

APLE Cambodia

CODE OF CONDUCT



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CC001 / Code of Conduct

Introduction

APPLE is a Cambodian non-governmental organization dedicated to combating the sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

APPLE's vision is *"A community with robust social and legal justice in which all children are safe from child sexual abuse and exploitation"* and its mission is *"To strengthen national social and legal mechanisms for the protection of children at risk of, or affected by, child sexual abuse or exploitation"*.

APPLE aims to:

- prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation by raising community awareness, training and disseminating factual information;
- protect the victims of sexual abuse and exploitation by providing them with social and psychological support as well as pro-bono legal aid; and
- increase the capacity of national law-enforcement agencies through collaboration, training and facilitating international liaison
- promote prosecution of child sex offenders by closely collaborating with law enforcement authorities to conduct proactive and reactive investigations and assisting with rescue and raid operations when required

Everything done by APPLE staff must be directed towards furthering APPLE's vision and its aims. This Code of Conduct and all of APPLE's Policies, procedures and guidance must be read and interpreted with APPLE's vision and aims in mind.

This Code of Conduct establishes the principles and values of moral, professional and legal conduct to which all APPLE staff must adhere in furthering APPLE's vision and aims. It references relevant APPLE Policies and procedures that can be used for more detailed guidance. It also identifies the APPLE officer or executive responsible for the oversight of particular policies and procedures; this individual can be contacted for additional guidance on their application and is the person to be informed should any breach of this Code of Conduct or Policies or procedures be identified.

Code of Conduct

Integrity

External stakeholders, such as law enforcement authorities, courts, donors and other NGOs dedicated to child protection must have confidence in APPLE's integrity. In particular, the children and their families whom APPLE is dedicated to protect and assist must have complete confidence that APPLE staff will always do the right thing, will always behave in an honest and open manner, will always be truthful and forthright in their dealings and will always do what they say they will do.

APLE staff will not offer or accept inducements to achieve a result even if that result is in line with APLE's vision or aims.

APLE staff will not knowingly give false, misleading or inconsistent information which could lead to miscarriages of justice and must not try improperly to influence stakeholders, law enforcement authorities, courts, children or their families.

APLE staff may, where appropriate, lobby or advocate in a proper and proportionate manner for the achievement of APLE's vision and aims.

Responsibility

The Board will set and uphold the standard by which APLE will be viewed and the standard which every member of APLE staff will uphold.

Other relevant APLE Policies, procedures and guidelines

- Anti-corruption, Bribery and Gifts Policy
- Communication Policy

Professionalism

APLE's stakeholders must have confidence that the decisions and actions of APLE and APLE staff are objective, reasonable and based upon the best available data.

Consequently APLE staff must uphold a high standard of personal and professional conduct and exercise honesty, integrity and credibility at all times.

In particular, APLE staff must avoid improper contact and relationships with children, their families and other parties involved in the work of APLE. APLE staff must avoid any conduct which would place them in breach of the criminal law or call into question their suitability to work with APLE, and must always be aware that even the appearance, or suggestion, of such improper contact will be enough to damage the reputation of APLE and the APLE staff member concerned and bring them into disrepute.

APLE staff must be aware that APLE stakeholders and external agencies (including the media) and the general public will expect the very highest standards of conduct from APLE staff when dealing with children and their families.

APLE staff must preserve their professional independence in the course of their duties and must act in accordance with the law and best practice pertaining to child protection free from all other influences. Information, intelligence and case histories must be presented in a neutral and objective way and in complete accordance with all available facts and evidence.

APLE staff must never entrap individuals by unfair or dishonest means, nor enter premises without the permission of the owner or occupier.

APLE staff will treat children, their families, stakeholders, professional partners, colleagues and the general public fairly and respectfully without discriminating on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion or faith, disability, sexual orientation or gender identification, birth, political opinion, nationality or similar criteria.

APLE staff will respect and encourage the expression of views and perspectives and lawful opinions even when the views expressed may differ from those of APLE staff. In particular APLE staff will listen to the views and perspectives of children and treat those views as a valuable tool in furthering APLE's aims.

Responsibility

The Board will set and uphold the professional standards of APLE and will review APLE's activities regularly to ensure that these professional standards are being upheld.

Each APLE executive is responsible for assessing these professional standards during the recruitment of APLE staff and regularly reviewing their activities to ensure that these professional standards are being upheld.

Guidance as to the applicability of these professional standards can be sought from senior APLE executives such as the Executive Director or Child Protection Officer. Where they consider that a professional standard is unclear or a situation has arisen where these standards are inappropriate, this must be referred to the Chair of the Board.

Breaches of these professional standards must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Board.

Other relevant APLE Policies Procedures and guidelines

- Internal Child Protection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Anti-corruption and Bribery Policy

Conflict of Interest

Conflicts of Interest may arise where:

- APLE's vision and aims conflict with an external agency or one or more stakeholders;
- The interests of a member of APLE staff, whether personal or professional, conflict with APLE's vision and aims, or the proper and effective functioning or administration of APLE;
- The professional duties of a member of APLE staff conflict either with other professional duties of that APLE staff member or the professional duties of another APLE staff member.

APLE staff must always be alert for potential conflicts of interest and seek guidance as to whether such a conflict arises and how it can be resolved as soon as possible. It is better to discuss the possibility of a conflict at an early stage even if it transpires that no conflict actually exists. If a situation arises where a member of APLE staff is unable to dedicate themselves fully to the protection of children or a particular child, or where the interests of a

child and their family might be prejudiced by a professional or personal relationship, then a conflict of interest will exist and must be raised.

For the avoidance of doubt, being offered or asked for a bribe or other inducement will always be in conflict with APLE's vision and aims.

A conflict of interest may be resolved by transferring cases to another suitably-qualified APLE staff member or appropriate external agency, or by disclosing the potential conflict and obtaining consent to continue to act. In extreme circumstances it may be necessary to terminate one of the relationships or activities giving rise to the conflict.

Responsibility

The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that the allocation of responsibilities amongst APLE staff does not give rise to a conflict of interest, and that adequate systems exist whereby potential conflicts can be identified and reported at an early stage.

The Chair of the Board must be notified of any conflict of interest arising and its resolution.

Where the conflict of interest may involve the transfer of a case outside APLE, or where a conflict needs to be disclosed to another party, or where a relationship or activity has to be terminated or changed to resolve the conflict, this must be the subject of discussion by the whole Board.

Other relevant APLE Policies Procedures and guidelines

- Anti-corruption and Bribery Policy

Competence

APLE staff must provide the highest possible levels of assistance and support to children and their families, law enforcement agencies, judicial bodies and other external agencies including national and international bodies dedicated to the protection and welfare of children.

APLE staff must have the necessary professional, legal and forensic skills to provide such assistance and support to the required level.

APLE staff must not go beyond their own level of competence or qualifications and must seek advice and assistance where necessary. They must respect and value the competence of others.

APLE staff are expected to participate actively in expanding their own knowledge, understanding and competence, and that of others, by engaging in internal and external training programmes and information sharing.

Responsibility

Each APLE executive is responsible for assessing competence during the recruitment of APLE staff and regularly reviewing their activities to ensure that their knowledge understanding and competence remains relevant, and to identify any training requirements.

The Executive Director is responsible for maintaining a training programme using both internal and external resources.

Other relevant APLE Policies Procedures and guidelines

- Recruitment & Selection Policy

Confidentiality and Privacy

Information concerning children, their families, APLE casework, operations or investigations must be treated as strictly confidential and protected against unauthorized disclosure. APLE staff must ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect the privacy of people involved in APLE activities and guard against the inadvertent disclosure of private and personal information.

This will include the physical security and protection of hard copy material and suitable data security for material held on computer, discs or intranet, including firewalls and password protection to a level considered to be current best practice in child protection.

Information held about individuals may only be disclosed either with the consent of that individual, the appropriate order of a law enforcement or judicial agency, or as directed by the Executive Director or Chairman of the Board.

Communication with the media or other external agencies concerning the activities of APLE may only be made as directed by [*Chair of the Board?*] or in accordance with the Communication Policy or where Memoranda of Understanding or other agreements are in place.

Responsibility

The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that information held within APLE's offices or on APLE's systems has adequate security.

The Board is responsible for formulating media policy or procedures for sharing information with other child protection agencies as appropriate.

Other relevant APLE Policies Procedures and guidelines

- Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy
- Communication Policy
- Media Policy
- Child Protection Policy

Complaints

In order to fulfil APLE's vision and aims, APLE staff will act at the highest levels of integrity, professionalism and competence. However, it is possible that a child or a member of their family might feel that their case has not been handled appropriately. Where such a complaint is received, it must be referred to the Chair of the Board immediately who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated, if necessary independently.

The investigation of such a complaint will be separate from any investigation held in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.

Responsibility

The Chair of the Board will ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented in the full investigation of complaints.

Other relevant APLE Policies Procedures and guidelines

- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy

Working Environment

APPLE staff will at all times demonstrate respect and consideration for each other regardless of seniority or status within APLE.

In recruitment, promotion, terms and conditions of employment and working environment APLE will not discriminate on grounds of race, colour, sex, religion or faith, disability, sexual orientation or gender identification, birth, political opinion, nationality or similar criteria.

APPLE will take all reasonable steps to accommodate those with disabilities.

APPLE will not tolerate bullying or sexual harassment in the workplace.

APPLE staff must adhere to APLE's Health and Safety Policies and procedures both on APLE's premises, in the field, and when working from home. APLE expects APLE staff to exercise caution and act responsibly in caring for themselves when not subject to supervision on APLE premises.

APPLE staff will respect the environment and do everything reasonable to avoid waste and pollution.

APPLE staff should be alert to instances of slavery and human trafficking, not just in the course of their investigative work but also in those external organizations involved with APLE, such as suppliers.

Responsibility

APLE executives are responsible for ensuring that recruitment for which they are responsible is not subject to discrimination.

The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring a safe and healthy place of work for APLE staff, and putting in place appropriate procedures, including training where necessary, to prevent bullying and other forms of harassment.

Other relevant APLE Policies Procedures and guidelines

- Environmental Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Modern Slavery Policy

Listening to Children

APLE staff will have unique access to the experiences of children who have been the subject of abuse or sexual exploitation. Subject to the privacy rights of each child and their family, and without making any disclosures that might prejudice investigative or prosecution work being done by APLE, these experiences should be recorded and reported.

APLE will seek to develop its governance, decision-making and activities in the light of these experiences so that the voices of children can be heard at the highest level.

APLE staff engaged in the training and guidance of young people should be aware of the need to listen to their views and experiences, and report those views and experiences to the Programme Lead, so that these views may be incorporated into future APLE activities and strategies.

Responsibility

The Executive Director is responsible for receiving reports from APLE staff of the views, experiences and perspectives of children and preparing a report to the Board at least annually.

The Board is responsible for reviewing reports of children's experiences and perspectives and considering whether APLE's activities, policies and procedures should be adjusted accordingly.

Reporting and Disclosure/"Speak Up"

APLE encourages a frank, open and honest working environment. APLE staff are encouraged to make suggestions for the more effective achievement of APLE's vision and aims, disclose errors and failings, and report breaches of APLE's policies, procedures and this Code of Conduct.

APLE staff needing to make such disclosures will need to consider carefully to whom such disclosure should be made. Simple suggestions for making APLE's administration more effective or the working environment better should be made to a manager or supervisor or directly to the Executive Director.

However, breaches of policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct, particularly when it is necessary for the disclosure to be made in confidence, need to be considered carefully. The proper reporting line should be: line supervisor, then to the Executive Director. If, however, either of those individuals are implicated in the breach, or if there is any other concern regarding the consequences of making the disclosure, then the report should be made directly to the Chair of the Board.

Instances of child abuse should be reported in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each line manager or the Executive Director to act upon suggestions or disclosures made to them, including recording the action taken.

If the disclosure involves a breach of the law, a policy or procedure or this Code of Conduct, then any request for anonymity on the part of the person making the disclosure must be respected.

The Chair of the Board is responsible for ensuring that a member of APLE staff raising concerns or making disclosures in good faith is protected from personal, professional or economic prejudice as a result of doing so.

Other relevant APLE Policies Procedures and guidelines

- Child Protection Policy
- "Speak Up"/Reporting and Disclosure Policy

Violation of this Code of Conduct

All concerns or suspicions about a breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported within 24 hours or as soon as practically possible to the Department Manager, who will notify the Executive Director. Any concern or suspicion that the Department Manager or Executive Director are themselves in breach must be reported directly to the Executive Director or Chair of the Board.

Responsibility

Every member of APLE staff is responsible for adhering to this Code of Conduct, honestly and conscientiously acknowledging breaches of it on their own part, and being alert to breaches committed by other people.

An Executive receiving a report of a breach must escalate it appropriately for investigation. In normal circumstances that escalation should be to the Executive Director and then to the

Chair of the Board, however, if necessary, a report may be made directly to the Chair of the Board.

The Chair of the Board is responsible for receiving reports of breaches where necessary, overseeing the investigation of such breaches, and overseeing any remedial action required.

The Board of APLE will review breaches of this Code of Conduct and any necessary remedial action.

Other relevant APLE Policies Procedures and guidelines

- “Speak Up”/Reporting and Disclosure Policy