

# CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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## POLICY STATEMENT

Children who come into contact with Save the Children as a result of our activities must be safeguarded to the maximum possible extent from deliberate or inadvertent actions and failings that place them at risk of child abuse, sexual exploitation, injury and any other harm.

This responsibility falls upon all of our staff and representatives and is reflected across many policies. This duty of care is enshrined in our Child Safeguarding Policy.

### The Policy requires:

- Save the Children to recruit only representatives who are suited to work with children and to apply strict child safe recruitment practices
- That everyone associated with the organisation is aware of their obligations and responds appropriately to issues of child abuse and the sexual exploitation of children.
- That anyone who represents our organisation behaves appropriately towards children and never abuses the position of trust that comes with being a member of the Save the Children family
- That everyone who represents the organisation must actively create a safe environment for children who come into contact with the organisation.
- All activities and programmes of work including during the response to Humanitarian emergencies are assessed for risks to children which are reduced or removed by all means within our control
- Central, Regional and Country Offices establish and maintain systems which promote awareness of Child Safeguarding, enable the prevention of harm, facilitate the reporting of and responding to safeguarding concerns.

In this way we make Save the Children *safe* for children and by creating a child safe organisation; we honour their rights and our aspirations.

## PRINCIPLES

### The Child Safeguarding Policy is committed to and guided by the principles of:

- **Personal responsibility.** All representatives of Save the Children International must demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour towards children both in their private and professional lives. They have a responsibility to understand and promote the policy. They must do all that they can to prevent, report and respond appropriately to any concerns or potential breaches of the policy.

- **Universality.** The Policy includes mandatory requirements that apply to everyone in all aspects of Save the Children International's work regardless of how and where they work including during the response to humanitarian emergencies.
- **Standards based approach.** Save the Children has adopted a standards based approach to Child Safeguarding. Our safeguarding standards and standards of staff behaviour are often higher than those of the national laws and community custom or tradition. Nevertheless, it is our standards that representatives agree to when they join the Save the Children family and it is to these that they will be held account.
- **Openness.** We aim to create an environment in relation to child safeguarding issues, where any issues or concerns can be raised and discussed
- **Transparency and accountability.** This is essential in order to ensure that poor practice can be addressed, potentially abusive behaviour can be challenged and best practice promoted.
- **Accountability to children and their communities.** Through strengthening our internal systems, standards and practice we will be more accountable to the people we aim to serve.
- **Children participation and non-discrimination.** Children should be empowered to understand their rights in this area, and made aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem or a concern.
- **The Best Interest of any children involved.** When dealing with a Child Safeguarding concern, the best interest of the child will be our priority and we will strive to ensure their safety, health and well- being including meeting their emotional, psychological and physical needs.
- **Confidentiality.** All Child Safeguarding concerns/reports/ investigations will be dealt with on a need to know basis and all records will be held securely. Likewise communication will be confidential and secure.
- **Timeliness.** Given the potential for increased or repeated abuse, timely responses are essential and the accompanying procedures establish mandatory time limits on reporting and responding to concerns.
- **Compliance.** The policy will be implemented in adherence with the Child Safeguarding Protocol of the Save the Children Association and Save the Children International 2010, the U.N.C.R.C.1989; The Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse 2003, the U.K. Charity Commissioners and with due consideration to the local legal frameworks.
- **Uniformity.** This policy applies both during, after and in between work hours.
- **Ambition.** Save the Children aims to be able demonstrate that it is a leader in the field of safeguarding children.
- **Partnership.** We will work together with other agencies to promote Child Safeguarding within organisations and Child Protection within the wider community.

## DEFINITIONS

<b>Word/Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Child</b>	is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years <sup>1</sup>
<b>Child Safeguarding</b>	<p>Within Save the Children, the term refers to the set of policies, procedures and practice that we employ to ensure that Save the Children itself is a child safe organisation.</p> <p>We know that harm can befall children as a result of deliberate actions by a tiny minority of staff and representatives. We have a zero tolerance to such behaviour and pursue rigorous policies to prevent and respond to these issues. We aim to ensure that everyone associated with the organisation is aware of and responds appropriately to issues of child abuse and the sexual exploitation of children. We aim to ensure that anyone who represents our organisation behaves appropriately towards children both in work and outside work and never abuses the position of trust that comes with being a part of the Save the Children family.</p> <p>However, we also know that inadvertent actions, the lack of preventative actions and other failings on our part can and do sometimes have the unintended consequence of causing harm. Plus, preventable accidents can happen. We have seen examples of this across our developmental, humanitarian; fundraising, campaigning and advocacy work in every region where we work. Applying a safeguarding approach to the planning of programmes or in a myriad of other forms of engagement we have with children can be effective in mitigating and removing those risks.</p> <p>In other words, Child Safeguarding is our attempt to ensure that everything which lies within our control is done to ensure the safety and welfare of children that we work with.</p> <p>It helps in ensuring the rights of children within their communities are based on sound foundations. Some agencies continue to use the term Child Protection for this aspect of work, however, we have found it advantageous to differentiate between this and the broad scope of Child Protection work. UN agencies often refer to aspects of this work under the term Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) as outlined in the U.N. Secretary General's Bulletin of 2003.</p>
<b>Child Abuse</b>	Child Abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their

<sup>1</sup> U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

	<p>prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.</p> <p><b>The main categories of abuse are defined by World Health Organization (WHO) as Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect and Negligent Treatment, Sexual Abuse, and Exploitation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Physical Abuse</b> involves the use of violent physical force so as to cause actual or likely physical injury or suffering, (e.g. hitting, shaking, burning, female genital mutilation, torture.)</li> <li>• <b>Emotional or psychological abuse</b> includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation).</li> <li>• <b>Sexual Abuse</b> includes all forms of sexual violence including incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in pornography, and sexual slavery. Child sexual abuse may also include indecent touching or exposure, using sexually explicit language towards a child and showing children pornographic material.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual Exploitation</b></p>	<p>This means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.<sup>2</sup></p>
<p><b>Sexual Exploitation of a Child</b></p>	<p>The sexual exploitation of a child who is under the age of consent, is child sexual abuse and a criminal offence. An underage child cannot legally give informed consent to sexual activity.</p> <p><b>Save the Children considers that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. sexual activity with a child with or without their consent is child abuse and a crime e.g. rape, indecent assault;</li> <li>2. any sexual activity with a child who is under the legal age of consent of the country in which she/he lives and/or in which the offence occurs regardless of whether they consent is child abuse and a crime;</li> <li>3. consensual sexual activity with a child over the legal age of consent of the country in which she/he lives and/or in which the offence occurs, but below 18 years (although not a crime) will be dealt with as a breach of this Child Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct.</li> </ol>
<p><b>The scope of this policy</b></p>	<p><b>This policy applies to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Save the Children International staff, whether national, international, full-time, part-time or engaged on short-term contracts (e.g. consultants,</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Secretary General's Bulletin Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse 2003 ST/SGB/2003/13

	<p>researchers etc.) – referred to as <b>staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• members of Save the Children International (SC, Save the Children members and other representatives (<b>other representatives</b>);</li><li>• Volunteers, trustees and board members, staff and representatives of partner agencies (including consortium partners) and any other individuals, groups or organizations who have a formal/contractual relationship with Save the Children International that involves any contact with children (unless it is formally agreed that a partner organisation may enforce its own safeguarding or protection policy), referred to as “<b>partners or staff of partner agencies</b>”</li><li>• Donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians and other people who visit Save the Children programmes or offices in order to make contact with children must be made aware that this Policy applies to them while visiting our programmes or offices. (During this time they are referred to as “<b>representatives</b>”)</li><li>• All of the above must act in accordance with this Protocol in <b>both their professional and their personal lives.</b></li></ul> <p>Breaches in the policy can lead to disciplinary action including possible dismissal. For partners/contractors, breaches can lead up to and including termination of relation including contractual and partnership agreement. Where relevant, the appropriate legal or other frameworks as per the national laws will be referred to.</p>
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## **SUPPORTING/RELATED DOCUMENTATION**

1. A sample list of unacceptable behaviour for Save the Children representatives, both in personal life and professional life.
2. Code of Conduct

## Sample List of Unacceptable Behaviour

**Staff, partners and other representatives must never:**

1. Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
2. Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years regardless of the age of majority/consent or custom locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
3. Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
4. Act in ways that may be abusive in any way or may place a child at risk of abuse.
5. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
6. Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
7. Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised unless exceptional circumstances apply and previous permission has been obtained from a their line manager
8. Sleep in the same bed as a child with whom they are working
9. Sleep in the same room as a child with whom they are working unless exceptional circumstances apply and previous permission has been obtained from a their line manager
10. Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do themselves
11. Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
12. Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
13. Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment or favour to particular children to the exclusion of others.
14. Spend excessive time alone with children away from others in a manner which could be interpreted as inappropriate
15. Expose a child to inappropriate images, films and websites including pornography and extreme violence
16. Place themselves in a position where they are made vulnerable to allegations of misconduct

**This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. Staff, partners and other representatives should at all times avoid actions or behaviour which may allow behaviour to be misrepresented, constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.**