



**GLOBAL CHILD
SAFEGUARDING**



Save the Children

SAVE THE CHILDREN GLOBAL CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROTOCOL



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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Children have a right to protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation. This is evident in a number of regional and international treaties, first and foremost in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Nevertheless, as children tell us, abuse and sexual exploitation of children still occurs on a global scale and in every country, culture and society. All child abuse and sexual exploitation involves the abuse of children's rights and is unacceptable.
- 1.2 Humanitarian aid workers and other representatives of INGOs, such as Save the Children, are placed in a position of special trust by the populations they serve. When that special trust is exploited and standards for safeguarding children fail, immense damage is caused with long term effects on the lives of victims and their families and implications for the credibility and reputation of the organisations involved. Save the Children has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and sexual exploitation of children by our staff, partners and others who represent us.
- 1.3 Our commitment to children's rights means we have a commitment to safeguard children, especially those with whom we are in contact. The focus of the Child Safeguarding Protocol is to ensure that SCI and each Member take all reasonable steps to make itself safe for children both as an organisation and in the conduct of all aspects of its day to day operations of emergency, humanitarian, developmental, policy and campaigning work.
- 1.4 This Child Safeguarding Protocol describes the standards that SCI and each Member are required to apply and monitor in order to ensure that any children who we come into contact with are respected and protected from abuse and sexual exploitation of any sort.
- 1.5 As individuals and organisations which together form a global movement fighting for children's rights, Save the Children makes the following commitment to children we work with:

COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN

AWARENESS we will ensure that all staff, partners and other representatives are aware of the problem of child abuse and sexual exploitation and the risks to children. Children and their families will be made aware of the standards of behaviour they can expect from our representatives and of how they can raise a concern.

PREVENTION we will ensure, through awareness raising and good practice, that staff and others minimise the risks to children. Staff and managers will receive specialist training to ensure that they create an environment where children's rights are respected and child abuse and sexual exploitation of children is prevented.

REPORTING we will ensure that staff and others are clear as to what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the abuse or exploitation of children.

RESPONDING we will ensure that action is taken to support, safeguard and protect children where concerns arise regarding their possible abuse and exploitation.

- 1.6 This Protocol has been adopted by the SCA Board and is to be adopted formally by the board of trustees and the management of each Save the Children Member and SCI. The standards outlined within the Protocol must be incorporated into SCI's and each Member's Child Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
- 1.7 SCI and each Member will identify a person accountable for the implementation of the Protocol; such person would normally be the Chief Executive Officer, supported by their Child Safeguarding Lead.



DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

- 2.1 Under this Protocol a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.
- 2.2 This Protocol applies to:
- 2.2.1 Each Save the Children Member and references to Save the Children Member will include any successor entity and any international programming unit whether established as part of the Member or as a separate Save the Children entity; and
 - 2.2.2 Save the Children International (“SCI”) and references to SCI will include any successor entity and any international programming unit whether established as part of SCI or as a separate Save the Children entity.
- 2.3 This protocol is intended to be child-focused and requires the highest standards of child safeguarding of all those who come into contact with children. This includes:
- 2.3.1 Save the Children staff, whether full time, part time or engaged on short-term contracts, e.g.
 - 2.3.2 researchers etc. and whether international or national (referred to as “staff”);
 - 2.3.3 Volunteers, consultants, board members, trustees of SCI or its Member organisations (referred to as “representatives”);
 - 2.3.4 Staff and representatives of partner agencies and any other individuals, groups or organisations who have a formal/contractual relationship to Save the Children 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 “staff of partner agencies”);
 - 2.3.5 Donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians and other people who visit Save the Children programmes or offices in order to make contact with children.
- 2.4 Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood; abuse may occur through direct contact, online or without the knowledge of the child.
- 2.5 Save the Children recognizes five categories of child abuse, which are sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Other sub-categories may be adopted from time to time.



IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- 3.1 This Protocol will be reviewed every 3 years and children must be consulted as part of the review process.
- 3.2 SCI and each Member must introduce and maintain an organisation-wide Child Safeguarding Policy, reporting procedures and a Code of Conduct. The Child Safeguarding Policy must cover all aspects of internal operations and programming, reporting procedures and case management processes (together these documents are referred to in this Protocol as SCI's or a Member's Child Safeguarding Policy). Reporting Procedures will set out arrangements for child safeguarding concerns to be identified, reported and responded to. The Code of Conduct must include a set of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards children and be consistent with this Protocol.

AWARENESS AND PREVENTION STANDARDS

DISSEMINATION / AWARENESS RAISING

- 4.1 **STANDARD** SCI/each Member must ensure that the Child Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct and reporting procedures are made widely available and publicised to children and their carers, all their staff, representatives, staff of partner agencies and other stakeholders.
- 4.2 **STANDARD** SCI/each Member must ensure that their Child Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct and reporting procedures are understood by children and others involved in the work of Save the Children, receiving services or benefiting from programmes; this must include the translation of relevant materials into local languages, pictorial images and/or other child friendly material.
- 4.3 **STANDARD** Children and their carers must be made aware of the procedures which exist to raise a concern or a complaint about the conduct of any Save the Children staff, partners or representatives.
- 4.4 **STANDARD** 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 the relevant SCI/each Member Child Safeguarding Policy applies to them while visiting programmes or offices.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 4.5 **STANDARD** Recruitment and selection of staff and others must reflect Save the Children's commitment to safeguard children by ensuring that robust safer recruitment measures are adopted, including obtaining the most thorough criminal background checks available in each jurisdiction, employment references from official sources and thorough interviewing to screen out anyone who may be unsuitable to work with children.
- 4.6 **STANDARD** Successful candidates must be required to declare in writing – prior to commencing their roles - their commitment to follow Save the Children's policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children and made aware of the binding nature of these policies, procedures and codes of conduct and that they apply equally to personal and professional life, unless this is specifically prevented by local legislation.
- 4.7 **STANDARD** SCI/each Member must collaborate effectively to share information and other data to ensure that only people suitable to work with children are engaged on Save the Children's activities, which includes a specific obligation to use all possible means within their jurisdiction to share information with SCI or other Members which may assist in preventing the engagement in Save the Children of anyone who may directly or indirectly pose a risk of harm to children.

BUILDING CHILD SAFEGUARDING INTO MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

- 4.8 **STANDARD** All Save the Children activities or services for children must be operated with the safeguarding of children as their first priority, which must reflect the principles and standards of the Child Safeguarding Policy.

- 4.9 STANDARD** The Country Director, Chief Executive or equivalent must make available and authorize a Child Safeguarding Framework Statement on an annual basis, which must detail the services available in their jurisdiction to support the needs of victims/survivors of abuse or exploitation; a summary of the scope and nature of the criminalization of child exploitation and abuse; an assessment of the quality and efficacy of law enforcement, social care and health services in respect of child abuse and exploitation; the availability of criminal records background checks; any legal obligations to report the abuse or exploitation of children and other information relevant to the safeguarding of children. The Child Safeguarding Framework Statement must be completed in consultation with local child protection advisors to ensure that the safety of the child(ren) involved and ensure that local laws, customs and norms are adequately reflected in Save the Children's organizational response to preventing and responding to child exploitation and abuse.
- 4.10 STANDARD** SCI's/each Member's Child Safeguarding Policy must be observed in their existing practices and incorporated into any new systems and processes that have any impact on the lives of children. This supports the establishment of an environment where the rights of children are respected and where the abuse and sexual exploitation of children is not tolerated.
- 4.11 STANDARD** SCI's/each Member's Child Safeguarding Policy must be reflected in all their human resource and management arrangements that define or determine how staff and other representatives carry out their work, including job descriptions, terms of reference, codes of conduct, performance management systems and disciplinary procedures. Failure to adhere to child safeguarding aspects of any such arrangements must be recognised as a serious disciplinary breach.
- 4.12 STANDARD** SCI/ each Member must ensure that staff in all functional areas have a detailed understanding of their responsibility to ensure programming and operations are safe for children through, mitigating and managing risk and executing our duty of care in all contexts.
- 4.13 STANDARD** The cost of implementing the Child Safeguarding Protocol and SCI's/each Member's Child Safeguarding Policy must be reflected in SCI's/each Member's operational plans, budgets and funding proposals.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.14 STANDARD** SCI/each Member must ensure that all activities across Save the Children, including those delivered by partners will integrate 'Safer Programming' principles, including but not limited to child participation activities, humanitarian responses, new business development, programme development and implementation, policy, operations and campaigning works and ensure that any child safeguarding risks are identified, mitigated and adequate controls developed.
- 4.15 STANDARD** All activities must be assessed to ensure that all children are safeguarded and included, this must include consideration of the needs of children who may have additional requirements to ensure their safe participation, such as those with different abilities, racial heritage, tribal affiliations, religious belief, language, gender, those identifying as LGBTI+, those with medical or physical conditions that may affect their participation. This list is not exhaustive. These aspects must be included in the Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks for such activities.
- 4.16 STANDARD** SCI/each Member and its partners will ensure the inclusion of children with all abilities in programme activities. Children with differing abilities and their families/communities will be consulted on the design and implementation of programming to ensure adequate inclusion.
- 4.17 STANDARD** SCI/each Member must ensure adequate participation of each function or thematic area of work to ensure that the assessment of child safeguarding risk from inception to exit is completed and any learning is incorporated into improving the safety of all programmes and humanitarian responses.
- 4.18 STANDARD** All activities, involving contact with children through use of information technologies, must be assessed to make sure that any child safeguarding risks are identified, mitigated and adequate controls developed. These aspects must be included in the monitoring and evaluation frameworks for such activities.
- 4.19 STANDARD** Engagement with children and their legal guardians for the purposes of marketing, media/communications and advocacy must be with informed consent and must not exploit the child or their carers, nor increase their vulnerability or place them at risk.



- 4.20 STANDARD** The use of images of children and details about their lives for media, advocacy and other purposes, must never include images or information that would allow a child or children to be identified, particularly by ensuring that a child's full name, specific location and image are never combined.
- 4.21 STANDARD** Risk management must ensure that the participation of children is not limited or restricted irrespective of their carer's consent to the fundraising, marketing, media and advocacy processes.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 4.22 STANDARD** SCI/each Member must provide child safeguarding training to all staff, representatives and relevant staff of partner agencies, which must include details of the Child Safeguarding Policy, guidance on promoting a culture where children's rights are observed, how to identify potential harm to children and how to report allegations and suspicions of abuse. Sensitivity to and understanding of local circumstances and culture must be integrated in learning and training without condoning acts that are harmful to children.
- 4.23 STANDARD** Staff who have the responsibility to respond to reports or disclosures of child abuse, including sexual exploitation, must receive specific training in receiving and responding to disclosures. Such training must account for cultural and linguistic variation in the communities served.
- 4.24 STANDARD** SCI's/each Member's Child Safeguarding Policy must include an obligation to conduct induction and child safeguarding training for staff and all other representatives within one month of the commencement of their role, which must be refreshed no less than every two years. Training participation must be recorded centrally by SCI/each Member in a way that facilitates audit and compliance work.

PARTNERS (INCLUDING SUB-GRANTEES)

- 4.25 STANDARD** All partner agreements between SCI/Members and partner organisations must include a commitment to child safeguarding. If a partner elects to use its own policy, that partner child safeguarding policy must be of an equal or higher standard for protecting and recognizing the rights of children.
- 4.26 STANDARD** Agreements with partners must clearly outline procedures for reporting and investigating concerns involving breaches of the policy. This must include clear accountability and an obligation to report breaches in partner agencies to Save the Children.
- 4.27 STANDARD** SCI/each Member must provide support to their partners to build their child safeguarding capacity to develop child safeguarding policies and standards that can be integrated into their work. This would ensure that the partner organization continues to practice strong child safeguarding in all future work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

- 4.28 STANDARD** SCI/each Member must adopt and implement procedures to govern the use of information and communication technologies including the internet, websites, social networking sites and the use of digital imagery to ensure that children are safeguarded from harm.
- 4.29 STANDARD** Country Directors and Chief Executives must ensure that all Save the Children information systems prohibit access to indecent material depicting children and pornography, through the use of firewalls and/or other appropriate measures.

AUDIT AND REVIEW

- 4.30 STANDARD** The SCA Board of Trustees will commission audits across all Save the Children organisations to monitor the levels of compliance with this protocol. This will take place on a cycle of no less than every three years.
- 4.31 STANDARD** The Board of Trustees of SCI/each Member must put in place systems to monitor compliance with their own policies and this protocol and develop implementation action plans aiming at full compliance within agreed timescales.
- 4.32 STANDARD** SCI/each Member will ensure that children and their carers are consulted as part of their monitoring and assurance processes.



REPORTING AND RESPONDING STANDARDS

ORGANISATION WIDE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- 5.1 **STANDARD** SCI/each Member must have a system for reporting alleged Child Safeguarding Policy violations. Local responses must feed into a central reporting scheme to ensure proper recording and response to allegations. Central records shall be reported and accessible to senior managers and trustees on a regular basis.
- 5.2 **STANDARD** SCI/each Member must implement and communicate to their staff and representatives a Whistleblowing Policy. The policy must describe both the procedures for reporting suspected or known policy violations and the protection against retaliation for any individual reporting a breach or compromise to the policy in good faith.
- 5.3 **STANDARD** SCI/each Member must introduce a standard format for reporting concerns and recording key data, which is supported by guidance, advice, training and support available to all relevant staff, representatives and staff of partner agencies.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

- 5.4 **STANDARD** Reporting procedures must be implemented to identify what, how and when concerns are reported and by whom. The reporting procedures must include clear accountability as well as guidance on when and how to report concerns externally and be consistent with the Child Safeguarding Framework Statement for the jurisdiction.
- 5.5 **STANDARD** Reporting procedures must be easily accessible, known to and understood by all beneficiaries, their families, communities, staff, representatives and staff of partner agencies.
- 5.6 **STANDARD** All suspected or known child safeguarding concerns must be reported by staff and representatives within 24 hours, unless it is impossible to do so or other exceptional circumstances exist.
- 5.7 **STANDARD** Where child safeguarding incidents occur on SCI programmes, the funding Member must be notified by SCI within 48 hours of the first report, where possible, and no later than 5 working days after the incident is reported.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- 5.8 STANDARD** All senior management in County Offices (COs) and CEOs and senior management in member offices shall be accountable to bring visibility to and compliance with the Child Safeguarding Policy, including reporting of and responding to alleged policy violations.
- 5.9 STANDARD** Child Safeguarding Focal Points, designated staff members to receive Child Safeguarding concerns/complaints must be appointed at appropriate geographical/operational unit levels and provide other support, such as training, must be appointed and integrated into the operational and programmatic needs in geographically defined areas).
- 5.10 STANDARD** Staff nominated to key positions must have their roles & responsibilities for child safeguarding clearly identified. This must include roles and responsibilities for staff to report suspected or known child safeguarding concerns/complaints through the reporting mechanism and/or to the designated reporting point of contact for receiving child safeguarding allegations or concerns, as well as the responsibility for managers to respond to and manage these concerns.
- 5.11 STANDARD** All Save the Children staff, representatives and staff of partner agencies must be aware of the procedure for reporting a Child Safeguarding Policy violation or concern and/or have the contact details of the Focal Point responsible for receiving such concerns.

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- 5.12 STANDARD** Staff responding to allegations of child abuse, including sexual exploitation an abuse, must be trained and guided by the highest sector standard practices that promote healthy reactions to the affected child(ren) and reduce the probability of creating or compounding harm. The best interests and safety of the child(ren) and witnesses must be paramount to any response undertaken in order to protect their safety, physical and psychological health and welfare, and to respect their rights to confidentiality, equality and access to justice.
- 5.13 STANDARD** Staff will act appropriately and effectively in the process of investigating an allegation and/or cooperating with any subsequent, external process of investigation, and must always act in the “best interests of the child” in any such processes.
- 5.14 STANDARD** Staff will be required to cooperate in any internal or external investigation and maintain the appropriate levels of confidentiality. A process for cooperating with external investigations or authorities must be developed locally, in consultation with Save the Children or other local child protection advisors and be consistent with the Child Safeguarding Framework Statement at 4.9. The level of cooperation will be determined by the levels of safety and protection any local response offers to the affected child(ren).
- 5.15 STANDARD** SCI/each Member must ensure that all child safeguarding allegations are promptly and effectively investigated; in circumstances in which a member of staff or representative resigns or otherwise leaves Save the Children employment/engagement, investigations must continue, and an investigative conclusion must be reached.
- 5.16 STANDARD** At the conclusion of investigations into the abuse or exploitation of children, SCI/each Member must ensure that a clear outcome is recorded and that effective and informative employment references are provided to the future employer of any individual found to have harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm.

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO RESPOND TO, MANAGE, AND LEARN FROM INCIDENTS

- 5.17 STANDARD** The management systems across SCI/each Member must be capable of managing an incident, taking appropriate and necessary actions to safeguard children and making the appropriate recommendations to improve systems designed to keep children safe.
- 5.18 STANDARD** Lessons learnt from reported incidents across the SCI/each Member must be used to influence policy and develop safer practices and programming across the Save the Children movement and elsewhere when appropriate.



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