

National Safe from Harm Policy of Bangladesh Scouts

A. Introduction:

The Scout Movement is a voluntary, non-political educational movement for children and young people, open to all without distinction of gender, origin, race, or creed. The Movement offers children and young people the opportunity to develop their full emotional, intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual potentials as individuals, responsible global citizens, and members of local, national, and international communities. Bangladesh Scouts is committed to always maintain a safe environment for them. Protecting and safeguarding children, young people, young adults, and adult leaders from harm is the responsibility of Bangladesh Scouts.

The implementation of the National Safe from Harm Policy will create a positive change and enhance scouting's profile, particularly by:

- aligning with and working towards achieving the mission and vision of the Scout Movement
- strengthening the purpose of Scout Movement and thereby, providing better scouting experiences in non-formal education
- ensuring that scouting takes an active role in promoting child and youth protection within local, national, and international communities.

B. Background

Addressing child and youth protection issues is vital for the safety of Scouts. Needs of young people must be paramount and their interests are at the centre of all decision-making processes. It is important to ensure that everyone knows how to act and to keep the organization safe. Therefore, even recognizing the different cultural and organizational backgrounds must be one of the key priorities of Bangladesh Scouts. Bangladesh Scouts prepared and adopted this policy considering the following points.

- traditionally, relevant rules and procedures exist in Bangladesh Scouts to deal with issues related to safe from harm
- the policy is developed following 'WOSM Safe from Harm Policy' considering the needs of Bangladesh Scouts and sociocultural context of Bangladesh
- extensive discussions were carried out with participation of adult leaders and youths at all levels of Bangladesh Scouts and feedback in the forms of comments and suggestions are duly considered. Consultation and suggestion from the Asia Pacific Region were also incorporated herewith
- great care and efforts were given to align it with the relevant state and international policies, acts, rules, and legal frameworks with special emphasis on Bangladesh Constitution, national laws and regulations on violence, abuse, and safety as well as data protection, policies and strategies on child and youth protection. It is also in alignment with the National Youth Protection Policy, UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
- this policy complements the 'Organization and Rules of Bangladesh Scouts', and other policies and rules of organization

C. Definitions:

Safe from Harm means keeping children and young people safe from harm encompasses all areas of children and youth protection work including a complete system aiming to promote that the safety of children and young people is a priority in all scouting activities. Safe from harm also includes safety for all in Scouting.

Child and youth protection is treated as the safeguarding and promotion of the wellbeing of children and young people including but not limited to:

- protecting children and young people from abuse,
- preventing the impairment of a young person's health or development,
- ensuring that Scouting is providing children and young people with a healthy environment in which they can grow and develop,
- taking action to promote the safety of children and young people in all possible situations.

Safe environment is an environment that promotes and supports children and young people's wellbeing, while working to address and prevent harmful practices. There are some fundamental norms in Scouting that are non-negotiable. These include:

- The Scout Promise and Law,
- Fundamentals of Scouting,
- Respect for oneself and others,
- An environment that promotes openness and a diversity of views, without a fear of adverse repercussions for expressing different opinions,
- Providing equal opportunities for everyone. Ultimately, a safe environment enables the self-development of children and young people.

Harm refers to any detrimental effect on a person's physical, emotional, or psychological wellbeing and integrity.

Abuse describes a range of ways in which maltreatment can be inflicted on children and young people (physical, psychological, emotional and take various forms such as bullying, neglect, sexual abuse, or exploitation) resulting in actual or potential harm to the children's health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship or responsibility, trust or power.

It is important to note that children and young people can suffer from one or a combination of these forms of abuse. Abuse can take place at home, in school, at Scouts or anywhere else. Types of abuse are as follows:

Physical Abuse of a child is that which results in potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or a person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. These may be single or repeated incidents.

Emotional Abuse includes the failure to provide a supportive environment so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies.

Sexual Abuse is the sexual activity that children or young people do not fully understand and are not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society.

Neglect is the

failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to Bangladesh Scouts.

Exploitation refers to engaging children in work or other activities for the benefit of others.

Whistle-blowers are the persons, who disclose or report information to the competent authorities of Bangladesh Scouts about any wrongdoing related to safe from harm and whose identity are protected. Again, the rights of all persons involved in Safe from Harm related matters will surely be safeguarded.

Youths in Scouting refers to all boys and girls involved in the educational programme within the Movement.

Adults are primarily volunteers and in some of the cases Scout Executives responsible for the development, facilitation, or delivery of the Youth Programme, supporting other adults or supporting the organization's development.

Youth Programme is the totality of the learning opportunities from which children and young people can benefit (What), created to achieve the purpose of Scouting (Why) and experienced through the Scout Method (How).

Adults in Scouting is a systematic programme for managing adults to improve the effectiveness, commitment, and motivation of the leadership so that better programmes are delivered to the children and young people.

Code of Conduct for Adult Leaders of Bangladesh Scouts will regulate the conduct of all Adult Leaders of Bangladesh Scouts always recognizing that they are expected to exercise "Duty of Care" and act in accordance with the Scout Promise and Law which are the core ethics of the Movement. Bangladesh Scouts will base its services on best practices and this Code will serve as a tool to implement these practices.

Adult Leaders of Bangladesh Scouts shall:

1. act and uphold the Scout Promise and Law, and 'Organization and Rules of Bangladesh Scouts.'
2. not use the Movement to promote own beliefs, behaviour, or practices where these are not compatible with Scouting principles, or any other motives or intention in their activities for personal benefits.
3. respect the rights and the dignity of themselves and others including personal privacy and confidentiality.
4. uphold the humanitarian imperative in all services with no discrimination of race, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality and distinction of any kind and respect people of any religion and/or ethnic group.
5. act with good intentions and judgement in all interpersonal relationships at all times both inside and outside the movement.
6. not use the scout movement or exercise power to promote interests which are in conflict with scout principles and purpose of the movement.

7. Strictly follow National Safe from Harm Policy by not indulging in bullying, physical or sexual harassment, neglect, or any other type of abuse.
8. refrain from tobacco use and abuse in the presence of young people.
9. not use alcohol, illegal drugs, other addictive chemical substances including gambling as such behaviour is forbidden in Bangladesh Scouts.
10. abide by the scout principles stated by Bangladesh Scouts when connecting with others using any kind of communication technologies.

Breach of conduct will be considered as misconduct and shall be subjected in accordance with Adult Leaders Misconduct Rules.

Safe from Harm Policy describes the process and mechanism to deal with and prevent any harm, abuse or exploitation towards children and young people including all others within the Scout Movement.

D. Basics of the Policy

The National Safe from Harm Policy clearly sets the purpose of the policy, policy statement, policy principles and the individuals who are under the policy.

Policy Purpose:

The purpose of the National Safe from Harm Policy is to protect the children and young people from any type of harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation within the Scout Movement. The policy guides and facilitates the development and implementation of necessary systems and procedures to create a safe environment for all children and young people in scouting. This policy also extends such coverage for all others in scouting.

Policy statement

The National Safe from Harm Policy clearly defines that 'protecting and safeguarding children, young people, young adults and adult leaders from harm is the prioritized responsibility of Bangladesh Scouts.' Following this commitment the policy aims to keep Scouts safe from harm by supporting the development of national frameworks with local effectiveness that will promote the well-being, healthy development and safety of children and young people by providing them with a safe environment throughout their time in the Scout Movement. The policy also extends safety for all in Scouting.

Providing a safe environment for children and young people encompasses, among others, the following dimensions:

- create an awareness of the importance of child and youth protection
- following the diversity and inclusion issues of Youth Program Policy and Youth Involvement Policy, involve all stakeholders e.g. children and young people, adult volunteers and professional staff, parents, school authorities, faith-based organizations
- ensure safety and educational purpose of scouting activities
- develop personal and interpersonal skills
- encourage positive behaviour
- give much importance to the children and young people with special needs

- ensure healthy interaction between young people and their peers, young people and adults, adults and their peers

Policy principles

The National Safe from Harm Policy of Bangladesh Scouts is designed by a set of principles derived from previous Scouting experiences on keeping children and young people and related persons safe from harm. These principles are:

- non-discrimination: all children and young people have equal rights to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, or socio-economic status
- best Interest: the best interest of children and young people should be prioritized in all scouting activities
- participation: children and young people should have the opportunity to participate in all decision-making processes
- special care: in Scouting need-based activities will be provided to the differently able children and young people with special care and attention
- safety for all: safety for all related in Scouting activities is an essential part of the moral values of the Scout Movement.

Policy Scope:

The National Safe from Harm Policy is to be used as a resource by all stakeholders who support the implementation of the Mission of the Scout Movement. The individual subjects of this policy are:

- children and young people between 6 and 25 years of age
- adult volunteers and professional staff
- non-scouts and other external stakeholders whenever they are involved in Scouting.

The Policy Strategy

The National Safe from Harm Policy which aligns with all other policies of Bangladesh Scouts is committed to provide a safe environment for children and young people in all Scouting activities, indoors and outdoors. Hence, the strategy of Bangladesh Scouts undertakes to keep the children and young people and all related persons safe from harm is as follows:

- 'Safe from Harm Policy' describes the process and mechanism to protect children and young people safe from any type of harm, therefore, it is mandatory to comply with this policy in all Scouting activities
- Bangladesh Scouts must ensure a child-friendly environment and for all its planning, policy procedures, activities, code of conduct, recruitment, and infrastructure as well
- National Safe from Harm Policy must be in line with the other policies and laws of the country
- other policies and rules of Bangladesh Scouts e.g. Financial Policy, Procurement Policy, Training Manual, and Service Rules etc. have to be reviewed whether they do not conflict to the

National Safe from Harm Policy and if so, they need to be amended before the 'National Safe from Harm Policy' comes in to practice.

- the Code of Conduct of Adult Leaders of Bangladesh Scouts must be followed for all kinds of activities like recruitment (both volunteers and professionals), hiring consultants, employment of volunteers, etc.

- Bangladesh Scouts will undertake activities to build awareness, capacity building like monitoring, investigations, and reporting skills among the Adult Leaders about National Safe from Harm Policy.

h) Bangladesh Scouts will ensure that all Adult Leaders are aware about all contents of the policy and implementation process.

- Bangladesh Scouts will maintain liaison, communication, or exchange of information with other organizations working with children and young people about the implementation of National Safe from Harm Policy.

Policy implementation

The National Safe from Harm Policy is expected performance of the stakeholders and should complement other national policies, guidelines, and procedures. It is the evaluation criteria when assessing or reviewing the national policies and procedures on keeping children and young people safe from harm. The Youth Programme and Adults in Scouting are the key components where the Safe from Harm is in built and this must be applied through a structural process in Scouting events.

E. Youth Programme

The educational purpose of Scouting is achieved through the implementation of quality Youth Programme. The educational elements included in the Youth Programme provides young people with the means to empower, motivate and protect themselves and build a positive framework of dialogue and partnership with adults.

The Scout Method is the cornerstone for the implementation of a National Safe from Harm Policy, particularly the areas that apply to the Youth Programme. The implementation of the Scout Method enables boys and girls, young men, and young women to prevent violence, educates them to have respect oneself and others and helps in developing a safe environment. This helps young people to live as active citizens of their local communities in a globalized world.

The principles of Scouting support the holistic development of young individuals towards self-confidence and reflective personalities. The Scout Method is a very valuable and supportive tool for the development of young people.

E1. The National Youth Programme includes guidance on developing and maintaining a safe environment for young people. The following features will help ensure safety:

- develop a culture of listening to and consulting where young people feel safe

- use existing educational objectives and learning opportunities to empower and develop the potential of young people by keeping them safe from harm
- maintain focus on developing educational experiences that are challenging, appealing, rewarding and safe,
- welcome young people and adult volunteers from all backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, and abilities as Scouting is an inclusive Movement,
- meet the evolving needs, expectations, and aspirations of young people in different social contexts,
- enable young people to thrive in a dynamic and multicultural world, where differences are respected and valued,
- ensure young people with special educational needs are given equal opportunities for developing skills for life & to overcome their challenges,
- ensure every scout will have equal rights,
- develop positive change in young people in terms of values and behaviour through the Youth Programme.

E2. All activities and practices of Bangladesh Scouts e.g. programme, youth participation and emergency response must be assessed to identify risks and develop adequate control mechanisms in line with the National Safe from Harm Policy.

E3. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks for all activities and practices of Bangladesh Scouts should be implemented and include adhering to the corresponding Safe from Harm procedures.

E4. Safety inspections and regular maintenance of equipment and facilities used by young people and adults to be ensured on defined requirements.

E5. Information regarding medical, dietary, and developmental needs of individuals is stored confidentially but easily accessible to those responsible for the welfare of young people. Monitoring the use of media, particularly the internet which is an integral part of young people's lives as it provides invaluable education.

E6. Bangladesh Scouts promotes online safety by ensuring that the online environment under their control are safe environments e.g. websites of and within Bangladesh Scouts, social media platforms, etc. At the same time, Bangladesh Scouts will monitor any abuse, cyberbullying, and breach of confidentiality online.

E7. Guidance should be provided on how to safely use information and communication technologies, particularly those that are online based e.g. development and use of digital platforms, websites, social media networks, digital photography, by volunteers and professional staff as well as young people who use technologies in the context of Scouting.

F. Adults in Scouting

The development, facilitation and delivery of the Youth Programme as well as other functions and roles in Scouting require the active involvement of competent adults. Adults who are attracted and motivated to join Scouting will develop the competencies needed to perform different roles throughout their time in the Scout Movement. Implementing a safe environment in Scouting also means that all adults are listened to, taken care of and supported so that they can carry out their roles at their best in all situations. It is the responsibility of Bangladesh Scouts to

create the most appropriate conditions for adults to be able to play their role, either as volunteers or as professional staff. Hence, Bangladesh Scouts is committed to implement and monitor the National Adults in Scouting Policy.

F1. The National Safe from Harm Policy encompasses rules, procedures, and tools to provide healthy and positive collaboration and relationships between adults, adults and young people.

F2. The National Adults in Scouting Policy, adult recruitment, selection and induction processes are aligned with the National Safe from Harm Policy throughout.

F3. Leader profile (job specifications) and role descriptions for all positions dealing with young people, will include the responsibility to keep children and young people safe from harm.

F4. Adults are aware about communication with stakeholders on safeguarding standards and procedures and have the knowledge to find ways and means to mitigate and solve the problem if there be any.

F5. Appointments of adults through appropriate checks have been conducted. This includes:

- a) suitable background check (in accordance with national guidelines and legislation),
- b) references check,
- c) interview process.

F6. All Adult Leaders of Bangladesh Scouts must sign the code of conduct prior to appointment and abide by this conduct throughout their life cycle.

F7. Training on protecting young people from harm is a core component of all training schemes and made available to all adults, either volunteers or professional staff. It covers areas such as creating situational awareness, signs and symptoms of abuse, dealing with different forms of abuse, providing information about the operational procedures which include but not limited to:

- a core-training component
- training on the subject is made available on an ongoing basis

F8. Safe from Harm topic is to be integral components in adult training and kept updated according to changes in legal frameworks and trends in society.

F9. Bangladesh Scouts will make sure that the adult leaders before interacting with children and young people must have Safe from Harm training and sign the Code of Conduct understanding the safeguarding of children and young people in the Scout Movement.

F10. The process of performance assessment for Adults in Scouting includes the appraisal of elements related to Safe from Harm e.g. risk planning and management in activities; facilitating interpersonal relationships; attitudes and behaviours.

F11. Scout leaders, as important role models within the Scout Movement, are supported with expert guidance on prevention and safeguarding of children from harm.

F12. Bangladesh Scouts has a set of procedures for all adults related to safe from harm and is committed to develop relevant procedures e.g. Code of Conduct, Adult Leaders Misconduct Rules. Adult Leaders Support Service System, Bullying and Harassment Policy, etc.

G. Structures

Structures are required to implement the National Safe from Harm Policy. These structures have three components: (a) develop and adopt necessary structured documents like rules, procedures, protocols, and tools related to Safe from Harm Policy, (b) develop a well-defined child and adult safeguarding reporting policy with relevant procedures, and finally (c) Involve organizational structures like Safe from Harm committee, task groups, and relevant internal and external structures necessary to support this task and implement the policy,

The guidelines of structures are as follows:

- Bangladesh Scouts shall have a written statement referring to its commitment to child and youth protection. This statement will be disseminated to all stakeholders and explains acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. The statement follows: 'Protecting and safeguarding children, young people, young adults and adult leaders from harm is the prioritized responsibility of Bangladesh Scouts.' The Code of Conduct of Adult Leaders of Bangladesh Scouts will be taken into consideration in this regard.
- Policies of Bangladesh Scouts e.g. National Adults in Scouting Policy including Training System and National Youth Programme Policy adopted and implemented at the National level, will align with, and refer to the National Safe from Harm Policy. Other key organizational rules and resources should also reflect the National Safe from Harm Policy.
- all documents related to 'Organization and Rules of Bangladesh Scouts' will be developed for dealing with identified issues on National Safe from Harm Policy and made available to everyone in the organization. These should also include requirements for all adults to report any suspicion of abuse immediately to the designated person or division and committee within Bangladesh Scouts and ensuring that the statutory process in the country.
- a process of reporting a suspicious case of abuse is necessary that describes how to receive, react and document any complaint of abuse involving young people or adults. This process should include:
 - deliver a complaint or concern
 - ensure immediate and continuous support to the victim(s)
 - dealing with any and all alleged abuser(s)
 - quickly contacting the child's or young person's parents and/or guardians to inform them of the situation
 - inform relevant government or statutory authorities
 - handle the exposure to the local press or other media outlets
 - pre-designate a person or division within Bangladesh Scouts to facilitate these communications
 - document all reported cases of abuse in details and store them in a permanent confidential record

- create a protocol for whistle-blowers to ensure confidentiality, identity protection to make them more confident in reporting such cases
- process of follow-ups of reported matters
- identify and report learnings arising from any incident. The welfare of the child and young person is paramount, so confidentiality should not be allowed to override a child or young person's right to be protected from harm. Everyone in the organization needs to be aware that they can never keep or promise to keep secrets where the welfare of a child or young person is compromised. However, reports of abuse are confidential.

6.3.5 Written procedures will state clearly that Bangladesh Scouts will refer to the government and statutory authorities to deal with any situation when appropriate.

6.3.6 Establishing a body such as a committee or division at the national level will bear the responsibility to oversee all work on Safe from Harm defined through the Terms of Reference. The process of contacting this body is to be disseminated to all levels of Bangladesh Scouts.

6.3.7 It is necessary to engage various structures such as Youth Programme Committee, Adults in Scouting Committee, and Organisational Management structures in this task.

6.3.8 Where appropriate, external structures like parents/guardians of the young people, relevant stakeholders, Government and Non-Governmental Organizations need to be involved.

6.3.9 Confidentiality: All collected or compiled documents, reports and information related to Safe from Harm will be held in absolute confidence. No person in the organization shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event except as necessary to ensure proper investigation. Limited additional disclosure can be made as an example to keep other children and young people and other related persons safe from harm.

H. Scouting Events

Scouting events at all levels must reflect the principles and guidelines presented in this policy. This is achieved by covering the different aspects throughout the planning, delivery and follow-up of each event. There shall be clear Youth Members Activity Rules including Camp Rules. As part of the Activity Rules, a check list that contains provisions of the implementation of safe from harm in organizing a scouting event at any level of Bangladesh Scouts needs to be prepared and followed. The guidelines of such rules are as follows:

- necessary information related to Safe from Harm including a code of practice and information about how to raise concerns is to be provided to all attendees, both adults and young people
- appropriate Safe from Harm training for the event is to be offered to all adults prior to the event
- a Safe from Harm plan to be developed and tailored for each event, considering all national and international legislation
- the Safe from Harm Policy is to be implemented and monitored throughout the event.

G1. A system of data preservation relevant to the National Safe from Harm Policy that complies with national regulations e.g. dietary and safety requirements, situations of abuse, etc. This data is to be communicated to all stakeholders.

G2. Any Adult Leader involved in Scouting events must not:

- a) discriminate children or young people based on their parents' profession, socio-economic status, religion, ethnic identity etc.
- b) express harshness for unwanted conduct of a child or rebuke
- c) spend excessive amounts of time with children and young people away from others
- d) have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children and young people
- e) call children and young people names
- f) make a child do the leader's personal work
- g) use abusive words at any time
- h) make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even for fun
- i) be engaged in act that provokes sexual feelings or sexual relations with a child.
- j) watch nude photographs, porn videos or other materials having adverse effects
- k) allow a child to be exposed to hazardous equipment
- l) torture physically, mentally, or spiritually
- m) favour any individual
- n) push children to attend in discussion, cultural program, or competition against their will
- o) allow allegations made by a child to go unrecorded or not acted upon
- p) smoke, drink or use alcohol in the company of children and young people
- q) involve Scouts in child labour in Scouting activities.

G3. A Safe from Harm training will be provided to the Adult Leaders prior to their involvement in any Scouting event.

G4. Bangladesh Scouts will take immediate action for any allegation of abuse against children and young people.

H. Management

H1. At national level, 'National Safe from Harm Committee' shall be formed. The Committee will be responsible for major Safe from Harm matters and breaches of any ethical issues and reporting to the National Executive Committee or to the higher authority. There will be also a Safe from Harm Coordinator with the responsibility of looking after all relevant issues of Safe from Harm.

The committee will consist of a Chair, Co-Chair and maximum 11 members. Chief National Commissioner will be the Chair of this Committee. An experienced adult leader will be appointed as Co-Chair. National Commissioner of Adult Resources, Training, Programme, Organization, Administration divisions and other 1-3 responsible leaders of Bangladesh Scouts related and suitable for Safe from Harm task will be the members. The Executive Secretary of Bangladesh Scouts will work as Member Secretary of the Committee.

H2. This Committee will be responsible for the definition of systems, rules and procedures, particularly the process of reporting the incidents of safe from harm violations. These include ways to follow-up on the reported matter, and further developing guidelines on all matters related to the National Safe from Harm Policy. The Committee will be responsible for overall implementation and monitoring of the National Safe from Harm Policy. The other key functions of the Committee are production of supporting educational and training materials and tools for the purpose. This Committee will coordinate with the relevant divisions of Bangladesh Scouts and should be linked to a network covering all areas of Scouting. The committee will oversee and monitor the safety of children and young people within the Scout Movement.

H3. At regional level, there will be a 'Regional Safe from Harm Committee' as described in 'H2'. This Committee will be responsible for implementing the policy and disseminating supporting materials. It is also responsible for communicating related matters to the national on one hand and district levels and other lower tiers on the other hand.

I. Conclusions

If a situation where a word/clause or any point of the National Safe from Harm Policy of Bangladesh Scouts conflicts or contradicts with any other related existing law/rule of the country, then that national law/rule will be given preference.

To keep this policy updated and relevant, this policy will be reviewed yearly or as required based on monitoring reports. Review needs to be done at least once in every three years. The change through review should be reflected in the policy and stakeholders should be informed about the change as early as possible. The National Safe from Harm Policy is applicable to local, regional, and national levels of Bangladesh Scouts accordingly.

Safe from Harm is one of the major key elements for the implementation of the Scout Programme in the best possible way on which the success of the Scout Movement depends. Therefore, a firm commitment is required to implement the National Safe from Harm Policy.