



## Policy on Child Sexual Abuse

### Issue:

Child sexual abuse statistically occurs at a very high rate in child residential settings. It is for this reason that many institutions were forced to close in western countries.

With recent cases of young people, aged 14 and above being engaged in sexual activity at HfCC (or outside HfCC in their villages), this poses a risk of increased sexual activity and or abuse amongst children living in HfCC.

### Action required:

1. Develop a policy and procedure within HfCC for how to both prevent and to manage child sexual abuse within the centre.
2. Assign 2-3 (both male and female) staff members to act as trusted members of staff that children can report current and past sexual abuse. (recommended Barang & Khem nurse) Ensure these staff are given proper training in procedure, what to do, etc...
3. Any cases of current sexual abuse in the Centre do need to be reported to local management directly, if staff are made aware of them. Such issues should be handled discretely. Reports should be immediately sent to the chair of the Board, and if necessary an outside consultation will be arranged by the Chair to support the staff in Cambodia. This is a very serious issue.
4. Education sessions on sexual abuse need to be conducted for every child over the age of 10 in the Centre. In small group sessions. Younger children should be aware of who they can talk to about problems also.
5. Education and procedures should be given in groups to all members of staff, particularly housemothers. Staff should also be aware of codes of conduct and what abuse is.

6. Counseling sessions are needed for children who are known to have had sexual abuse previously, as these children are at high risk to themselves and possibly others.

**Suggested format for education sessions:**

What is abuse? (i.e. It is not just rape between a man and a woman)

Different types of abuse / unwanted sex / touching / grooming / sexualized language and acts (male /female – male / male – female /female etc..)

What are private boundaries? My rights?

What is consent? Bullying intimidation, obligations.

Who can I talk to? Is it confidential? What will happen?

Will I get in trouble? Will they ask me to leave the centre?

Was it my fault that it happened?

**Notes:**

The director and people in charge of admissions and reintegration cannot be the counselor of children. IE – discipline must be separated from counseling.

Children and young people must be provided with a safe avenue to report problems and concerns.

HfCC policies on sex within the Centre amongst children must be very separate to policy and procedure for sexual abuse.

All reports of sexual abuse by children must be believed, investigated and reported to the HfCC Chair, as a category

Support / consultation and guidance can be offered to staff (from Australia) in how to approach and talk to children about past sexual abuse, and how to deal with issues of current sexual abuse.

Local staff need to be aware of codes of conduct, as well as recognize unusual sexual behavior and the importance of reporting issues.

Further literature, guides and resources are available in how to guide discussion groups.

**Timeframe :**

It is requested that each of the 6 actions are completed (including education sessions for all children, within 2-3 months. Before the end of school holidays for those remaining at the Centre and the end of October for the 20 children who returned home during the school holidays.

**Jenny McAuley**

**Chair**

**Hope for Cambodian Children Foundation**

**Australia.**