



Tonrak Ananda Marga School
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Tonrak School Child Protection Policy

(Updated 23.11.2023)

Purpose

As a child educational unit, Tonrak Ananda Marga School has a responsibility to ensure that the students are protected from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and neglect. This policy should conform to the general principles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as follows:

Best interests of the child: All decisions and alternatives should be carefully considered to ensure that the best interests of the students are served, e.g. that each student receives the maximum benefit possible from services provided and that the positive impacts of any course of action outweigh any negative impacts.

Non-discrimination: All students are protected and assisted regardless of gender, nationality, religious or political beliefs, family background or economic status, physical or mental health or criminal background. All students are entitled to enjoy equal rights and to receive equal benefit, fair treatment and the respect and value due them as human beings. Exceptions are if a student's actions or mental condition may cause danger to the other students or personnel at the school.

Participation and Self-Determination: All students and guardians, must be given the opportunity to express their ideas and views on matters affecting them, and to have them considered carefully (according to level of maturity) in the decision-making process. Subject to their level of maturity, all children (and their guardians) also have the right to self-determination and the right to refuse services.

Tonrak Ananda Marga School aims to provide a safe environment where students can develop in a healthy way.

The following guidelines are intended to protect both the child from abuse and the adult from false accusation.

1. Scope and Responsibility for Implementation

1.1 This policy and its required standards seek to reduce risk to all children under 18 years of age who study at the school and including all teachers and other personnel as well (as defined in this clause). It shall therefore apply to:

1.2 All beneficiaries under the age of 18;

1.3 All personnel, independent contractors, volunteers, interns, sponsors and board members who assist or have access to children.



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1.4 The management of Tonrak Ananda Marga School shall ensure that this Child Protection Policy is explained to and read by all personnel, who shall acknowledge their receipt and understanding of this policy.

1.5 Tonrak School shall revise and update the Child Protection Policy as needed in order to ensure that it remains relevant and effective, and to advise and/or assist teachers and personnel in carrying out their respective responsibilities as outlined in 2.2 to 2.5 inclusive below.

2. Personnel Recruitment, Screening and Orientation

2.1 All prospective personnel are to be informed in outline of Tonrak Ananda Marga School Protection Policy at the start of any recruiting process.

2.2 Basic screening of applicants for positions of all those who will work with or have access to our children shall include a written application, personal interviews and reference and criminal background checks where applicable. During the interview process, applicants should be asked about previous work with children.

2.3 Tonrak Ananda Marga School management reserves the right not to hire an applicant if the interview process or background checks reveal that in accordance with these policies the person is not suitable to work with children or might put our students at risk.

2.4 Policies and behavioral standards (including procedures for reporting suspected abuse and any disciplinary or legal actions that could follow any investigation) shall be explained in detail during personnel orientation.

2.5 All new personnel shall acknowledge in writing their understanding of this document (Child Protection Policy) or due to illiteracy among some staff orally recite their understanding and signed copies shall be retained by the school.

3. Behavioral Standards for Project Personnel

3.1 Behavioral standards are guidelines for appropriate and proper behavior for all personnel at Tonrak Ananda Marga School when interacting with our students. They are designed not only to protect the students but also to protect personnel from false accusations.

3.2 In addition, personnel must be concerned about inferences which might be reasonably drawn from their language and interactions with the students. This is especially true in relation to male staff and in interactions with ALL students since male personnel are particularly vulnerable to suspicion and accusation of sexual misconduct. Particular care should also be taken to protect the reputations of all students and personnel by ensuring that language and behavior at all times appropriately reflects proper relationships and are respectful of and in line with local and National culture and customs.



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3.3 Whether on or off duty, personnel are expected to, at all times to respect the rights of children in their own homes and communities, and to uphold the rights and principles contained in the UNCRC.

3.4 Personnel must not at any time spend time alone with a student in an isolated environment without prior permission from the school administration, whether at the school, personnel place of residence or any other place. This also applies to any online communication. In case of a teacher tutoring a single student online it is appropriate to include an administrative member to the contact and in all cases such communication must be informed to the school's administration.

3.5 Personnel must not hire any student as domestic servants on their free days or to perform any work in or outside school hours unless the child's age and working conditions fully meet the criteria specified by the MOSALVY Prakas on Light Work for Minors and other relevant labor laws which include hiring only minors over the age of twelve years old and providing appropriate limits to their hours of work. Personnel not meeting these criteria will be in breach of this policy document and may also be in violation of child labor laws and accordingly subject to investigation and prosecution. Also, any utilization of students outside school hours must be brought to the knowledge of the schools' management and the legal guardian as well.

Any outside school activities designed by personnel that includes students must at all times be informed to and given permission by the Tonrak School administration.

3.6 Personnel must not give money or gifts directly to the students. If they wish to do so for a specific reason, they must seek prior permission from the school's management.

3.7 Personnel must not fondle, hold, kiss, hug, or touch minors in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way. Under no circumstances should any contact, physical or otherwise, be or have the appearance of being sexually motivated.

3.8 Personnel must not hit, slap, pull, push, or otherwise use inappropriate physical force of any kind on the student.

3.9 Personnel should be aware that they might work with children who may, because of the circumstances and abuses they may have experienced, use their relationship with an adult to obtain inappropriate attention. Personnel shall always be responsible for their response even if the student behaves seductively. Personnel should be alert to the risks posed by such behavior and should take all reasonable steps to avoid being placed in a compromising or vulnerable position.

3.10 Where possible and practical, the "two adults" rule (whereby two or more adults supervise all student' activities) should be followed. In cases where individual counselling is deemed appropriate, the counselor must inform the schools administration in advance that this will happen, as well as when, where and with whom.

3.11 Every student shall be respected and listened to. Respect for their views and opinions is vital for their healthy development. Expression of their views and feelings and participation by them in age-appropriate decision-making process, must be encouraged at all times, especially decisions that affect their own development and their futures.



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3.12 No student will be forced to accept a decision that he or she is not comfortable with, unless his or her refusal may result in harm, abuse or place the him or her or others in an unsafe situation.

3.13 Every student shall be empowered by being given adequate knowledge of his or her own rights.

3.14 Personnel must make every reasonable effort to ensure that all students receiving education from Tonrak Ananda Marga School feel safe and protected at all times.

3.15 Personnel must act as positive role models for all students in the school as well as for the adults who see them working with the students. They must treat each student with kindness, respect, dignity and sensitivity.

3.16 Personnel must not act in a way that is verbally, psychologically, or emotionally abusive (e.g. shouting, humiliating, insulting or shaming a student). Nor must personnel neglect students by failing to meet their needs. Personnel are at any time welcome to inform and discuss with the schools' administration if there are cases beyond their limit of time or expertise. In some cases, a student's further development will become under a direct responsibility of the schools' administration.

3.17 Breach of any of the requirements of this Child Protection Policy shall constitute grounds for discipline, up to and including dismissal from employment or discharge from any other relationship with Tonrak Ananda Marga School and its students.

4. Reporting and Investigating Abuse or Suspected Abuse

4.1 Child abuse, in all its forms, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, is a serious offense that threatens the well-being and reputation of the child, the accused and the reputation of the school as well. Since perpetrators of child abuse are not likely to remain in an environment where personnel are trained to identify and report suspicious behavior, all personnel are required to report any suspected child abuse or other exploitation.

4.2 Any person who has knowledge of a potential child protection issue involving Tonrak School's personnel must immediately contact the school's management. The report must be made as soon as possible to allow for a timely investigation and/or early intervention. Failure to report suspected child abuse may itself result in disciplinary action and/or dismissal. The Tonrak School management will decide who needs to be informed about any suspected child abuse. This will be on a strict "*Need to Know*" basis since the best interests of the student require protection and the right to confidentiality at all times.

4.3 Any investigation must respect the privacy and rights of the child as a priority and must be initiated by the school's management as soon as possible. The investigation will be conducted by personnel selected for this purpose by the management.

4.4 The investigation must be carried out confidentially and with care and concern, since the student may fear retribution and punishment and the accused may be concerned about his or her privacy and legal rights.



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4.5 Though Tonrak Ananda Marga Schools management may, at its discretion, determine otherwise, the accused must be temporarily suspended at the outset of the investigation. The accused should be informed of the allegations made against him or her when appropriate and with the protection of the child's safety and wellbeing as a priority and be given an opportunity to respond. The accused should also be informed that the school has an obligation to initiate an investigation. The accused should be encouraged to participate in the investigation by providing information and the names of witnesses to be interviewed. Every reasonable effort should be made to provide assistance to the accused, including counseling or other appropriate forms of support.

5. Responding to Investigation Findings

5.1 At the conclusion of the investigation, the accused, the student and/or his legal guardians as appropriate, shall be informed of the outcome and advised of any corrective action, to be taken.

5.2 In the event that an allegation is proven to be untrue, appropriate steps will be taken for follow-up with the accused, the student and the person(s) who reported the incident.

5.3 If abuse is proven by investigation, every effort will be made to assist the student to cope with any resultant physical or emotional trauma. This may include medical treatment, psychological counseling or any other form of assistance deemed necessary and appropriate.

5.4 If the investigation concludes that child abuse or misconduct has occurred or is suspected to have occurred but no criminal prosecution follows, the accused will still be subject to disciplinary action within the school up to and including dismissal or discharge.

5.5 If the investigation concludes that abuse or misconduct has occurred or is strongly suspected to have occurred and criminal prosecution follows, all findings will be reported to the relevant authorities and full cooperation afforded their investigation. If the accused is an expatriate, the relevant law enforcement authorities will also be informed with due regard given the potential for extraterritorial proceedings by the expatriate's country of origin.

5.6 In the event an accused is discharged for proven or suspected child abuse or misconduct, the school may disclose any information requested by police, a prospective employer, etc. where such requests may assist in a legal investigation or the prevention of future abuse. Such disclosures will be made in accordance with applicable law and/or customs.

5.7 A plan for dealing with media inquiries is annexed as Appendix One.

6. Visitors to Tonrak Anada Marga School Facilities

6.1 All visitors must register with the school's office who further informs the administration in uncertain cases before they will receive permission to enter the school's premises. No visitor



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should be allowed access to our facilities unless prior authorization has been granted by the office and or management. This also applies to the student's legal guardian.

6.3 All visitors must be closely monitored by the schools appointed staff.

6.4 No visitor shall be left alone, with or without students, when on the school's premises.

6.5 All media representatives and visitors to the schools' facilities shall abide by the media and visitor conditions as set out in Appendix One.

7. Tonrak Ananda Marga School Management's Discretion to Waive Compliance

7.1 Despite anything to the contrary contained in this Child Protection Policy document, in any case where and on any occasion when the school's management considers it in their best interests to waive compliance with any of the requirements of this Child Protection Policy document with respect to any particular student or students, it may waive the necessity for such compliance. If it in any case does so, as soon as practicable afterwards it shall notify of its decision all the schools' personnel who are or but for its decision would be responsible for that student or those students at that time, and to any other of the school's staff member or members likely to be affected by that decision. The management shall not waive the necessity for such compliance in any case where in its opinion to do so might compromise the safety or welfare of the child or children concerned.



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Appendix One

1. Conditions with respect to all Media and Visitors

The purpose of these conditions is:

- To protect the beneficiaries of Tonrak Ananda Marga School (the term “beneficiaries” refers to both child and adults).
- To maintain the confidentiality of all beneficiaries.
- To maintain the best interest of the beneficiaries at all times.
- To prevent any form of exploitation of the beneficiaries by members of the media or other visitors.
- To protect media representatives, visitors and the school itself.

Tonrak Ananda Marga Schools Child Protection Policy applies to all adults working directly and indirectly with our students. This includes paid staff, volunteers, trainers and donors (if applicable), that have interaction with the students in person or online or have access to information about the students.

All visitors must adhere to clause 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 of the schools Child Protection Policy even if they are not working directly with children. This states that:

“3.6: Personnel must not give money or gifts directly to the students. If they wish to do so for a specific reason, they must seek prior permission from the school’s management.

“3.7: Personnel must not fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch minors in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way. Under no circumstances should any contact, physical or otherwise, be or have the appearance of being sexually motivated.

“3.8: Personnel must not hit, slap, pull, push or otherwise use inappropriate physical force of any kind on the child.”

In particular, visitors should understand that they are strangers to the children, unlike the schools’ teachers and other personnel who are familiar to them and have gradually gained their trust. All the teachers and other personnel are trained on child protection guidelines that are specific to the challenges faced when working with our students on the Thai/Burmese border. Our teachers educate all students on the importance of personal safety and space. In particular, they work diligently to raise awareness of the dangers posed by foreign and local sexual predators looking to exploit vulnerable children both in person and online. Since the children have a natural tendency to be too trusting of strangers and of foreigners in particular, it is important that ALL visitors acknowledge that they have a role to play in this education process and that they do not inadvertently undo the work of our staff by being overly familiar with our students.



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The Conditions

1. Interviewing students and adults

Any individual's story used must be within the context of describing the schools' activities in general and should not be the focus of the article. Before any interview, all interviewees (whether minors or adults) must be given a full explanation from the schools' administration and appointed teachers about the purpose of the media article and its intended use. Any proposed interviewee has the right to decline at any time to be interviewed, or to decline to continue with an interview that has already begun.

Permission must always be obtained from the schools' management prior to any form of interview taking place.

Tonrak Ananda Marga Schools' management or approved personnel must be present at all times during an interview.

The interview and the process of gathering information must always maintain the best interests of the beneficiaries. Whenever an interviewee becomes distressed in the course of an interview, the interview shall be terminated and shall not continue without the express agreement of the interviewee and the presiding the appointed personnel.

Unless the interviewee is and adult and has explicitly consented to answer such questions, no questions relating to issues such as HIV, sexual or physical abuse or drug use may be asked of any interviewee.

In order to maintain confidentiality, real names will never be used in any material resulting from the interview.

2. Visitors must never offer cash, or in-kind donations directly to beneficiaries.

By signing below, I hereby agree to abide by the provisions contained within this Child Protection Document.

Signature

Print Name

Date

Date