

Safeguarding Children

What is Save the Children doing to ensure that the children and young people we work with are safe from exploitation and abuse?

We aim to be a 'child safe' organisation. We will do all that we can to ensure that children and young people's experience of our organisation is one that is free from any form of exploitation or abuse and that they feel respected and safe.

Within Save the Children itself

Anyone representing our organisation is expected to adhere at all times (both in their private and professional lives) to the highest standards of behaviour towards children, young people and their families. This is clearly stated in a Code of Conduct and our Child Safeguarding Policy. Wherever there are concerns regarding our own representatives, they will be investigated honestly and fairly with due regard to internal disciplinary procedures and national legal procedures.

Within the wider community

Save the Children has well-established programmes of work across the world that address the children's right to be protected from exploitation and abuse. If we encounter individual cases of child abuse in communities, our staff, representatives and partners will respond with child protection measures appropriate to the location and available resources.

What is involved in a safeguarding approach?

We have adopted a range of preventative measures and systems and clear procedures to protect individual children where abuse or exploitation has occurred. We investigate and discipline perpetrators. These systems are regularly monitored by our country programmes and internal auditors.

We have recently reviewed and revised our policies and procedures and have developed clearer guidance in terms of:

- **when to apply the policy**
- **what actions staff should take in reporting a concern**
- **procedures to be used in taking steps to protect a child when those concerns are based outside our organisation**
- **procedures to be used in taking steps to protect a child when those concerns lie within our organisation**
- **managerial and senior managerial responsibilities**
- **supporting tools.**

These revised Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures are the foundation stones for making this a truly child safe organisation. However, they stand alongside a well-established set of commitments, approaches, policies and procedures that have been in operation for many years.

What are the building blocks for making ours a child safe organisation?

We are committed to raising awareness of, preventing, reporting and responding to issues of child exploitation and abuse.

This work builds on the foundations provided by the International Save the Children Alliance Child Protection Policy and Protocol, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Secretary General's Bulletin 2003/13, the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response and the Keeping Children Safe Child Protection Standards

What are some of the key components of our approach?

- It is the responsibility of every individual who represents this organisation and not just one department or person.
- Communicating with children, families and communities about their right to be respected and protected is seen as essential.
- We regularly audit and monitor implementation of these key areas.
- Our representatives agree to abide by a strict Code of Conduct backed up by well-established disciplinary systems.
- Our Trustees have direct and regular oversight of this area and we have a central reporting system.
- We support staff and partners by developing resources, toolkits and forms of support.

What are some of the key policies and procedures in this area?

Global Safeguarding Policy

Code of Conduct

Global HR policies for recruiting, induction, staff development and training, performance management and disciplinary procedures

Whistle-blowing, Complaints and Investigation mechanisms

Country specific Child Protection (Safeguarding) Procedures

Regional and Country HR policies and procedures designed to implement global policies.

Reporting and accountability

Any allegations and concerns relating to our staff and partners in this crucial area are reported centrally to our Trustees on a six-monthly basis. In the interests of accountability, we now publish the annual figures of complaints received against our staff and the outcomes of subsequent investigations.

Save the Children employs approximately 4,500 people across six regions. No concern is raised in relation to this policy and the Code of Conduct with the vast majority of our staff. From July 2006 to July 2007 we received eight complaints against staff members. Following investigation:

- **three cases led to staff being dismissed when allegations were proven**
- **five cases were found to be unfounded, unrelated to staff, unproven or malicious.**

Finally

The unfortunate truth is that we work in some of the world's most hostile environments where children's rights are widely and routinely breached. As an organisation we address this across a broad range of activities. We are proud of the real difference we make to millions of children's lives, but we recognise that we cannot protect every child in all the countries where we work. We also recognise that sometimes a small minority of our own staff do not meet our own standards of professionalism. We will continue to work to ensure that these standards are met at all times and in all locations.

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We're the world's independent children's charity. We're outraged that millions of children are still denied proper healthcare, food, education and protection. We're working flat out to get every child their rights and we're determined to make further, faster changes. How many? How fast? It's up to you.

We Save the Children  Will you?