



Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK)

**Balagokulam**



# HSS (UK) Safe to Trust Policy and Guidelines

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APPROVERS: HSS (UK) KENDRIYA KARYAKARTA MANDAL



# हिंदू स्वयंसेवक संघ युके Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK)

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## HSS (UK) Safe to Trust Policy and Guidelines

**A document looking at ways to protect children and young people who attend HSS (UK) activities.**

### Section 1

#### Introduction:

It is a privilege to work with children and young people (defined as those under the age of 18); it is also a great responsibility. Parents trust us to look after their children, to care for them, give leadership, and keep them safe. We need to ensure that we honour their trust.

The purpose of this document is:

- to make sure that children in our care are protected from harm;
- to respond appropriately should abuse be discovered or disclosed;
- to provide guidance to karyakartas in ensuring situations are minimised where a karyakarta's actions could increase the risk of causing safeguarding issues (this last point is concerned with protecting both children and karyakartas from false allegations).

#### Clarification of Terms:

In this document, 12 different categories of abuse are referred to (based on National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) guidance). These are:

- Domestic Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Online Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Bullying and Cyberbullying
- Child Trafficking
- Grooming
- Harmful Sexual Behaviours

Children and young people are defined as those under the age of 18.



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## Policy Statement:

- As Swayamsevaks/Sevikas of HSS (UK) we commit ourselves to the protection and safekeeping of all children and young people for whom we care in our activities.
- It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent abuse of children and young people and to report any abuse discovered or suspected (see categories of abuse in section 1).
- We recognise that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole management of HSS (UK).
- We are committed to the provision of resources for those who work with children and young people and to providing suitable and adequate supervision.
- All karyakartas must be familiar with this document and agree to support the principles and guidance in it.

## Section 2

### Good Practice Guidelines:

#### A. *Good Practice with Children and Young People:*

We will endeavour to adhere to the following:

- this guidance will be available and accessible by local shakhas (branches);
- where a child is under 5 years of age (below primary school year 1), their parent/guardian must be present;
- at least two adults will conduct any children's and young people's activity, at least one of whom must be DBS checked;
- if both Swayamsevaks and Sevikas are present (male and female members), there must be at least one male and female adult present;
- as far as possible, a karyakarta will not be alone with a child;
- if privacy or confidentiality is required between a karyakarta and child, another karyakarta should be told, doors should be left open and the karyakarta and child should be checked on periodically. The child should be told about this arrangement;
- access to and from the building should be safe and well lit.

The karyakarta will:

- treat all young people with respect and dignity without discrimination;
- be careful with speech, tone of voice, and body language;
- respect the privacy of children, e.g. when visiting the toilet;
- avoid games whose rules do not prevent the possibility of physical aggression, inappropriate language, inappropriate touching or improper use of technology;
- refrain from any sexually suggestive comments, ridiculing, or rejection of a child or young person, even in fun;



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- avoid inappropriate touching of any form; exercise caution if comforting an injured or distressed child;
- avoid all situations where he/she is alone with a group exclusively of the opposite sex; a second karyakarta of the same sex as the group must be present;
- learn to control children without using physical contact, or aggressive or intimidating behaviour;
- make sure another adult is present if, for example, a child has soiled his or her clothes and needs assistance with washing or a change of clothes;
- not let children or young people involve him or her in excessively attention seeking behaviour, especially if it is of an overtly sexual or physical nature;
- not invite a child or young person to his or her home without another adult being present, parental consent and a good reason/rationale for this invitation;
- make sure that parents know where their child is, and obtain written parental consent for non-routine events, such as trips;
- avoid, where possible, giving lifts to individual children; if this is unavoidable, ensure that their parents are aware and have given consent;
- ensure that all child passengers are safely returned to their destination at a time agreed with the parents, and that they are accompanied safely to the premises;
- not provide lifts to passengers exclusively of the opposite sex;

## *B. Good Practice amongst Karyakartas*

- karyakartas must support each other in their work with children and young people, and encourage and reference the use of these guidelines at all times;
- if karyakartas have a concern about the behaviour or suitability of another karyakarta, they must speak to the shakha karyawaha about the concern; if the concern relates to the shakha karyawaha then speak to the vibhag karyawaha;
- karyakartas must be given the opportunity to meet together to review the work that they have done, and to plan future work;
- the shakha and vibhag karyawaha should take opportunities to observe karyakartas in activities with children and young people, and to discuss what they have observed with the karyakarta;
- karyakartas should accept such observations as part of HSS (UK)'s commitment to safe and high-quality activities with children and young people;
- the shakha/vibhag karyawaha should discuss with karyakartas their role, performance and any concerns they have about their work with children and young people; this is supervision.



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## Section 3

The selection of Karyakartas and their responsibilities:

- It is not enough to rely on someone's good reputation to guarantee that they are suitable to work with children and young people.
- Applicants should be vetted by a minimum of two karyakartas of HSS (UK).
- Karyakartas should only be appointed subject to satisfactory disclosure from a DBS check.
- All karyakartas should have access to these guidelines.
- The roles of all karyakartas must be established and clearly explained to them by the shakha/vibhag karyawaha.
- Karyakarta must not be expected to perform duties for which they are not adequately trained or experienced.
- See Karyakarta Development Policy for further information.

## Section 4

*Procedures to follow:*

HSS (UK) is committed to the protection of children from harm (see categories of abuse in section 1). In order to achieve this, karyakartas need to value children, and take time to listen to them, when they choose to talk about their experiences and concerns. It is important that karyakartas know how to respond if abuse is disclosed or suspected.

*If abuse is disclosed or suspected:*

- approach the child about your concerns privately, ensuring good practice guidelines are following as noted above;
- listen to the child and keep a note of what is said, or of what your concerns are;
- do not interrupt the child, and try not to ask questions;
- reassure the child, but do not encourage her or him to tell you more;
- tell the child that you will have to inform someone else of what has been said, so that action can be taken to make sure that he or she is safe;
- do not delay, tell the shakha/event karyawaha about the disclosure or concerns;
- ensure you write down all information provided within the discussion as soon as possible after the discussion
- the shakha/event karyawaha is responsible for making sure that the matter is referred to the safeguarding officer, parents/guardians (where appropriate) and statutory authorities (police or social services);



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- the details of the concern or disclosure should not be discussed with anyone other than the child, the shakha/event karyawaha, safeguarding officer, parents/guardians (where appropriate) or the statutory authorities;
- if the disclosure or concern is about someone who is a swayamsevak/sevika of HSS (UK), this procedure must still be followed (if the shakha/event karyawaha or safeguarding lead is implicated then an alternative safeguarding officer should be informed directly). That person should be suspended from any activities with children and young people at least until the matter has been investigated.
- the parents/guardians should be informed of this matter unless informing them would compromise the child's safety.

## Section 5

### Designated Safeguarding Officers

Trained male and female designated safeguarding officers are in place. Contact [dbs@hssuk.org](mailto:dbs@hssuk.org) for further information.