



# GoodWeave International (GWI) Child Protection Policy

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## Table of Contents

<b>Section 1 – Introduction</b> .....	3
1.1 Organizational Intent .....	3
1.2 Basis of GoodWeave’s Policy.....	3
1.3 Application of this Policy.....	3
References.....	4
<b>Section 2 – Guiding Principles</b> .....	5
2.1 Universal Rights of Children .....	5
2.2 Priorities of this Policy .....	6
2.3 Definition of Abuse .....	7
<b>Section 3 – GoodWeave Code of Practice for Child Protection</b> .....	9
3.1 Contact with Children .....	9
3.2 Abuse Prevention and Awareness .....	9
3.3 Communications and Media Guidelines .....	13
3.4 Implementation and Monitoring of the Policy.....	15
<b>4. Code of Employee and Representative Behaviour</b>	17
<b>5. Reporting and Reacting to Allegations of Suspected Child Abuse</b>	19
Appendix 1 – Guidelines for Involving Children in Advocacy	23
Appendix 2 – Protocol for Visitors to GoodWeave’s Children’s Programmes	25

## Section 1–Introduction

### 1.1 Organizational Intent

GoodWeave -- a nonprofit organization founded in 1994 -- is the leading global institution with a mission to end child labor in global supply chains through an authentic system that harnesses the power of the market, establishes transparent and clean supply chains, creates educational opportunities for children, and improves conditions for all workers. GoodWeave brings visibility to global supply chains, gives voice to informal and marginalized workers, provides assurance that certified products are free of child labor, and restores childhood to vulnerable children so they can laugh, learn, and play. GoodWeave, a pioneer with more than two decades of experience, works in South Asia in carpets, apparel/fashion jewelry, home textiles, bricks, and tea.

GoodWeave International (hereafter referred to as “GWI”) sets organizational policies for GoodWeave programs worldwide, which are implemented in each country of operation by National Initiatives and local partners.

### 1.2 Basis of GoodWeave’s Policy

GWI’s Child Protection Policy (CPP) is based on the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Labor Organization Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor to ensure that its operations are in the best interests of children. Further, the Policy also takes into account the special national and state laws dealing with child rights, and in particular child protection, child labor, trafficking and forced and bonded labor.

### 1.3 Application of this Policy

The protection of children from all forms of abuse is of prime importance to GoodWeave and is considered both an organizational and individual responsibility. Everyone who works for GoodWeave or its partner organizations must take all possible precautions to protect the children with whom they come into contact. The key ethical consideration for GoodWeave representatives in working with children is 'to protect children from harm'. Operations of GoodWeave do not involve the collection of data pertaining to children in the European Economic Area.

This policy must be implemented in each of GoodWeave’s countries of operation, and must be translated into the local language. The principal document for reference will be the English version.

This policy, its reporting requirements, and any national level procedures for implementation of this policy are primarily intended to be a conduct policy for employees and representatives of GoodWeave. GoodWeave recognizes that representatives may

in their work observe abuse of children. The level of intervention that may be appropriate in such situations will be a matter of judgment, but will be guided by these principles.

This policy and the concepts expressed in this policy are central to GoodWeave's mission and GoodWeave has incorporated it in the governance, structure, strategy, and everyday operations of the organization.

### **1.3.1 Individuals Governed by this Policy**

This code applies to all employees, board members, volunteers, consultants and staff of GoodWeave and its partner NGOs (hereafter referred to as "Representatives" of GoodWeave), especially those working directly with children in the inspections, monitoring and rehabilitation processes and those travelling overseas as well as visitors to GoodWeave programs. Failure to comply with this policy constitutes gross misconduct within the terms of the contract of employment or relationship.

### **1.3.2 Those Protected by this Policy**

This policy is meant to protect children under 18 years of age as defined by UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, but GoodWeave intends that its employees and representatives would also apply this policy and its intent to adults who may be vulnerable to exploitation because of disability, economic dependence or cultural constraints whenever necessary, and especially to those adults who entered into the situation of vulnerability or exploitation as a child.

### **1.3.3 Entry into Effect**

This version of the policy entered into effect on December 13, 2018.

### **1.3.4 Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed by the GWI Child Protection Committee with input from the GWI Executive Leadership Team and the approval of the GWI Executive Board every year to ensure compliance with any new regulation or legislation in the countries where GoodWeave operates.

## **References**

GWJ Forced, Bonded and Child Labour Remediation Policy

GDPR Staff Guidance v.1. June 5, 2018

## Section 2 – Guiding Principles

### 2.1 Universal Rights of Children

This Child Protection Policy intends to ensure child rights in all aspects of work of GoodWeave, in particular against child labor, trafficking of children, forced labor, any kind of abuse including physical or sexual abuse, any other kind of economic or other exploitation or social, religious, gender-based or any other kind of violence or discrimination.

While recognising that:

- a child is any person below the age of eighteen years;
- every child has universal, inalienable and indivisible human rights including the right to life, survival, development, protection and participation;
- the rights of children are interrelated and interdependent, and each one of them is equally important and fundamental to the well-being and dignity of the child;
- a multi-dimensional, integrated and inclusive approach is necessary for the overall and harmonious development and protection of children, which acknowledges their heterogeneity and different needs;
- right to life, survival and development goes beyond the physical existence of the child and also encompasses the right to identity and nationality, and mental, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development of the child;
- family or family environment is most conducive for the all-round development of children and they are not to be separated from their parents, except where such separation is necessary in their best interest;
- the best interest of the child is of paramount concern in all decisions and actions affecting the child, whether taken by legislative bodies, courts of law, administrative authorities, public, private, social, religious or cultural institutions;
- children, especially girls, are free to express their views and their voices are heard and their opinions are respected in all matters affecting them in any way they are able to communicate, in particular judicial and administrative proceedings and interactions, in accordance with their age, maturity and evolving capacities;

Reaffirming that:

- all children have equal rights irrespective of place of birth, sex, religion, caste, class, language, and disability, social, economic or any other status;
- all children have the right to a loving family, a dignified life free from exploitation and that families are to be supported by a strong social safety net in caring for and nurturing their children;
- safety and security of all children is integral to their well-being and children are to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, violence, maltreatment and exploitation;

GoodWeave is committed to take pro-active measures for inclusion of all children in accessing their rights, especially those marginalized or disadvantaged; to ensure that all children have equal opportunities; and that no custom, tradition, cultural or religious practice is allowed to violate or restrict or prevent children from enjoying their rights.

This Policy is to guide and inform all policies, plans and programs of GoodWeave affecting children.

## 2.2 Priorities of this Policy

Education, health and nutrition, development, protection and participation and freedom from exploitation are the undeniable rights of every child and are the key priorities of this Policy.

### Education and Development

- The right to life with dignity, right to education, and the right to freedom from exploitation are inalienable rights of every child and will receive the highest priority.
- GoodWeave stands committed to equitable access to holistic and essential education of the highest standard for all children up to the age of employment in their specific countries.
- GoodWeave recognizes its responsibility to secure rights to equality, freedom from exploitation and discrimination, equal rights to learning, knowledge and education for every child in all its programs and interventions, with due regard for special needs, through access, provision and promotion of required environment, information, infrastructure, services and support, towards the development of the child's fullest potential.

### Protection

A safe, secure and protective environment is a precondition for the realization of all other rights of children. Children have the right to be protected wherever they are.

It is the responsibility of GoodWeave to create a caring and protective environment for all children in its programs, to reduce their vulnerability in all situations and protect them from all forms of violence and abuse, especially in situations of child labor as well as in other situations of neglect, stigma, discrimination, deprivation, exploitation including economic exploitation and sexual exploitation, abandonment, separation, abduction, sale or trafficking for any purpose or in any form but especially for forced labor or bonded labor, other similar practices of slavery and servitude, pornography, substance abuse, or any other activity that takes undue advantage of them, or harms their personhood and affects their development.

GoodWeave commits to taking special protection measures to secure the rights and entitlements of children in difficult circumstances, characterized by their specific social

and economic situations, including their need for rehabilitation and reintegration, in particular but not limited to, children affected by child labor and trafficking.

## **Participation**

GoodWeave has the primary responsibility to ensure that through its programs, children are made aware of their rights, and provided with opportunities and support to develop skills, to form aspirations and express their views, in accordance with their age, maturity and evolving capacities, so as to enable them to be actively involved in their own development and in all matters concerning and affecting them.

GoodWeave shall promote and strengthen respect for the views of the child, especially those of the girl child and of children from minority groups or marginalized communities, within: the family; community; schools and institutions; different levels of governance; as well as in judicial and administrative proceedings that concern them.

GoodWeave shall engage all stakeholders in developing mechanisms for children to share their grievances without fear; monitor effective implementation of children's participation through measurable indicators; develop different models of child participation; and undertake research and documentation of best practices.

GoodWeave shall take all necessary steps to protect children from any and all forms of abuse and exploitation and also to ensure that proper safety mechanisms are in place to enable children to come forward and speak about any abuse that they are facing or might potentially face. GoodWeave is also committed to providing the highest possible standard of care and protection to any child victim of abuse if such a case is ever brought forward against any of its staff, associates, volunteers, etc.

## **2.3 Definition of Abuse**

For the purpose of this policy, Child Abuse shall be defined as per the World Health Organization, which has defined child abuse as "any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that results in actual or potential harm to the child's physical, psychological or emotional health, development, dignity or well-being in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power."

Child abuse can be categorized under four main forms, namely:

- 1) Physical abuse is the actual or likely physical injury and/or harm to a child or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.
- 2) Sexual abuse is the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or young person. It includes direct or indirect sexual exploitation of children by involving them (or threatening to involve them) in sexual activities.

- 3) Emotional abuse is the actual or likely adverse effect on the emotional or behavioural development of a child caused by repeatedly rejecting and humiliating them or denying their worth and rights as human beings.
- 4) Neglect is the persistent lack of care of children including safety, warmth and medical attention.



## Section 3 – GoodWeave Code of Practice for Child Protection

### 3.1 Contact with Children

GoodWeave strives to promote child-friendly communities and behavior through its various programs, and encourages all of its employees and representatives to follow child-friendly practices. Consequently, GoodWeave recognizes that many of its employees and representatives are often in contact with children, either directly or indirectly, and may have access to their personal information as they carry out their day-to-day duties.

- GoodWeave defines direct contact as being in the physical presence of a child or children while performing work on behalf of GoodWeave. This includes, but is not limited to, visits to factories, looms or schools, inspections, transporting, attending any event or gathering where children are present, and includes correspondence with children.
- Indirect contact is defined as having access to information on children in the context of any form of GoodWeave operations such as children’s names, locations, addresses, or photographs and case studies.

While positive child-friendly contact and behavior is encouraged, GoodWeave employees and representatives should strive to avoid unnecessary direct and indirect contact with children and limit the number of individuals who have unnecessary direct and indirect contact with children. In the case of direct contact, no adult (including visitors and staff) should be alone with a child or children, unless in the context of confidential counselling. Outside of confidential counselling, two or more adults should be present when there is direct contact with a child.

When children are found to be working during supply chain inspections, the inspector should follow the relevant procedures of the GoodWeave Child Labor Remediation Policy, including finding details of the child to enable remediation of child labor as appropriate to the situation.

### 3.2 Abuse Prevention and Awareness

#### 3.2.1 Recruitment of Employees, Volunteers, Consultants

Each national office or representative will identify all potential positions and roles with the organization in which direct or unsupervised contact with children is possible or likely and ensure that extra care is taken in dealing with applications and interviews for such posts. GoodWeave and its representatives are obligated to thoroughly vet candidates on the issue of child protection by means that may include:

- Candidates being asked to describe their previous experience of working with children;

- Candidates providing at least two (2) references who can comment on their work with children,
- providing a self-declaration form about criminal convictions and completing a thorough review of criminal history and other issues that would raise concern;
- Questioning of candidates during the interview process to determine suitability to work with children and/or young women;
- Conducting criminal background checks on all prospective employees;
- Holding briefings on child protection issues and GoodWeave policies with new employees, volunteers and members of committees upon their recruitment and induction into the organization.
- Cross checking the candidate for previous history of child abuse from any directory or public information portal in countries where such information exists.
- Cross referencing the information provided by the candidate with previous employers.
- Ensuring the existence of clauses for indemnity as well as for confidentiality in its contracts.

GoodWeave, its national offices and representatives have the right and the obligation to completely exclude those individuals with a record of sexual offences or other forms of child endangerment from employment or any role within the organization.

GoodWeave shall also provide every selected candidate with rigorous training on all aspects of child protection and shall also initiate a detailed induction program on its own child protection policy as well as international and national policies and legislations on the same.

### **3.2.2 Child Protection and GoodWeave Partners, Schools and Rehabilitation Facilities**

GoodWeave has a legal and moral obligation to ensure that individuals and agencies contracted to provide a service which may involve direct or indirect contact with children are aware of, and abide by, the GoodWeave Child Protection Policy.

GoodWeave is committed to ensuring that the protection of children is paramount in our work, and in the work of our partners.

GoodWeave recognizes that to be effective, Child Protection Policies need to be initiated and implemented by local organizations. GoodWeave is committed to providing partners support and assistance with this process.

GoodWeave works with and through partners (organizations with whom we have an active relationship) in several countries. For the purposes of this policy a partner is:

- a) An organization that receives funding from GoodWeave for programs, either long or short term, project or core costs, regardless of the amount involved.
- b) An organization involved in project work with GoodWeave, whether the work is long or short term, regular or one-off, and regardless of whether funding is involved. This can include partnerships with government or private schools and rehabilitation facilities.
- c) GoodWeave licensees and other business partners.

When establishing a partnership, the GoodWeave country office will perform the necessary due diligence to determine whether the potential partner has sufficient child protection measures in place. In some cases it may be necessary to establish a partnership agreement (for example working with photographers, the media, or evaluators). In such cases, all partnership agreements will include a requirement to implement GoodWeave's Child Protection and Rehabilitation Policies and procedures. The agreement will make clear GoodWeave's position and approach to working with children. The proposed response to any instances of abuse should be clearly set forth. In other cases it may not be necessary or even possible to establish a partnership agreement (for example, government-run schools may already have child protection measures in place, in which case a formal agreement might not be necessary). The assessment done by the GoodWeave country office should determine whether a partnership agreement is necessary or if the potential partner organization's existing measures for child protection are sufficient.

GoodWeave will encourage partners to address child protection issues in their organization and in the communities in which they work. Where needed, GoodWeave will also work with partners to develop Child Protection Policies or contracted partners may adopt and follow the GoodWeave policy.

All partners will be made aware of the provisions of this policy, asked to confirm their agreement with the principles contained therein, and to accept the importance of implementing it.

Representatives of GoodWeave, in the course of their work, should support partners in their efforts to increase their awareness, knowledge and skills in relation to child protection issues. Since many partners have significant expertise in this area, GoodWeave employees and representatives should also be receptive to learning from the experience of partners on these issues.

Further, the schools and rehabilitation facilities shall have clear and unambiguous guidelines of their own for child protection including freedom from abuse and exploitation, principles of non-discrimination, participation and equality.

Any partner and facility being found not following these principles shall be given two opportunities to improve upon them, failing which the agreement with such partner or facility shall stand suspended or terminated.

In the event of any accusation or incidence of child abuse or exploitation by a partner or in a rehabilitation facility, the same shall be dealt with utmost sincerity and priority. The GoodWeave country offices will ensure that processes for responding to any such cases are established and responsible individuals are designated. An inquiry on the issue shall be set up within 2 days of such incidence coming to light and report shall be filed within the next 15 working days for further action.

### **3.2.4 Monitoring, Research or Other Visits to Schools or to the Field that Involve Meeting with Children**

To safeguard children, when employees and/or representatives conduct monitoring or other visits for GoodWeave programs, it is imperative that:

- Planning of such visits ensures an awareness of all involved of child protection issues and the employee or representative's responsibilities should they witness or receive information on an alleged abuse;
- There is a clear agenda of what the research, monitoring or visit seeks to achieve;
- Where necessary, compliance with relevant legislation shall be secured prior to the visit;

### **3.2.5 Accommodation for Children in GoodWeave Partner Boarding Schools or Similar Premises**

GoodWeave provides social services to children. Some of these programs may involve long or short term lodging. In such cases it shall be ensured that:

- Boys and girls have separate accommodation;
- The children are supervised by a same-sex person designated for their protection;
- That the supervisor is trained in child protection;
- The premises are safe and secure and do not compromise the welfare of children;
- Clear rules are in place regarding visitors to the premises;
- Where the premises are operated by organizations other than GoodWeave, an agreement is in place for management of the premises consistent with GoodWeave's Child Protection and Forced, Bonded and Child Labor Remediation Policies.

### 3.3 Communications and Media Guidelines

Stories of individual children rescued by GoodWeave are a key component in the effort to end child labor. Gathering and publication of images, video footage and text referring to children must be done in a way which respects each child's dignity, identity and right to privacy. It must also be done in accordance with national law, and international norms. When sharing personal information about children with a public audience, extreme caution should be used to ensure that sensitive information such as personally identifiable information (PII data) is not shared in a way that would put the child at risk. Informed consent must be obtained from the child, and when possible the parent or guardian, before using the child's story in any way. The practice described is intended to ensure that the rights of children are respected while allowing GoodWeave to report on its work using stories, photographs and video in an ethical and empowering manner.

GoodWeave employees and representatives will strive to:

- Portray children as realistically as possible, in their own context, without being overly sensational or overly positive, and without portraying children as victims;
- Represent the diversity of children in the areas where GoodWeave works and take care to give children's perspectives due weight;
- Be aware that some children may need extra protection when communicating their stories (for example, those who have been subject to sexual abuse); In the case of sexual abuse, avoid sharing information about this abuse with public audiences when possible. If information is shared, take extra care to omit or anonymize personally identifiable information for the protection of the child and the respect of his or her right to privacy.
- Ensure that children and their legal guardians are fully informed of any potential risks and made aware of their rights so that they can make informed decisions about sharing their story;
- Respect the right of the child to decline to share his or her story; In the event that a child decides not to share his or her story, there will be no negative repercussions for this decision; the support the child receives is not conditional on sharing his or her information.
- Ensure that participants see how their story is used in GoodWeave materials;
- Empower children through telling their story.
- Ensure that the identity of the child is not disclosed in cases where the child is still in need of care and protection. For example, a working child's photograph may not be published with identifiable information, in case the child's safety may be in jeopardy as a result of the publication.
- Ensure compliance with each country's national legislations on a child's right to privacy.

- Ensure adequate protection of the child in special circumstances where the story, or other depiction of the child has led to any challenge to the child's safety or well-being.
- No private information of the child shall be printed, distributed or shared that is detrimental to the child. The designated child protection specialist shall be responsible for ensuring private/identifying information is controlled and shared with others on a need to know basis.

### **3.3.1 Informed Consent**

GoodWeave employees and representatives shall explain and seek permission, as far as is possible, for the way in which these materials will be used (e.g. for fundraising, campaigning, abroad or in country). It is important to ensure that children fully understand the nature and consequences of giving permission, and that the consent they give is informed. This means assessing whether the child is in a position to understand, and has understood, the nature and consequences of what is being asked. Wherever possible, as well as gaining informed consent from the child, GoodWeave shall acquire written consent from the child's parents, the child's school or whoever is in charge or legal guardian of the child acting in the place of parents to use images and stories for external communication. (This may not always be possible when dealing with crowd shots.)

No payment or reward shall be given in order to gain consent. Additionally, there must be no payment to minors for material involving the welfare of children nor payment to parents or guardians (including schools and partner organizations) for material about their children or wards unless it is demonstrably in the child's interest.

In the event that consent is not given to share information, there will be no negative repercussions for this decision. The support the child receives is not conditional on consent to share information.

### **3.3.2 Confidentiality**

While it is extremely important to publish real stories and photographs for the sake of authenticity and transparency, GoodWeave shall strive to protect the identity of children on two fronts:

- a) To avoid the exploitation of images and stories by those who may wish to misuse them; and
- b) To protect children from being stigmatized or mistreated in their own communities as a result of any publicity arising from the interview or subsequent publication of photographs or images.

For the above reasons, GoodWeave does not use a child's family name in external communications. When sharing a photograph and story of a child with a public audience, the child's first name should be anonymized, particularly when the child's

location is being shared as well. In the interest of transparency and accuracy, when a name has been changed, a disclaimer should be used to mark the change and to explain that this change was made for the protection of the child. These guidelines also apply to vulnerable adults and any young people still at school.

### **3.3.3 Interviewing Children**

All interviews with children should be conducted with extra care and sensitivity to the child's welfare and safety. Children's cultural values, interests and priorities should be honoured and child-friendly language should be used. Information should be shared with the interviewee in a transparent way.

Care should be taken so that children are free to express their feelings about the assistance given to them so that GoodWeave's partnership with communities is reinforced by the respect and protection GoodWeave accords the child. Questions that are overly intrusive will not be allowed.

### **3.3.4 Visitors to GoodWeave Programs**

Visitors to GoodWeave programs shall present their reasons for visiting beneficiaries. Visitors will only be permitted to meet with children after their agenda has been approved by GoodWeave and/or the partner operating the program, as appropriate to the situation. On arrival, visitors must be given 'GoodWeave's Guidelines for Involving Children in Advocacy' (Appendix 1) and 'Visitors Protocol' (Appendix 2). Visitors must sign a written statement that they will adhere to the conditions set forth in each.

Visitors will be accompanied by a member of the GoodWeave staff at all times in their interaction with children, who can intervene in or halt an interview at any time.

The visitors shall also be required to sign a form declaring that they will also not use any photo, video, etc., without prior written permission of GoodWeave.

## **3.4 Implementation and Monitoring of the Policy**

The GWI Executive Leadership Team has overall responsibility to ensure that the Child Protection Policy is implemented and will monitor its and its partner's commitment to child protection through a review process to be held at least once every three (3) years.

### **3.4.1 Procedures for Implementation at the National Level**

National country offices, as a requirement of GoodWeave membership, must develop national procedures for implementing this policy to ensure conformity to national laws and customs. GWI's Child Protection Policy can be used as a model and appendix documents will be created over time to further inform national office policy development, which shall include specific references to country legislation.

### **3.4.2 Appointment of a Child Protection Designated Official**

There shall be a designated person responsible for the implementation, supervision and monitoring of the Child Protection Policy at the country level.

National office Executive Directors or Program Leads will ensure that the Child Protection Designate has received training on child protection, is aware of local laws applying to child protection and has information on national child protection agencies.

It shall be the duty of the designated person to:

- Provide information and advice on child protection within the organization;
- Ensure that GoodWeave's policy and procedures are followed and particularly inform child protection authorities of relevant concerns about children;
- Be familiar with local procedures;
- Interact with police, social or child welfare agencies and other agencies as appropriate;
- Keep relevant people within the organization informed about any action taken and further action required;
- Maintain an individual case record of action taken by the organization, liaisons with other agencies and outcome under confidential cover;
- Design a reporting format that is user-friendly;
- Advise the organization of child protection training needs.
- The Child Protection Designate shall be solely responsible for coordinating action within the organization and for interacting with health, social welfare, police and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse.



## **4. Code of Employee and Representative Behaviour**

### **4.1 All GoodWeave Employees and Representatives in Contact with Children Shall:**

- Never place a child at risk of abuse through actions or words;
- Treat everyone with respect, recognizing their right to personal privacy;
- Plan and organize events involving children in such a way that risks are minimized and, if it is a residential event, ensure that adults and children have separate sleeping accommodations;
- Ask for permission from children and their parents, guardians or school authorities before taking photographs; explain to the children and/or guardian how these images will be used; and always act in the best interest of the child.
- Foster a culture of mutual accountability so that potentially abusive behavior can be challenged;
- Help children to develop their own sense of their rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem.

### **4.2 Employees and Representatives Who Come into Contact with Children Should:**

- Empower children by promoting their rights and raising awareness;
- Ensure that field visits, studies and programs affecting children are in the best interests of the children concerned;
- Consult with children, to the extent feasible, in the planning, implementation and evaluation of field visits, studies and programs that affect them;
- Avoid, being alone with children, in particular individual children, unless in the context of confidential counselling. Activities should be planned so that more than one person is present or, at least, other people are within sight or hearing, or close proximity; this is for your own protection, as well as for the protection of the child.
- Avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behavior such as tantrums or crushes and avoid showing favoritism to any individual child.

### **4.3 Employees and Representatives Must Not, Under Any Circumstances:**

- Develop sexual relationships with children or vulnerable adults;

- Develop inappropriate relationships with children or spend time alone with a child away from others;
- Behave in a way or use language that is discriminatory on the grounds of race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political persuasion;
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice, which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive<sup>1</sup>;
- Condone, or participate in, behavior which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children;
- Employ any children in their private homes;
- Withhold identity papers, passports or similar items against the will of any child who has reached the age of majority.
- In any situation hit, physically abuse a child, or engage in any kind of activity that encourages violence against children.
- Receive any benefit of any kind from carpet and other sector manufacturing businesses, the employees, agents, or any other persons connected with the trade so as to cause a conflict of interest during the term of employment.

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<sup>1</sup> Employees and representatives should note that different people and cultures may perceive differently what is considered inappropriate or offensive. When in doubt, please refer to the local Child Protection Designate for guidance.

## 5. Reporting and Reacting to Allegations of Suspected Child Abuse

This procedure will be followed for reporting and reacting to any witnessed, suspected or alleged incident of child abuse or violation of the Child Protection Policy by an employee, consultant, or representative.

The guiding principle in responding to any concerns around child protection is that the safety and welfare of the child should always come first. No child should be put at more risk by any action that may be taken. The following factors will be of consideration:

- Are others aware of the abuse (i.e. a local partner may be working on this issue)?
- Will intervention help the child?
- Is there any meaningful intervention the GoodWeave representative can make?
- Will intervention put the GoodWeave representative or others, at risk?
- To what extent does GoodWeave have control over the circumstances which the child is in?

If any person has concerns about any aspect of GoodWeave or its representatives' work with children, they should address their concerns to the local Child Protection Designate or to the GWI Executive Leadership Team, which can be reached via email at [info@GoodWeave.org](mailto:info@GoodWeave.org).

### 5.1 If You Witness, Suspect or a Disclosure is made to you about a Case of Child Abuse:

- Stay calm so as not to frighten the child.
- Accept what the child has to say and reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Do not confront or challenge the alleged person directly.
- Do not investigate or inform the parents or guardians of the child.<sup>2</sup>
- If you have to ask questions, keep them to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or ideas have been suggested during the questioning.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will keep them informed of progress.
- Do not promise confidentiality, but that you will inform people who need to know.

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<sup>2</sup> Except in case a child is found to be working during inspections, in which case the inspector should follow the provisions of the GoodWeave Child Labor Remediation Policy.

- Safety of the child should always be considered to be paramount. If urgent action is required in order to protect the child then it may be made prior to the reporting procedure. For example, if the child needs urgent medical attention, make arrangements to get the child to the nearest health facility and inform the medical personnel of your concerns. Make them aware that there is a child protection issue.
- Record all concerns relating to the case. Include the date and time of your conversation and any incident disclosed.
- Report as soon as possible to the local Child Protection Designate who will assess the situation in consultation with GoodWeave and advise on further steps that may need to be taken.
- Recognize that at this stage any reported or suspected abuse is an allegation rather than proved.
- All concerns and allegations about abuse, even when there is doubt, must be referred to the Child Protection Designate.
- Report all cases or suspected cases of child abuse to local authorities, accredited agencies or law enforcement including the police or social welfare institutions.<sup>3</sup>

## **5.2 If Allegations are Made Against You:**

- Inform the local Child Protection Designate or GoodWeave management immediately.
- Record all details as you know them and send to the Child Protection Designate or national office Director. If they cannot be contacted, inform your superior officers.

## **5.3 Concerns Outside of GoodWeave Business**

Any person having any child abuse concerns from outside the immediate GoodWeave activities should:

- Contact local child protection agencies and/or the police. The police and relevant child protection agencies will decide how to handle the matter.
- Also report the incident to the Child Protection Designate who shall ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play any role in the organization and act accordingly.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, in India cases may be reported to Child Welfare Committee or Childline. In Afghanistan, cases can be reported to Child Protection Action Network-CPAN.

## 5.4 Confidentiality

- Any information offered in confidence to a GoodWeave employee or representative is received on the basis that it will be shared with people in relevant authority. This will be, first, the Child Protection Designate, but may include statutory agencies (e.g. police or social welfare). Apart from this, careful confidentiality will be observed.
- Any recorded information must be kept confidential and should be passed on to the respective national office Executive Director. Sharing of information, which could identify a child or an alleged perpetrator, should be purely on a need-to-know basis.
- All information, including that contained in correspondence or reports from the field, shall be kept under lock and key in a secure place with limited access to designated people. It should not under any circumstances be available for wider viewing.
- The national office Executive Director or country manager, together with GWI, will look at the allegations and gather evidence, determine what action to take and how, and who should be informed.
- In certain instances, there may be an obligation for employees and representatives to report concerns to the appropriate external bodies. This will usually occur as a consequence of the reporting procedure to the Child Protection Designate.

## 5.5 Management Responsibilities

An alleged perpetrator of abuse will be immediately suspended from their normal relationship with GoodWeave, pending investigation. It should be made clear that suspension does not imply guilt but is necessary to protect both parties while undertaking investigation. The period of inquiry will be 15 days maximum and may only be increased for reasons to be recorded in writing after obtaining due permission.

In deciding the appropriate course of action, the Child Protection Designate may report and follow up cases in relation to:

- A member of the public service – to their line manager or head of department and/or police;
- A member of the public – to the police community liaison officers.

In deciding the appropriate course of action, subject to conditions of employment, codes of practice and local law, proven child abuse will lead to:

- In the case an employee: classified as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal;
- In the case of a contractor or consultant: termination of their contract;
- In the case of a representative: termination of their relationship with GoodWeave;
- In the case of a board member: removal from the board and termination of their relationship with GoodWeave.

The person may be subjected to criminal prosecution under local laws in addition to other disciplinary procedures by their employer. All cases will be considered on an individual basis and arrangements will be put in place to provide support to those affected during and following an allegation. Necessary support for counseling and safety will be provided to a victim of abuse in all cases where a staff or partner of GoodWeave is involved.

## **5.6 Working with the Aftermath**

After a suspicion or allegation about a child protection issue has been investigated, there are likely to be strong feelings among employees, parents, children and/or the community which will need to be addressed. There are likely to be issues of:

- Communication – if rumor or fact;
- Guilt and blame – if suspicions had been around for some time;
- Impact – on individual, on the nature of what occurred and to whom;
- Gaps in the organization in terms of roles and position held.

Careful thought will need to be given to the sharing and provision of appropriate information.

Only the Child Protection Designate or national office Director should handle any media inquiries, as set out in the national procedures for implementation of the GWI's Child Protection Policy.

## Appendix 1 – Guidelines for Involving Children in Advocacy

The following are guidelines to GoodWeave staff, representatives, partners and volunteers in organizing events or activities involving children.

1. The key ethical rule when involving children in advocacy is ‘do no harm’. The best interests of the child are paramount. This means:

- Protect children from any additional risks;
- Respect children’s dignity;
- Explain and seek permission, as far as is possible, for the way in which children’s stories, pictures and other materials will be used (e.g. for fundraising, campaigning, abroad or in country);
- Try to ensure that children fully understand the nature and consequences of giving permission, and that the consent they give is informed. This means assessing whether the child is in a position to understand, and has understood, the nature and consequences of what is being asked;
- Take age appropriate consent from children to use their stories, pictures or participation (not just the permission of adults, even if they are parents);
- Respect children’s decisions if they refuse to be interviewed or photographed;
- Use the best possible information; i.e., that is accurate, not distorting, respectful and truthful;
- Do not use negative, degrading or stigmatizing images of children, either in pictures or in words;
- Do not identify individual children or groups of children unless they have given their permission and you can be sure that they will be protected from further exploitation;
- Do not exaggerate, or use unnecessarily emotional language;
- Do not make promises to children of financial aid or sponsorship, or anything that you cannot keep;
- Do not raise expectations you cannot fulfil;
- Ensure that all safety mechanisms are in place, including emergency medical help, adequate number of personnel, etc. in all advocacy related activities as appropriate.

- Ensure that permission from concerned parents, guardians or other concerned authorities has been obtained for the involvement of the child in advocacy activities.

## 2. Remember the dangers

In involving children in advocacy we have to avoid the real possibility that children are harmed through their participation. The following are examples of the ways that participation can negatively affect children:

Adults may exact retribution for the child speaking out. For example, employers may dismiss or physically abuse a child worker who is identified in an article or photograph;

Individual children may feel ashamed about having their stories or photographs used to illustrate articles about them as victims. Children can be stigmatized by stories about them that suggest they are all sexually abused, or that they come from poor families;

Children are given unrealistic expectations of how their situation might improve as a result of their advocacy, and feel let down as a result;

Stereotypes that should be challenged may inadvertently be reinforced; avoid this.



## **Appendix 2 – Protocol for Visitors to GoodWeave’s Children’s Programmes and Acknowledgment Form**

Thank you for your interest in GoodWeave’s Children’s Programmes. The safety of children involved in these programs is paramount to GoodWeave and as such visitors are expected to take special measures while interacting with Program participants.

### **Visitors Sign In**

Visitors to any GoodWeave Program must sign a visitors log kept by the Program Administration, noting name, time of arrival, and reason for being on the premises. Visitors should similarly sign out upon their departure.

### **Visitor Accompaniment**

Visitors will be accompanied by a member of the GoodWeave staff at all times in their interaction with children, who can intervene in or halt an interview at any time.

### **Adherence to the GoodWeave Child Protection Policy**

GoodWeave has developed a Child Protection Policy to guard the rights and safety of children. As a visitor to GoodWeave’s programs you agree to abide by the same code of conduct as summarized below.

#### **All GoodWeave Visitors in Contact with Children Shall:**

- Never place a child at risk of abuse through actions or words;
- Treat everyone with respect, recognizing their right to personal privacy;
- Plan and organize events involving children in such a way that risks are minimized and, if it is a residential event, ensure that adults and children have separate sleeping accommodations;
- Ask for permission from children and their parents, guardians or school authorities before taking photographs; explain to the children and/or guardian how these images will be used; and always act in the best interest of the child.
- Not use photographs, case studies, etc., for any purpose whatsoever without obtaining prior permission of GoodWeave;
- Foster a culture of mutual accountability so that potentially abusive behavior can be challenged;
- Help children to develop their own sense of their rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem.
- Not raise expectations or promise financial aid or sponsorship, or anything that may not or cannot be achieved.

**Visitors Who Come into Contact with Children Should:**

- Empower children by promoting their rights and raising awareness;
- Ensure that field visits, studies and programs affecting children are in the best interests of the children concerned;
- Consult with children, to the extent feasible, in the planning, implementation and evaluation of field visits, studies and programs that affect them;
- Avoid being alone with children, in particular individual children, unless in the context of confidential counselling. Activities should be planned so that more than one person is present or, at least, other people are within sight or hearing, or close proximity; this is for your own protection, as well as for the protection of the child.
- Avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behavior such as tantrums or crushes and avoid showing favoritism to any individual child. GoodWeave does not accept sponsorships from individual donors for individual children.

**Visitors Must Not, Under Any Circumstances:**

- Develop sexual relationships with children or vulnerable adults;
- Develop inappropriate relationships with children or spend time alone with a child away from others;
- Behave in a way or use language that is discriminatory on the grounds of race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political persuasion;
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice, which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Condone, or participate in, behavior which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children.
- Indulge in any behavior which negatively affects the physical, social, mental, or psychological well-being of the child.

**Acknowledgment:** I have read the GWI Child Protection Policy and this Protocol for Visitors to GoodWeave’s Children’s Programs and hereby declare my understanding of and agreement to abide by it.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_