



Stairway Foundation, Inc.

Child Protection Policy

2021





I. Introduction

Stairway Foundation Inc. (SFI) is a non-stock, non-profit, non-government childcare organization located in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines. Below is the organization's Vision and Mission.

A. Vision

A safe environment for children worldwide where their rights are equally respected.

B. Mission

Through innovation, creative excellence and professional networking, Stairway is committed to continuously learn from our local operations and manifest our gains as a resource to inspire and educate partners in the region and the world to protect and promote children's rights.

SFI was established in 1990 as an alternative program for the most marginalized and endangered street children in the Philippines. Today, the foundation operates several different units and programs:

- A Family Home Program
- The Stairway NCR Office, which houses various special projects, the Break the Silence Campaign, as well as the Child Safeguarding and Capacity Development Unit.
- Community Assistance Program
- Environmental Awareness for Children and Youth (EACY)

All units/programs use creative expressions as a vehicle for change. Many years of working directly with children from the streets of Manila compelled the foundation to get directly involved in the fight against child sexual abuse and exploitation.

C. Aim of the policy

This document sets out the principles, rules, and procedures that constitute Stairway Foundation's Child Protection Policy. The organization is fully committed to safeguard the welfare of all children under its care. It will take all reasonable steps to uphold the children's right to be protected from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or beliefs, and their right to be involved in any decisions which directly affect them.

D. Scope of the Policy

The Child Protection Policy of Stairway applies to everyone working for or associated with Stairway Foundation. It encompasses the whole of Stairway and includes without limitation:

1. **Staff:** refers to all Stairway regular employees (including those in probationary and part-time status) as well as short term contractual workers (i.e. additional cooks for events, construction workers, one time project persons, resource persons, etc)
2. **Volunteers:** refer to persons who offer their time, expertise and skills to the organization on a short term or long term basis.
3. **Visitors:** refers to persons visiting the center on official or personal capacity (e.g. personal visitors, journalists, existing donors and potential donors, staff and people associated with partner organizations, people passing thru the center, BOT, etc.)
4. **Children:** Refers to all children who are beneficiaries of Stairway's programs, children who stay at the Stairway main office in Puerto Galera whether long or short term, and children whom any Stairway staff encounters, both within the Stairway center or outside (e.g. during trainings or Sea Adventure School sessions) . Also included are children whom visitors and volunteers interact with while under the supervision/in active connection with Stairway (e.g. during a visit)

"Children" refers to the legal definition as per Philippine law (any person below the age of 18, or above 18 but is incapable of taking care of him/herself because of certain conditions).

Children regardless of nationality, gender and social origin shall be covered in this child protection policy.

E. Legal framework

The principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are used as a legal framework for Stairway's child protection policy. Taken holistically, the CRC provides a comprehensive framework for the protection, provision and participation of all children without discrimination to ensure their survival and development to the maximum extent possible. This child protection policy shall also be bounded by all National and local child protection laws in the Philippines.

F. Definitions and types of abuse

Child abuse is defined as harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare that occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment, by a parent, a legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare.

It also refers to behaviors directed toward a child by an adult that harms a child's physical or emotional health and development. In the context of a childcare facility, child abuse includes four major categories: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect.

Physical Abuse

Refers to a non-accidental physical injury as a result of a caregiver's acts. Physical abuse frequently includes shaking, slapping, punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, or other similar acts.



Sexual Abuse

Refers to any employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of a child to engage in sex or assist another person to engage in sexual intercourse or lascivious conduct. It includes molestation, prostitution, or incest with children.

Emotional / Psychological Abuse

This is the habitual verbal harassment of a child by disparagement, criticism, threats, or ridicule. Emotional or psychological abuse includes behavior that threatens or intimidates a child. It also includes name-calling and belittling of the child's capacity.

Neglect

Refers to any unreasonable deprivation of a child's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care, general care, and supervision by guardians or custodians.

II. Preventive Strategies

The following shall constitute the rules and guidelines of good practice for everyone connected to Stairway Foundation with regards to child protection.

General Principles

- Stairway shall at all times, have a member of the staff responsible to monitor and implement child protection policies. He or She has received appropriate training and support for this role and would act as the focal person should allegations of abuse arise.
- The organization shall make sure that all staff are clear where to report possible cases of child abuse.
- It shall encourage a culture of open communication and transparency that will ensure the protection of all children under its care.
- It shall promote a safe environment for children to express concerns and complaints of unacceptable and/or abusive behavior.
- It shall continuously build the capacity of both staff and children with regards to children's rights and child sexual abuse prevention.
- It shall continue to develop policies and practices that will uphold the children's welfare, as well as that of the members of the staff who interact with them.
- It shall have a regular monitoring and supervision process of all staff working directly with children.
- It shall also ensure that the rules in this policy as well as in other documents are followed and sanctions for whatever violations are consistently implemented regardless of the violator's position in the organization.

A. General Code of Conduct for all adult to children interaction/ General behavioural protocols

1. Appropriate Standards of Behavior:

All adults (staff, volunteers and visitors) **should**

- Treat all children equally, with respect and dignity
- Always work in an open environment (e.g., avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- Put the care, welfare and safety needs of a child first
- Listen attentively and respectfully to the child's ideas and views
- Respond sensitively to children's concerns
- Report to the child protection officer/team any disclosures of abuse from the child, or any observations of the child being exposed to a potentially abusive situation, harm, exploitation, or neglect.
- Dress in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner while in the premises of the Stairway center. Cross dressing is allowed.

2. Inappropriate Standards of Behavior:

All adults (staff, volunteers and visitors) **should NEVER**

- Use physical force against a child, unless it aims to restrain or protect him from an immediate danger to himself, to another child, or to property.
- Allow a child to be bullied or harmed by anyone in the organization through inaction.
- Behave in a manner that may be abusive or put children at risk (e.g., verbal bullying, let children watch inappropriate movies for their age, ignoring illness complaints, etc.)
- Engage children in sexually provocative acts, including but not limited to horseplay, flirting, inappropriate touching, and acting in a sexually suggestive manner, making sexual innuendoes, and telling jokes with sexual undertones.
- Take a child on an outing alone or to any personal activity without permission from the organization.
- Sleep in the same bed with child beneficiaries of Stairway.
- Drink or smoke in front of the children, nor invite children to drink alcohol with them.
- Develop a relationship with children which could be exploitative or abusive (e.g., boyfriend/girlfriend or emotional blackmail)
- Pay particular attention to a child to the exclusion of the other children, including giving the child personal gifts without giving the same to the others (all gifts shall be coursed through the organization for proper distribution).
- Do tasks for a child, which he can do himself, or asking the child to do personal chores which the staff him/herself could do.
- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive (e.g. swearing)

- Allow children to swear or use sexualized language unchallenged.
- Use corporal punishment.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Ignore, or participate in, behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe and abusive (e.g., ignore reports of abuse from one child)
- Exaggerate or minimize another staff member or any other adult's concerns about a child's welfare or ignore an allegation/suspicion of abuse/neglect.
- Come into work intoxicated.
- Access establishments which will put the organization in a bad light, contribute to the exploitation of men, women and children or put the staff him/herself at risk.
- Display excessive affection with a romantic partner in front of children beneficiaries.

Aside from the general behavioral protocols, each program will have to follow additional special guidelines formulated based on the context of the program itself. These special program guidelines will cover both behavioral protocols towards children, and general behavioral protocols in the context of risk reduction.

B. Special Program guidelines

1. Family Home Program (FHP)

- a) The use of any form of corporal punishment is strictly prohibited.
- b) Staff are not to invite or allow FHP children to stay at their home without the approval of the organization
- c) Staff are not allowed to stay/sleep in the same bed with FHP children
- d) Ensure that fighting/aggressive interaction with other staff is not shown in front of FHP children
- e) Ensure that staff shall not keep information (secrets) that would affect the FHP children, other staff or the organization. This should be relayed to the management team/program supervisor.
- f) Ensure that children will not gain unsupervised access to harmful/dangerous objects or materials (e.g. knives, solvents, etc)
- g) Ensure that all staff will not provide access to FHP children to use staff's own personal mobile devices (e.g. mobile phones, laptops, tablets, etc)
- h) Ensure that FHP children are not left unattended even if another staff should already be handling the children.
- i) Staff shall not provoke fighting/misunderstanding amongst FHP children
- j) Staff shall not divulge personal information of FHP children to persons not authorized to receive such information
- k) Staff shall not give FHP children nicknames which are discriminatory, or emotionally harmful (e.g. fatso, blacky, etc)
- l) Staff shall not allow other non-FHP staff to have unnecessary unsupervised interaction with FHP children, including access to FHP children's dormitory

2. Community Assistance Program (CAP) (including EACY)

- a) Staff shall not come to work drunk, with a hangover or smells of cigarette smoke
- b) Ensure that they will not use their personal mobile phone numbers to contact CAP children (key CAP staff shall be provided with a basic mobile phone with sim for official use)
- c) Shall not engage in activities which harms the environment like inappropriate disposal of garbage, harming coral reefs, etc (this is in the context of role modelling)
- d) Ensure that meetings with CAP children will not have children go home late at night.
- e) Staff shall not let CAP children stay in CAP staff's own homes
- f) Ensure that CAP children are not unattended during any activity (e.g. beach cleanup). Appropriate staff to children ratio shall always be observed
- g) Staff shall not divulge personal information of CAP children to others (adult and staff) except in cases wherein this is deemed necessary and is sanctioned by the organization
- h) Staff shall not engage CAP children and their families for their own personal business (e.g. offering products)
- i) Staff shall not actively campaign for local candidates during election season
- j) It is also prohibited to unnecessarily give or receive gifts from CAP children or their families
- k) SAS boat staff shall always ensure that the SAS boat is operated safely.
- l) Staff shall not allow other non-CAP staff to have unnecessary unsupervised interaction with CAP children

3. Stairway NCR OFFICE

Staff shall not put the organization at risk while travelling outside of Stairway through improper conduct such as but not limited to;

- a. Engaging in any illegal activity
- b. Access establishments which exploits men, women and children
- c. Have children stay in their training accommodations
- d. Get the contact details of children they interact with unless it is deemed necessary and with proper/immediate coordination with the organization
- e. Expose children to inappropriate content or training methodologies

4. Admin staff

Admin staff should never;

- Divulge confidential information of children beneficiaries of Stairway
- Provide access to harmful/risky materials to FHP children (e.g. pentel pens, scissors, cutters). Admin staff should make sure that FHP children will be accompanied by an FHP staff in such cases.



5. Orientation for volunteers

Before or within 24 hours upon arrival at Stairway, volunteers shall undergo a formal child protection policy orientation by the admin staff or anyone assigned by the admin staff. The volunteer(s) shall also sign a commitment letter indicating adherence to the Stairway child protection policy.

C. Additional Guidelines for visitors

Aside from the general behavioral guidelines, Stairway visitors should never:

1. Unnecessarily touch children (FHP and CAP)
2. Interact with the FHP and CAP children in private
3. Talk to FHP and CAP children in the context of counseling or digging up past experiences of abuse.
4. Take photos of children (FHP and CAP) without asking permission from the program staff, and asking for consent from the concerned children.
5. Give gifts directly to any child without approval from the program staff. All gifts must be coursed through the organization for distribution to the children.
6. Give promises to a particular child—e.g., of adopting the child, bringing him outside the country, giving a scholarship to him. Should one wish to make a donation or help a child in any way, he/she should coordinate with the program staff.
7. Obtain or give contact information pertaining to establishing a personal communication with the child outside of the organization (i.e., getting the child's email address/social media account details or giving one's contact information to the child).
8. Allow children to use their mobile phones/laptops or any mobile communication device or to talk to any caller without the program staff's permission.
9. Take a child outside of the premises of Stairway
10. Ask a child to come into the volunteer living quarters or share a bed with them.
11. Drink or smoke in front of the children or inside the center.
12. Dress in a culturally insensitive manner. As much as possible, overly revealing clothing should be reconsidered.
13. Disclose information that identifies children beneficiaries or make it available to the general public without explicit consent from Stairway Foundation. (General public also includes Social Media and other public media outlets).

Visitors are highly encouraged to report to any program staff any child protection concern that they have witnessed/heard about (child to child, staff to child, visitor to child, child to adult)

III. Safeguarding children in travel

This section provides safeguarding guidelines in the conduct of official activities wherein children will have to travel out of Stairway together with staff, or staff has to bring children to Stairway for activities.

A. Pre-Activity:

1. Before a child is allowed to participate in any activity, consent of parents or guardian must be duly secured (if applicable). Parents or guardians shall be informed about the nature of the Stairway activity, which includes duration, kinds of activities, sleeping arrangements, etc.
2. Ensure that for activities which shall involve strenuous physical activities, parents/guardians and children shall be informed so that they can make informed decisions for participation.
3. Stairway staff shall conduct a pre-departure orientation for children on the safety protocols during travel (In transit guidelines).
4. Stairway staff shall ensure that any vehicle to be used to transport children is in good condition via vehicle safety checks. The drivers should have proper and updated license and be in good medical condition.
5. Vehicle capacity shall always be observed.
6. If public transport shall be taken, Stairway staff shall always accompany children.
7. Stairway staff shall carry a basic medical kit that is accessible throughout the duration of the activity.

B. While in Transit:

1. Stairway staff shall ensure that children are seated comfortably and safely.
2. As much as possible and if applicable, children must travel in groups together with Stairway staff.
3. If travelling using jeepneys, children shall not be allowed to sit at front besides the driver.
4. Stairway staff shall ensure that regular updates shall be sent to the program coordinator concerned.

5. Unless in an emergency situation, no deviation from the pre-determined travel routes is allowed.

C. During Activity Safeguarding Guidelines:

1. Stairway staff shall not use sexually explicit, aggressive, demeaning and vindictive words to address children.
2. Stairway staff and children shall not share the same sleeping quarters with children.
3. In case any child gets injured or becomes ill, proper medical treatment shall be provided.
4. Children shall be informed before any activity on who to go to if they have any child protection concerns.
5. All code of conduct for staff shall be applied to all adults involved in the activity, regardless if they are part of Stairway or not.

D. Post-Activity:

1. Staff shall ensure that children are dropped off at the designated area as previously agreed upon (if applicable)
2. During drop-off, if applicable, in case the parent/s or guardian cannot fetch the child during the designated time, Stairway staff shall exercise due diligence to contact the parent/ s or guardian and wait for their arrival.

Guidelines during Youth for Change Camps (YFC)

In order to ensure that children are protected during YFC camps, all general behavioral protocols shall be followed and will be applicable to children participating during YFC camps even if they are not children from the FHP or CAP.

A child protection policy orientation shall be conducted before the start of any YFC.

Risk analysis shall be undertaken in designing the activities of YFC Camps, and corresponding risk mitigation plans shall be formulated in order to ensure the safety of children participating in the YFC camps.

IV. Standards for Human Resources

A. Recruitment process

Recognizing that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way, Stairway shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working in the organization. It shall develop best practices in the recruitment and selection of individuals to a childcare position.

All job advertisements shall clearly indicate the presence of Stairway's child protection policy, as well as the requirement, upon hiring, of signing the Stairway CPP Statement of Commitment (Annex B).

Particular attention will be paid to an applicant's previous work experience, references from previous employers, and background checks with the National Bureau of Investigation and Philippine National Police. An interview shall also attempt to investigate the potential staff member's attitudes towards children. Furthermore, psychological assessment could also provide information on the applicant's suitability to the job. Online checks shall also be part of the background checking procedure during the recruitment process.

B. Capacity Building

Aside from ensuring that all staff members are aware of and commit to adhere to the Child Protection Policy, Stairway shall also make certain that all staff, regardless of their position or areas of responsibility, shall:

1. Sign a commitment document for the Stairway Child Protection Policy
2. Understand their obligation to protect children under their care from harm, abuse and exploitation.
3. Know their accountability to report care or protection concerns about the children in the institution to the social worker in charge, as well as concerns about any co-worker's potentially abusive actions towards any child in the program. It is not for staff to decide whether or not the allegation is true. All suspicions or allegations must be taken seriously and dealt with according to this procedure.
4. Internalize their responsibility to uphold the best interest of the child.

Stairway is also committed to provide opportunities to all staff members to develop their knowledge, skills, habits, and ethics of work, particularly in relation to the care and protection of children.

It will also ensure that the procedures relating to the conduct of its staff members—as stipulated in the organization's Manual of Operations as well as in other pertinent documents, including this Policy—shall be implemented in a consistent manner.

V. Standards for Communication

A. Scope

The guidelines on communicating images (stills and video), text, audio regarding children will include, but not be limited to the following;

1. Newsletters
2. Brochures
3. Reports
4. Website
5. Social Media Accounts

B. Consent

The consent of a child and/or parent/guardian (if applicable) shall always be obtained before recording information or obtaining images, and the intended use(s) of such materials shall be explained. Staff shall use the Stairway image consent form (Annex A)

C. Depiction of children.

Stairway shall ensure that all communications about children, in all media it uses and hosts, shall use images, text, audio and language that are decent and respectful to children. We shall not portray children in a manner which strips them of their dignity as human beings.

D. Usage of images of children

No persons outside of the organization shall be authorized to set-up any online presence of the organization and use images of children in our center. We will not provide children's personal addresses or contact information to partners both present and potential unless assessed by the organization as something really needed (e.g. for case management or legally compelled to do so).

We expect the same respect for children's protection and privacy from our partners, donors, visitors and supporters.

VI. Online and Social Media Guidelines

With the advent of Social Media, Stairway has put into place special policies in order to guide staff on how to behave in Social Media in order to protect the rights of children, and interest of Stairway as an organization. As a technology precaution, Stairway shall install filtering software for its internet connection in order to block access to inappropriate materials for children, specifically pornography

A. Online/Social Media behavior guidelines for staff;

1. Staff should automatically report to the social media platform, any online child protection concern they encounter (e.g. cyberbullying, child sexual abuse materials, etc.)
2. Staff shall refrain from sharing, uploading and liking content which is;
 - Pornographic
 - Hateful
 - Violent
 - Discriminatory
 - False or misleading
 - Spam
 - Sexualized content
3. If staff decides to share or upload any controversial post (e.g. in support of a particular election candidate, an opinion about a polarizing issue not related to children, etc.), then the staff should put a disclaimer indicating that his/her views doesn't necessarily reflect the view of the organization.
4. Staff is provided the choice to post Stairway as their work in their Social Media account. However, staff are reminded that by doing so, they must take extra care with regards to their online activities as these also reflect back to the organization.
5. Staff should not add children beneficiaries as social media friends. If prior to this policy, staff already have children beneficiaries as friends, then they should put them under the restricted friends list.
6. Staff should not post internal organizational issues via Social media.
7. If staff wants to share work related content, protection of confidentiality of children's information and protection of Stairway's image shall be upheld.
8. Dissatisfaction in relation to work or a co-worker should not be posted online, but rather be coured through official channels for proper resolution.
9. Staff should not post confidential information about any child beneficiary via Social Media, including single photos of children.
10. Staff should ensure the privacy and security of their social media accounts.
11. Staff shall not engage in cyberbullying or cyber trolling.
12. Staff shall not engage in online fights.
13. Not to be involved in any multi-level marketing scheme (Ponzi scheme).
14. When attending online meetings via video conferencing platforms, Stairway staff shall ensure that what is seen and heard via their webcam/audio feed are child safe and appropriate.

B. Online engagement of FHP and CAP staff with children beneficiaries

1. Staff are prohibited from adding FHP and CAP children beneficiaries
2. Communication shall be done ONLY via a closed Facebook group (NOT VIA GROUP CHAT) which shall be created by the program coordinator together with another program staff.
3. The said Facebook group shall be administered by the program coordinator and at least 1 program staff.

4. General rules on respectful online interaction, sharing of non-abusive content and languages shall be enforced.
5. Communication via private messages is prohibited, unless there is a need to maintain confidentiality, to which a temporary GC with the child together with the program coordinator and staff shall be made.

C. Management of Stairway's Social Media presence;

1. Confidentiality of children will be protected even online.
2. Individual photos of children shall not be posted as much as possible. If such photos will be posted, Stairway shall ensure that only non-identifying information will be provided.
3. Dignity in portrayal of children shall be maintained at all times.
4. Pseudonyms for children shall be used at all times.
5. Children's consent will be acquired at all times if their images are to be posted online.
6. Stairway shall maintain 1 main official Social Media presence, with additional pages for individual programs.
7. These program pages shall follow the guideline laid down in the child protection policy.
8. Stairway shall have at least 4 persons to form the social media team who will be responsible for managing the social media account of Stairway.
9. At any given time, 2 persons shall safe-keep the account details of Stairway's social media accounts.
10. Child Protection concerns reported to the social media accounts shall be linked up to the case management system of Stairway. No admin shall delete any private message sent to any Stairway Facebook page.

VII. Case Management

A. Stairway Child Protection Team (CPT)

All staff and other stakeholders have the responsibility to be on the alert for and to report any possible incidents of child abuse or any child protection concern inside and outside the organization. Anyone with personal knowledge about abusive incidents, or who has received a disclosure of child abuse, or has any child protection concern has the obligation and responsibility to bring the incident to the attention of any member of the child protection team. The Stairway child protection team shall be composed of the following;

1. Executive Director for overall guidance
2. SFI NCR program and management head for support
3. Program head for FHP, CAP and EACY
4. 2 SFI social workers for case management
5. Admin officer for support and documentation



6. SIRDU head/Senior Advocacy Officer for child protection capacity building/policy review/alternative reporting point

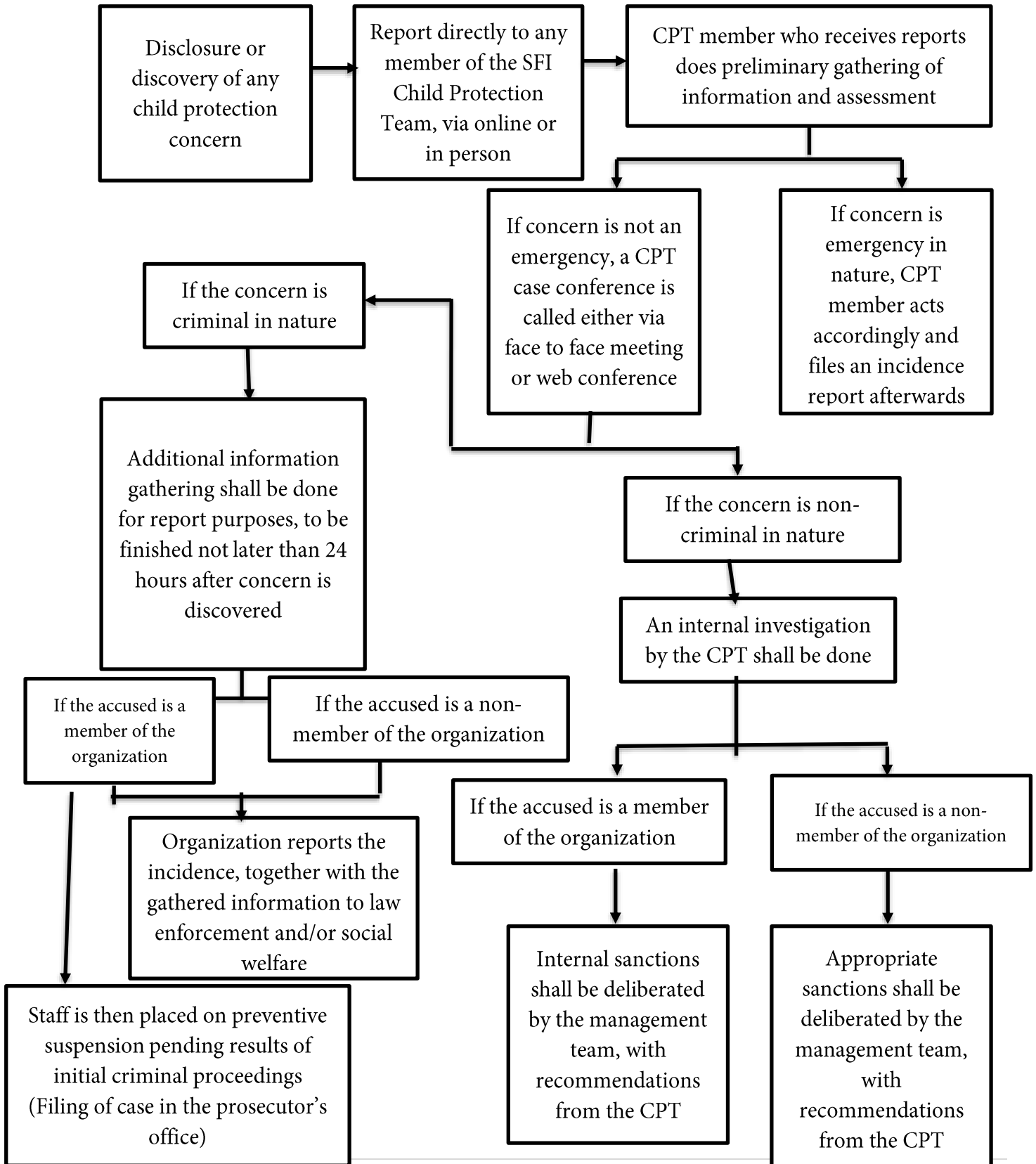
B. System for disclosure, reporting, investigation and dealing with Child Protection Concern

Dealing with disclosures of abuse or discovery of any child protection concern

In a situation where a child discloses incidents of abuse committed by a person/s from the organization or outside the organization (non-staff), or upon the discovery of a child protection concern, the following guidelines shall be followed by the recipient of the disclosure or the person concerned:

1. React calmly, but don't minimize the disclosure
2. Listen carefully and attentively
3. Reassure the child that he has taken the right action in talking to you
4. Do not promise to keep anything secret
5. Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions.
6. Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood
7. Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
8. Record the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible. Sign and date the record.
9. Ensure that the child understands the procedures which will follow
10. Pass the information to the Stairway CPT, do not attempt to deal with the problem alone
11. Keep the information confidential after reporting it to the Stairway CPT.

Stairway's Case Management Flowchart



If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the Director, the Board of Trustees will deal with all aspects relating to the investigation. If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to any member of the child protection team, this person shall be excluded in all case proceedings. Employment/contractual issues will be dealt with separately.

No matter what happens to a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse, all details must be recorded by the child protection team. Important information to record includes:

1. date and time of disclosure, suspicion, allegation or actual abuse incident
2. details given about the above
3. any action taken by the staff and the organization
4. referrals done
5. follow-up activities needed

Recording should be factual, with no reference to the staff's own opinions. Records should be kept completely confidential and secured in a database and only shared with those who need to know about the incident. Records of the child protection report shall be documented using the Stairway CPP Case Management Report Form (Annex C)

The CPT member assigned shall ensure that steps taken to address a case shall be communicated to the CPT.

C. Protection and rehabilitation measures for affected children

Stairway shall ensure the safety of affected children, and shall take measures in order to provide the affected child the proper intervention, whether it will be provided by Stairway, or by an outside child care provider, including but not limited to: therapy, counseling, medical and legal aftercare.

Stairway shall restrict access to confidential information regarding the children under its care to the social worker in charge or any staff member officially designated to work with the children.

The organization's social worker or psychologist shall also ensure that material arising from counseling sessions shall remain confidential unless the child intends to harm himself or others, or if the child has disclosed of incidents of abuse.

D. Protection of Workers

Any staff member/volunteer/visitor who reports suspicions, allegations, or disclosures of abuse to the child protection team, shall be provided legal immunity from the individual/s implicated in the abuse/harm/neglect of the child, as long as the person's report was motivated with concern for the child's welfare and was not done with malice nor intent to harm.



VIII. Child Protection in Emergencies

A. Principles

Stairway recognizes that children are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation especially during disaster and emergency situations. In times of emergencies such as natural and man-made disasters, pandemics and other similar situations, Stairway shall ensure that the following principles are observed:

- The existing behavioral guidelines shall still be observed
- Staff shall be in a heightened state of vigilance for child protection concerns
- Any national guidelines governing the existing emergency situation shall be followed

B. Use of the Stairway Facilities as evacuation centers

- The existing child protection policy shall be enforced.
- Families staying within the Stairway center shall be billeted together
- Unaccompanied children shall be accompanied by at least 2 Stairway staff

IX. Working with Partners

As much as possible, Stairway shall perform child risk assessment in order to determine the appropriateness of working with a potential partner or donor. The results of the said child risk assessment shall be one of the primary guides in decision making whether Stairway shall engage with an individual, or organization.

For existing partners, Stairway shall actively promote the setting up of a child protection policy for them if they don't have one yet.

X. Monitoring and Adjusting the CPP

Stairway shall hold a review of the guidelines stipulated in this Child Protection Policy every 3 years. The Executive Director shall appoint a senior staff member to ensure the conduct of activities necessary to undertake the review of this document.

XI. Personal Conduct Outside of Work

Stairway respects the personal boundaries of staff; however, Stairway staff shall agree to maintain the standards set by the organization in maintaining the rights of children even after office hours. As such, staffs are encouraged to follow the behavioral protocols set by the organization even after work. No staff shall engage in action which shall put ANY child at risk or harm/abuse. Staff shall also protect the image/interest of the organization by not engaging in risky/illegal behavior outside of work.

Staffs are enjoined to bear in mind the essence and principle of this Child Protection Policy, and they should be sensitive on how their behavior may be perceived both at work and outside work.

XII. Sanctions for Violations

Stairway shall immediately place in preventive suspension any staff or any associate (volunteer, BOT, contractual employee) who is alleged to have violated the Child Protection Policy, pending the outcome of an investigation (whether internal or external). Stairway Foundation reserves the right to take any disciplinary action against any of the above, who have been proven guilty in an investigation, which may include reporting the incident to law enforcement. In non-criminal cases, internal investigation shall be given priority in order to resolve any allegations in the least amount of time. For persons not directly under the organization, violations punishable under Philippine criminal laws shall be immediately reported to law enforcement. Appropriate internal sanctions shall be deliberated by the management committee, with recommendations from the child protection team.



STAIRWAY FOUNDATION INC.
a learning and resource center for children's rights

Statement of Commitment to the Stairway Child Protection Policy

I, _____, have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in this Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing child protection policies and practice while associated with Stairway Foundation. I further agree that by signing this agreement, I am bound to the penalties and sanctions outlines in the policy.

(Print name)

(Job title/ role)

(Signature)