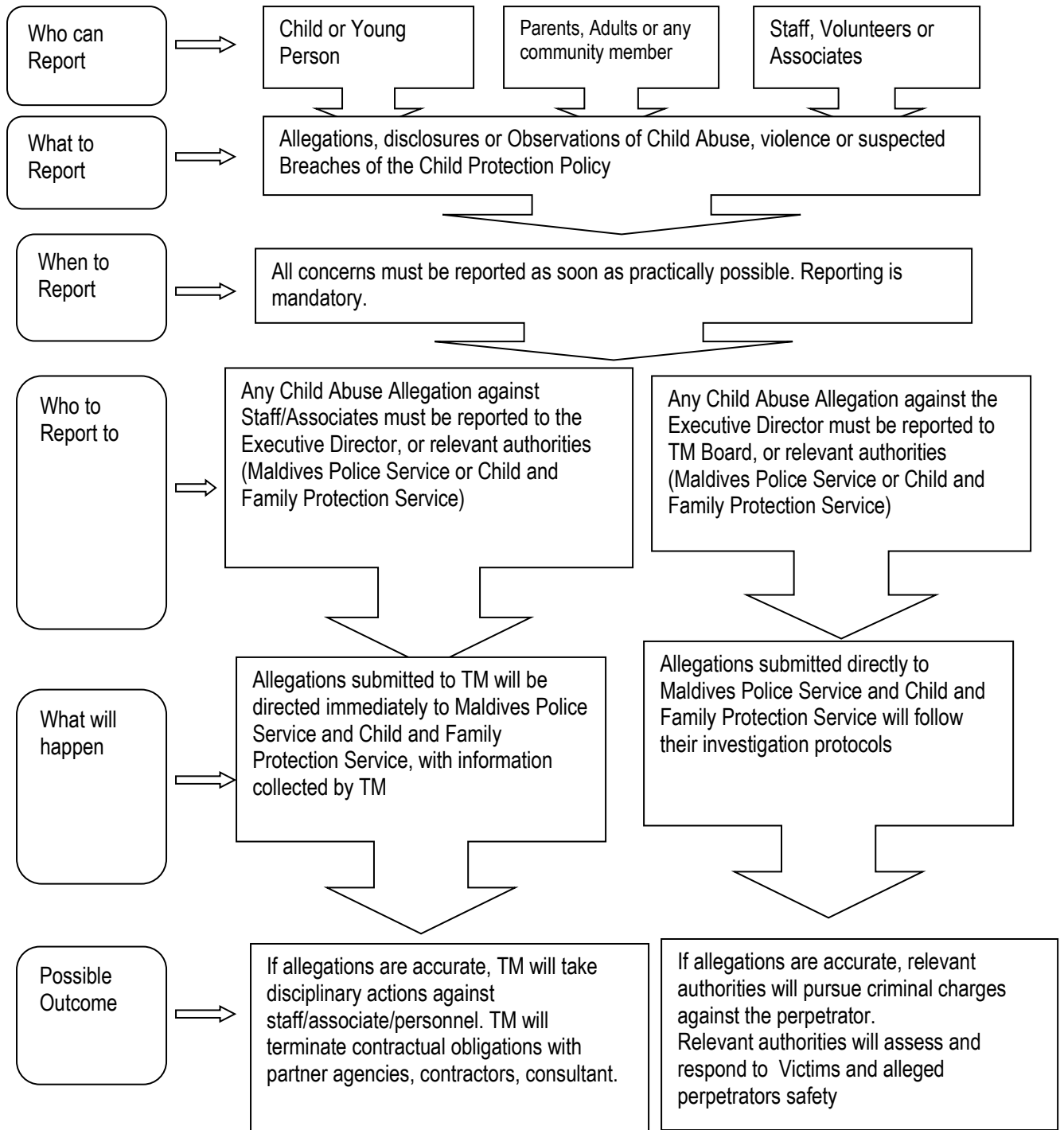
## **13. Implementation of the policy**

This policy will be implemented following approval of the policy by Board and after circulation of the policy to all TM employees.

Any subsequent changes brought to the policy will be approved by the Board and disseminated to all employees.

This policy, together with subsequent change to this policy, will also be published in TM's website.

## Annex 1: Reporting process





**Annex 2: Sample claimer for TM's external stakeholders****PLEDGE TO UPHOLD TM'S CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

I agree to abide by and respect TM's Child Protection Policy and uphold its tenets in all aspects of this assignment/project/program. I provide assurance to disseminate this policy within our organization and ensure that our project teams are fully familiar with this policy. I further provide assurance that our organization will refrain from engaging in any form of actions that can be construed as exploitation, abuse or violation of child rights and will notify to TM and relevant authorities without delay any allegation of incidents.

Name:

Position:

Project/ Program/ Agreement:

Duration:

Date:

Sign:

### **Annex 3: Important numbers for reporting**

#### **Transparency Maldives**

Phone: 3304017

Email: [office@transparency.mv](mailto:office@transparency.mv)/ [hr@transparency.mv](mailto:hr@transparency.mv)

#### **Child and Family Protection Service (Ministry of Gender and Family)**

Phone: 3328393

#### **Maldives Police Service (Family and Child Protection Department)**

Phone: 3000600

#### **Child Helpline (Ministry of Gender and Family)**

Hotline: 1412

NOTE: The Child Helpline is a toll-free number

#### **Family Protection Authority**

Phone: 3010551