



Child and Vulnerable Person Protection Policy (Cambodia)

Board Approval: March 2018
Next Review: December 2018

Introduction

Epic Arts is an inclusive arts organisation that brings together people with and without disabilities. Epic Arts is unique in working both in the UK and internationally, and across art forms. In all the countries we work in we use the arts as a form of expression and empowerment, and to create a dialogue within those cultures around disability issues.

Our work is open to people of all faiths, and none, regardless of disability, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, background or belief. Epic Arts is an organisation founded on and sustained by the Christian faith, but does not proselytise or impose its religious beliefs. We respect the religious beliefs and practices in countries where we work and seek mutual understanding with people of all faiths and no faith.

Through the arts we seek to live out the values of inclusion, understanding, integrity, justice and equality. We embrace, not exclude. We provide creative opportunities where people connect and where the misconceptions and fears that divide us can be broken down.

Epic Arts is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our services are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse. Epic Arts is committed to encouraging its entire staff to consider children and vulnerable people with respect and dignity.

Epic Arts works extensively with children and vulnerable people, has an MOU with the Cambodian Government and is overseen by a UK Board of Directors. Epic Arts is registered as a charity in the UK and the Epic Arts child and vulnerable protection policy is compliant with international child protection legislation expressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The characteristics of child and vulnerable people abuse can take a number of forms (see below for definitions) and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries. There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

Definitions in this policy

Children are defined as people under the age of 18.

Vulnerable people are people who are over 18 years of age and who may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.

Epic Arts Staff are people who are employed in a paid or voluntary capacity to work at Epic Arts Center or Epic Arts Café Cambodia

Children and Vulnerable people who work with Epic Arts are typically people who:

- Have a physical or sensory disability
- Have a learning/intellectual disability
- Are Non-disabled students under our care

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms, including:

- **Physical abuse** includes any hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, neglect, corporal punishment (with or without an instrument) or abandonment.
- **Sexual abuse** is involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, sexual activity where a person is being taken advantage of because of their lack of understanding or vulnerability, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism.
- **Emotional/psychological abuse.** Any actions (gestures, words and behavior) that deliberately affect a child mental/emotional well-being for example by making them afraid, anxious, annoyed or discouraged. e.g. intimidation or humiliation.
- **Financial abuse** is theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money or providing insufficient compensation for work/tasks - i.e. under what the minimum wage is according to the labor law.
- **Discriminatory abuse** is stigma or abuse based on race, sexual orientation, ability/disability, religion or poverty.
- **Personal exploitation** involves denying an individual his/her rights of freedom or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will. e.g forced labor/slavery
- **Spiritual Abuse** - e.g. not giving children/vulnerable people a choice about whether they want to be involved in any worship/prayer activities

Aim of the policy

All children and vulnerable people have the rights to protection from abuse irrespective of race, social background, age, gender, skin color, disability, religions and belief.

Epic is committed to educate and inform its members about the importance of child and vulnerable people protection by implementing preventative measures. By doing so, children and vulnerable people are protected from abuse that could be realized by staff and/or by others. EA is also committed to dealing with peer bullying between clients/children which, for some clients may be as distressing as other forms of adult to child abuse.

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable people by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all staff, **students** and members of the public are clear about their responsibilities.

Communicating the Policy

All staff will receive child and vulnerable people protection training before being put in a position of trust

Should there be any change to the policy, all staff shall be provided with any necessary re-training

Epic Arts staff members are encouraged to attend additional external training courses to acquire knowledge of child and vulnerable people protection and respond to any concerns related to child abuse;

All children and vulnerable people at Epic Arts shall be educated about how to protect themselves from all forms of abuse, including physical and mental abuse as well as neglect.

The Epic Arts children and vulnerable people protection policy will be accessible in the reception area and office of the staff and volunteers. Visitors will be required to sign a summary of the Policy before they enter other areas of the building.

This policy will be translated to Khmer language and to picture form and will be reviewed every three years, if the policy has been challenged, or when even it is deemed to be required.

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Staff Recruitment Process

In every case of staff recruitment, Epic Arts will seek to obtain the following information:

- Recommendation of employment from the previous workplace;
- Character reference from the persons village/ commune previous employee
- Criminal record check (CRB) where available)
- Resume of previous work

The Senior Management Team (SMT) will confirm the character of the candidate through contacting referees and former work places. References should be checked preferably by telephone to give previous employers an opportunity to express concerns verbally.

In the probationary period, all the staff members and volunteers shall receive training on children and vulnerable people protection at Epic Arts

All new staff members shall sign the children and vulnerable people protection policy, ensuring that s/he has understood and complied with the said policy

Epic Arts is entitled to cancel the contract immediately if it is found that the staff member has failed to comply with the children and vulnerable people protection policy and is not suitable for work with children or vulnerable people

The child and vulnerable people protection policy shall be reviewed during new staff orientation and shall be reviewed on an annual basis with all staff

Should there be any clear affirmation and confirmation [of facts] about any staff member who has a background involving child or vulnerable people abuse, Epic Arts will not accept that staff member for employment.

Any staff member who is found to have committed child or vulnerable people abuse at Epic Arts or in the past will be dismissed from Epic Arts, if there is any apparent evidence.

Volunteers

The child and vulnerable protection policy applies to all Epic Arts volunteers in the same way it does for staff. Including the checking of references and process for dismissal.

Staff Character and Behavior

All staff, volunteers, visitors, donors, board members, and others guest are required to treat all children and vulnerable people and other staff members with respect and dignity.

Each individual staff and volunteer must sign a statement to say that they have read the children and vulnerable people policy, will respect it and understand that action will be taken in case of policy breaches.

Epic Arts staff must set a good example of behavior and character to children and vulnerable people at Epic Arts.

No staff member can take any child or vulnerable person out of the Epic Centre for any reason or without authorization from the team leader or relevant staff members and only then with two staff members present.

Staff members should maintain and respect the physical boundaries of the children or vulnerable person whenever they work with the child or vulnerable person

Due the physical nature of some of the activities at Epic Arts, touch may be used within Arts activities to guide an activity or learning area e.g dance technique. Any touch used must be done so appropriately according to the arts activity and in a not threatening or sexual manner. Touching children or vulnerable people, in an inappropriate manner or in anyway against Cambodian culture is prohibited and will be reported to SMT.

Staff members shall use appropriate language and have positive communication with the children and vulnerable people at all times

A number of acts such as excessive drinking or consuming illegal substances that are injurious to health shall not be committed in front of children or vulnerable people. Epic does not promote this behavior and reminds staff that they are representatives of Epic Arts at all times.

Staff must avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable person in the Epic Center or outside it. If the staff is alone with a child or vulnerable person, they should always be visible to others, if it involves a private meeting, meet in a public place or in an office with opened windows and inform a programme manager when and where the meeting will take place.

Staff members, volunteers, visitors and other guests are not permitted to take the children or vulnerable people to their place of residence.

Adults will always be responsible of their behavior and cannot blame the child even if the child provokes or acts in a seductive way.

Epic Events Policy

When the center is open to the public for a public event, all Epic staff will attend the event and act as chaperones to children and vulnerable people at Epic Arts.

It is not possible to sign in each person to a public event, so staff are asked to be with children and vulnerable people and be vigilant at all times. Staff are ultimately responsible for all children and vulnerable people at Epic during a public event.

All activities will happen downstairs in the main performance room and Art room and all Epic staff will be in attendance and assigned areas to monitor at all times.

If staff notice any suspicious behavior from a member of the public they must inform SMT immediately.

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Photography and Social Media Policy

Photography permission from parents, guardians or relevant staff members of all children, vulnerable people and students at Epic must be obtained when a person joins Epic.

If a parent/guardian does not give permission for photography, SMT must be made aware and inform anyone wishing to take photographs.

If visitors have been given permission from SMT to take photographs, a staff member shall accompany the visitor at all times.

Appropriate images of children/vulnerable people/students at Epic can be taken by staff members and used for publicity with the permission from the relevant programme manager/SMT.

The use of social media (Facebook/Twitter) is encouraged for the promotion of Epic Arts, but only programme managers and SMT are allowed to post status up-dates, comments or images on the Epic social media sites and must follow the rules of appropriate images.

Visitors will be informed not to post any images of activities in Epic Arts Centre apart from performances and workshops.

No names of children/vulnerable people/students should be attached to images used within any public media

Staff, volunteers or board members at Epic Arts must not 'friend' or 'follow' any students of Epic Arts on Twitter or Facebook. Staff are reminded that even in the social media world, staff are representatives of Epic Arts and must not post inappropriate/humiliating images of other staff on any social media sites.

Tour/Events Outside Epic Arts Property Policy

Any children, vulnerable people or students leaving Epic for an event linked to Epic Arts or for a performance or workshop tour must be accompanied by at least two members of Epic Staff

If the event or tour requires an over-night stay, appropriate and safe accommodation must be pre-booked by the tour/event manager

If an overnight stay is required, staff and students must not share a private room, but can occupy a same-sex dormitory.

The staff accompanying children, vulnerable people or students to an event or on tour away from Epic Arts are ultimately responsible for the safety and well-being of the group. This includes ensuring the wearing of safety belts in transportation where possible; care crossing the road, etc.

A member of CMT/SMT will be assigned as the main contact for the staff who accompany the group and will be available at all times to respond to/advise on any situations that may arise.

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Visitors Policy

All the visitors shall register at the center entrance to obtain an identity card and sign the visitor book.

Visitors must be accompanied by a member of Epic Arts Staff at all times.

Visitors should make an appointment to visit Epic Arts Center, and will only be admitted with the permission of SMT/CMT.

Visitors cannot take photographs/video within the center unless they have the permission of SMT/CMT

Visitors are not allowed to give prizes or gifts to any child unless this has been pre-arranged with SMT/CMT.

All visitors shall return their cards and sign out before they leave

No children or vulnerable people will leave the premises with any visitor.

Responses to Allegations

All Epic Arts staff have a duty to identify abuse and report it.

During child and vulnerable people protection training, the process for allegations will be presented to all Epic Arts staff to ensure that all staff, volunteers, visitors and where possible children/vulnerable people know how to report and allegation made either by a child, a vulnerable person, parents, staff members or visitors.

If there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse by any member of staff at Epic Arts, parents or visitors, staff must inform the children and vulnerable people protection officer immediately and complete an abuse allegation form available to all staff and part of this document

Where an allegation has been made that staff, volunteers, visitors, children/vulnerable people of the organization has abused a child then the organization will investigate. The SMT will make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse and report the situation to the UK Board.

In emergency situations (e.g. where there is the risk or occurrence of severe physical or sexual injury), where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health or safety the SMT must be informed and where necessary the police informed.

When there is a serious accusation against a staff or volunteer of the organization, such volunteer shall be subjected to (paid) temporary suspension from work during the investigation.

Relationship with other organization is encouraged for accountability and support in times such as these. Both the victims and perpetrators will be treated with respect.

If a foreigner is involved, the relevant Embassy will be informed.

The SMT will deal with the media and the police. Where possible consideration/plans will be made beforehand with input from the Board about how members of the media and the police will be informed/involved