



Afghan Connection Child Protection Policy

Our commitment to protect children

Mission

AC has been operating in Afghanistan since 2002. Its aim is to bring hope and opportunity to young people in Afghanistan through education and sports projects. By responding directly to Afghan needs and operating in a culturally sensitive manner, AC's work helps to strengthen communities, create dignity and reduce intolerance.

AC supports education in rural areas, where girls in particular miss out, by funding initiatives designed to maximise the opportunity to access and complete a quality education. The Charity has funded 46 school constructions serving more than 75,000 children.

AC runs cricket projects which have been backed by the Marylebone Cricket Club, (MCC) and more recently, by the UK Government. These projects have benefited more than 100,000 children in 22 provinces of Afghanistan.

We are committed to child protection. Afghan Connection is a registered UK charity number 1092134. For more information about the charity go to www.afghanconnection.org or email office@afghanconnection.org

Introduction

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 19 states:

- parties shall protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

The abuse and exploitation of children happens in all countries and societies across the world.

Nonetheless, staff and volunteers at Afghan Connection (AC) and partners have a common commitment to the prevention of child abuse and the protection of children.

This policy sets out common values, principles, and beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken in meeting our commitment to protect children.

Our values, principles and beliefs

- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation
- The situation of all children must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation
- Child abuse is never acceptable
- We have a commitment to protecting children with/ for whom we work
- When we work through partners, we make clear that we expect them to meet our standards of protection for children in their programmes.

What we will do

We will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse through the following means:

Awareness: we will ensure that all AC staff are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children. An online safeguarding course will be completed by Sir Richard Stagg, Chairman of Trustees and Dr Sarah Fane, CEO and any staff members or Trustees visiting the projects.

Prevention: we will endeavour to ensure, through awareness and good practice, that AC staff and visitors travelling with AC staff to Afghanistan minimise the risks to children. We will share our Child Protection Policy with all our partners. AC staff and Trustees and any persons accompanying AC to visit projects in Afghanistan will have DBS checks.

Reporting: we will endeavour to ensure that staff are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children. A report on any incident related to Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, SCA, (AC's implementing partner) would be to Andreas Stefansson, Director General of SCA, based in Stockholm. A report on any incident related to Afghan Youth Cricket Support Organisation would be to the Afghan Cricket Board.

Responding: Where concerns arise regarding possible abuse, AC will also endeavour to:

- Take seriously any concerns raised
- Work closely with our partners to ensure they take correct steps in the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns
- Work closely with our partners to ensure they support children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns
- Act appropriately and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation
- Be guided through the child protection process by the principle of 'best interests of the child'
- Listen to and takes seriously the views and wishes of children

How we will ensure our commitments above are met

- All AC staff will abide by the child protection policy and code of conduct
- All staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of the child protection policy. This will be kept in the Safeguarding File at the AC office and will be sent to individual Trustees.
- Recruitment procedures will include checks on suitability for working with young people. All new AC staff will have DBS checks

- Induction will include briefing on child protection issues for staff and Trustees. There will be a presentation to Trustees by member of AC team
- AC workplace will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse to the Country Director of SCA and the Afghan Cricket Board.
- This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the AC management team in the UK and the Board of Trustees

Staff and others must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- Sleep in close proximity to or in a bed with a child with whom they are working
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

It is important for all AC staff when in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace in order to minimise risks
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged

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