

# World Childhood Foundation

## Child Safeguarding Policy

# CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## Introduction

*The vision of World Childhood Foundation (“Childhood”) is “all children free from violence, sexual abuse and exploitation”.*

*Childhoods mission is to inspire, promote and develop solutions to end sexual abuse, exploitation and violence against children.*

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 16.2 calling for ending all forms of violence against children by 2030 and the core principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) constitutes the foundation for Childhood’s work. In all actions, Childhood should be guided by every child’s right to survival and development, non-discrimination, best interest and participation.

## The aim of the policy

Childhood is committed to ensuring that each child enjoys the benefit of a protective environment in which their rights are respected. The aim of the policy is to demonstrate that commitment and ensure that no child or group of children involved in activities implemented by, or supported by, Childhood are harmed or abused in any way by staff or partners of Childhood, or allowed through inaction to be harmed.

The policy will also help Childhood minimize the risk that potential abusers want to be engaged in the organization and makes Childhood less vulnerable to false or malicious accusations of abuse.

The policy covers different aspects of Childhood’s operation and programming; recruitment, grant-making, communications, and direct interaction with children. It will ensure that there are systems in place to prevent situations that may put children at risk and help guide Childhood staff and representatives in dealing with difficult situations that may occur.

Childhood partners are encouraged to develop and use their own safeguarding policies and procedures to make the organization safer for children. Childhoods Safeguarding Policy and accompanying safeguarding tools can be used as inspiration for partners in need of establishing or strengthening its safeguarding policy and procedures.

## Intended for

This policy applies to anyone who represents Childhood (representatives) or may come into contact with children through or on behalf of Childhood, including

- Childhood staff
- Childhood Board of Directors
- Childhood Advisory Board Members
- Childhood Board committee members

- Partners visiting Childhood supported projects
- Any other person acting on behalf of Childhood

## Definitions

**Child:** Child refers to any individual under the age of 18 as defined in the UNCRC.

**Child abuse** or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

**Child safeguarding:** Child Safeguarding is the responsibility that organizations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organization has about children's safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities. (Keeping Children Safe definition)

**Child sexual abuse** is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give consent to, or that violates the laws and social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person" (WHO definition)

**(Commercial) Sexual exploitation of children** is sexual abuse by an adult accompanied by remuneration in cash or in kind to the child or third person(s).<sup>1</sup>

## Zero tolerance to all forms of harm and abuse

- Childhood Board of Directors has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that the organizational culture allows raising concerns and reporting and that the safety of children is always the first priority.
- Childhood management has the responsibility to ensure safeguarding in risk assessment, project/program design, planning, funding, monitoring and evaluation
- Childhood management has the responsibility to ensure that all staff actively participate in safeguarding trainings and are updated about current guidelines and routines. Staff members also bear an individual responsibility to participate in trainings and keep themselves updated about safeguarding guidelines and routines.
- A Safeguarding focal person (s) will be identified by the management in each office to support them and all staff to prevent any possible incident and respond appropriately to ensure the safety of children

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<sup>1</sup> Definition from the declaration of the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm in 1996).

- All Childhood staff and representatives must actively work to prevent any possible harm to children involved in activities implemented by, or supported by, Childhood, and respond appropriately, including reporting any safeguarding concern or violation
- All reports of concern regarding the safety of a child participating in an organization supported by Childhood must be submitted to the safeguarding focal person at Childhood.
- Childhood staff suspected of violating the policy will be suspended during investigation, and if found guilty of violating the policy, their engagement with Childhood will be terminated. Depending on the violation the staff member may be reported to law enforcement authorities (the safety and the best interest of the child always applies).
- Childhood Board of Directors and other representatives suspected of violating the policy will be asked to step away from its duties for Childhood during the investigation, and if found guilty of violating the policy, their engagement with Childhood will be terminated. Depending on the violation the representative may be reported to law enforcement authorities (the safety and the best interest of the child always applies).
- If safeguarding concerns arise in relation to a project partner, the matter should be reported and handled in line with the local legislation<sup>2</sup> and safe-guarding routines. If the partner organization is not taking action and accept additional support from Childhood to ensure sufficient level of child safeguarding, the partnership might be suspended and /or funding and support will be withdrawn.

## **Recruitment**

- Childhood job announcements should clearly state Childhoods commitment to safeguarding and that a background check will be conducted of potential candidates. that candidates will be screened for child abuse.
- Interview questions (including scenarios) should be used during interviews with candidates to assess commitment to safeguarding and/or references from previous managers, who will be asked safeguarding questions with regards to the candidate
- Background checks of child abuse history should be made for all new staff, board members and other representatives. The background check should be in line with national regulations. If possible, the candidate should be asked to submit records from police register. Alternatively, the candidate should be asked to submit signed self-disclosure form that the person has not been suspected for or convicted for any offences harming children.
- All staff, board members and other representatives must submit criminal background checks or self-disclosure forms every second year.

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<sup>2</sup> In instances where the legal framework is harmful to the child, the he best interests of the child should always be central in our actions.

## **Trainings**

- All Childhood Board of Directors and other representatives receive an introduction to child safeguarding
- All staff receive and attend interactive safeguarding introduction training during the first month of employment and refresher trainings.
- Specialized mandatory safeguarding training and at least annual refresher training to staff as per their role and responsibility are provided
- Safeguarding trainings are planned and implemented by the safeguarding focal point. Childhood management is responsible to ensure that trainings take place.

## **Reporting**

- All staff and any representative or partner visiting Childhood supported projects are responsible for reporting suspected and actual abuse of children involved in activities implemented or supported by Childhood. The concern or incident should normally be reported on the same working day (or latest within 24 hours), in person, by phone or email.
- If the suspect is a staff, representative or partner visiting Childhood supported projects action will be taken following the Childhood flowchart for reporting.
- If Childhood staff member or representative receive information or witness suspected or actual abuse of children during a project visit, the Childhood Program Manager should be informed and report to the project partner as per their flowchart for reporting. In situations where the partner does not have sufficient safeguarding procedures in place the Childhood Program Manager will report to the Childhood management for further action.
- Childhood should support project partners in their work to ensure that children experiencing abuse receive protection and support during investigation and after.

## **Online protection**

- Everything stated in this Child Safeguarding Policy is applicable to what happens online and/or with the help of technical devices (phones, computers, cameras, tablets). The online environment should be as protective and respectful of children as the offline environment.
- Childhood is to install software which may help in detecting child sexual abuse material accessed via or stored on devices owned by Childhood
- There shall be no personal communication (this includes via social networks or via text messaging, phone calls or video calls) between anyone covered by this policy and children with whom they have come into contact via Childhood and Childhood's

affiliates. Any work-related communication has to go through Childhood's partner organisations or be approved by a Childhood senior staff member.

- If Childhood staff or representatives receive anything in digital form - images, videos, documents, audio files - containing child sexual abuse material it should be reported to a Childhood senior staff member, forwarded to the appropriate agencies (normally the police and one of INHOPE's member hotlines) for action and then deleted from all technical devices.

### **Confidentiality and information sharing**

- Ensure that all information about any suspected or reported incidents are kept strictly confidential
- Always obtain informed consent for use of individual children's data
- Always remove information with names and identifying information about individual children to ensure that children are not put at risk
- Set clear guidance on how information is shared on social media (organizational and personal)

### **Communication**

- Ensure that clear guidelines are established and followed regarding how children are portrayed in images and reporting, such as not taking pictures of individual children that portrays them as victims and/or in exploitative way.
- Always request consent forms (caregiver consent and child's assent) before using images and stories in reports, awareness raising, fundraising or any other activities
- When taking pictures make sure to turn off geo-tagging for images

### **Grant making**

Since direct services and support to Childhood's target groups primarily are implemented by project partners, it is essential that Childhood through its actions and grant-making processes ensures that organizations which receive funding from Childhood adhere to safeguarding principles. In its grant-making, Childhood shall:

- As part of the application process Childhood should request information about safeguarding policies and procedures developed and implemented by the applicant and must also be prepared to demonstrate evidence that their policy and procedures are genuinely implemented in practice.
- Require that project partners that do not have a safeguarding policy and procedures to develop the policy and tools during the first year of cooperation with Childhood.

- Actively support partners to develop or strengthen its safeguarding policy and procedures when needed.

### **Accountability**

- Include safeguarding in the organization's annual planning and reviews
- Annually share safeguarding progress, performance and lessons learned with the board of Director and the other Childhood offices.
- Ensure that best practices and lessons learned are reflected in updated versions of the policy and its procedures.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understood Childhood's Safeguarding policy and accept its content. I agree to fully comply with the terms and conditions in this document.

Date and place: