



Rädda Barnen

STRATEGY

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PROTECTION AGAINST SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Established by: Board of Directors

Date: 2024-03-01

Responsible for revision: HR Director

Policy to be updated: 2026-03

Applies to: All members, activists, representatives, employees and partners



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Basic view

Working for Save the Children Sweden, in Sweden or in another country, entails a special responsibility to protect human rights in general and the rights of the child in particular. Save the Children's core values are based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They are based on the conviction that:

- the equal value of all people
- that children have specific rights
- everyone has a responsibility

Scope of the programme

This policy is about protection against sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of adults. Protection against sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children is specifically described in the policy on safe and secure activities for children.

The policy applies to:

- All staff, whether full or part-time, international or national.
- Staff employed on short-term contracts, e.g. consultants, researchers, etc.
- Active members, volunteers and board members of local, district and national organisations.
- Staff and representatives of partner organisations and individuals, groups or organisations that have a formal/contractual relationship with Save the Children - unless it has been agreed that the partner organisation may apply its own policy on sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Donors, journalists, politicians and other people visiting Save the Children programmes or offices.

The policy sets out the basic rules and behaviours expected of those who represent the organisation in any form. Sexual exploitation and abuse are serious violations of both the norms of aid work and the rights of our beneficiaries.

This policy applies 24 hours a day, seven days a week and every day of the year. We have zero tolerance for all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation and will not accept any behaviour that violates this policy. Violation of this policy or "Safer Together" is contrary to our values and may be grounds for termination of employment contract, expulsion of a member, termination of cooperation or association with Save the Children.

Background and purpose

Save the Children enjoys a high level of trust in society and among those supported by the organisation. Representing Save the Children therefore often means being in a position of power. We recognise that our work, particularly in humanitarian response, risks exacerbating and reinforcing existing inequalities in the communities we work with. In our work, we have an obligation to work against such inequalities in different ways. The position of power and trust held by Save the Children representatives must never be abused, and everyone in the organisation has a duty to maintain a professional and ethical approach.

This policy emphasises the importance of reporting all incidents to enable early intervention and action. Sexual abuse and exploitation can be preceded by threats, grooming or other behaviours, physical or digital, that escalate and can lead to further abuse or exploitation. Save the Children

wants to ensure that everyone feels safe to report incidents in confidence, so that we can act quickly and confidentially.

Save the Children works to reduce the risks of abuse and exploitation. This is done through effective prevention, by ensuring that vulnerable individuals are not exposed to further harm, and with effective reporting and response procedures, offering appropriate supportive interventions when needed.

Ensuring compliance with this policy requires that individual responsibilities are clear to all. Managers and supervisors are tasked with ensuring a good working environment with minimal risk of sexual exploitation and abuse and that those who report are not exposed to further harm.

We are committed to 'Do no harm' by ensuring that all areas of Save the Children's operations are designed to minimise potential opportunities for perpetrators to act exploitatively. We also work to maximise the safety of those who participate in our activities and are involved with Save the Children in various ways.

Knowledge and awareness

Those who represent Save the Children in any form (see scope section) must be provided with information about our policy and must comply with the values, norms, behaviours and procedures contained therein.

In connection with employment or entering into a position of trust or cooperation with Save the Children, a review of the policy must be made. Responsibility for implementation shall lie with the leader responsible for the individuals.

As a manager, within the first three months of your employment, you must also complete the mandatory internal training in this area.

All partners, consultants and visitors to a Save the Children International country programme, including but not limited to journalists, donors, staff and representatives, must be informed of this policy in relation to their specific assignments and what behaviour is expected and how to report any incidents.

Prevention

Operating safely means that all Save the Children representatives must be aware of how we work, the potential impact of our presence in the countries we operate in and how we carry out our activities.

Representatives of Save the Children are never allowed:

- Engaging in or having a sexual relationship with a person in a vulnerable group, unless the persons are part of the same group and the relationship has not arisen as part of the person's role in Save the Children;
- sexually assaulting or sexually exploiting individuals in the workplace or in the communities we work with;
- Engaging in or having exploitative sexual relationships with recipients of direct or indirect support (parent or carer of a child taking part in Save the Children activities, for example) from Save the Children;
- Buying sexual services, regardless of local or national laws or standards on prostitution or the laws of their own country;



- Suggesting, proposing, requesting and/or demanding sexual favours from individuals in the communities we work with, in return for something - for example, protection, support (goods, services, resources, opportunities) or employment;
- Supporting or engaging in any form of sexual exploitation or abusive activities, including human trafficking, or sexual or exploitative relationships with trafficked persons; *or*
- Fail to report allegations, concerns or suspicions of sexual exploitation and/or abuse of any person.

Save the Children is committed to zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse, which means that all programme design and planning must include risk assessments that address the associated risks. Programme design and staffing must reflect these assessments.

Reporting and action

All incidents of sexual abuse and exploitation must be reported with the utmost urgency. Early reporting of all suspected offences increases the chances of prompt action and preventing further abuse.

Both incidents and risks should be reported through one of Save the Children's reporting channels.

You can report incidents and risks in three different ways:

- via direct contact with the chairperson or manager (who in turn makes a notification under the two the following options)
- via the digital reporting channel <https://rapportera.rb.se>
- via incident and risk reporting forms emailed [to rapportera@rb.se](mailto:to.rapportera@rb.se)

Suspicions of incidents can reach the organisation in different ways. For example, a vulnerable individual, or someone close to them, may report it themselves. It may also be that a Save the Children staff member or other representative witnesses an incident, or hears about an incident. Suspicions may also arise more indirectly, for example, through research, focus group discussions, studies or other mapping that provides identifiable patterns of potential abuse. Reporting is therefore not dependent on direct suspicions, but can be triggered by the existence of sufficient causes for concern from enough sources.

Assessments are initiated by designated Save the Children representatives with the support and involvement of HR, according to the assessment procedure.

In the case of a mapping exercise, strict confidentiality applies to all parties. Surveys must be carried out in accordance with the GDPR data protection policy and be designed to prevent, as far as possible, gossip, rumour-mongering or the destruction of anyone's reputation and relationships. Violations of this and/or attempts to intimidate, harass or retaliate against any party involved in the mapping are seen as a serious breach of our values and may be grounds for termination of employment, exclusion of a member, termination of cooperation or association with Save the Children.

Save the Children recognises that there may be a high risk of threats and/or retaliation against victims and other reporters. Therefore, the needs and safety of the victim should be at the centre of any response strategy. Investigations and actions should be carried out in a professional manner, not least because it affects the organisation's confidence and future reporting on similar issues.



Save the Children ensures that vulnerable individuals are supported by relevant social institutions including health, legal, psychosocial and economic institutions, where possible. Individuals may be supported by external resources, such as occupational health services.

All information relating to a suspicion of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation must be treated with strict confidentiality and not shared with any party other than those who are part of the reporting channel.

Incidents should be reported to the National Board, global management and the management team of Save the Children Sweden according to other business monitoring and risk/crisis management.

This policy is implemented in accordance with;

- All relevant Swedish laws related to protection against sexual abuse, violence and harm, as well as those specifying the reporting of known or suspected cases of exploitation;
- Applicable laws in all countries where Save the Children operates; and
- Bulletin of the UN Secretary-General "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" (ST/SBGB/2003/13).

Save the Children reports criminal behaviour to the relevant authorities. Where there are international procedures for reporting perpetrators in their home countries or abroad, Save the Children will report according to these. Those under investigation will be invited and encouraged to participate in the ongoing investigation.

Save the Children's internal screening continues even after a notification to the relevant authority has been made. This applies even if the person being investigated declines, leaves the organisation or is unavailable for any other reason.

Knowing about sexual abuse and/or sexual exploitation but not acting or reporting is considered misconduct.

Information gathering

Information that, alone or together with other information, can identify the individual(s) concerned, such as personal data, images, testimonies, etc., may never be used in communication, publication, research or collection material.

Revision of the policy

Review of this policy shall take place every two years, with the Head of HR being responsible for revision, and decisions are taken by the Board of the National Association.

Definitions

Term	Definition of term
Vulnerable individual	A person who has been, or continues to be, sexually exploited or abused in connection with their involvement in any of Save the Children's or another organisation's activities.
Representative	Anyone who represents Save the Children Sweden in any form, see section "scope".
Local communities like us working with	Community or place where Save the Children and/or Save the Children International works and offers support and services.
Sexual harassment	Unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that violates someone's dignity. This can include, for example, groping or showing pictures with sexual content. It can also include unwelcome compliments and innuendo. ¹
Sexual abuse	Includes all forms of sexual behaviour imposed by another person. Sexual abuse means that the other person takes advantage of a position of dependence, that the act is based on the other person's needs, that the act violates the victim's privacy, that the act is against the victim's will or is an act to which the victim cannot give informed consent or otherwise does not participate voluntarily in the sexual act.
Sexual solicitation/grooming	Developing emotional relationships with people in vulnerable situations or in unequal positions of power, with the intention or potential to manipulate these relationships into a sexualised dynamic.
Sexual exploitation	Actual or attempted abuse of a vulnerable person for sexual purposes from a position of power or trust. This includes, but is not limited to, promising the person economic, social or political gain through sexual exploitation.
Sexual favours	Any type of sexual or sexualised act given in exchange for things like money, goods, services, opportunities or similar. It also includes requesting inappropriate pictures, films or exposing someone to pornography.
Consent	Informed consent is an ongoing consent freely given based on a clear appreciation and understanding of the facts, implications and future consequences of an action. To give informed consent, the person concerned must have all the relevant facts at the time of authorisation and be able to evaluate and understand the consequences of an action. They must also be aware of and be able to exercise their right to refuse to participate in an act without justification and/or not to be coerced (i.e. persuaded based on force, coercion or threat, either directly or implicitly).

Supporting and related documents

- Policy on safe and secure activities for children

¹ <https://www.do.se/globalassets/stodmaterial/stod-sexuella-trakasserier-pa-arbetsplatsen.pdf>



- Save the Children's ethical guidelines
- Guidelines for volunteering with Save the Children
- Risk assessment Child Safeguarding/Safer Together
- Procedures and templates for reporting concerns
- Whistleblowing policy

Annex 1 PSEA - Declaration of Authorisation

Signed statement for all Save the Children representatives.



I hereby certify that I have read and understood the Policy on Protection from Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation.

I undertake to comply with all aspects of the Policy on Protection from Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation, including the personal and professional obligations it entails.

I understand that a serious breach of the Policy on Protection from Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation may be grounds for Save the Children to terminate my employment and/or exclude me as a member and/or from having any association with Save the Children.

I understand that certain behaviour in breach of the Policy on Protection from Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation may result in criminal sanctions.

Date:

Signature: _____

Name clarification: _____

