

Adapted excerpt from the 2018 ISKCON Child Protection Guidelines, Appendix IV pages 31-32

Child Protection Volunteer – Role and Responsibilities

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

CPVs 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. CPVs 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:

At least two local individuals, ideally three will serve as Child Protection Volunteers. (If family members serve as CPVs there should be at least one additional member.)

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

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

***Names of all CPVs 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 CPV may occur by request of the CPO Director, Temple President or the CPVs themselves. If temple management wants a CPV removed from the service this should be done in coordination with the CPO Director and vice versa.

Qualifications to be a Child Protection Volunteer:

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, CPVs will not be Temple Presidents, but will work in cooperation with them in the protection of children at the local level. Applicants for CPV 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 response in reporting any allegations of abuse to civil authorities and the CPO Director, per the *Guidelines*.

Where a CPV 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 CPVs 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.