Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct

For everyone who works or volunteers with Nawazishein Foundation. Read it, follow it, and sign the last page.

Why this exists

Most of the Foundation's work brings adults into contact with children, often in their own neighbourhoods and often without their parents present. That contact is a privilege and it carries risk, both to the child and to the adult. This policy sets out how we behave, so that children are safe and so that nobody is left guessing what is acceptable.

It applies to founders, interns, volunteers, visitors, donors on field visits, photographers and anyone else present at our activities. There are no exceptions for seniority or for how long someone has been with us.

Our commitments

- Every child we work with has the right to be safe, to be treated with dignity, and to be heard.
- A child's welfare comes before the Foundation's reputation, convenience or content.
- We do not tolerate any form of physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child.
- Concerns are acted on, not managed quietly.

In this policy, a child means anyone under the age of 18.

The code of conduct

You MUST:

- Stay in open, visible spaces when with children. If you need to speak to a child privately, stay where another adult can see you.
- Treat every child equally, whatever their family, religion, caste, gender or ability.
- Let a child say no. To a photograph, to a hug, to an activity.
- Report any concern about a child's safety to a founder the same day, even if you are unsure.
- Report any behaviour by a colleague or volunteer that worries you, even if it seems small.

You MUST NOT:

- Be alone with a child where you cannot be seen, including in a vehicle, a room or a stairwell.
- Take a child anywhere, including home, to a hospital or to buy something, without a founder's permission and ideally a second adult present.
- Hit, shake, shout at, humiliate, or use physical discipline of any kind on a child.
- Use language, jokes or gestures that are sexual, abusive or demeaning in front of a child.
- Give money, gifts or special favours to a particular child or family.
- Share your personal phone number or social media with a child, or contact them privately. All contact with families goes through the Foundation.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Do for a child what they can do for themselves, particularly anything involving their body.

Photographs and social media

Our Instagram raises money and brings volunteers, and most of the images on it are of children. That makes the rules below part of the work, not an afterthought.

1. Ask the child, and a parent or guardian where one is present, before photographing or filming. Explain where it may be used. If either says no, that is the end of it.
2. A child must be fully and appropriately clothed in any photograph, and poses must not be sexually suggestive.
3. Never publish a child's full name, school, address, or the exact location of their home alongside their image. Do not tag locations at a child's home.
4. Do not post photographs of children on your personal accounts. Photographs taken at our activities belong to the Foundation and are posted only from Foundation accounts.
5. Photographs must show children with dignity. If an image is only striking because it shows a child's poverty or distress, do not use it.
6. Delete photographs from personal devices once they have been handed over to the Foundation.
7. If a parent later asks us to remove an image, we remove it without argument.

If you have a concern

You do not need proof, and it is not your job to investigate. It is your job to tell someone.

1. If a child is in immediate danger, make them safe first. Call 1098 (Childline) or 112 for emergency services if needed.
2. Tell a founder the same day. In person or by phone, not by a message that might sit unread.
3. Write down what you saw or were told, in plain words, as soon as you can. Record the date, time, place and who was present. Do not add your opinion of what it means.
4. Do not promise a child that you will keep it secret. You can promise that you will only tell the people who need to know in order to help.
5. Do not question the child in detail, and do not confront the person you are concerned about.
6. Keep what you know to yourself otherwise. Do not discuss it with other volunteers.

Designated person for child protection

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Every concern reaches this person. If your concern is about them, go to any other founder.

What we do with a concern

1. The designated person records the concern and decides, with one other founder, what is needed.
2. Where there is reason to believe an offence against a child has occurred, we report it to the police or the Child Welfare Committee. Under the POCSO Act, failing to report a known sexual offence against a child is itself an offence.
3. Anyone about whom a serious concern is raised is kept away from children while it is looked into.
4. We support the person who raised the concern, and no one is penalised for raising one in good faith.
5. We keep records of concerns securely and separately, seen only by the founders.

Before you join us

- Everyone signs this policy before their first day on field.
- Everyone declares that they have no criminal record and no pending case, including any offence relating to children.
- Interns and regular volunteers are briefed on this policy, and may be asked about it at any time.
- Breaking this code ends your association with the Foundation immediately, and may be reported to the authorities.

Declaration

I have read the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct of Nawazishein Foundation. I understand it, I agree to follow it, and I understand that breaking it will end my association with the Foundation and may be reported to the authorities. I confirm that I have no criminal record and no pending case against me, including any offence relating to children.

Name and signature
Intern or volunteer

Date

A note on this document

This policy was drafted for Nawazishein Foundation's own use. Review it with your legal advisor before relying on it in any formal or funding context, and revisit it once a year.