Date: 19 February 2019

COAST Trust

**Subject: Safeguarding policy for children and vulnerable adult**

1. **Introduction**
   
   As a right-based organization, COAST believes that each and every child as well as vulnerable and disadvantaged people have right to live. It is, therefore, the responsibility of COAST to take necessary initiatives within the organization and communities. Every place under the organization will be safe and secured for children as well as all vulnerable and disadvantaged people. Every personnel of COAST are supposed to be the pathfinder to build a safe and secured society for them. COAST does believe that every staff’s moral and professional responsibilities are to protect them with ensuring dignity for the vulnerable groups in every tire of the society.

2. **Principles**

   This Safeguarding Policy is prepared based on Keeping Children Safe International Safeguarding Standards; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and its related UN conventions; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (and its optional protocols); the UN Statement for the Elimination of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation and all child-related UN conventions; the national child protection and vulnerable adults legislation of Bangladesh and international good humanitarian practice.

3. **We believe that**

   3.1 All children and vulnerable adults have equal rights to protection from harm.

   3.2 We have a duty of care to children, vulnerable adults with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations.

4. **Objectives of the policy**

   4.1 To protect the children and vulnerable from any physical, mental and other types of harassments at all level of the organization.

   4.2 To create awareness and inspiration among the staff of the organization on the safety, security and dignity of children and vulnerable groups of the society.

   4.3 To create awareness and inspiration among all the participants of different programs about this.

5. **Definitions and Terms**

   5.1 **Child:** according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, any person below the age of 18, will be treated as child.

   5.2 **Safeguarding:** Safeguarding is the responsibility that organization has to make sure their staff, operations, and programs do no harm to children and vulnerable adults in any way for now and in future.

   5.3 **Vulnerable Adult/Adult at risk:** any person aged 18 or over, and if the adult has particular care, support or special needs and as a result abuse occurs when a vulnerable adult/adult at risk is mistreated, neglected or harmed by another person who holds a position of trust.

   5.4 **Sexual abuse:** forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities that he or she does not fully understand and has little choice in consenting to. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. It may also include involving children in looking at, or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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   Begum Shamsun Nahar
   Chairperson-Board of Trustee
   COAST Trust

   [Signature]

   Rezaul Karim Chowdhury
   Executive Director
   COAST Trust
5.5 **Sexual exploitation:** a form of sexual abuse that involves children or vulnerable adults being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family needs.

5.6 **Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

5.7 **Neglect and negligent treatment:** allowing for context, resources and circumstances to show neglect and negligent treatment to a child.

5.8 **Emotional abuse:** persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on mental wellbeing and mental health. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

5.9 **Commercial exploitation:** exploiting a child or a vulnerable adult in work or other activities for the benefit of others. It includes cheating, exploitation and forced labor.

5.10 **Employee:** all staff from local and national level, volunteer and interns.

5.11 **Associates:** all contractors, e.g., consultants, board members, stakeholders including local community based stakeholders as well as guests and visitors.

5.12 **Emotional misconduct:** It won’t be considered as emotional misconduct if the supervisor needs to deliver sharp talk to any staff for neglecting his/her duty.

5.13 **Defamation /humiliation/satire:** It includes delivering sharp talk in front of other people to any child/vulnerable adult or staff or program participant, that hits on his/her dignity. But it doesn’t include if the supervisor needs to speak such in private to any staff for neglecting his/her duty.

5.14 **Forcing to do (including cyber bullying):** it includes forcing someone to take part in sexual activities or making public of his/her any private picture or inappropriate thing in the social media.

5.15 **Bullying:** if supervisor warns any staff for neglecting of his/her duty first time by giving advice, second time by giving verbal warning, third time by written warning and next time warning by saying that s/he could lose her/his job—this type of actions would not be treated within the purview of bullying.

5.16 **Discrimination:** Supervisor praises staff for performing their duty well, sometimes uses hard talk for less performance. It is because the employee can improve and perform well. If it happens so, using of hard talk to the staff for his/her improvement will not be treated as discrimination.

5.17 **Mental torture:** If any employee gives pressure to any other employee or member to complete their duty or task on time, that is aligned with the organization, e.g. shouting or setting a deadline, etc. that type of pressure or gesture of supervisor would not be treated as mental torture.

6. **Prevention**

6.1 **Risk assessment/risk mitigation:** A risk assessment of all COAST Trust operations, programmes and project activities will be conducted (e.g. health risk, security risk, negative impact, etc.). Risk mitigation strategies will be developed, which minimize the risk to children, and vulnerable adults and incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of programs, operations and activities which involve or impact upon children.

6.2 **Safe recruitment:** COAST will ensure that it applies the highest standards in its recruitment and vetting policies across the organization. Candidates are checked for their suitability for working with children and their understanding of safeguarding.

6.3 **Safety check:** Protection checks, such as disclosure of previous convictions or police checks (if disclosure is unavailable), forms an important part of our recruitment policy and covers all those representatives that we have an employment relationship with. If police checks are impossible, other checks are put into practice and noted. Checking evidence of identity and the authenticity of qualifications, requesting self-declarations about previous convictions, and a minimum requirement of at least two references are carried out in all cases.

6.4 **Education/training:** All staff and associates receive safeguarding policy and training to help them understand why it is necessary to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults. Children and families will be informed on COAST’s commitment to safeguarding and what to do if they have concerns about a child.

6.5 **Safe program design:** Organization will design its program keeping in mind that the
programs/projects/activities will not put the children and vulnerable adults at risk. The aims of the organization will make the safe guard of the children and vulnerable adults. The policy will be as the cross-cutting issue of all the programs/projects.

6.6 **Communications – use of images and children’s information:** In our use of information and visual images, both photographic stills and video, our overriding principle is to maintain respect and dignity in our portrayal of children, families and communities. Our communications policy/guidelines details our procedures.

6.7 **Social media (if applicable):** The organization has its own social media policy and there is clearly mentioned about not to post any status which is undignified others.

7. **Partners**
Agreements with partners will include a statement that partners who do not have a safeguarding policy will either abide by COAST policy or develop their own as a condition of the partnership.

8. **Reporting/responding to concerns**
COAST will receive disclosures from children with sensitivity and will strive not to re-traumatis children in their handling of complaints. If a child or young person tells you they are being, or have been, abused:

8.1 Listen to and accept what the child or vulnerable adult says but do not press for information.
8.2 Let the child or vulnerable adult know what we are going to do next and that we will let them know what happens.
8.3 Do not investigate and do not inform, question or confront the alleged abuser.
8.4 Record carefully what we have heard on the reporting form.

Identifying information about children or vulnerable adults will be shared on a ‘need to know’ basis only. Deliberate false allegations are a serious disciplinary offence and will be investigated.

9. **Range of application**
This policy will be applied to all staff, volunteer and beneficiary.

10. **Approved by BoT, effective date and monitoring**
This policy has been approved unanimously in the 99th BoT meeting held on 22 March, 2019 and be effective in no delay. Assistant Director-MEL&HA will monitor the implementation progress of this policy in the organization.

11. **Review of this policy:**
This policy can be reviewed with the significant changes made in the national and international laws, policies, human rights declaration.

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*Signature*

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury
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Chairperson,
Board of Trustee
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