Rädda Barnen

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POLICY FOR SAFE AND SECURE PRACTICES FOR CHILDREN

SAFER TOGETHER – RÄDDA BARNENS CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Approved by: The National Executive Committee
Date: 21 May 2026
Responsible for revision: Child Safeguarding Director
The policy must be updated: Within 2 years
Responsible for monitoring: Head of Management Support & Membership
Applies to: Overall, all activities within Save the Children

Rädda Barnen

POLICY ON SAFE AND SECURE PRACTICIES FOR CHILDREN

Background and purpose

Save the Children is the world's leading children's rights organisation. To fulfil our mission as the world's leading children's rights organisation, we need to ensure that our practicies are safe and secure for children. At Save the Children, we are determined to do everything in our power to ensure that every child in our activities is and feels safe. Children should thrive and feel at ease in our activities, and have their rights upheld in accordance *with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. We who represent Save the Children must be able to work in accordance with children's rights and carry out our work with and for children in a safe and responsible manner. That is why we have 'Safer Together', or 'Child Safeguarding' as it is known in our international operations. It comprises internal policies, guidelines, procedures, working methods and tools which, together, ensure that Save the Children is a safe and secure organisation for children.

This policy relates to Save the Children's Global Alliance's *Child Safeguarding Protocol*. The Protocol was adopted in March 2010 and revised in 2026. The Protocol sets out common requirements for policies and procedures that all member countries and Save the Children International must follow.

Core principle

Save the Children shall be a safe and secure organisation for children. We have zero tolerance for all forms of discrimination, abuse, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation of children, and do not accept any behaviour that contravenes this policy. This means that all employees, elected representatives, volunteers, trainees, partners and other representatives who work for or are in any way contracted to Save the Children Sweden have a duty to have read the policy, to share this fundamental principle and to comply with the obligations defined by Save the Children.

Our fundamental principle is that:

- a child is any person under the age of 18.
- all children are of equal worth and have the same rights, regardless of the child's or their guardian's/parent's skin colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or other status.
- All children have the right to be free from all forms of harm, discrimination, abuse, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Save the Children works to ensure that children are aware of their right to be free from harm, discrimination, abuse, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, and we shall inform them of that right.

- Save the Children has a duty to ensure that everyone working for, on behalf of or in collaboration with Save the Children Sweden applies the best possible practices regarding behaviour towards children in accordance with this policy.

Scope

Every child involved in our practicies must be protected from all forms of intentional or unintentional harm, discrimination, abuse, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation through compliance with this policy and its annexes. The rights of the child are of paramount importance. Every effort must be made to safeguard the child's right to safety and protection during an investigation following a risk or incident report. The child's safety and security are the top priority.

It is our responsibility to ensure that all children in our programmes and their carers are aware of and understand the implications of this policy. Children and carers must be informed and know how to report any violations of the policy, and that the reporting channels are also available to them.

All operations within Save the Children must comply with Child Safeguarding/Safer Together. For corporate operations, the requirements in this regard are set out in the ownership policy and ownership directives, where this policy or an equivalent governing document is a fundamental requirement. A child-friendly version must also be available.[1]

There must be a contact person or persons for *'Tryggare Tillsammans'* on the National Board, at head office and in the regional offices.

The policy applies to:

1. All employees, regardless of whether they work full-time or part-time, internationally or nationally.
2. Employees on short-term contracts, such as consultants, researchers, etc.
3. Elected representatives and volunteers in local associations, districts and the National Executive Committee.
4. Interns at Save the Children.
5. Employees, representatives, partners and individuals, groups or organisations that have a formal or contractual relationship with Save the Children involving any form of contact with children, either in person or online – unless it has been agreed that the partner may apply its own policy on the protection of children from abuse and exploitation.[2]
6. Donors, journalists, politicians and other individuals who visit Save the Children's programmes or offices and who may come into contact with children.

[1] *One-pager on 'Safer Together' for younger children.*
[2] Partners must apply the policy or have drawn up their own policy of a similar standard. Partnership agreements must clearly set out agreed procedures for reporting and investigating suspected violations of the policy, including issues relating to the harassment and exploitation of children.

Our commitment and responsibility

We shall be aware, prevent, act and report in accordance with this policy:

Be aware

We shall:

- sign the 'Safer Together' declaration of consent[3] upon employment or assignment to demonstrate that we have read and understood the policy and that we will act in accordance with it.
- share the fundamental principles and comply with the obligations defined by Save the Children.
- be aware of who to contact if we suspect that children are being harmed within our organisation, or in the event of any violations of this policy.

Prevention

We who represent, work for or are in any way contracted to Save the Children must:

- complete Save the Children's training on Child Safeguarding/Safer Together.[4]
- provide an extract from the police criminal records register: *for work with children in other organisations.*[5]
- familiarise ourselves with the risk assessment for the activities in which we take part.
- When in direct contact with children, we must ensure that such contact always takes place in an open manner, so that at least one other adult can see or hear us. We must not work alone with children, either physically or digitally, unless it is necessary and has been approved in advance by the line manager or the chairperson[6] . This also applies when travelling. When working with children in a digital environment, working alone may take place provided that a risk assessment has been carried out and approved by the person responsible for Child Safeguarding.
- comply with the policies, procedures and guidelines that apply to photographing and filming children, such as ensuring that consent has been given by the child and their guardian and that the images are taken with respect[7] .
- ensure that, when working with children on digital platforms, no material or data is shared that could enable a child to be identified, either directly or indirectly. This includes, for

[3] Appendix 1: *Safer Together – Declaration of Compliance* or Appendix 2: *Safer Together – Declaration of Compliance for partners.*

[4] All employees, elected representatives and volunteers must complete the 'Safer Together' training within one month of taking up their role and then repeat the same training every two years. Suitable online training courses are available for partners, although these are not compulsory for partners.

[5] Forms – children in other activities | The Swedish Police Authority (polisen.se)

[6] There are currently exemptions for activities governed by healthcare legislation and regional advisers for safe and secure activities.

[7] Save the Children's Consent Form for Film and Photography.

example, screenshots, usernames, the content of chat histories, and digital images and files that may contain metadata.

Those of us who are responsible for and/or lead an activity with Save the Children shall:

- carry out a risk assessment to identify, minimise, address and, where possible, avoid situations and behaviours that may expose children to risks[8] .
- based on the risk assessment, organise our work and the workplace in such a way as to minimise the risk of children being exposed to harm, discrimination, abuse, violence, sexual abuse, exploitation or any other violation of their rights.
- Adjust the existing risk assessment based on measures taken and lessons learnt when a risk or incident occur.
- ensure that all children in our practices and their carers are aware of and understand the implications of this policy. They must be informed and aware of how violations of the policy are to be reported and that the reporting channels are also available to them.
- empower children and their families/carers on their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can expect from their collaboration with Save the Children.
- promote an environment characterised by openness regarding children's vulnerability to discrimination, abuse, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, and ensure that questions or concerns can be raised and discussed safely and respectfully.

Take action

We shall:

- do everything in our power to protect children from intentional or unintentional harm, discrimination, abuse, all forms of physical and psychological violence, sexual abuse or exploitation.
- treat children as individuals, with respect and free from discrimination; regardless of the child's or parent's/carer's ethnic or socio-economic background; age; disability; gender; gender identity or gender expression; language; religion or other belief; political opinion; or sexual orientation.
- respect every child's integrity and never harm the child's physical and/or mental health.
- In accordance with children's right to participation, respect children's views and concerns, and give them the opportunity to express their views in situations that affect them, in a manner appropriate to their age and maturity[9] .
- Always treat children fairly and never discriminate against, or give special favour to, individual children to the detriment of others.

[8] Appendix 3: *Risk assessment for safe and secure activities*
[9] Save the Children's *Guidelines on children's participation.*

- Never expose children to situations which they cannot understand, for which they are not mature enough, and to which they cannot give their consent.
- Never act with the intention of blaming, humiliating, belittling or dishonouring children, or otherwise subjecting them to psychological abuse.
- act respectfully in our interactions with children by avoiding speech, physical contact or suggestions that may be perceived as inappropriate or offensive.
- ensure that we keep our private lives separate from our role as representatives of Save the Children to avoid finding ourselves in situations that risk causing harm to children, adults or the organisation. This includes, amongst other things, not allowing children or adult participants whom we meet in the course of our work to stay or sleep at our homes.
- never sleep in the same bed or room as children we meet in the course of our work.
- never entering into relationships with children that could in any way be considered exploitative or inappropriate.
- never entering into a relationship or sexual contact with children or young people taking part in Save the Children's activities.
- Only assist children with intimate and private tasks if they are unable to do so themselves, such as using the toilet or getting dressed.
- Never encourage, contribute to, or in any way participate in illegal behaviour by a child.
- As an adult, never initiate sexual contact with anyone under the age of 18, regardless of the national age of consent.
- Deal with children who may have been subjected to harm, discrimination, abuse, psychological or physical violence, sexual abuse or exploitation, in accordance with Save the Children's reporting procedures and in the best interests of the child as well as their safety and protection.
- cooperate fully and in confidence during investigations into suspicions and allegations.

Reporting

We must report without delay any suspicions that a child has been subjected to any form of intentional or unintentional harm, abuse, psychological or physical violence, sexual abuse or exploitation, in accordance with Save the Children Sweden's reporting procedures[10] . All risk and incident reports must be made promptly and within 24 hours. Risk reports must also be submitted without delay.

Incident reporting

An incident report must be made when any of the following occurs:

- When someone violations this policy.

[10] Appendix 4: *Incident and reporting form* or https://rapportera.rb.se

- When we become aware of or suspect that a child has been harmed in Save the Children's activities.
- When a child tells us themselves that they have been harmed whilst participating in Save the Children's activities.
- When someone reports to us that a child has been harmed or has suffered harm within our activities.

Risk reporting

Risk reporting is an important part of Save the Children's preventative work to ensure a safe and secure environment for children. All risks that could result in a child being harmed must be reported, regardless of their severity. This also includes risks and shortcomings in the physical environment.

A risk report must be made:

- When risks or shortcomings in the practices are identified in accordance with this policy, even when no child has come to any harm.
- When an incident or situation comes to light which, despite the policy having been followed, could have resulted in a child being harmed.

We can report in various ways:

- by contacting the chairperson or manager directly (who will then submit a report in accordance with the following two options)
- via the digital reporting channel https://rapportera.rb.se[11]
- via the incident and risk reporting form, which is emailed to rapportera@rb.se[12]
- partners may report via a contact person at Save the Children, but should still be aware of the reporting channels above and are welcome to directly use it as well

Reporting concerns

If we become aware of, or suspect that, a child is being harmed, even outside our own organisation, we at Save the Children must always report our concerns to the social services in the local authority where the child lives. This is a decision we have taken to ensure that every child we encounter has the right to safety and protection. For guidance, please refer to Save the Children's *Guidelines for reporting concerns when children are at risk* and *the template for reporting concerns*[13] . When reporting a concern, we do not use the incident and risk reporting system. If any uncertainty arises or support is needed, we can consult the chairperson or manager and contact our regional advisers for safe and secure operations at the relevant regional office.

[11] Välfärd AB and our subsidiaries have a separate, equivalent reporting channel at http://rapportera.valfard.rb.se
[12] Välfärd AB and our subsidiaries email risk and incident reports torapportera.valfard@rb.se
[13] For further support, there is also Save the Children's *Guidance on Concerns for a Child*, which is aimed at all adults who come into contact with children and young people in the course of their work, including those outside Save the Children

Reporting to the police

Suspected offences in which children are harmed must be reported to the police, provided this does not pose a further risk to the child. This applies even if the offence was not committed in connection with Save the Children's own activities. It is important to seek support from the chairperson or manager when reporting the matter to the police. In the case of, where a crime is suspected in the digital environment, the incident must also be reported using the platform's own tools.

What happens next?

Save the Children handles all reports in accordance with established procedures. Cases are dealt with professionally and confidentially by a limited number of authorised individuals. Reports are received centrally and followed up by the relevant departments within Child Safeguarding. All cases are taken extremely seriously, dealt with without delay, and feedback is always provided. Risks, incidents and compliance with the 'Safer Together' programme are monitored by the National Board's Audit Committee.

If there is a suspicion that a child is, or is at risk of, coming to harm, the case will also be reported to social services. If there is a suspicion that a case is of a criminal nature, it will be reported to the police, provided this does not pose a risk to the child.

All confidential reports will be handled in the best interests of the child, regardless of the outcome of the investigation.

Consequences of violations the policy

Employment disciplinary measures may be taken against staff who violate the policy or the ethical guidelines. Elected representatives and volunteers may have their membership revoked[14] .

All employees, elected representatives, volunteers, trainees, partners and other representatives of Save the Children must be aware that any allegations of intentionally or unintentionally harming, discriminating against, abusing, using violence against, sexually abusing and/or exploiting a child will be reported and investigated:

a) Where a crime is suspected, a report will be made to the police.

b) Through Save the Children's internal investigation in accordance with established reporting procedures for suspected violations of this policy[15] .

Responsibility for implementation, compliance, monitoring and continuous improvement

[14] §2 Membership: Save the Children's Articles of Association.
[15] See the Procedure for violations, for example *Anyone behaving inappropriately must be made aware that their behaviour causes discomfort to others and that*
such behaviour must cease. As a general principle, everyone in the context has a responsibility to speak up immediately if someone behaves in a manner that contravenes Save the Children's core values

The following roles are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the policy within their areas of responsibility:

- Managers and the Chair
- Safe and Secure Operations Advisers
- Child Safeguarding Advisor
- Child Safeguarding Director
- National Executive Committee

Revision of the policy

The Child Safeguarding Director is responsible for reviewing the policy, which must take place every two years. Decisions are taken by the National Association's Board.

Definitions of terms related to the policy:

Discrimination: When a person is treated unfairly or is subjected to abuse on the basis of a ground of discrimination. Lack of accessibility and sexual harassment also constitute discrimination[16] .

Abuse: This means that a child's mental health is harmed or jeopardised, usually over a long period, when a person, through words or actions, treats the child in a condescending manner or attacks the child's personality[17] .

Physical violence: Physical violence means that someone causes a child bodily harm, illness or pain, or places the child in a state of helplessness or a similar condition. Any form of corporal punishment counts as physical violence. Sexual abuse often involves physical violence[18] .

Psychological violence: Psychological violence means that a child is systematically subjected to disparaging comments, degrading treatment or deliberate emotional distress. Even a single serious incident can put a child at risk of harm. Being forced to witness violence in their immediate surroundings or living in an environment where violence and threats of violence occur can also cause a child psychological harm[19] .

Sexual abuse of children: This includes all forms of sexual acts forced upon a child by another person. This means that

- the person exploits the child's position of dependence and the act is motivated by that person's needs

[16] The definition of discrimination is taken from the Discrimination Ombudsman.
[17] The definition of harassment is taken from the WHO.
[18] The definition of physical violence is taken from the WHO.
[19] The definition of psychological violence is taken from the WHO.

- the act violates the child's integrity
- the act takes place against the child's will or is an act that the child cannot understand and is not mature enough to comprehend[20] .

Exploitation of children: This includes all forms of exploitation of children that may cause harm to the child in any respect, such as physical, psychological, sexual and financial exploitation[21] .

Supporting & related documents

Documents supporting the policy and its implementation:

- Save the Children Global Child Safeguarding Protocol
- Save the Children's Ethical Guidelines
- Ethical Guidelines for Voluntary Work at Save the Children
- Policy on Protection against Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation
- Procedure – Risk Assessment for Safe and Secure Operations
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Guideline for reporting concerns when children are at risk
- Template for reporting concerns
- Procedure in the Event of Violations
- Consent for photography and filming
- Guidelines for photography and the publication of images
- Procedure for holiday activities
- Guidelines for children's participation
- Procedure for child protection rounds
- Save the Children Youth Association's safety policy

Appendices

Appendix 1: Safer Together – Declaration of Approval

Appendix 2: Safer Together – Declaration of Approval for partners who work with children

Appendix 3: Risk Assessment for Safe and Secure Activities

Appendix 4: Incident and Risk Reporting Form

Appendix 5: Responsibilities within the organisation for Safer Together

[20] The definition of child sexual abuse is taken from the WHO.
[21] The definition of exploitation is taken from the Convention on the Rights of the Child.