ISKCON
Child Protection
Policy and Operational Guidelines

ISKCON Central Office of
Child Protection

Revised and Ratified
by the
ISKCON GBC
February 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introductory Statement 3
Overview 5
Definitions 6
Standards, Principles, and Procedures Overview 7
I. Standards: Abuse Reporting Standards 8
II. Principles: Faith Doctrine and Internal Governance 9
A. General Principles for ISKCON Clergy and Personnel 10
B. Preventative Principles 10
C. Behavioral Principles in Dealing with Children 11
III. Procedures: Internal Review Procedures 11
A. Pastoral Commitment 12
B. Victim Assistance 12
C. CPO Review Panels 12
Communication Policy 13
Removing ISKCON Clergy or Personnel 13
Implementation of Policies 14
IV. Specific Procedures of the CPO Review Panels 14
A. Principles 14
B. Jurisdiction 14
C. CPO and Review Panel Process 16
D. Convening a Review Panel 17
E. Conducting the Review 17
F. Review Panel Decisions and Recommendations 18
G. Written Decisions 19
H. Distribution of Decisions 19
I. Additional Policies -Confidentiality, Application of Decisions, Statute of Limitations, Double Jeopardy 20
Appeals Process 20
J. Further Considerations on Restrictions, Requirements and Recommendations 21

Appendix I – Definitions of Types of Abuse 24
Appendix II – Adolescent Offenders 28
Appendix III – Role and Duties of ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection 29
Appendix IV – Child Protection Team Role and Responsibilities 31
Appendix V – Relevant GBC Resolutions 33

Introductory Statement

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is committed to the well being of all individuals involved with ISKCON, especially children and other more vulnerable participants.

ISKCON recognizes that children, for their full and harmonious development, need to be raised in an atmosphere of love, support, guidance and understanding. ISKCON acknowledges that children, when so raised, are likely to play a vital role in the future of our Society. Thus, placing the interests of the children first is not only in the best interest of the children themselves but also of ISKCON and society at large.

ISKCON affirms that children have the need and the right to be protected, nurtured, and guided. This includes the right of all children and young people to live in an environment where they are protected from exploitation and abuse, and to actively participate in temple/devotional activities within the ISKCON community.

Thus, for ISKCON, the protection of children is paramount. All persons who associate with ISKCON should be able to trust with confidence those within ISKCON who associate with, care for, and minister to them. This principle is especially true for children. The violation of trust through abuse or harassment of children by ISKCON leadership, clergy or other personnel is a source of great pain and disturbance for those directly affected, as well as the greater Vaisnava community and society at large.

The GBC directly, through its influence within ISKCON and its participants, and particularly through the ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection (CPO), is committed to make every reasonable effort to protect children and to prevent abuse of children. Hence, the *ISKCON Child Protection Policy and Operational Guidelines* (hereafter "*Guidelines*") is meant to put in place policies that facilitate prompt and appropriate response to all allegations of abuse wherever there is a reasonable belief that abuse has occurred.

ISKCON is committed to implementing these *Guidelines* to ensure that everyone involved with children honors their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm. This can be achieved only by a clear commitment from all ISKCON participants, especially those in management, leadership and educational roles, to follow these *Guidelines*, which includes (where applicable) the duty to promptly report any concerns about children's welfare to the relevant secular authorities.

The aim of these *Guidelines* is to promote good practice and offer effective policies to provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in ISKCON communities. The *Guidelines* are also intended to facilitate the CPO and its agents, local Child Protection Teams (CPTs), and other ISKCON authorities in making informed and confident decisions with regards to specific child protection issues, and to offer clear guidance for addressing instances of child maltreatment.

Any credible report of child maltreatment to the CPO or a CPT will be taken seriously and should receive a confidential, adequate, consistent and sensitive response.

ISKCON will comply with all obligations of both civil and ecclesiastical law. It will endeavor to prevent abuse and harassment to the fullest extent possible, provide education and guidance as appropriate, and promote healing and empowerment when needed.

No person, who has been determined to have engaged in severe maltreatment of children, will be allowed to remain active in a position of authority or trust[1] within ISKCON, this includes activities such as leading kirtan, giving class, speaking publically at any ISKCON event or representing ISKCON in official capacities. This sanction is to avert future threats to children and to the society as well as to honor and respect those who have been impacted by abuse.

Such actions violate civil and criminal laws as well as Vaisnava spiritual principles and are outside the scope of the duties, employment and engagement of all personnel. ISKCON will not tolerate any such criminal behavior. This policy applies to all temples, centers, projects and activities within ISKCON.

Balanced care will be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly any person who claims to have been abused, as well as the person against whom an allegation has been made. Should an accusation be found accurate, every reasonably possible step will be taken to protect the abused person and prevent the accused from ever again endangering any vulnerable person within ISKCON. Conversely, should an accusation be proven unfounded, every reasonable step will be taken to help protect and restore the good name of the person falsely accused.

In sum, the intention of ISKCON in offering these *Guidelines* is to promote a balanced expression of acknowledgment, support, healing and empowerment based on the underlying and unwavering principle that acts of abuse or harassment by ISKCON clergy and personnel will not be tolerated.

In support of that principle, the disclosure of alleged abusive conduct will be promptly addressed; the accused will be confronted with a view to doing justice; the alleged victim will be supported throughout this process; the accused will receive a fair hearing; all parties shall be acknowledged, respected and shown civility at every stage. If the accusation is found to be unsubstantiated it will be publicly acknowledged as such, if appropriate. If the accusation is substantiated, appropriate discipline will be instituted with the view to protect the victim and the community, and to prevent abusive behavior in the future.

[1] Position of trust or authority include any of the following:

1. Having any position of leadership within ISKCON.
2. Giving class or leading kirtan in the temple or at any ISKCON related program/festival.
3. Having any service that involves contact with children.

Overview

The CPO Policy and Operating Guidelines ("*Guidelines*") provide the ISKCON Society with information and guidance regarding expected conduct and basic ecclesiastic and legal responsibilities when interacting with children as ISKCON clergy, personnel or participants.

ISKCON leaders, Child Protection Team members, teachers, parents and others who in the normal discharge of their daily duties regularly interact with children, are required to acquaint themselves with the *Guidelines*. It is understood that these *Guidelines* will be used as a reference document, and thus sometimes only specific sections may be referenced. On this account, a degree of repetition has been allowed.

The *Guidelines* are composed of three distinct sections or areas which, taken together, create a comprehensive framework designed to address the complex set of issues involving child protection, child abuse and related intrusive behavior.

The three sections, which together comprise the framework for these *Guidelines* are as follows:
I. Abuse Reporting Standards - "*Standards*"
II. Faith, Doctrine and Internal Governance - *"Principles"*
III. Internal Review Procedures - *"Procedures"*

In order to prevent abuse, protect individuals, pursue justice, help offenders reform, and balance the rights of all parties in the process, appropriate action will be taken when any ISKCON personnel disregards or fails to comply with the expectations and behaviors defined in these *Guidelines*.

Accordingly, as a condition of all devotees' involvement, ministry and/or employment within ISKCON, they, especially those who interact with children, must be familiar and comply with these *Guidelines*, along with all other policies that apply.

These *Guidelines* provide the Society with information and guidance about expectations in regard to conduct and basic legal responsibilities of ISKCON clergy and personnel. Violation of these *Guidelines* or any other ISKCON policy is grounds for disciplinary action.

In recognition of the complexities inherent in any policy which involves and has an impact on human behavior, the intention of the ISKCON CPO is that these *Guidelines* be applied in a firm yet dynamic manner - that is, within a spirit of mature understanding and practical application, rather than inflexibly, mechanically or judgmentally.

ISKCON includes numerous independent nonprofit organizations, temples and other projects (hereafter "ISKCON centers") which are located throughout the world and operating under the guidance and ecclesiastical authority of the Governing Body Commission (GBC). Each ISKCON Center is directly impacted by National, State, Provincial, and local law requirements. It is therefore the responsibility of management personnel from each ISKCON center to understand, respect and apply, on an ongoing basis, the applicable law where they reside in relation to these guidelines.

The ISKCON CPO strongly recommends that each ISKCON center obtain independent legal advice as regards applicable legal definitions and requirements. These *Guidelines* cannot and do not substitute for a review and assessment of the secular laws, rules and regulations which may apply to a particular ISKCON center in a particular jurisdiction. The *Guidelines* are to be applied with diligence, unless application of these *Guidelines* violate or contravene local law.

Definitions

For the purposes of these *Guidelines* and *Standards*, the following definitions shall apply:

1. *Allegation* - any statement or accusation of child abuse, maltreatment or harassment.
2. *Appeals Review Panel (ARP)* - consists of three senior Review Panel members selected by the CPO Director when a Review Panel decision is appealed.
3. *Case Manager* - the person who gathers information under the direction of the CPO Director. They will often, but not always, be a local CPT member. Unless specifically directed, they do not make formal recommendations for resolving a complaint.
4. *Child Abuse* – occurs when a child has been subjected to physical, sexual, emotional or psychological maltreatment and/or neglect which has resulted, or may result in harm to the child's well-being. It may involve ongoing, repeated or persistent abuse, or arise from a single incident. [Please see Appendix I page 24 at the end of this document for detailed definitions of various types of abuse that constitute *Child Abuse*.]
5. *Child or Minor* - a person less than eighteen (18) years of age, unless otherwise defined by the jurisdiction in which the alleged abuse occurred.
6. *Clergy* – While generally clergy refers to a second initiated devotee in ISKCON, for the purposes of this document, clergy shall refer to any person who is engaged in ministry, or providing spiritual or religious service, either directly or indirectly, for an ISKCON center or authorized program in the larger temple community, such as a nama hatta home program.
7. *CPO* - refers to the International Child Protection Office of ISKCON also known as the ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection (ICOCP) and Association for the Protection of Children (APC or APVC).
8. *CPO Director* - the managerial head of the CPO, appointed by the GBC.
9. *CPO Regional Office* - generally established by Regional Governing Bodies (RGBs) of ISKCON, in consultation with the CPO Director. Regional offices and CPO Regional Directors shall operate according to these *Guidelines* under the authority of the CPO, the RGB, and the immediate direction of the CPO Director.
10. *CPT* - acronym for a local Child Protection Team, which works under the auspices and direction of the CPO, in cooperation with local ISKCON management, temple presidents, and zonal GBC's.
11. *Ecclesiastic* – of or relating to the religious organization; not secular.
12. *Intrusive Behavior* – acting or behaving in a way that is uninvited, invasive or offensive according to these Guidelines or to the subject themselves. Snooping, stalking, intruding into the privacy, aggressive behavior or harassment are some examples of intrusive behavior.
13. *Personnel* - includes but is not limited to priests, management, employees, and any volunteer involved in any ISKCON center. The term *ISKCON Personnel* as defined refers only to the applicability of these *Guidelines*, and does not necessarily or presumptively indicate any agency or employment relationship between ISKCON and the individual whose compliance is sought, nor shall ISKCON be vicariously liable for those personnel acting in contravention of any law or against the faith, doctrine and behavioral principles of ISKCON.
14. *Review Panel* - members of the Review Panel are appointed and approved by the CPO Director to assist in duties outlined in the *Guidelines*.

Standards, Principles and Procedures (Overview)

1. Abuse Reporting Standards ("Standards")

Standards are essentially the minimum requirements necessary to maintain the values of ISKCON, and for which all involved parties are responsible to understand and apply.

It is the intention of the ISKCON Child Protection Office (CPO) to support ISKCON Centers in meeting their responsibility to comply with the law. To that end, the ISKCON CPO intends to provide basic information respecting the standards necessary for compliance. However, National and State law respecting abuse varies. Thus, every ISKCON center has the duty and responsibility to understand and comply with the secular law which applies within its local jurisdiction, as well as to follow ISKCON *Guidelines*.

2. Faith, Doctrine and Internal Governance ("Principles")

In addition to the applicable minimum legal standards, ISKCON espouses refined ethical and spiritual values and behaviors which call for more restraint and sensitivity than would generally be expected or enforced in secular law. Moreover, as a religious organization, ISKCON holds broad constitutional rights and autonomy in making ecclesiastic decisions regarding its own internal affairs, including matters of faith, doctrine and internal governance.

ISKCON asserts its inviolate legal right and spiritual mandate to evaluate and make ecclesiastic decisions regarding ISKCON clergy and personnel in relation to shastric (scriptural) principles, spiritual standards and the instructions, elucidations and directives provided by the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

3. Internal Review Procedures ("Procedures")

In direct support of the principles of faith, doctrine and internal governance, ISKCON, through the GBC, and as delegated to the ISKCON CPO, asserts its right and mandate to not only evaluate and make decisions regarding ISKCON clergy and personnel, but to also periodically refine the procedures necessary to make and enforce those decisions.

In this regard, the ISKCON CPO is authorized to develop and institute disciplinary policies and procedures. The GBC firmly stands by, supports and confirms the evaluations and decisions previously made and rendered by the CPO. At the same time, and in the spirit of growth and experience, the GBC has deputed the CPO to further refine its policies and procedures consistent with the mood, language and intent expressed in these *Guidelines*.

I. STANDARDS

Abuse Reporting Standards

A. Summary and Purpose These *Guidelines* provide guidance on how to respond to allegations of child abuse. They are policy standards intended to establish requirements and procedures in an effort to prevent child abuse by ISKCON clergy and personnel and the resulting harm to the victims and the Vaisnava community.

B. Distribution of Guidelines

A copy of these *Guidelines* shall be made available to all ISKCON centers.

C. Obligation to Report Abuse to Secular Authorities

1. All ISKCON clergy and personnel must comply with applicable laws regarding incidents of actual or suspected abuse of minors as directed in these *Guidelines*.

2. All ISKCON personnel who know, or have reasonable cause to suspect, that a child has been a victim of child maltreatment or abuse, shall immediately make any report required by law directly to the local law enforcement authorities or other civil authority, such as the local child protective services agency, as may be appropriate or mandated in their local jurisdiction.

3. Immediately thereafter, once a report is made to the local authorities, a report shall also be made to the local child protection team (CPT), temple president or director, and GBC zonal secretary, and where existent, regional CPO.

4. All allegations of child abuse by ISKCON clergy and personnel, or on ISKCON premises, or at an ISKCON affiliated function such as a Rathayatra event, shall also be reported promptly to the director of the CPO, or designee, through email, or if not available, by telephone and regular mail.

NOTE: The investigation of child abuse allegations normally proceeds under the auspices of local law enforcement authorities and must therefore be left to local authorities. Under no circumstances shall ISKCON management interfere in any investigation, nor shall any evidence be disturbed, moved, gathered, tested or destroyed. This is particularly applicable in those countries with a responsive legal system. ISKCON managers, personnel and participants are directed to cooperate fully with any investigation of abuse by local police or social welfare organizations.

5. In addition to the above, an individual may also be a *Mandatory Reporter*[1] under the law and have independent reporting requirements. Note that if you are a Mandatory Reporter, the failure to report abuse may subject you to serious legal action from the authorities and others.

6. If the abuse complaint is not received from or does not involve the parent or guardian of the child, arrangements should be made to immediately notify the parent or guardian. Notice should not be given to the parent or guardian if he or she is the person against whom the complaint is made or if this is contrary to local government Social Services mandated procedures. Appropriate pastoral concern and support shall also be shown to all parties involved, including the family. All information relating to a child, in which a

complaint is made against ISKCON clergy or personnel, shall be assembled in writing and given to the CPO to be retained.

7. The ISKCON center involved will also cooperate with public authorities about reporting in cases when the person alleged to have been abused is no longer a minor. In addition, the ISKCON center will support a person's right to make a report to public authorities.

8. In cases of child abuse, the ISKCON center will not enter into confidentiality agreements except for grave or substantial reasons brought forward by the alleged victim or survivor and noted in the text of the agreement. Any such proposed confidentiality agreement must first be reviewed and approved by ISKCON Legal Counsel or by the ISKCON Child Protection Office in writing.

[1] *Mandatory Reporters:* Almost every legal system mandates individuals who are legally required to report allegations and suspicions of abuse. Failure to report can result in legal action. Mandatory reporters may include (see local law): (1) physicians licensed to practice medicine, interns, residents, hospital and medical personnel, dentists, podiatrists, registered professional nurses or licensed practical nurses; (2) school teachers, school administrators, school guidance counselors, visiting teachers, school social workers, or school psychologists; (3) licensed psychologists, persons participating in internships to obtain licensing as psychologists, professional counselors, social workers, or marriage and family therapists, child-counseling personnel; (4) child welfare agency personnel (including any child-caring institution, child-placing agency, maternity home, family day-care home, group day-care home, and day-care center), child service organization personnel; (5) law enforcement personnel; (6) persons who process or produce visual or printed matter; (7) some jurisdictions include members of the clergy; and (8) some include anyone with knowledge of abuse to be a *"Mandatory Reporter."*

II. PRINCIPLES

Faith, Doctrine and Internal Governance

It is within the harmonious context of shastric principles and the instructions and personal example of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder Acarya of ISKCON, and other acaryas in the Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition, that ISKCON finds both its inspiration and its aspiration. ISKCON derives and expresses its faith, doctrines, discipline and internal governance based on these transcendental sources, viz. *sadhu, sastra and guru.*

While on the one hand secular law establishes minimal standards of required conduct and behavior, on the other hand, as a matter of faith, doctrine and internal governance, ISKCON espouses, practices and mandates ethical and spiritual values and behaviors which may require greater restraint and sensitivity by ISKCON clergy and personnel. Moreover, precisely how these refined values are applied in particular environments at particular times is ISKCON's administrative prerogative based on ecclesiastical rule, custom and law.

In this context, ISKCON recognizes that there are few offenses more serious than abuse or other misconduct with a minor, especially by a member of the ISKCON clergy or other personnel. Accordingly, it is the policy of ISKCON to use every reasonable means to prevent the occurrence of abuse, to treat with utmost seriousness any allegation of abuse or misconduct and to alleviate, as far as possible, the suffering of all persons affected by abuse if an incident should occur.

To that end, ISKCON, as a matter of policy and governance, espouses and promotes the following *Principles* for ISKCON clergy and personnel, including its participants.

A. General Principles for ISKCON Clergy and Personnel

1. Actively practice the philosophy and teachings of ISKCON as presented by its Founder Acarya, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.
2. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of each person at all times; and to conduct relationships with others in a non-intrusive manner consistent with Vaisnava spiritual culture and ideals.
3. Fully and promptly meet, and comply with civil as well as ecclesiastical law obligations.
4. To the best of our ability, ensure children live in a safe environment; and to protect them from all forms of abuse, neglect and intrusive behavior.
5. Keep all information received in the course of counseling, spiritual instruction or other professional or ministerial contact in the strictest confidence (except as mandated by law, or required by ISKCON CPO internal review procedures).
6. Refrain from making false accusations against another or revealing the faults and failings of others to those who have no direct interest or legal right to the information or matter.
7. Promptly report incidents of ethical misconduct or intrusive behavior to the appropriate ISKCON authority.
8. Reach out supportively to all persons adversely affected by an incident of mistreatment or abuse and communicate sincere commitment to their spiritual, physical and emotional well-being.
9. Review, understand and abide by all child abuse regulations and reporting requirements applicable to the local civil jurisdiction.
10. Read, understand and comply with these *Guidelines*.

B. Preventative Principles

In the effort to deal properly with an offense, and more importantly to prevent misconduct, all ISKCON centers as well as the ISKCON CPO and CPTs will work to institute the following measures within ISKCON centers:

1. Employ appropriate screening and evaluative techniques to assure the fitness of all residents, clergy, personnel and volunteers serving in positions of trust, including CPO clearance, with a strong recommendation that criminal background check and contacting references are carried out.
2. Educate all those involved with the appointment, hiring and retention of personnel, volunteers and employees about procedures designed to prevent the exposure of children to unfit persons.
3. Require every person engaged within ISKCON to comply with and otherwise support the *Guidelines*. This includes ISKCON clergy, personnel, employees and those volunteers who are given responsibilities that regularly involve contact with children
4. Respond promptly to all allegations of abuse and harassment.
5. Comply fully with the reporting requirements of each jurisdiction, and cooperate with any investigation the civil authorities might undertake.
6. As indicated by circumstances, where appropriate, temporarily relieve from duty an accused person until the matter is fully investigated as required by these *Guidelines*.
7. With due respect for the privacy of individuals involved, deal as openly as possible under the circumstances with members of the community about the incident.

8. Reach out supportively to victims, and to all other persons affected adversely by the incident and communicate our sincere commitment to their spiritual, physical and emotional well-being.

C. Behavioral Principles in Dealing with Children

1. A high ethical and professional standard while interacting with children must be maintained.
2. When children are being supervised by someone other than their parent or guardian it is recommended that 2 adults be present for built in accountability.
3. Physical discipline in any form for the behavior management of children is prohibited. Except in the event that reasonable and lawful restraint may become necessary to prevent a child from inflicting harm on themselves or others, in which instance a detailed written record of the incident is to be submitted within 48 hours to the local CPT, Temple President and CPO, and should be maintained on file.
4. Sexually explicit or morally inappropriate materials may not be shown, provided or made available in any way to children.
5. No mind or mood-altering substance, including alcohol, may be introduced, used or possessed while interacting with children. Unless local laws permit, no medications of any kind may be administered to a child other than with the express written permission of the parent and/or legal guardian of the child.
6. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:
    a) Sharing the same bed, van, hotel room, sleeping bag or tent with a child unless the adult is a parent, guardian or sibling;
    b) Being alone with a child who is not a member of the family in a locker room, rest room, dressing, changing or showering facility;
    c) Taking photographs of children who are unclothed or dressing, or permitting photographs by others;
    d) Verbal harassment, such as derogatory comments, jokes, or slurs;
    e) Visual harassment, such as derogatory or sexually explicit messages, notes or gestures;
    f) Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature;
    g) Neglect or refusal of essential requirements necessary for the physical, mental and emotional well-being of a child.

III. PROCEDURES

Internal Review Procedures

Making and enforcing decisions respecting intrusive conduct and abusive behavior is a complex task which involves balancing the rights of all parties. It is neither the desire nor the intention of the ISKCON Child Protection Office to institute policies and procedures which attempt to duplicate or mimic the civil and criminal investigation and adjudication mechanisms which already function in the secular world. Rather, these *Procedures* find their genesis and resulting expression within applicable principles of faith and doctrine. Accordingly, these *Procedures* follow ecclesiastical rule, custom and law. Moreover, and along parallel lines, the ISKCON CPO has been authorized by the ISKCON GBC to develop and institute comprehensive disciplinary policies and procedures in alignment with the intent, form and language expressed in these *Guidelines*.

A. Pastoral Commitment

In addition to required reporting of any allegation of abuse to the appropriate civil authorities, when an allegation of physical, psychological or sexual abuse of a minor by any ISKCON clergy or personnel is received, the local CPT and local Temple President shall be notified immediately. A preliminary investigation in harmony with CPO procedures shall be conducted without undue delay.

The alleged abuser will be promptly notified of the investigation unless notification serves to compromise or impact review, investigation or prosecution by the secular authorities. ISKCON will cooperate fully, and be careful not to interfere with any investigation by law enforcement.

If an allegation of abuse or harassment of a minor by ISKCON clergy or personnel is initially found to have credibility, the alleged abuser may be temporarily relieved of any ecclesiastical ministry or function, in harmony with ISKCON principles.

Findings Contrary to Allegation: Should the accused be found not guilty by secular authority, and the CPO Director or a CPO Review Panel determines that the person in question has not violated ISKCON's standards of required behavior; attempts will be made to restore the position and reputation of the accused. If the allegations have become public knowledge, the ISKCON CPO shall publicize the innocence of the accused in an appropriate forum.

B. Victim Assistance

ISKCON and its CPO are concerned for the spiritual, physical and emotional well-being of alleged victims and are committed to promote healing, reconciliation and empowerment. This includes reaching out supportively to victims and to all other persons adversely affected by an abuse incident to communicate sincere commitment to their spiritual, physical and emotional well-being. As far as possible, appropriate counseling, spiritual assistance, and access to support resources and other services should be provided.

C. CPO Review Panels

1. Purpose

To assist the ISKCON CPO in implementation of these *Guidelines*, Review Panels that function as confidential consultative and advisory bodies will be established by the CPO.

2. Membership

The Review Panels will be composed of three individuals of outstanding integrity and good judgment, and who have had training in the recognition and response to the abuse of minors. The members will be approved and appointed (and may be removed) by the CPO Director.

3. Qualifications, Challenges and Replacement of a Review Panel Member

a) Each Review Panel Member shall be independent and impartial.
b) By accepting appointment, each Review Panel Member shall be deemed to be bound by these rules and any modification agreed to by the parties.
c) A Review Panel Member shall promptly disclose in writing to the CPO Director, any circumstances that might cause doubt regarding the Review Panel Member's independence or impartiality. Such circumstances include bias, interest in the result of the adjudication, and past or present relations with a party or its counsel.
d) A Review Panel Member may be challenged by either party if circumstances exist or arise, that give rise to justifiable doubt regarding the Review Panel Member's independence or impartiality. The outcome of a challenge shall be decided by the CPO Director.
e) In the event of death, resignation or successful challenge of a Review Panel Member, a substitute Review Panel Member shall be selected by the CPO Director.
f) In the event that the Review Panel Member fails to act, or in the event the CPO Director determines that a member of the review panel is de jure or de facto prevented from duly performing the functions of a Review Panel Member, the CPO Director shall select a replacement.
g) If a Review Panel Member is replaced, the CPO Director shall decide the extent to which any hearings held previously shall be repeated.

4. Functions

The functions of the Review Panels include:

a) Conducting a thorough assessment of allegations of abuse or neglect of minors pertaining to CPO jurisdiction.
b) Determining the suitability of the alleged abuser to continue having any position or involvement with ISKCON.
c) Determining any requirements or restrictions as may be necessary or appropriate.

Communications Policy

Within the context of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved the CPO will deal as openly as possible with members of the community. This is especially so with regard to assisting and supporting Vaisnava communities directly affected by alleged ministerial misconduct involving minors.

All information received by the Review Panel shall be considered confidential and shall not be revealed by any member of the Review Panel, except to ISKCON Legal Counsel, other members of the Review Panel, the CPO Director and Case Manager, and on occasion the CPO Advisory Panel, unless compelled by law.

Removing ISKCON Clergy or Personnel

Nothing here shall be construed to preclude any legally formed ISKCON entity, per their own standards of operation, and in consultation with the ISKCON Child Protection Office, from temporarily or permanently removing ISKCON clergy or personnel upon notification of an allegation, either pending or after the Review Board's completion of its proceedings.

Implementation of Policies

The ISKCON CPO has developed its own specific procedures for implementing the policies detailed in accordance with the guidelines of this document. Any one alleged to be responsible for intrusive behavior contrary to these guidelines will receive a fair and impartial review.

The CPO must receive final approval for any major procedural changes from the ISKCON International Governing Body Commission (GBC).

IV. SPECIFIC PROCEDURES OF THE CPO REVIEW PANELS

A. Principles

As stated above, it is neither the desire nor the intention of the ISKCON Child Protection Office to institute policies and procedures which attempt to duplicate or mimic the civil and criminal investigation and adjudication mechanisms which already function in the secular world. Rather, these *Procedures* find their genesis and resulting expression within applicable principles of faith and doctrine. Accordingly, these *Procedures* follow ecclesiastical rule, custom and law, rather than criminal or civil procedures.

In some instances, cases of child maltreatment (neglect, sexual, physical, and psychological abuse) will have already gone through local legal systems. In other instances a Review Panel may need to conduct its own examination of allegations as it pertains to ISKCON. These procedures are an internal review mechanism in line with ISKCON's administrative prerogative to enforce behavioral guidelines consistent with fairness and other Vaisnava principles. As such, broad latitude is given to the review panel's decisions as how to weigh evidence and make decisions.

As conditions for an individual's ongoing relationship with the ISKCON institution, Review Panels may also propose requirements and restrictions as may be necessary or appropriate. In all cases, findings of the Review Panels are ecclesiastic decisions that only pertain to the devotee's suitability to continue as ISKCON clergy, other position, or their future relationship with the ISKCON organization.

B. Jurisdiction

1. Degree of offenses dealt with by the CPO Review Panels

There are different categories of child abuse allegations, with a range of severity. Less severe offenses should be handled at the local level, by the local CPT. [1] More severe instances of child abuse allegations may be subject to a CPO Review Panel (*If consistent with further jurisdictional requirements described in the following section IV.B.2*). However, local CPTs must consult with the CPO, for questions on how to best handle an incident. In all cases, nonetheless, the CPO should be informed of all complaints received by any ISKCON leader or CPT.

[1] Examples of *less severe offenses* would include:
a) Neglect that doesn't result in serious injury requiring hospitalization/medical attention or cause lasting psychological or physical damage.
b) Isolated, non-chronic event of physical punishment that did not result in injury.
c) One time isolated incidents of psychological abuse that did not result in any long term trauma to the child.

2. Circumstances warranting review by CPO Panels

Generally, the CPO system of review pertains to ISKCON clergy or personnel engaged in behavior contrary to principles established in this document. The jurisdiction of the CPO extends to where the alleged perpetrator of child maltreatment is (or was at the time of the alleged incident) an ISKCON clergy, staff member, or other personnel, including resident or trusted volunteer, and/or the incident occurred at an ISKCON temple, project or function.

As stated in the *Standards for Reporting* (Please see Section I. C. 3 page 8), it is the duty of the management of all ISKCON temples and projects "who know, or have reasonable cause to suspect, that a child has been a victim of child maltreatment, to immediately make any report required by law directly to the local law enforcement authorities or other authority, such as the local child protective services agency, as may be appropriate in their jurisdiction." These cases should then be decided by the local criminal and civil authorities. Those found guilty in a court of law will be subject to restriction as outlined below.

However, there are situations when ISKCON is unable to avail themselves of decisions by the local legal systems. This may occur for any number of situations, such as a country may not have a responsive legal system, the case is beyond the local statute of limitations, or other reasons. The decision to constitute a Review Panel in other situations would be decided by the Child Protection Office on a case-by-case basis. The case then will be processed according to the procedures outlined in Section IV. C. page 16.

3. Special Circumstances

a. Cases decided by the legal system

In certain cases, individuals involved with ISKCON have been found guilty of child abuse in criminal courts. These cases may or may not have involved ISKCON temples and projects. Nevertheless, the individuals, even if now taking up or currently engaging in the process of devotional service, may still constitute a threat to our children, or be considered unsuitable for a position of leadership within ISKCON.

In these cases of clear finding of guilt by the secular legal process, it is not necessary to go through a Child Protection Office Panel Review. Those who have been convicted, or found guilty, of sexual or physical child abuse in legitimate criminal or civil court proceedings will be restricted in their relationship with ISKCON temples and projects in the following manner:

i. They cannot have any position of leadership within ISKCON or publicly represent ISKCON in any way.
ii. They cannot reside in temples or stay overnight.
iii. They cannot give class or lead kirtan in any ISKCON sponsored activity or event.
iv. They cannot engage in service involving children.
v. They cannot be present at a temple if their victim(s) are also present (without the victim's uncoerced consent).

The Director of the ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection shall verify that they have been found guilty in a criminal court proceeding. Extenuating circumstances that would warrant either the relaxation of the above restrictions, or warrant more strict restriction to the above standards would require review from the CPO Office.

A temple is free to totally restrict an abuser from the temple if they so choose.[2]

b. Allegations of child abuse within the congregation

Some allegations of child abuse occur within the congregation; in other words, the alleged abuse did not occur on ISKCON property or at an ISKCON temple or project, nor was the abuse committed by an ISKCON clergy, officer, or employee. In these situations, the Child Protection Office does NOT have jurisdiction to refer the case to a CPO Review Panel. Rather, the CPO will act in a consultative manner with the local temple and congregation.

The local authorities, along with the local Child Protection Team, should be encouraged to:

i. Report, or have reported, the abuse to local civil authorities as appropriate and indicated in the above *Standards (page 8)*.
ii. Offer support and counsel to the victim of abuse and their family.
iii. Report the incident to the CPO.
iv. Take precautionary measures that are required and prudent to the local situation such as ensuring other children are not affected and reducing any further impact on the community where possible.

Notwithstanding the above, in certain cases, upon the request of the local Temple President and GBC representative, the CPO may accept a specific case beyond these jurisdictional limits. This would apply, for example, in cases where a congregational member is highly active or well known in the community, or the allegations involve a person who previously served in a highly active or visible role.

It should be noted that as private non-profit organizations, any ISKCON center is free to limit or restrict access to its facilities as it sees appropriate.

Anyone in knowledge of someone interacting with ISKCON who has a criminal child abuse history should report such information to the CPO as well as their local CPT and/or temple management.

C. CPO and Review Panel Process

The procedures for bringing an allegation to the Review Panel and the functioning of that Panel shall be based on the concept of providing a fair and impartial hearing within our ecclesiastic principles. Generally, the process will be as follows:

1. An allegation or situation is brought to the attention of the CPT by parents, victim(s), local temple authorities, individual members of the community or others.

2. The local CPT and/or Regional CPO, or if neither is active, temple authorities, will typically examine the issues and allegations. Where there are convincing indications suggesting that abuse has occurred, the CPO Director will be consulted for advice and guidance.

[2] B.3.a. is GBC Resolution – 2006 #407

3. Notwithstanding 2 above, all complaints being dealt with by the local CPT and /or Regional CPO shall be communicated to the CPO.

4. After evaluating the nature of the allegations, the CPO Director will decide whether this situation falls within the jurisdiction of a CPO Review. If the concerns are sufficient to initiate further investigation, a Case Manager will be assigned by the Director to conduct an investigation.

5. When the investigation is concluded, the CPO Director, in consultation with the Case Manager, will decide if there is sufficient information, such that a Review Panel should be convened to consider the allegations.

6. Where sufficient resources and personnel are in place, the CPO Director should be minimally involved in the investigation of any case, and allow the investigation to be conducted by the Case Manager and/or local CPT.

7. After selecting three Review Panel members, the CPO Director will have all pertinent information submitted to the Review Panel for their deliberation.

8. Prior to a decision being made by the Review Panel, short term and interim restrictions may be placed on the person involved by the International CPO Director in consultation with the Regional CPO Director/CPT.

D. Convening a Review Panel

The CPO Director shall assign three members to each Review Panel. Panelists shall be chosen from a list of devotees that have undergone training in the recognition and response to the abuse of minors in understanding child abuse, evaluating evidence, and the psychology of abusers and victims.

Any panelist with personal familiarity or knowledge of either the accused or the victim, such that it would prevent them from an impartial decision, must recuse themselves from the panel.

E. Conducting the Review

1. Within the general guidelines of providing a fair and impartial hearing, the Panel may conduct the review in such manner as they shall deem appropriate. The Panel members, assisted by the CPO Case Manager, shall be responsible for the organization and arrangements of the Review and when necessary, may avail of the assistance of the CPO Director, CPT, zonal GBC member, and Temple President.

2. Any devotee subject to a Review will be notified of the nature of those allegations of conduct contrary to Vaisnava principles.

3. The parties may be represented or assisted by a person of their choice.

4. The devotee being reviewed will be shown all statements or information regarding their behavior, and have an opportunity to give any written reply, statement or additional information that they wish.

5. Whatever information, statements, documents and rebuttals provided by the devotee being reviewed shall be copied and provided to the alleged victim(s). The alleged victim(s) shall then have the opportunity to respond and present additional information in effect, a second time.

6. If additional information is so submitted, those comments, statements and documents shall be forwarded to the devotee being reviewed. S/he may then submit their second and final response with documents. Thus both parties have two opportunities to provide information and respond to one another, sequentially.

7. The Review Panel will be presented with all information. Additionally, they may ask for additional information from the CPO Case Manager, which will be provided if possible and practical.

8. The CPO may be used as a resource, for information regarding procedures, general child protection and abuse information, or requests for additional information. The Office will also monitor and facilitate the deliberations of the Panel.
   The Review may be handled in person, by email, video conference, and/or telephone, or other means chosen, depending on the proximity of those involved and practical considerations.

9. The proceedings should be carried out in an expeditious manner, without undue delay, ideally, while respecting the integrity of the review, within 90 days.

10. Some latitude is given in the presentation and evaluation of evidence, as deemed appropriate by the Review Panel. Different types of evidence include, but are not limited to, written testimonies, reports from local CPT's, interviews with the victim and accused, statements of witnesses, character witnesses, reports from civil and legal authorities, and psychological assessments.

11. Except as otherwise provided in these rules or permitted by the entire Review Panel, no party or anyone acting on its behalf shall have any ex-parte communication with the Review Panel members with respect to any matter of substance relating to the proceeding.

F. Review Panel Decision and Recommendation

1. After considering all evidence, the Review Panel will come to a conclusion regarding the responsibility of the alleged abuser in question. A decision to find the alleged offender responsible for the allegations must be a unanimous decision of the Panel.

   Standard of Evidence: Similar to many professional organizations and institutions internal review procedures, a more relaxed standard of evidence is used than often found in criminal court procedures. Some leeway is given to the Panel, so that inappropriate behavior may not be shielded by an inordinate standard of proof. At the same time, the internal review process should be fair to all sides. Therefore, the Review Panel shall consider the preponderance (majority) of evidence in the case. "Majority of evidence" means that taken all together, the evidence weighs on one side of the question, and it is reasonable to conclude responsibility.

2. If there is not a unanimous decision, a second Review Panel, comprised of three different Panelists will be convened for a new review. If the second Panel cannot arrive at a unanimous decision, then the CPO Director will close the case. If new victims or new information comes forward in the future a new review can be opened per these Guidelines and the decision of the CPO Director.

3. The Decision of the Review Panel shall be final and any restrictions will begin immediately. There is a process of appeal outlined below. (See section IV. I. 5 page 21)

4. Restrictions may be set by the Review Panel, in consultation with the CPO Director, depending on severity and frequency of the offense. Where serious abuse has been admitted or established, the minimum sanction to be enforced will be a lifelong ban from working with children and from holding positions of leadership within ISKCON. A range of restrictions, including time limitations, is possible, particularly with cases of less severe abuse. *Further considerations are outlined below (see section IV. J page21).*

5. Some cases of abuse may be of such severity, that the Panel may decide that the offender may not associate with ISKCON in any manner. *Refer to the policy on very severe cases of abuse (see section IV. J. 2. b. page 22).*

6. In some rare instances, the CPO Director may determine sometime later that changes of circumstances may justify reducing requirements or restrictions. This can be done only with the unanimous consent of the CPO Director and the original Review Panel. In the event that any of the original Review Panel members are not available, the CPO Director may appoint new Panel Members.

G. Written Decisions

The Review Panel, after arriving at its decision, will write an Official Decision on the case. The CPO Director or Case Manager may assist in writing this document. The Decision should be written in clear and simple language. Furthermore, the decision must review the allegations and evidence presented that indicates the abuser has acted contrary to the principles and behavior of Vaisnavism. It shall thus present the findings of the Panel, and clearly state any Restrictions, Requirements, and Recommendations it deems appropriate.

H. Distribution of Decisions

A Review Panel Decision and any restrictions shall be released at the discretion of the CPO. All immediately concerned parties will be provided with the written decision, including the local ISKCON authority (Temple President), CPT, spiritual master (if any) and local GBC. If present, the Regional CPO Director will be provided a copy first in the event preparations need to be made for the implementation of the decision and to ensure the Regional Director is able to read through before receiving communication from other parties.

The CPO will serve as the clearinghouse for all legitimate screening requests regarding CPO and Review Panel decisions, from authorized ISKCON centers. It is understood that ISKCON leaders and those in position of responsibility will need access to Review Panel decisions on a regular and updated basis.

I. Additional Policies

1. Confidentiality

All parties involved and the Review Panel shall treat the review proceedings and any related information as confidential, unless otherwise required by law, or where doing so could jeopardize the safety of children.

The CPO will make all reasonable efforts to respect any request for anonymity by confirmed victims.

2. Application of Decisions Throughout ISKCON

Requirements or restrictions determined by the Review Panel cannot be reduced by a local community, temple president, or local GBC. The decision of the panel constitutes the minimum restrictions that an ISKCON organization or community may place on a devotee. Any specific ISKCON organization may choose to invoke more stringent restrictions. However, it is expected that all ISKCON entities will carefully consider these decisions of the Review Panel before imposing more stringent limitations, as the constraints prescribed herein are deemed to be sufficient with regards to child protection.

3. Statute of Limitations

There is no statute of limitations within the CPO system.

4. Double Jeopardy

A person can be brought before a Review Panel only once, (with the exception of a failure of a Review Panel to reach a unanimous decision, as explained above) for alleged abuse against a particular individual. However, if new victims come forward, the Director of the Central Child Protection Office can open a new case and initiate a new review.

Conversely, if a person found responsible for unacceptable behavior by a Review Panel later (beyond the time frame for lodging an appeal) submits overwhelming evidence showing innocence, the CPO Director may decide to reconvene the original Review Panel, or if that is not possible, to hold a second Review Panel with as many original members as possible, and that Review Panel shall have the authority to overturn, re-affirm or modify the earlier decision.

5. Appeals Process

Anyone found responsible for behavior contrary to Vaisnava principles, or a victim of such alleged behavior who was not satisfied by the decision of a CPO Review Panel may appeal that decision. The following procedure will apply:

1) An appeal must be made within 60 days of receipt of the decision. The devotee making the request shall submit their reasons for asking for an appeal in writing, to the CPO Director.

2) An appeal will be presented by the CPO Director to the CPO Appeal Review Panel (ARP). The ARP will consist of three senior Review Panel members, who have not served on the first Panel, and are selected by the CPO Director.

3) The ARP will first decide on the merit of an appeal. An appeal may be granted by the ARP only if:
    a. Procedures used in the original Review prevented a fair and impartial hearing, or
    b. There is new and compelling additional evidence.

4) If the ARP unanimously decides that there is sufficient reason to grant an appeal, they will review the case again, and write a new decision.

5) All restrictions imposed by the original Review Panel remain in place during the appeal, unless the ARP, at their sole and unanimous discretion, reduce or set aside restrictions during the process of appeal.

6) The proceedings of the Appeals Review Panel will be conducted in a similar manner as the first hearing. Generally, the Panel will review all information from the first Review, as well as any new arguments or evidence presented, and if they choose, they may allow a one-time response from the alleged victim and person under review regarding the aspects that the Appellant has raised in his/ her grounds of appeal. The decision of the Appeal Review Panel will be final. There is no further process of appeal.

J. Further Considerations on Restrictions, Requirements, and Recommendations

1. Jurisdiction and Scope of Review Panel Decisions Limited to ISKCON

Review Panels may set restrictions and requirements for an individual's relationship with ISKCON Centers. These restrictions constitute ecclesiastic discipline. The intention of restrictions is to protect children within ISKCON from any undue risk; limit the position of leadership within ISKCON to those whose character and behavior is consistent with its spiritual principles; prevent legal risk to the institution; show respect to the victims and assist them in their journey to heal; act as a deterrent to future potential offenders; and where possible, assist all parties in continuing their spiritual advancement.

2. Restrictions

a. Serious cases of abuse

For offensive acts of abuse which are admitted or established, depending on the severity of abuse, a wide variety of discipline may be considered and implemented. Besides (1) restrictions on any future leadership positions, other restrictions may include some or all of the following: (2) suspension from certain activities for stated time periods; (3) expulsion from a particular ISKCON center, community, or communities; (4) requirements for education or counseling leading to an assessment of trustworthiness; (5) where appropriate, adequate apology and or restitution to the victim(s); (6) completion of a program designed to change the intrusive behavior; (7) counseling with a therapist with the appropriate credentials as mandated by the CPO; and (8) any other discipline, program or counseling which serves to protect the victim and community, discipline and correct the offender and prevent future intrusive behavior.

Additional restrictions may be placed at the discretion of the Panel, consistent with the *Principles* and *Standards* enunciated in this document.

b. Very severe cases of abuse –

Some incidents of child abuse are of such severity that the Panels' decision would be to invoke the strongest decision. In other words, the abuser would not be allowed to visit any ISKCON property, attend ISKCON functions, or have any contact with ISKCON properties or functions of organizations affiliated with ISKCON for the remainder of their lifetime.

Cases that would be eligible for the strongest decision include serious sexual or physical abuse where the evidence is clear and persuasive. Considerations in determining "serious sexual abuse" would include evidence of some of the following elements: The sexual abuse includes instances where violence, force, or the threat of violence is used; the sexual act itself is of a very invasive nature, the acts are repeated, and where there is great physical or psychological distress experienced by the victim.

Serious physical abuse would include some of the following elements: The act is of a very violent nature, there is long-term physical harm to the victim, the acts are repeated, and there is great physical or psychological distress to the victim. [3]

c. Less severe cases of abuse

In instances of less severe case of abuse, the Panel may modify select restrictions as appropriate. This may include time limitations on restrictions, application of only certain restrictions, limiting restrictions to certain temples or areas, or other decisions that the Panel deems appropriate.

3. Requirements

Additionally, the Review Panel may set Requirements that must be met, in order for the devotee to continue their relationship with ISKCON. Requirements should be written simply and clearly, should be reasonably do-able, and meant to accomplish a purpose. Examples of requirements might include writing a letter of apology, undergoing a risk evaluation[4], undergoing professional counseling or monetary restitution to a victim[5]. Requirements, in the mood of "restorative justice,"[6] should first and foremost consider the needs and wishes of the victim.

---

[3] Section J. 2. b. is a GBC Law, GBC Resolution – 2005 #410

[4] The Panel should bear in mind that psychological risk evaluations are expensive, and it is difficult to find qualified professionals in developing countries. Therefore, this should be required only where it serves a clear need.

[5] It is essential to consider the wishes of the victim(s), as receiving such money directly from the aggressor may be a source of further trauma.

[6] An approach to justice that focuses on the needs of the victim and the offenders, as well as the involved community, instead of satisfying abstract legal principles or punishing the offender. Victims take an active role in the process, while offenders are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, "to repair the harm they've done—by apologizing, returning stolen money, or community service". In addition, it provides help for the offender in order to avoid future offences. It is based on a theory of justice that considers crime and wrongdoing to be an offence against an individual or community, rather than the state. Restorative justice that fosters dialogue between victim and offender shows the highest rates of victim satisfaction and offender accountability

4. Recommendations

After reviewing the case and coming to its decision, the Review Panel may also present non-binding recommendations to any and all parties concerned. These recommendations are meant to help guide the parties toward better standards of child protection, more functional processes of dealing with the current situation, and personal spiritual advancement.

Feedback from Investigation and Review Proceedings

In its efforts to serve the Society more effectively, the CPO will invite and consider all feedback and concerns that it receives from ISKCON leaders, clergy, personnel, other participants in ISKCON, and those who have made use of the CPO processes. Written feedback shall also be made available to the Advisory Board for their input and consideration.

APPENDIX I - DEFINITIONS OF TYPES OF ABUSE

Note: (Some portions of this section use graphic terms. While we regret this, they are necessary for clear definitions.)

A. CHILD MALTREATMENT

1. Child definition- 0 up to 18 years of age OR whatever the legal definition for a child is in the particular country or jurisdiction where the alleged maltreatment occurred.

2. Maltreatment definition- A broad range of mistreatment of children including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and psychological/ emotional abuse.

In some countries, the legal definition may be stricter than that of these Guidelines. In such a circumstance, ISKCON abides by the local legal codes. In a country where the definition or laws of child abuse are less strict ISKCON abides by the standards in these Guidelines.

B. TYPES OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

1. **NEGLECT**- An act of omission (failure to do) where the parent or caretaker fails to provide for the child's basic needs and proper level of care to support the child's health or development. It is important to distinguish between willful neglect and a parents or caretakers only being able to provide a reduced standard of life due to poverty or cultural norms.

   Types of neglect include:

   a) PROTECTION- Failure to provide an environment where the child is safe from harm. Example: Headmaster fails to protect child even though the child has informed the headmaster that he is being physically or sexually abused by older boys and staff.

   b) FOOD- failure to provide an adequate diet and sufficient food/ prasadam. Example: child is forced to eat old rotten food/prasadam or child is given portions too small to satisfy their hunger.

   c) CLOTHING- failure to provide clothing adequate for the season. Example: Child is given no socks or sweater in wintertime.

   d) SHELTER- failure to provide a clean, hazard free place to live. Example: House has garbage and excrement on the floor, exposed wires, insect and rodent infested.

   e) MEDICAL- refusal or delay in seeking necessary medical care Example: Infant has chronic diarrhea and is not brought for treatment; teenage son is found to be sexually abusing other boys and the parents refuse to bring their son for an adolescent sex offender assessment and treatment.

   f) HYGIENE- failure to keep the child clean, tidy, and bathed. Example: Child's hair is dirty, matted; clothes are dirty, child looks disheveled, child smells.

g) SUPERVISION- failure to watch the child appropriate to the child's developmental abilities to ensure his/her own safety.
Example: Dropping a young child off at the temple without insuring designated adult supervision for them; parents repeatedly leave a 5-year-old child alone sleeping while they go out; parent lets 3 year old run around temple parking lot unsupervised.

h) EDUCATION- permitting chronic truancy, failure to enroll or provide home-schooling (where legally permissible) to a child of mandatory school age; inattention to a special educational need.
Example: An 8-year-old child receives no schooling whatsoever; a teacher is responsible to educate children at a certain level but does not provide adequate education.

i) EMOTIONAL- failure to provide a climate that emotionally nourishes the child.
Example: Child repeatedly sees her father beat up her mother; parent abuses alcohol or drugs; has sex in front of the child or expose the child to pornography.

2. **PHYSICAL ABUSE**- An act of commission (perpetration) by the parent or caretaker where the child is physically injured. Marks such as bruises, welts, lacerations, or burns, etc. may be visible though not always. Such an injury is not an accident. It may be intentional or the result of an unrestrained or overzealous attempt to discipline the child, and the parent or adult may or may not have intended to hurt the child. The presence of an unexplained injury, scars, bruises, or instances where the explanation provided is inconsistent with the injury suffered are strong indicators of abuse.

In a sports situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregards the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Forms of physical abuse include:
Hitting, punching, beating, shaking, whipping, caning, burning, slapping, biting, kicking, ear twisting, shoving, scalding, suffocating, drowning, throwing, poisoning, and giving alcohol or drugs.

Example: A student is whipped with a cane and red welts are visible; a parent slaps a child so hard across the face that marks appear in the shape of a hand; an infant is shaken so hard that brain damage occurs; a mother spanks an 11 month old.

Corporal punishment can also be considered abusive if, although no single incident leaves a mark or results in an injury, the frequent and chronic use of such has a deleterious cumulative effect. (In a recently published study on spanking, researchers found that the more frequently spanking was used as a method of punishment [three or more times per week], the more antisocial behaviors the child developed.)

Example: A child is spanked for minor infractions, several times a week

3. **SEXUAL ABUSE** occurs when perpetrators (male or female) use a child to meet their own sexual needs. It is an act of commission (perpetration) where a child is coerced, induced, persuaded, enticed, seduced, or entrapped into sexual acts with another person. The coercion can be either physical, verbal, or non-verbal. The other person could be either an adult, an adolescent (12-17 years of age), or in extreme cases, another child (less than 12 years of age). The abuser uses his/her position of authority or power (size, age, social position, cognitive differential) to exert control over and exploit the victim.

Forms of sexual abuse include:
a) Voyeurism ("Peeping Tom"); b) Exhibitionism (flashing); c) Taking, storing, or viewing pornographic pictures or video of a child; d) Having the child watch while the perpetrator masturbates; e) Forced masturbation; f) Kissing; g) Fondling; h) Digital/object penetration of vagina and/or anus; i) Oral sex; j) Sodomy; k) Intercourse

Examples: A 14-year-old boy badgers (verbally coerces) his 13-year-old male friend into anal sodomy by repeatedly calling him a sissy; an ashram teacher fondles a boy's genital while tucking him in; a father engages in any sexual activity with his daughter; an aunt has a 9-year-old nephew suckle her breast.

Sexual activities may also include non-contact activities, e.g. involving children in looking at/ production of sexual images; watching sexual activities; or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. This may include the use of photographs, pictures, cartoons, literature or sound recordings, e.g.: the internet, books and magazines.

> *Note: There is a continuum of sexual behaviors in children ranging from the normal to the abnormal and there are distinct phases of normal psychosexual behaviors.* Although ISKCON does not advocate any form of sexual interactions outside of marriage, it is recognized that most children below 18 years of age have some degree of developmentally normal sexual curiosity. Allowances need to be made for innocent activities or natural stages of sexual development or experimentation in children, and clearly marking the distinction in cases of abuse and exploitation. The age difference of the children involved is a significant factor to help differentiate.

4. **SEXUAL HARASSMENT** (for ISKCON Child Protection purposes) is defined as any form of sexual attention from an adult or older/more powerful youth to a child, whether welcome or not. Such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, and offensive environment.

> Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include, but is not limited to the following:
> a) Sexual advances; b) Requests for sexual favors; c) Verbal harassment or abuse; d) Pressure/coercion for sexual activity; e) Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications; f) Unwelcome or inappropriate touching; g) Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats; h) other inappropriate oral, written or physical communication or contact of a sexual nature.
>
> Example: a) A male devotee pats a young girl in an inappropriate place, or frequently puts his arm around the shoulder of a young teenage brahmacarini; b) a brahmacari repeatedly taunts and denigrates a young girl, calling her a "Maya devi", "prostitute", or worse.

These offenses could initially be categorized as less severe and handled accordingly. If they continue or are of a more severe nature, or are an effort in "grooming", then they may be categorized as more severe offenses.

5. **PSYCHOLOGICAL / EMOTIONAL ABUSE** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It is a repeated pattern of behavior that conveys to the child that they are worthless, flawed, unwanted, unloved, or only of value to meet another person's needs. This verbal battering seriously erodes and damages the child's self-esteem and sense of worth as a person.

Forms of Emotional/Psychological Abuse

a) SPURNING- hostile, rejecting humiliating parent/caretaker acts that degrade the child.
Example: "You no good rotten kid, you'll never amount to anything, you're stupid, ugly, clumsy. I wish I never gave birth to you!" Or making the child who had an "accident" wear their urine-soaked underwear on their head while inviting other children to mock them; forcing a child to cross dress while having other children jeer.

b) TERRORIZING- Acting in such a way that leads the child to believe that s/he may be hurt, killed or abandoned; causing a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, using actions or words that suggest placing the child or his/her family in a dangerous situation.
Example: Killing a child's pet in front of them intentionally to instill fear and gain compliance; locking a child screaming in a dark closet or cupboard; randomly picking out a child from a line and hitting them for no apparent reason other than to instill fear.

c) CORRUPTING- acts that encourage the child in criminal, antisocial behaviors.
Example: Taking a child shoplifting to teach them how to cheat or break the law; teaching them or allowing them to be used for begging; giving a child drugs or alcohol.

d) DENYING EMOTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS- ignoring the child's need for love and affection.
Example: Chronically being cold and aloof to the child; providing only concrete needs while treating the child as an object, and not a person; no warmth or affection.

e) Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations such as interactions beyond the child's developmental capability, overprotection, limitation of exploration and learning, preventing the child from participation in normal social interactions.

Note: These guidelines do not exempt one from observing local laws. For example, in Sweden corporal punishment of any kind is against the law. Our parents, guardians, and care providers are expected to be aware of and observe local laws.

APPENDIX II – ADOLESCENT OFFENDERS

One fourth to one third of all sex offenses involve teenage offenders. Adult offenders who were interviewed retrospectively have shown that the average age at which offenders begin their deviant acts is fourteen. One third of victims who were sexually abused will unfortunately go on to abuse others. It is very important to try to break the cycle of offense. While abusive behavior must be ended and victims supported, effort toward rehabilitation and counseling should be at the core of any decision. Thus, young abusers should also be seen as victims, and handled somewhat differently than adults. This is done primarily through attempts to rectify and rehabilitate the behavior.

A local CPT and the CPO should establish a mood of compassion in dealing with these cases, yet clearly maintain the necessity for protective intervention for both the victim and the offender. All good faith efforts to avoid stigmatization should be made. The families of the victim and the abuser will both need community support.

Extreme care and sensitivity may be required when dealing with parents of young offenders, as these incidents are likely to affect them almost as much as the parents of the victims. In the event that a parent/guardian is uncooperative or undermines enquiries, it remains the responsibility of the CPT and CPO to ensure that no child is left in immediate danger, that allegations are pursued appropriately, and that the CPO is notified of the report.

APPENDIX III - ROLE AND DUTIES OF THE ISKCON CENTRAL OFFICE OF CHILD PROTECTION (CPO)

Individuals who have been found responsible for child abuse will not be allowed to serve as CPO Director, Regional Director, Review Panel Member, CPT member, Advisory Panel member or other staff position.

A. The CPO will serve a number of functions:

1. To raise awareness and disseminate information about child protection.
2. To coordinate review of abuse allegations.
3. To keep all records and files for use in screening, etc., and share with appropriate ISKCON leaders, according to policies outlined in these Guidelines.
4. To organize seminars and training on child protection and abuse prevention for ISKCON leaders, teachers, personnel and members.
5. To conduct inquiries to ascertain whether screening procedures are in place, and report the result of such to the appropriate ISKCON authorities and the GBC.
6. To monitor and train local temple child protections teams (CPT).
7. To train and coordinate regional/ satellite child protection offices.
8. To help coordinate service opportunities, support, and special programs for abuse victims/survivors where possible.

B. Requirements for Executive Director:

Mature, objective, learns quickly, self-motivated, has good people skills, has integrity, empathetic, well organized, multi-tasker, computer literate, can delegate assignments, a good office manager, good communication skills, spiritually strong and balanced, understands the importance of child protection and the impact of abuse, high moral standards and character. Has education and experience in the field of child abuse prevention, response, counseling, advocacy and/or law. Ideally available to serve full time. Willing to accept some international travel.

C. Duties of Executive Director (Central office):

1. Establish and monitor regional (satellite) offices.
2. Prepare training and reference materials appropriate for different audiences, such as GBCs, TPs, school staff, local Child Protection Teams, ("CPTs"), children and parents.
3. Supervise and direct other CPO staff and volunteer members.
4. Establish or update existing screening processes for ISKCON.
5. Organize training seminars for ISKCON leaders, schools, parents, etc…
6. Counsel local CPTs and regional offices as needed.
7. Help coordinate counseling for confirmed victims, whenever possible.
8. Coordinate and oversee review system for cases of alleged abuse, including selection of Review Panel Members.
9. Coordinate staffing of and training for that Review System.
10. Interface with ISKCON leadership; attend annual GBC meetings, etc.

D. Duties of Central Office Personnel:

1. Keep copies of all permanent records.
2. Help compile and update list of devotee health care professionals willing to volunteer their time for counseling or to work with victims to find local care.
3. Maintain files and list of past cases and Review Panel decisions. Provide information to ISKCON authorities as appropriate and consistent with confidentiality policies.
4. Screening: The central office will develop systems and policies for hiring/ screening throughout ISKCON (who stays in our ashrams, works for us, teaches in our schools, and becomes an initiated disciple). Such screening will be mandatory for all ISKCON centers, educational projects, etc.

Allegations Against CPO Staff or CPT Members

In the event of complaints of mishandling of a case by CPT members or CPO staff, the matter should be reported to the CPO Director who will conduct an inquiry, if s/he deems necessary. Where complaints pertain to the CPO Director, the issue should be presented to the CPO Advisory Panel, and if they choose, it may be referred to the GBC Executive Committee.

If allegations of child abuse are lodged against CPO staff or CPT members they need to be reported directly to the CPO Director who, in consultation with the Advisory Panel, will institute an investigation in the usual manner.

If allegations of abuse emerge against the CPO Director, the local CPT or ISKCON authorities will refer the matter to the GBC Executive Committee, who will consult with the CPO Advisory Panel as to the appropriate action.

E. Advisory Panel

Members of the Advisory Panel should have training and experience in child protection and the recognition and handling of abuse to minors. Members shall be appointed by the CPO Director, in consultation with the GBC Executive Committee, for a three-year term. Additional terms will be by invitation of the CPO Director.

The functions of the *Advisory Panel* include:

1. Promoting awareness and understanding of the importance of child protection in ISKCON.
2. To act as an advisory body to the CPO Director.
3. To review and offer advice on proposed amendments to the CPO Policy and Operational Guidelines, and other policies as requested by the Director.
4. To review any written feedback or complaints about the CPO and to provide advice how to address such issues.

APPENDIX IV
Child Protection Team – Role and Responsibilities

Every ISKCON temple, project and school is required to have a trained and active Child Protection Team (CPT) per ISKCON law. CPT's are accountable to both the CPO Director and local ISKCON Temple President or community leader (and Regional CPO Director where existing).

CPT's serve in an advisory capacity to the temple management and are intended to be independent of the management. This system provides a layer of accountability, confidentiality and objectivity for all parties. CPT's have a special focus of knowing what to do and who to contact when child protection issues arise, as well as making sure child abuse prevention measures are in place.

Appointment and Removal:

A CPT will be made up of at least two local individuals, ideally three. (If family members serve on a CPT there should be at least one additional member.)

Existing CPT members can select additional members, subject to the approval of the Temple President *and* CPO Director, or CPO Regional Director.

If no CPT members are active, new members will be selected by the local Temple President or community leader, in consultation with the CPO Director.

***Names of all CPT members and their contact information should be provided to the CPO Director and updated annually, by January 5, by local Temple Presidents, and if they fail to do so, by the individual GBC Member responsible for that zone.

Removal of a CPT member may occur by request of the CPO Director, Temple President or the CPT itself. If temple management wants a CPT member removed from the service this should be done in coordination with the CPO Director and vice versa.

Qualifications to be a CPT member:

Members may represent different constituencies – parents, school, community, etc.

Members should be able to be objective, balanced, mature, approachable and able to keep strict confidence. A special background or education in the field of child abuse response is not necessary but can be quite helpful.

Every member must receive training from the CPO. They should be trained according to standards set by the CPO Director and these *Guidelines*, and should take advantage of all resources provided by local Social Services.

Ideally, CPT members will not be Temple Presidents, but will work in cooperation with them in the protection of children at the local level. Applicants for CPT positions shall undergo necessary training per CPO direction, and be active members in good standing of the community.

Responsibilities:

1. Promote an atmosphere of child protection in their local community.
2. Be sensitive to and understand the implications of child abuse and neglect.
3. Arrange regular [at least annual] training for children, parents, teachers, community leaders and other personnel in child protection principles.
4. Be familiar with CPO Policy and Operational Guidelines and ensure local application.
5. Be familiar with their local laws and social service requirements regarding responding to and reporting allegations of abuse.
6. Work with local temple and community leaders to ensure that all clergy, personnel, and volunteers who serve in a trusted position have been appropriately screened, per CPO policies, i.e. criminal background check, CPO clearance and calling references.
7. Help ensure appropriate codes of practice are in place for those working with children.
8. Distribute the CPO Guidelines to teachers, management, relevant personnel and individuals.
9. Assist and advise the local Temple President and the CPO Director regarding any issue that may arise locally regarding child protection concerns.
10. Serve as the "first line of defense" in reporting any allegations of abuse to civil authorities and the CPO Director, per the *Guidelines*.

Where a CPT member or ISKCON authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child who is a member of the community is suffering, or is likely to suffer harm, they shall make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as necessary.

It is recommended that the CPT meet monthly with the goal of preventing child abuse in their community as well as preparing in the event an issue arises.

Being prepared for an incident of child abuse, regarding the child, perpetrator and community includes knowing local laws, knowing who to report to, knowing local services such as Social Services, Department of Children and Families, Rape Crisis Center, etc..

Arranging for annual child protection awareness training of children and adults in their community can include finding local secular resources such as someone who does personal safety training in local schools for children and/or someone from a domestic violence agency who speaks to churches.

APPENDIX V – RELEVANT GBC RESOLUTIONS

[Voted into ISKCON law February, 1998]

A. Decisions of judges [now titled Review Panelists] are final. No appeal process except as outlined in this proposal.

B. GBC chair is responsible to see that decisions are enforced and will issue time limits for verdicts to be enacted. Local GBCs and temple presidents are to help GBC chair in implementing these verdicts.

C. If individuals named in a decision are in their area of responsibility, the local GBCs and temple presidents are obliged to work together with the Director of the Central Office to see that verdicts of this system are carried out.

D. Failure to assist as outlined in "b" and "c" will result in censures as described in existing GBC resolutions. In such cases, the GBC executive committee can then intercede and direct the local temple president and local GBC, etc. to implement these verdicts and standards.

E. It is every GBC's duty to be sure there are active and trained CPTs in place at the temples/ projects/ schools under their supervision with help and reminders from central and/or regional office

F. Until a police investigation, trial, and verdict and/or a case has gone through ISKCON's child protection court [now called Review System], the local CPT, with guidance and confirmation from the regional or central child protection office, determines the interim protection requirements for alleged victim and restrictions on alleged abuser. The local leaders and GBC must respect and help implement those guidelines.

G. All ISKCON leaders (GBCs, gurus, temple presidents, project directors and managers etc.) are obliged to follow the guidelines for screening those who live on ISKCON property and serve with our temples, schools, farms, and other projects.

H. The CPO may find that additional standards, guidelines, and resolutions are required to implement and improve this proposed system. Those additional standards, guidelines, and/ or resolutions will be reviewed by the GBC executive committee first, and with the GBC executive committee's approval, they will become provisionally binding on all ISKCON members, until they are reviewed and accepted, revised, or rejected at the next annual GBC meeting or GBC e-mail voting session (whichever method is selected by the GBC executive committee).

I. [2007 GBC Resolution # 312. Clarifying Leadership Standards Part B.]
Whenever the ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection rules that an offense is such as to restrict a person from serving in ISKCON in positions of leadership (including but not limited to offices of GBC, minister, zonal secretary or temple officer), the restriction must include the position of initiating guru. This restriction shall apply to all previous and future decisions of the Central Office of Child Protection.

J. [2006 GBC resolution #409]
The GBC recommends that ISKCON leaders worldwide:

- Act in a way that is sensitive to the needs of those who were abused, while treating them with respect, love, patience and understanding
- Take steps to improve the care and facilities for children in our communities, including Sunday schools, parental training, and other educational programs, as well as providing appropriate facilities like playgrounds, etc.
- Conduct annual child protection awareness training at every temple
- Encourage, value, facilitate and engage the youth and gurukula alumni
- Train and mentor youth and second-generation devotees with the goal of engaging them in responsible positions

GBC members are recommended to:
Meet regularly with youth and gurukula alumni, listen to them, encourage them, and help the society build better relationships with our second generation.

Leaders of ISKCON educational venues are recommended to:
Provide and promote all educational programs at reduced rates for gurukula alumni and youth. (This includes VIHE, MIHE, VTE, BC, etc.)

All ISKCON leaders are recommended to utilize the Child Protection Office's Employee-Volunteer Screening Form. This document may need adjustments to accommodate local requirements.

K. [2009 GBC resolution #309]
That the GBC hereby creates a GBC Review Panel of the CPO comprised of three neutral persons with interest or experience with child protection issues. The members of this panel are to be appointed by the GBC Executive Committee. Upon completion of the current internal review being conducted by the CPO, or in conjunction with it, the Review Panel shall review the revised policies and procedures of the CPO and suggest any amendments helpful in achieving the objectives of the CPO.

The Review Panel will periodically, at the invitation of the GBC Executive Committee, review the CPO's compliance with its own policies and procedures, as well as propose or review additional revisions, and will report its conclusions to the CPO Director and GBC Executive Committee.

The Review Panel shall not represent or advocate for any person or party, get involved in legal issues or formal complaints, or rule on the validity of already issued decisions.

All information shared with the Review Panel remains strictly confidential. After each review, the Review Panel will make a recommendation regarding the length of time until the next review, which should be within three to five years.

*** Additionally:** If/when Regional GBC resolutions are made that affect child protection policy or review proceedings, those resolutions should be added as reference material to the regional CPO and CPT guidelines for upholding child protection policy in that region.