



Figure 1(c) For Children's Right to Play, Nidaa Al Suleima Abdul Jalil Shurbaji (Lebanon, 15 years)

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRINCIPLES

Defence for Children International

Adopted on 5 October 2023



“Child safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations 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 organisation has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities.”

Source: Keeping Children Safe
The International Child Safeguarding Standards

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<https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/international-child-safeguarding-standards/>



Defence for Children International (DCI)

DCI Movement: Child Safeguarding Policy and Principles

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Defence for Children International (DCI)

DCI Movement: Child Safeguarding Policy and Principles

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Defence for Children International (DCI)

DCI Movement: Child Safeguarding Policy and Principles

“All organisations whose work affects children need to develop a clear child safeguarding policy that prevents harm to children and outlines what measures are in place to respond when safeguarding concerns arise.”

Keeping Children Safe

[Safeguarding Standards and How to Implement them](#)

1. Introduction

[1.1 Mission of Defence for Children International \(DCI\)](#)

[DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL \(DCI\)](#) is a leading child rights independent international organisation and a membership-based grassroots movement, founded in 1979, the first international year of the child. DCI promotes and protects the human rights of children at the local, national, regional and international level, in accordance with international standards, as set out in its [statutes](#). DCI has National Sections (full members) in [more than 25 countries worldwide](#), and an international secretariat in Geneva, together referred to as “the Movement”.

As set out in Article 10 of the statutes, National Sections are legally and financially independent from the international organisation and the Movement as a whole. At the same time, each National Section, whilst abiding by institutional requirements of respective national legislation, must comply with the principles, guidelines, objectives and policies established by the Movement of DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL (DCI). Furthermore, in paragraph 1.2.10 of the [Code of ethics and gender policy](#) annexed to the statutes, DCI commits to abide by the Keeping Children Safe standards. DCI is a member of the [Keeping Children Safe network](#).

[1.2 Objectives of this document](#)

The aim of this document is to set out DCI policy and principles at international level, for the Movement as a whole, and to enumerate clear responsibilities for National Sections and the International Secretariat, to ensure that DCI staff, operations and programmes do no harm to children in their DCI-related activities or their private life, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.



This document is complemented by the individual child safeguarding policies of the National Sections and of the International Secretariat.

1.3 Scope of this document

This policy covers anybody who represents DCI. This means that all the following people must implement the policy and adhere to its requirements in their DCI-related activities and in their private life: all staff – whether permanent, temporary, or interim, contractors, consultants, trainees/interns, volunteers), as well as all trustees, Council and Board members. It also applies to the supervision of visitors to DCI premises, projects, events, or activities.

Partners: When working with partners, DCI understands the importance of establishing which organisation is responsible for all aspects of child safeguarding from concept design and planning through to implementation and follow-up and to taking action in the case that a concern is raised, or an incident takes place. To this end, when joint activities or projects are intended to be carried out with a partner, a joint agreement of procedure will be signed by all parties involved ([Appendix 12](#)) in order to clarify child safeguarding roles and responsibilities. This agreement does not impede DCI or the partner(s) from meeting its/their own reporting obligations and referring any issue to relevant authorities in case of a disagreement on the appropriate course of action.

1.4 A brief overview of DCI interactions with children

DCI National Sections interact with children directly in their programmes and daily work: e.g. [supporting access to justice](#) for individual children in socio-legal defence centres, [capacity-building among children on their rights](#), involving individual children and/or groups of children in project work, organising and coordinating their participation in events, including online, and conducting training sessions with child human right defenders. DCI also interacts indirectly with children when advocating on their behalf or have access to information on children in the context of the organisation's work, such as children's names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies, or provide funding for other organisations that work directly with children. As a child rights organisation, DCI also advocates for the development and implementation of robust child safeguarding policies more broadly, e.g., in working to enhance child safeguarding in sport or in other leisure activities.

It is in this context that DCI has adopted this Child Safeguarding Policy and child safeguarding principles for the Movement.

1.5 2023 Review of Child Safeguarding Policy

In the light of experience since implementation began in 2020, in this review we made the following updates, taking account of comments by the DCI Child Safeguarding Working Group:

- Scope and principles slightly updated to cover partnerships, visitors, online aspects and children's participation rights.
- Deadlines in requirements section updated and more focus on child-friendly documents, etc.
- Code of conduct updated and expanded.
- New appendices added to offer better guidance – only the new appendix headings are highlighted.

2. DCI child safeguarding principles

1. Within DCI, our work with children is grounded in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). In line with the Convention, every human being below the age of 18 is considered a child. Every child is recognised, respected, and protected as a rights holder, with non-negotiable rights to protection. Every child is treated with dignity and as a unique and valuable human being with an individual personality, distinct needs, interests, and privacy, with due regard to the child's right to participation. We understand the need to empower children to protect themselves and their peers and to claim



their rights. Children must be involved in decisions that concern them, including the development, monitoring and evaluation of child safeguarding strategies, policies, programmes and services.

2. All children, without discrimination of any kind, have the right to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. We recognise that types of risk may vary according to the child and that the means of addressing risks may also vary.
3. We acknowledge that violence is a global “epidemic” and an unfortunate daily reality for millions of children. Children of all ages, all genders, all social contexts, and all nationalities are beaten, sexually assaulted, tortured, and even killed. Violence takes place in their homes and families, schools, institutions, workplaces, and communities. The perpetrators are often those closest to the children – their parents, guardians, teachers, employers, police, and security forces – the individuals who are meant to protect them.
4. We are deeply committed to eradicating violence against children and take very seriously our duty to safeguard all children and promote their wellbeing. The protection of children from all forms of violence is both an organisational and individual responsibility. Everyone who represents DCI must take all possible precautions to protect the children with whom they come into direct or indirect contact, in their DCI-related activities as well as in their private life. DCI representatives can help to raise awareness and communicate the DCI approach to safeguarding in the communities they work and live in, grounded in the promotion of children’s rights.
5. This also means holding ourselves to account in ensuring that no child is harmed or placed at risk of harm as a result of their association with us and ensuring that where applicable clear measures are put in place for National Sections working with partners (assessment, agreement, support, capacity-building, monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms).
6. We understand that all staff should be trained in child safeguarding and that Child Safeguarding Focal Points should receive extra training to enable them to fulfil their role.
7. We understand the priority to be given to child safeguarding and understand that any concerns regarding child safeguarding should be reported to the relevant¹ designated, trained Child Safeguarding Focal Point immediately – it is **never** appropriate to wait and see or take time to reflect when a child may be at risk of serious harm.
8. We understand the importance of gatekeeping and supervising visitors to DCI premises, projects, events or activities, to ensure that they comply with our child safeguarding policies.
9. We understand the importance of keeping children safe online too, whether this concerns the participation of children in online events, what we as an organisation do or say online, and protecting children’s data and privacy online.
10. We commit to embedding child safeguarding risk assessment and risk mitigation in our strategic framework, regional action plans and any other strategic plans at National Section or IS level.
11. We are deeply committed to ensuring that children’s participation rights are fulfilled and understand that children need to be safe in order for that to happen.² We understand the priority to be given to

¹ Namely the Focal Point for the relevant National Section, or the International Secretariat, as the case may be.

² [Children's Human Rights to 'Participation' and 'Protection': Rethinking the relationship using Barnahus as a case example, 26 March 2023](#) - [Mary Mitchell](#), [Laura Lundy](#), [Louise Hill](#) - “...while the significance of participation for protection is now well established, if not always fully accepted or practised, there has been much less attention to the other side of this coin. If children are afraid to speak for fear of physical or



ensuring that we inform children, communities and staff (in child-accessible ways for children) on child safeguarding and on how to raise concerns, and we understand the priority to be given to supporting children to claim their rights.

12. We understand the necessity to develop and implement reporting procedures taking due account of national and/or regional law, policy, and procedures.
13. This document will be reviewed within two years of the date of its adoption³ by the IEC and every two years thereafter, taking account of all child safeguarding reports compiled by the International Secretariat and submitted to the IEC, IEC discussions on safeguarding, and in consultation with stakeholders, including Focal Points.

3. DCI requirements for (applicant) National Sections, the International Secretariat, and the International Executive Council (IEC)

1. DCI hereby designates Alex Kamarotos, Executive Director of DCI-IS, as the Movement's Child Safeguarding Focal Point.
2. The IEC is responsible for overseeing DCI's Child Safeguarding Policy and child safeguarding will therefore be a regular item on its meetings' agenda.
3. Each National Section, as well as the International Secretariat, must develop and implement a clear child safeguarding policy aligned with the Keeping Children Safe standards - covering the four standards under **policy, people, procedures, and accountability** - that prevents harm to children and outlines clearly what measures are in place to respond when safeguarding concerns arise. The child safeguarding policy must be developed, implemented, and reviewed in consultation with stakeholders. The child safeguarding policy must clearly recognise every child as a rights holder with non-negotiable rights to protection, and seek to empower children to protect themselves and their peers and to claim their rights.
4. Each National Section, and the International Secretariat, must embed child safeguarding risk assessment and risk mitigation in its strategy and carry out appropriate risk assessments and mitigations for all its activities, programmes, and operations.
5. All National Sections, and the International Secretariat, were required to notify the IEC of their designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point by 10 September 2023. If and when the Focal Point changes, the National Sections and the IS are required to inform the IEC.
6. Each National Section, and the International Secretariat, must return the signed and dated revised Code of Conduct ([Appendix 1](#)) together with a copy of its revised child safeguarding policy (adapted to this Movement policy) by **end June 2024**.
7. Each National Section, and the International Secretariat, must implement mandatory (induction and continuous or refresher) training (see [Appendix 11](#)) for all staff on safeguarding on a yearly basis, and further training for those in safeguarding focal roles, particularly with regard to reporting.
8. Each National Section, and the International Secretariat, must raise awareness and communicate the DCI approach to safeguarding in the communities they operate in, grounded in the promotion of children's rights and the key consideration of children as rights holders.
9. **By end June 2024**, each National Section is expected to have developed and started implementing a range of child-friendly means of communication on child safeguarding (e.g., child-friendly version

emotional harm, then Article 12 cannot be realised (Hill et al., [2021](#)). The question then becomes how to create a space where children are both heard and are safe – participation and protection.”

“Children cannot be kept safe if they are not heard and cannot be heard where they are not safe.”

³ See adoption date on cover page.



of their safeguarding policy, posters, complaint boxes, mechanisms to discuss child safeguarding with children and communities (e.g. before new projects or activities begin and continuously throughout), etc.) A summary of these should be sent to DCI-IS **by end June 2024**. Each National Section, and the International Secretariat, will publish their child safeguarding policy online in an easy-to-find manner and implement measures to inform children, communities, and staff of the policy and the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point (including but not limited to prominent displays in premises, child-accessible versions of their code of conduct and the main child safeguarding principles, complaints/comments boxes, information and awareness-raising sessions at the start of and during programmes, events, etc.).

10. Each National Section is required to immediately notify DCI-IS, and the International Secretariat must immediately notify the IEC, of any cases reported to the relevant national, regional, or local authorities, where a DCI representative or a visitor to DCI premises, events or activities is suspected of causing/alleged to have caused harm to a child.
11. Each National Section, and the International Secretariat, must ensure that where applicable clear measures are put in place for working with partners (assessment, agreement on which policy applies when and on accountability mechanisms, support, capacity-building, monitoring, and evaluation). See [Appendix 12](#).
12. Each National Section and the International Secretariat must complete the Keeping Children Safe self-assessment process and follow up on results. Each National Section is required to send to DCI-IS a copy of their self-assessment results **by end December of each year**, as well as any other safeguarding audit results.
13. As of 2020, all National Sections must include a section on child safeguarding in their annual reports as submitted to the International Secretariat.
14. The International Secretariat must include a section on child safeguarding in its annual report.
15. All National Sections and the International Secretariat are required to carry out a review of their child safeguarding policy every two years. Peer-to-peer assessments may additionally be considered by the Movement. All National Sections must transmit a copy of their two-year reviews or other updates to their child safeguarding policy to the International Secretariat.
16. The International Secretariat must compile all child safeguarding reviews received and self-assessment reports for submission to the IEC.
17. Applicant members must have a robust child safeguarding policy which is aligned with the Keeping Children Safe standards and this Movement Policy before they can be approved for membership by the IEC.

Note: National Sections are invited to inform the International Secretariat of other areas on which future common guidance tools would be useful to them.



4. Recap of deadlines set out in this Policy

Source requirement	Action	Deadline
Requirement 1	Notify IEC via DCI-IS of any changes to safeguarding Focal Point since 10 September 2023.	Whenever the Focal Point changes
Requirement 2	Each National Section, and the International Secretariat, must return the signed and dated revised Code of Conduct (Appendix 1) together with a copy of its revised child safeguarding policy (adapted to this Movement Policy) by end June 2024. National Sections should also send the URL for their policy on their website.	End June 2024
Requirement 3	Each National Section, and the International Secretariat, must implement mandatory (induction and continuous or refresher) training (see Appendix 11) for all staff on safeguarding on a yearly basis, and further training for those in safeguarding focal roles, particularly with regard to reporting.	Annual basis
Requirement 4	By end June 2024, each National Section is expected to have developed and started implementing a range of child-friendly means of communication on child safeguarding (e.g., child-friendly version of their safeguarding policy, posters, complaint boxes, mechanisms to discuss child safeguarding with children and communities. A summary of these should be sent to DCI-IS by end June 2024.	End June 2024
Requirement 5	Each National Section is required to immediately notify DCI-IS, and the International Secretariat must immediately notify the IEC, of any cases reported to the relevant national, regional, or local authorities, where a DCI representative or a visitor to DCI premises, events or activities is suspected of causing/alleged to have caused harm to a child.	As soon as a case is reported to authorities (immediately)
Requirement 6	Each National Section is required to send to DCI-IS a copy of their self-assessment results by end December of each year.	By end December of each year
Requirement 7	All National Sections must transmit a copy of their two-year reviews or other updates to their child safeguarding policy to the International Secretariat.	As and when updates are adopted



5. Appendices to DCI Child Safeguarding Policy and Principles

Appendix 1: Defence for Children International (DCI) Movement - Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct (October 2023)

As a leading child rights independent international organisation and a membership-based grassroots movement, DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL (DCI) promotes and protects the human rights of children at the local, national, regional, and international level, in accordance with international standards, as set out in its [statutes](#).

As set out in Article 10 of the statutes, National Sections are legally and financially independent from the international organisation and the Movement as a whole. At the same time, each National Section, whilst abiding by institutional requirements of respective national legislation, must comply with the principles, guidelines, objectives and policies established by the DCI Movement.

The DCI Movement Child Safeguarding Policy and Principles set a standard for all National Sections and the International Secretariat in Geneva to safeguard children with whom DCI has direct or indirect contact.

This DCI Movement Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour of adults towards children. It has been designed to give all organisations which are part of the DCI Movement the confidence to carry out their roles and to ensure that positive relationships are developed.

The primary purpose of this Code of Conduct is to protect children from any harm done by DCI representatives. The secondary purpose is to protect adults from false accusations of inappropriate behaviour or abuse. This is not an exclusive or exhaustive list and should be interpreted in a spirit of common sense and in consideration of the holistic view on children laid down in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

National Sections and DCI-IS are free to adopt more rigorous codes of conduct adapted to their context but cannot go below the one of the DCI Movement.

As a member of the DCI Movement each National Section should declare:

- ✓ Our organisation recognises every child as a rights holder.
- ✓ Our organisation is deeply committed to eradicating violence against children and takes very seriously our duty to safeguard all children and young people and promote their wellbeing. Everyone should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour towards children, and should ensure that a culture of openness exists, thereby empowering children. Our organisation does not tolerate any form of violence against children, even if a specific form of violence is not (yet) explicitly sanctioned under national law.
- ✓ Our organisation adheres to the principle that everyone who works for (including all those affiliated with the organisation: staff members, contractors, interns, volunteers, council and board members, etc.) must take all possible precautions to protect the children with whom they come into direct or indirect contact. **As people affiliated with the organisation are effectively representatives of the movement, this applies to their DCI-related activities as well as in their private life.** It is also our responsibility to ensure that visitors to DCI premises, events or activities abide by this Code of Conduct. They should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice, potentially harmful and/or abusive behaviour and/or any action which is not in the best interests of the child, young person, or otherwise vulnerable person or which could even constitute a child rights violation. We commit to ensuring that where applicable clear child safeguarding measures are put in place for working with partners (assessment, agreement, support, capacity-building, monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms).



- ✓ Our organisation has a clear child safeguarding policy aligned with the Keeping Children Safe standards - covering the four standards under policy, people, procedures, and accountability - that helps to prevent harm to children and outlines clearly what measures are in place to respond when safeguarding concerns arise.
- ✓ Our organisation commits to embedding child safeguarding risk assessment and risk mitigation in our strategy, programmes, and operations.
- ✓ Our organisation understands the priority to be given to child safeguarding and understands that any concerns regarding child safeguarding should be discussed with the designated, trained Child Safeguarding Focal Point immediately - it is never appropriate to wait and see or take time to reflect when a child may be at risk of serious harm.

This means when working with children, representatives of our organisation must NEVER:

1. Act in ways, online or offline, that may be abusive or place children at risk of abuse;
2. Hit, physically assault or physically abuse children or threaten to do so;
3. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice, which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
4. Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse, discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others;
5. Engage in behaviours that are physically inappropriate or sexually provocative;
6. Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years irrespective of the age of majority/consent or local custom;
7. Expose children to inappropriate images, films, music and/or websites including mature content, indecent images (pornography) and/or violence;
8. As a DCI representative who is not a relative of a child, stay alone overnight with one or more children benefitting from the organisation's programmes and who are not part of their family, whether in a compound, hotel, project premises, other accommodations or elsewhere;
9. Have a child beneficiary, who is not a part of their family, visit their home or stay overnight at their home;
10. Condone, or participate in, illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviour towards any child;
11. Allow allegations or complaints made by a child or concerns raised about their welfare to go unrecorded;
12. Fail to follow up on or act on any allegations or complaints made by a child or an adult on behalf of a child.

This means when working with children, representatives of our organisation must ALWAYS:

1. Recognise, respect, and protect every child as a rights holder, with non-negotiable rights to protection;
2. Contribute to create and/or uphold an environment where children are listened to and feel empowered and respected as individuals;
3. Always recognise, respect, and protect the concept of dignity attached to each child as a rights holder and as a unique and valuable human being with an individual personality, distinct needs, interests and privacy, including in the online domain;
4. Adopt a culture of support, respect, and tolerance;
5. Always be attentive to children's needs and respond to them in a positive manner;



6. Be a positive role model, for example, treating everyone equitably and always apologising for any mistakes;
7. Understand the requirement to respect children's agency, and to further empower children to protect themselves and their peers and to claim their rights;
8. Involve children in all decisions that concern them, including the development, monitoring and evaluation of child safeguarding strategies, policies, programmes, and services;
9. Plan activities in advance to ensure they take into account the age range, gender and needs, and ability of all participants;
10. Always conduct child safeguarding risk assessments in the context of activities, operations, and programmes to identify potential impact on or contact with children and analyse the potential risks of that impact or contact. There are three levels of risk:
 - external
 - organisational
 - linked to a specific event, activity, operation

Evaluate the risks in terms of likelihood they could occur and the seriousness of the impact on children and implement strategies to minimise and prevent risk. Consistently and rigorously review and revise risks and preventative measures including on completion of events, activities, operations, communicate and consult regarding risks.

11. Avoid working alone and spending excessive time with a child and be aware of situations which may present risks;
12. Use the Two-Adult Rule⁴ because it: (1) significantly reduces the risk of an incident of abuse; (2) protects against false accusations; (3) reduces liability and a possible claim of negligence; and (4) offers additional help if there is an accident or emergency;
13. Avoid inappropriate physical contact with a child. If a child is hurt or distressed, comfort or reassure him/her without compromising his/her dignity or doing anything to discredit the child's own behaviour;
14. Behave appropriately, model good behaviour, ensure that language is moderated in the presence of children and refrain from jokes or comments which are clearly inappropriate;
15. Pay attention to what children say, respect their right to be heard;
16. Read and fully understand the guidance on dealing with disclosures by children (see [Appendix 4](#)) and know how to respond/report appropriately;
17. Understand that the guiding principle in responding to any concerns around child safeguarding and protection is that the safety and welfare of the child should always take precedence. No child should be put at more risk by any action you undertake. You should do all you can to remove the child from immediate danger and ensure s/he is comfortable. You should respect the Two-Adult Rule and you should do all you can to minimise delays;
18. Use social media responsibly, safely, and legally in full consideration of the organisation's child safeguarding policy and procedures;
19. Understand that as much as 80% of child abuse cases may include a digital component. The person receiving a disclosure should note any disclosures in this regard, which may be essential to capture compelling evidence during any investigation;

⁴ The Two-Adult Rule requires that no fewer than two adults be present at all times when with a child.



20. Be mindful of the power imbalance between adults and children and commit to never abuse the power and influence that one has by virtue of one's position over the wellbeing of any child;
21. Empower children: inform them on their rights, teach them what is acceptable behaviour of adults towards them, what is not appropriate or unacceptable, and what they can do if something concerns or worries them;
22. Be familiar with the organisation's reporting procedure. This means that you must report to the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point any concern relating to the safety of a child immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so;
23. Maintain confidentiality and respect children's privacy, while respecting national child protection laws with regard to reporting, mandated or otherwise, of known or suspected child abuse.

On behalf of my organisation, I agree to abide by the DCI Movement Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct and the DCI Movement Safeguarding Policy and Principles.

Furthermore, I take responsibility for the implementation of the Policy and for ensuring that all persons working for/affiliated with my organisation are fully informed of our child safeguarding policy and that appropriate gatekeeping and supervision mechanisms are in place for visitors to DCI premises, events, or activities.

I understand that any breaches of the DCI Movement Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct need to be reported and appropriate action, in accordance with the policies and procedures in place, will be taken.

Organisation:

Name:

Title/Role:

Date:

Signature:



Appendix 2: Definitions (for the purposes of DCI’s Child Safeguarding Policy and Principles)

CONCEPT	DEFINITION
Child	In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, every human being below the age of 18.
Child Safeguarding Policy	A written policy aligned with the Keeping Children Safe standards, widely disseminated, and published online, documenting an overarching commitment to preventing harm to children and specifying the organisational procedures and principles to be observed in all areas of the organisation to support child safeguarding, including confidential reporting mechanisms for child safeguarding concerns.
Child Safeguarding	Child safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations 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 organisation has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.
Harm	In relation to a child “harm” is any detrimental effect on a child’s physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by abuse or exploitation whether intended or unintended. Harm may also be caused due to inaction or failure to act.
Violence	<p>[...] “Violence” is understood to mean “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse” as listed in article 19, paragraph 1, of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The term violence has been chosen here to represent all forms of harm to children as listed in article 19, paragraph 1, in conformity with the terminology used in the 2006 United Nations Study on Violence against Children, although the other terms used to describe types of harm (injury, abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment and exploitation) carry equal weight. In common parlance the term “violence” is often understood to mean only physical harm and/or intentional harm. However, the Committee emphasizes most strongly that the choice of the term “violence” in the present general comment must not be interpreted in any way to minimize the impact of, and need to address, non-physical and/or non-intentional forms of harm (such as, inter alia, neglect and psychological maltreatment).</p> <p>Paragraph 4 of General Comment No 13 (2011) of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the child’s right to freedom from all forms of violence http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.GC.13_en.pdf</p>
Child Abuse	<p>From Tusla (Irish child protection agency) Guidance on definitions of child abuse and on how to recognise abuse:</p> <p>Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger. The abuser may be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, you should consider it a child welfare and protection issue for both children and you should follow child</p>



CONCEPT	DEFINITION
	<p>protection procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser. The important factor in deciding whether the behaviour is abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the adult/parent/carer. The definitions of neglect and abuse presented in this section are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised.</p> <p>See also:</p> <p>Guidance on potential indicators of abuse: https://www.childmatters.org.nz/insights/abuse-indicators/</p>
<p>Neglect</p>	<p>From paragraph 20, GC No 13 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: Neglect or negligent treatment. Neglect means the failure to meet children’s physical and psychological needs, protect them from danger, or obtain medical, birth registration or other services when those responsible for children’s care have the means, knowledge and access to services to do so. It includes: (a) Physical neglect: failure to protect a child from harm, including through lack of supervision, or failure to provide the child with basic necessities including adequate food, shelter, clothing and basic medical care; (b) Psychological or emotional neglect: including lack of any emotional support and love, chronic inattention to the child, caregivers being “psychologically unavailable” by overlooking young children’s cues and signals, and exposure to intimate partner violence, drug or alcohol abuse; (c) Neglect of children’s physical or mental health: withholding essential medical care; (d) Educational neglect: failure to comply with laws requiring caregivers to secure their children’s education through attendance at school or otherwise; and (e) Abandonment: a practice which is of great concern and which can disproportionately affect, inter alia, children out of wedlock and children with disabilities in some societies.⁵</p> <p>From Tusla (Irish child protection agency) Guidance on definitions of child abuse and on how to recognise abuse: Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences. Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child’s health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child’s health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child’s life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect. Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability. A reasonable concern for the child’s welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period</p>

⁵ In many countries children are abandoned because parents and caregivers living in poverty do not have the means to support them. According to the definition, neglect is a failure of care when parents have the means to meet their children’s needs. The Committee has often urged State parties to “render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities” (art. 18, para. 2 of the Convention).



CONCEPT	DEFINITION
	<p>of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.</p> <p>The following are features of child neglect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision • Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding • Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation • Failure to provide adequate care for the child’s medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation • Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture • Lack of adequate clothing • Inattention to basic hygiene • Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child’s age • Persistent failure to attend school • Abandonment or desertion
<p>Emotional Abuse</p>	<p>From paragraph 21, GC No 13 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child:</p> <p>21. Mental violence. “Mental violence”, as referred to in the Convention, is often described as psychological maltreatment, mental abuse, verbal abuse and emotional abuse or neglect and this can include: (a) All forms of persistent harmful interactions with the child, for example, conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another’s needs; (b) Scaring, terrorizing and threatening; exploiting and corrupting; spurning and rejecting; isolating, ignoring and favouritism; (c) Denying emotional responsiveness; neglecting mental health, medical and educational needs; (d) Insults, name-calling, humiliation, belittling, ridiculing and hurting a child’s feelings; (e) Exposure to domestic violence; (f) Placement in solitary confinement, isolation or humiliating or degrading conditions of detention; and (g) Psychological bullying and hazing⁶ by adults or other children, including via information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as mobile phones and the Internet (known as “cyberbullying”).</p> <p>From Tusla (Irish child protection agency) Guidance on definitions of child abuse and on how to recognise abuse:</p> <p>Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child’s basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children’s emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen. A</p>

⁶ “Hazing” refers to rituals and other activities involving harassment, violence or humiliation which are used as a way of initiating a person into a group.



CONCEPT	DEFINITION
	<p>reasonable concern for the child’s welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.</p> <p>Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejection • Lack of comfort and love • Lack of attachment • Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play) • Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned) • Continuous lack of praise and encouragement • Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child • Bullying • Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions • Extreme overprotectiveness • Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom) • Ongoing family conflicts and family violence • Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development <p>There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.</p> <p>It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.</p>
<p>Physical Abuse</p>	<p>From paragraphs 22, 23 and 24, GC No 13 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child:</p> <p>22. Physical violence. This includes fatal and non-fatal physical violence. The Committee is of the opinion that physical violence includes: (a) All corporal punishment and all other forms of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and (b) Physical bullying and hazing by adults and by other children.</p> <p>23. Children with disabilities may be subject to particular forms of physical violence such as: (a) Forced sterilization, particularly girls; (b) Violence in the guise of treatment (for example electroconvulsive treatment - ECT) and electric shocks used as “aversion treatment” to control children’s behaviour); and (c) Deliberate infliction of disabilities on children for the purpose of exploiting them for begging in the streets or elsewhere.</p> <p>24. Corporal punishment. In general comment No. 8 (para. 11), the Committee defined “corporal” or “physical” punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting (“smacking”, “slapping”, “spanking”) children, with the hand or with an implement - a whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, caning, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding, or forced ingestion. In the view of the Committee, corporal punishment is invariably degrading. Other specific forms</p>



CONCEPT	DEFINITION
	<p>of corporal punishment are listed in the report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/61/299, paras. 56, 60 and 62). From Tusla (Irish child protection agency) Guidance on definitions of child abuse and on how to recognise abuse:</p> <p>Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse. Physical abuse can include the following: physical punishment, beating, slapping, hitting or kicking, pushing, shaking or throwing, pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling, use of excessive force in handling, deliberate poisoning, suffocation fabricated/induced illness, female genital mutilation.</p>
Sexual Abuse	<p>From paragraph 25, GC No 13 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child:</p> <p>Sexual abuse and exploitation includes: (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful or psychologically harmful sexual activity⁷; (b) The use of children in commercial sexual exploitation; and (c) The use of children in audio or visual images of child sexual abuse; (d) Child prostitution, sexual slavery, sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, trafficking (within and between countries) and sale of children for sexual purposes and forced marriage. Many children experience sexual victimization which is not accompanied by physical force or restraint but which is nonetheless psychologically intrusive, exploitive and traumatic.</p> <p>From Tusla (Irish child protection agency) Guidance on definitions of child abuse and on how to recognise abuse:</p> <p>Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography. Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and, in some instances, occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members. Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms. Examples of child sexual abuse include the following: any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child, an invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification, masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation, sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal, sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography (for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording on film, videotape or other media, or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means);

⁷ Sexual abuse comprises any sexual activities imposed by an adult on a child, against which the child is entitled to protection by criminal law. Sexual activities are also considered as abuse when committed against a child by another child, if the child offender is significantly older than the child victim or uses power, threat, or other means of pressure. Sexual activities between children are not considered as sexual abuse if the children are older than the age limit defined by the State party for consensual sexual activities.



CONCEPT	DEFINITION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act; • Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse, exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology, consensual sexual activity involving an adult and a child. <p>It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a child may be sexual abuse even if the child concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.</p>
Direct Contact	<p>Being in the physical presence of a child or children in the context of the organisation's work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short, or long term. Examples from DCI operations include: supporting access to justice for individual children in socio-legal defence centres, capacity-building among girls and boys on rights, involving individual children and/or groups of children in project work, organising and coordinating their participation in events, participating in events and conferences where children are also present, and conducting training sessions with child human right defenders.</p>
Indirect Contact	<p>Having access to information on children in the context of the organisation's work. Examples from DCI operations include: advocating on behalf of children, or having access to information on children in the context of the organisation's work, such as children's names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies, or provide funding for other organisations that work 'directly' with children. As a child rights organisation, DCI also advocates for the development and implementation of robust child safeguarding policies more broadly, e.g., in working to enhance child safeguarding in sport or in other leisure activities. Indirect contact also has an impact on children and therefore confers upon the organisation responsibility for child protection issues.</p>



Appendix 3: Guidance on indicators of abuse (covering child and adult behaviours)

Note: This list is not exhaustive and provided for guidance only. Some children may not show any signs and still be victims of abuse. You may need to add more guidance to reflect the context you work in. Signs may vary depending on the child's age, experience, gender, etc. (retrieved from: <https://www.childmatters.org.nz/insights/abuse-indicators/>)

Indicators of emotional abuse

There may be **physical indicators** that a child is being emotionally abused. Some examples of this are:

- Bed-wetting or bed soiling that has no medical cause,
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (e.g., headaches, nausea, abdominal pains),
- Prolonged vomiting or diarrhoea,
- Has not attained significant developmental milestones,
- Dressed differently from other children in the family,
- Has deprived physical living conditions compared with other children in the family.

There may also be **behavioural indicators** that child or young person is being emotionally abused. Some examples of this are:

- Suffers from severe developmental gaps,
- Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal, or aggression,
- Severe symptoms of self-destructive behaviour – self-harming, suicide attempts, engaging in drug or alcohol abuse,
- Overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean,
- Displays attention-seeking behaviours or displays extreme inhibition in play,
- When at play, behaviour may model or copy negative behaviour and language used at home.

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate emotional abuse. Some examples of this are:

- Constantly calls the child or young person names, labels the child or publicly humiliates the child,
- Continually threatens the child or young person with physical harm or forces the child to witness physical harm inflicted on a loved one,
- Has unrealistic expectations of the child or young person,
- Involves the child or young person in “adult issues”, such as separation or access issues,
- Keeps the child or young person at home in a role of subservient or surrogate parent.

Indicators of neglect

There may be **physical indicators** that a child or young person is being neglected. Some examples of this are:

- Inappropriate dress for the weather,
- Extremely dirty or unbathed,
- Inadequately supervised or left alone for unacceptable periods of time,
- Malnourished,
- May have severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders or rashes resulting from improper care or lack of hygiene.



There may also be **behavioural indicators** that child or young person is being neglected. Some examples of this are:

- Demonstrates severe lack of attachment to other adults,
- Poor school attendance or school performance,
- Poor social skills,
- May steal food,
- Is very demanding of affection or attention,
- Has no understanding of basic hygiene.

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate neglect. Some examples of this are:

- Fails to provide for the child or young person's basic needs, such as housing, nutrition, medical and psychological care,
- Fails to enrol a child or young person in school or permits absenteeism,
- Leaves the child home alone,
- Is overwhelmed with own problems and puts own needs ahead of the child or young person's needs.

Indicators of physical abuse

There may be **physical indicators** that a child or young person is being physically abused. Some examples of this are:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions,
- Unexplained burns,
- Unexplained fractures or disclosures.

There may also be **behavioural indicators** that child or young person is being physically abused. Some examples of this are:

- Is wary of adults or of a particular individual,
- Is violent to animals or other children or young people,
- Is dressed inappropriately to hide bruises or other injuries,
- May be extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn,
- Cannot recall how the injuries occurred or gives inconsistent explanations.

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate physical abuse. Some examples of this are:

- May be vague about the details of the cause of injury and the account of the injury may change from time to time,
- May blame the accident on a sibling, friend, relative or the injured child or young person,
- Shakes an infant,
- Threats or attempts to injure a child or young person,
- Is aggressive towards a child in front of others,
- May delay in seeking medical attention for a child or young person.



Indicators of sexual abuse

There may be **physical indicators** that a child or young person is being sexually abused. Some examples of this are:

- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing,
- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area,
- Blood in urine or faeces,
- Sexually transmitted disease,
- Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area.

There may also be **behavioural indicators** that a child or young person is being sexually abused. Some examples of this are:

- Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others,
- Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge,
- Comments such as “I’ve got a secret”, or “I don’t like uncle”,
- Fire lighting by boys,
- Fear of certain places e.g., bedroom or bathroom.

Some examples of this in older children or young people are:

- Eating disorders,
- Promiscuity or prostitution,
- Uses younger children in sexual acts,
- Tries to make self as unattractive as possible.

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate sexual abuse. Some examples of this are:

- May be unusually over-protective of a child or young person,
- Is jealous of a child or young person’s relationships with peers or other adults or is controlling of the child or young person,
- May favour the victim over other children,
- Demonstrates physical contact or affection to a child or young person which appears sexual in nature or has sexual overtones.



Appendix 4: If a child discloses abuse to you: some do's and don'ts.

Drawn from:

<http://guides.womenwin.org/gbv/readiness-and-response/response-referral-and-reporting/disclosure-dos-and-donts> - The do's and don'ts are also available in: [FR](#) – [ES](#) - [PT](#)

If a child discloses child abuse to you, it is critical to be prepared to handle the situation in the appropriate manner and then report it to the appropriate authorities. The guiding principle in responding to any concerns around child protection is that the safety and welfare of the child should always take precedence. No child should be put at more risk by any action you undertake. You should do all you can to **remove the child from immediate danger** and ensure s/he is comfortable. You should respect the Two-Adult Rule and you should do all you can to minimise delays.

As many as 80% of child abuse cases may include a digital component. The person receiving a disclosure should note any disclosures in this regard, which may be essential to capture compelling evidence during any investigation.

Here's some **feedback from children who disclosed abuse to keep in mind:**

- “My teacher noticed that I was often quiet, came late and that I would flinch when someone touched me. She did not give up, and in the end I told. She clearly explained that what I had experienced was not okay. I noticed she cared. She responded when I told.”
- “It is not safe to report when we do not know what happens next. We need to know what is happening, how it is happening and how many cases are going through. This must be explained with words children understand. Then it will be safe, and when it is safe, we will speak the truth.”
- “I was interrupted when I tried to tell. They did not need to hear anything from me, that's how it felt. Before they talked to me, they had read what had happened.”
- “Cry with us, not after we have left. If I am met without emotion, I may never tell again. It feels like what I told was not bad enough.”
- “Children need to know if something is to be told further, so that the child and adults can figure out together how to do it. It has to happen in a way that is good for the child.”
- “I would have answered if someone had asked me direct questions.”
- “I would rather carry what hurt inside me than what I said could be told further without me knowing where. I had never received some information on what could really happen if I told.”
- “Talk to me for a moment before I am sent on, otherwise I dare not trust adults anymore. It takes a lot to tell about violence. Wait with sending me on.”
- “If we tell an adult, then that person is selected. Then that person should not jump and contact child welfare, police or other adults. Then the person has the competence to talk to us, because we know very well which competence works and which does not. We do not need what adults think is cutting-edge expertise.”

If a child or young person informs you that she/he is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them or makes a direct allegation you can follow the points below.



General points⁸

- Accept what the child says.
- Keep calm.
- Don't panic.
- Don't seek help while the child is talking to you.
- Take what they say seriously, even if it involves someone you feel sure would not harm them. We know from experience that we must listen to what we are told even if it is difficult to believe.
- Be honest.
- Look at the child directly.
- Do not appear shocked.
- Let them know that you need to tell someone else.
- Assure them that they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Never ask leading questions.
- Try not to repeat the same questions to the child.
- Never push for information.
- Do not fill in words, finish their sentences, or make assumptions.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- Take proper steps to ensure the physical safety and psychological well-being of the child. This may include referring them for medical treatment or to a psychologist.
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the conclusions you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage of the procedure.
- Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the disclosure.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.

Things to say or do

- Repeat the last few words in a questioning manner.
- 'I believe you'.
- 'I am going to try to help you'.
- 'I will help you'.
- 'I am glad that you told me'.
- 'You are not to blame'.
- 'You did the right thing by telling me'.
- 'I cannot keep this a secret, but I won't tell anyone except for those who must know to help (doctors, police)'.
- Report to the authorities.
- Bring the survivor to get external medical and legal help immediately.

⁸ National Sexual Violence Resource Centre, retrieved from <http://www.nsvrc.org/elearning/21385> e-learning portal also available in [ES](#)



Things not to say or do

- 'You should have told someone before'.
- 'I can't believe it! I'm shocked!'.
- 'Oh, that explains a lot'.
- 'No, not... he's a friend of mine'.
- 'I won't tell anyone else'.
- 'Why? How? When? Where? Who?'.
- Doubt the child's disclosure.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Confront the offender.
- Wash or fix the survivor if they have been abused (as long as their safety is not jeopardized). The survivor's condition is evidence for prosecution.

At the end of the disclosure

- Reassure the child that it was right to tell you but do not promise confidentiality.
- Let them know what you are going to do next.
- **Immediately** seek help, in the first place from the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point.
- Write down accurately what the young person has told you. Records should be detailed and precise. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure place for an indefinite period. These are essential in helping your organisation, social services, or the Police decide what is best for the child, and as evidence if necessary.
- Use the reporting form in a sensible way to make sure that you gather all the relevant and important information.
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support.



Appendix 5: Template for a DCI National Section report on a child safeguarding concern

If you are concerned or know that a child's safety might be in danger, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge.

Please note that child protection concerns must be reported directly to the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point immediately. You may wish to complete this form before contacting the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point or you may wish to complete the report after contacting the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point, according to the best interests of the child. This report is to be used as a tool to develop the most un-biased information-based report possible. For confidentiality reasons, the report should be written and signed solely by you. It should be delivered exclusively to the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point or to the next most appropriate person. The Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Report will be held in a safe and secure place and treated in the strictest confidence.

A log of incidents/reports will be maintained by the organisation, including when a decision is taken to not refer to the local or national child protection authorities.

Case number xxx

202__ - 0__ (to be filled out by the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point)

About you

Your name _____

Your job title _____

Workplace _____

Your relationship to the child _____

Contact details _____

About the child

Child's name _____

Child's gender / gender identity _____

Child's age _____

Child's parents / guardians _____

About your concern

What is the concern? _____

How do you know about the abuse? _____

Did the child disclose the abuse to you? _____

Date of the alleged incident _____

Location of the alleged incident _____

Name of alleged perpetrator _____

Job title / relationship with the child _____

Nature of the allegation _____

Note if there were any references to a digital or online component which may be important for any subsequent investigation: _____



Your personal observations (visible injuries, child's emotional state, etc.)

N.B. Make a clear distinction between what is fact and what is opinion or hearsay.

Report exactly what the child or other source said to you about the incident and how you responded?
(Be clear on when you are reporting what a child or other source actually said, or whether something is your interpretation.)

Action(s) taken

Where is the child / where does the child stay, and who is responsible for him/her?

Name _____

Title _____

Location _____

Contact details _____

Is this safe? Why? If not, alternative arrangements need to be organised.

Were there any other children/people involved in the alleged incident?

Who else knows about the incident?

What would the child like to happen next?

Any other information not previously covered:

***I declare that the information provided by me on the above form is true
and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.***

Signature

Date

Received by the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point / Appropriate Person

Signature

Date



If a concern is not reported to the authorities or the child protection services, by the Focal Point, the following steps must be taken:

- ✓ The reasons for not reporting are logged within the template for reporting a concern ([Appendix 5](#)).
- ✓ If any other actions are taken as a result of the concern, these must be logged.
- ✓ The person who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported further.
- ✓ The person should also be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to the (specify exactly which child protection authorities).

Follow-up to report as per guidance in [Appendix 7](#) replicated above:

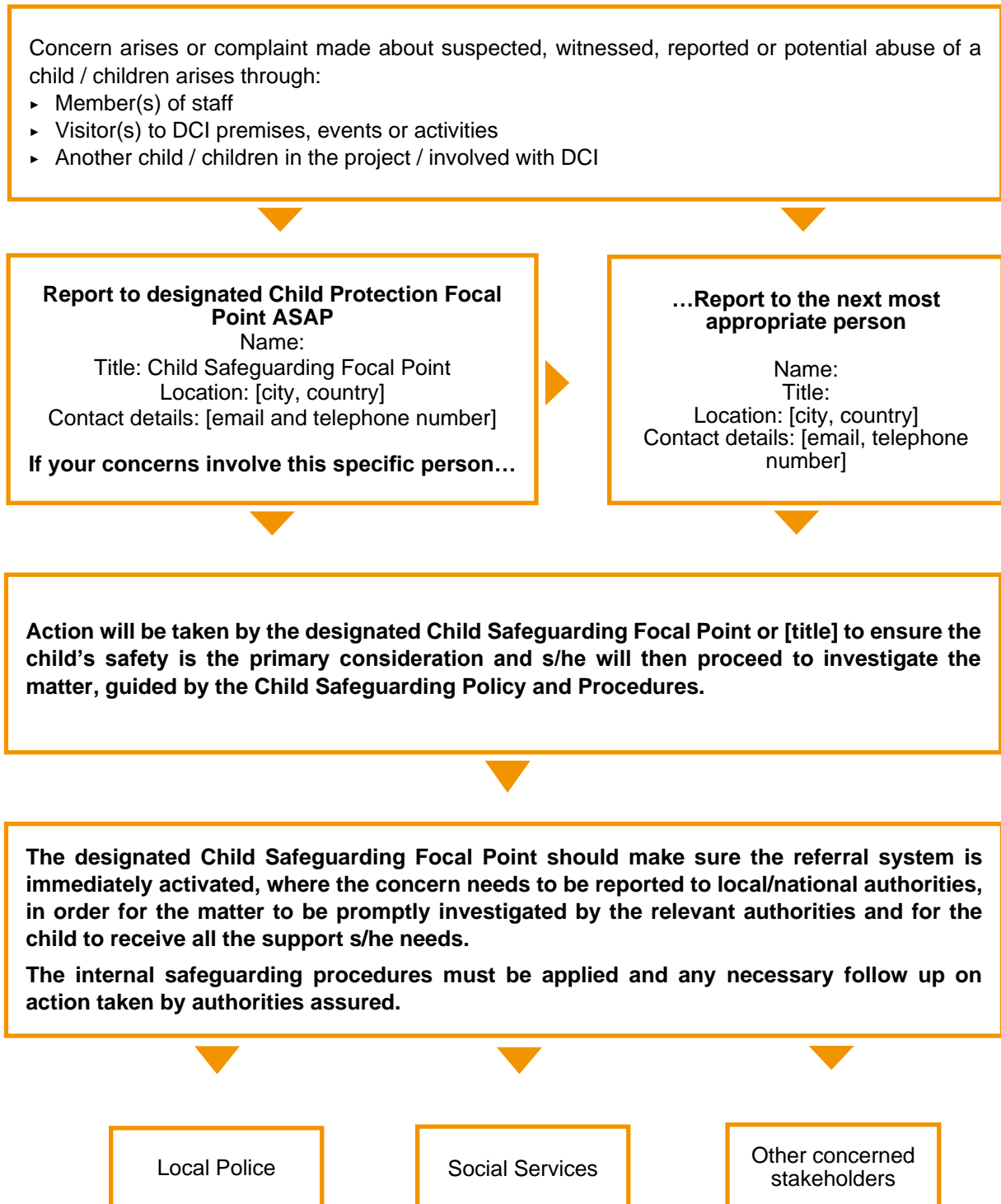
Dated:

Signed:

Role:



Appendix 6: Reporting flowchart template





Appendix 7: Guidance on responding to a concern and sanctions

Response

Reporting a concern

It is crucial that when a concern over child safeguarding appears or an incident occurs that swift action is taken by reporting according to DCI policy and procedures. All persons working at or with DCI receive all the necessary information and training as to who the Focal Point is. If there is a concern, it must always be treated as a matter of urgency and immediately brought to the attention of the Focal Point.

All persons falling under the scope of the Policy understand that when a child safeguarding concern arises it is essential to act immediately as the safety of children is always the most important consideration. DCI representatives may be alerted to a potential safeguarding concern when certain behaviours arise, either on the part of a child or an adult. Guidance on indicators of abuse is provided in [Appendix 3](#).

Whistleblowers

Keeping children safe from harm is the paramount consideration for DCI. Anyone representing or identified with DCI is required to report any child safeguarding concerns they have. It is important to note that any person falling under the scope of the Policy who reports a concern will not suffer any reprisal or disciplinary action if the report is made in good faith under the legitimate concern over the welfare of a child. While keeping children safe will always be the paramount concern, DCI will follow Keeping Children Safe guidance⁹ to respond to unsubstantiated, unfounded and/or malicious allegations.¹⁰

Responding to concerns

If a child discloses child abuse to any person falling under the scope of the Policy, it is critical they are able to handle the situation in the appropriate manner (as set out in the guidance on handling disclosure [Appendix 4](#)) and then report it according to the [Reporting Flowchart](#) in Appendix 6.

If a child discloses child abuse to you, it is critical to be prepared to handle the situation in the appropriate manner and then report it to the appropriate authorities. The guiding principle in responding to any concerns around child protection is that the safety and welfare of the child should always take precedence. No child should be put at more risk by any action you undertake. You should do all you can to remove the child from immediate danger and ensure s/he is comfortable. You should respect the Two-Adult Rule and you should do all you can to minimise delays.

Acting on a concern

All persons falling under the scope of the Policy must immediately report any safeguarding concerns to the Child Safeguarding Focal Point or the designated next most appropriate person who will implement the procedure and decide on the appropriate course of action. An exception lies if the concern directly

⁹ <https://codeofgoodpractice.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/KCS-Management-of-Child-Safeguarding-Allegations.pdf>

¹⁰ Unsubstantiated (Inconclusive): An unsubstantiated allegation means that there is insufficient identifiable evidence to prove or disprove the allegation on the balance of probabilities. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence. Unfounded (Unproven): The term 'unfounded' means that there is no evidence or proper basis that supports the allegation being made, or there is evidence to prove that the allegation is untrue. There is the possibility that the allegation may be malicious (see below), but it might also indicate that the person making the allegation had misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what s/he saw or was not aware of all the circumstances. Malicious: The term 'malicious' implies that an allegation, either wholly or in part, has been made with a deliberate intent to deceive or cause harm to the person subject to the allegation. For an allegation to be classified as malicious, it will be necessary to have evidence to prove the intention to cause harm. Care should be taken in dealing with such allegations as some facts may not be wholly untrue. Some parts of an allegation may have been fabricated or exaggerated but elements may be based on truth.



relates to the Child Safeguarding Focal Point in which case the designated next most appropriate person should be notified instead.

A written record of all complaints or concerns raised must be completed in accordance with [Appendix 6](#) and [Appendix 7](#) and filed by the Child Safeguarding Focal Point. Once a complaint or report is made and the Child Safeguarding Focal Point is notified, the principle of confidentiality around the procedure must apply to protect the child's privacy and dignity. Information about the complaint should only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis (in principle only to the Child Safeguarding Focal Point and/or the management/director level). All Incident reporting forms must be kept in a safe place in accordance with confidentiality rules.

If a DCI representative has a concern that a child is in immediate danger, they should, as a matter of urgency, call the police or the child protection actors (specify) as set out in the Reporting Flowchart, and then inform the Child Safeguarding Focal Point.

DCI (either the Focal Point or the management/director) must immediately notify the IEC of any cases reported to the relevant national, regional, or local authorities, where a DCI representative or a visitor to DCI premises, event, activities is suspected of causing/alleged to have caused harm to a child.

After a complaint is made, the Focal Point may need to consult or directly alert the local authorities (specify who).

If a concern is not reported to the authorities or the child protection services by the Focal Point, the following steps must be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting are logged within the template for reporting a concern ([Appendix 5](#)).
- If any other actions are taken as a result of the concern, these must be logged.
- The person who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported further.
- The person should also be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to the child protection authorities (specify exactly which).

Sanctions

Breaches of this Policy will be investigated in accordance with the Code of Conduct and contractual agreements, and/or a referral may be made to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country where DCI is based.

Breaches of this Policy may incur sanctions including disciplinary action leading to possible dismissal, termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements, and where relevant, appropriate legal or other such actions.



Appendix 8: Tips on writing a child safeguarding policy

1. **Start with reflecting on and mapping the interactions your organisation has with children.** This covers direct interactions (including online), or indirect, for example resulting from your advocacy work or guidelines and policy documents, statements, position papers you write. This is a very important exercise in which you should involve all the staff, with their different perspectives. Who are the children you interact with? Think about gender, age groups, societal factors causing vulnerability, where the interactions take place and frequency. Are there any online components? Who in your organisation has contact with them? Visitors? What children does your advocacy potentially impact on? Is children's safety properly embedded in your advocacy work? This key reflection and mapping of interactions with children will help you to maintain due focus on the children concerned and build the rest of the policy, including risk management. Think about the interactions you currently have, but also think ahead to cover the next two years, the lifespan of your policy. As a child rights organisation, you are expected to be exemplary in child safeguarding.
2. **Do take inspiration from other organisations' child safeguarding policies**, especially if you are finding it hard to know where to start. Read a few from different organisations. Don't fall into the trap of doing a copy/paste. You will always need to adapt them to your own organisation, staff, context, activities, and the children you work with or have an impact on.
3. **Stakeholder involvement** is crucial to identify child rights and child safeguarding champions and ensure ownership. Child safeguarding is the responsibility of all of us. Discuss the policy (draft or update) with all your staff and your board or other governance structures. Discuss child safeguarding with children you work with and the communities you work in. By discussing child safeguarding with children and the communities you work in, you better respect children's rights, strengthen your policy and its implementation and help build a strong safeguarding culture.
4. **Be clear.** The clearer your policy is, the most useful it will be if a concern or actual incident arises. People will know what to do even in a crisis and you can apply your policy consistently.
5. **Describe steps and processes, who does what, and when they do it.** Can you answer the question "who does this?" for every action you describe? Can you answer the question "when is this done?" for every step or action? Choose the active voice over the passive voice. ("I write this document", rather than "this document is written".)
 - **Children are informed on child safeguarding.**
 - ✓ At the beginning of every activity with children, the (define who: project manager or Child Safeguarding Focal Point) reminds children of their right to be free from violence, and what the organisation does to prevent harm to children, of their right to withdraw participation consent, of who to go to if they have a concern. S/he allows time for discussion and questions and ensures any follow-up needed.
 - **Child safeguarding risks are assessed for new projects.**
 - ✓ When designing a new project, the project manager is responsible for assessing child safeguarding risks and mitigating actions in consultation with the Child Safeguarding Focal Point and other staff. The project manager is responsible for updating the risk assessment at the start of the project and during implementation. Within two weeks of the end of the project, the project manager initiates a child safeguarding review, including an assessment of whether the risk assessment was fit for purpose, and noting any learning for future projects. The project manager invites the Child Safeguarding Focal Point to the review, as well as any other relevant staff.
 - **Staff are trained on child safeguarding.**
 - ✓ The Child Safeguarding Focal Point is responsible for organising all staff training. During induction, all new staff are trained as follows (describe). On an annual basis all staff participate in a half-day refresher workshop on child safeguarding, where together they



review their code of conduct and policy, and any questions that come up, and share new resources and tools (e.g. useful videos, articles, etc.). The Focal Point has completed the following extra training and/or participated in freely available online training (describe).

6. **Designate a Child Safeguarding Focal Point and other child safeguarding responsibilities.** Delineate responsibilities (e.g., those of management, the Focal Point, other staff). Remember that child safeguarding is the responsibility of all of us and the Focal Point cannot do everything. The appointment of a Child Safeguarding Focal Point does not mean that child safeguarding is magically done. You need to spell out what others' responsibilities are.
7. Pay due regard to **risk assessment and risk mitigation. A risk assessment does not belong in a drawer gathering dust.** Considering potential risks and deciding how to avoid risks becoming realities is time well spent. Risk assessments should be dynamic. Risk management is an integral part of project management where risks are reviewed, updated, and addressed at every single management meeting. Why would you not do the same when children's safety is involved?

Risk management needs to happen at different levels:

- **Organisational level** (inherent to your structure, governance, location, staff, activities in general) (e.g., linked to how child safeguarding is built into your strategy, how leadership acts on child safeguarding, physical infrastructure, etc.)
- **Programme, project and activity level** (i.e., specific to individual programmes or activities) (e.g. if you are running a workshop with children over several days, involving travel, different ages, groups of children, the types of violations to be discussed, risks specific to children's agency, such as for child human rights defenders), online and offline risks; and
- **External or environmental risks** as and when needed, e.g., a renewal of armed conflict in your region, a climate emergency, a more hostile government policy towards children in migration, changes locally to police or school management that are less child sensitive and carry risks for children you work with.

To help you do this at organisational level, see the risk assessment chart in Appendix 9 under "Risk assessment, management, and mitigation" for a good overview of potential risks linked to the organisation.

At programme, project, and activity level, build risk management into design and implementation. Before any activity with children, do a specific risk assessment, also taking account of the specific group of children or individual children (age, gender, situations of vulnerability, external risks (e.g., for child human rights defenders). Are there online aspects and risks? Who is responsible for risk assessment? Who is responsible for risk mitigation? How is the Focal Point involved? When an activity, project, programme ends, how is child safeguarding reviewed? Who checks if the risk management was fit for purpose? Set a deadline, e.g., two weeks after project end, so that it is still fresh in people's minds. Is there learning to record and share for new activities, projects, and programmes?

8. When your drafting work is almost complete look at how child safeguarding is reflected **in and aligned with other documents and parts of the organisation** (e.g., in the DCI Movement 2022-2026 Strategic Framework), in your local strategy documents, in other areas. You may also have a policy to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and want to ensure alignment. You may need to adapt vacancy notices, job descriptions, employment contracts (checking employment law also) to reflect child safeguarding requirements. The more you can **systematise child safeguarding** by adapting templates and setting up routine processes, the better you can implement child safeguarding consistently and robustly.
9. **Have you budgeted for child safeguarding training or other costs?** Adapted governance processes (child safeguarding as a regular management and governance agenda item), embedded child safeguarding programme and project design and implementation? You may be required by donors to have a child safeguarding policy. It is entirely legitimate to clearly reflect and include child



safeguarding costs in your budget (e.g., appropriate staff coverage to respect the Two-Adult Rule, communicating with children and communities on child safeguarding, training costs and staff time for training) in your projects and activities, as from drafting your project concept or proposal documents.

10. In terms of **stakeholder involvement in policy development and review**, DCI recommends that you **involve staff** in writing the policy (e.g., at least via round table discussions for the overview of interactions and risk identification/mitigation, in drafting, testing, and getting feedback on the reporting template and other practical tools). Staff members will have useful, different perspectives and it is also an opportunity to discuss challenges and strengths and to foster shared understanding. It is also highly recommended to **involve the children you work with** and the **communities you work in**, in developing your policy. The policy is, after all, to prevent harm to children. You are a child rights organisation and are naturally expected to respect, protect, and fulfil the child's right to be heard, among others. So why wouldn't you involve them and the communities (you might hold workshops with child protection actors in your community, leaders, families, other organisations, schools) you work with in defining it and, at the same time, raising awareness on child safeguarding?
11. You should **describe which stakeholders were involved** in discussions to elaborate your policy (see DCI Requirement 3 above).
12. **Leadership engagement in the process** makes a huge difference – it is essential, especially to ensure child safeguarding is embedded across the organisation. Your leaders should be champions for child safeguarding. Your board should have a Child Safeguarding Focal Point and child safeguarding should be an agenda item at governance and management meetings. Have all board members and staff members signed your code of conduct?
13. **Ensure child safeguarding is dynamic**: hold regular (e.g., every quarter) team meetings to discuss child safeguarding, including challenges or concerns.
14. **DCI recommends a policy review every two years, at least**. You can of course review before the two years are up if you have identified gaps. The Child Safeguarding Focal Point should keep a log of newly emerging needs or areas that are unclear during implementation to feed into the review.



Appendix 9: Commented template proposal for a DCI section child safeguarding policy

Introduction

Mission of DCI

Briefly describe what your organisation does and the context in which it works, adding relevant links to other documents or where your mission is set out. You could adapt the Movement mission statement:

[DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL \(DCI\)](#) is a leading child rights independent international organisation and a membership-based grassroots movement, founded in 1979, the first international year of the child. DCI promotes and protects the human rights of children at the local, national, regional and international level, in accordance with international standards, as set out in its [statutes](#). DCI has National Sections (full members) in [more than 25 countries worldwide](#), and an international secretariat in Geneva, together referred to as “the Movement”.

As set out in Article 10 of the statutes, National Sections are legally and financially independent from the international organisation and the Movement as a whole. At the same time, each National Section, whilst abiding by institutional requirements of respective national legislation, must comply with the principles, guidelines, objectives, and policies established by the Movement of DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL (DCI). Furthermore, in paragraph 1.2.10 of the [Code of Ethics and Gender Policy](#) annexed to the statutes, DCI commits to abide by the Keeping Children Safe standards. DCI is a member of the [Keeping Children Safe network](#).

Objectives of this document

You might wish to adapt this text: As a child rights organisation which has direct or indirect contact with children and which aims for the highest standards of protection for children, the full enjoyments of their rights and putting the best interests of the child first, DCI understands that it is crucial that internally we apply the same principles. The child safeguarding policy will help to ensure that DCI staff, operations and programmes do no harm to children, that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that DCI has in place procedures to consistently prevent and respond to actions of its staff, partners, and visitors that (could) result in violence against children. It also aims at informing children and communities we work with of DCI responsibilities regarding child safeguarding and the avenues for reporting incidents.

Child safeguarding commitment

Here you could simply repeat and link to the Movement’s Child Safeguarding Principles which provide the necessary commitment to the standards expected.

Scope of this document

*Start by setting out who the policy applies to (list the roles and relationships to your organisation to leave no room for doubt). Be clear that this policy covers everyone in their work life **and** in their private life: everyone is expected to behave appropriately towards all children, you could not accept to retain staff who do not abide by the policy in their private life. Everyone is expected to know what to do if a concern arises. Include measures to gatekeep and supervise visitors if this applies to your organisation.*

If you work with partners for certain activities, projects, or programmes, you need to ensure full child safeguarding coverage (as described above) and robust accountability mechanisms. In principle, each partner should have their own child safeguarding policy, for accountability reasons, and there should be a discussion on how child safeguarding will be managed throughout the partnership, resulting in a written child safeguarding partnership letter or agreement. See [Appendix 12](#), Guidance on child safeguarding partnership standards.



Brief overview of DCI interactions with children

(Specific to your NS) Reflect on how and when your organisation interacts with children, directly and indirectly, also on any advocacy you do for or with children. Think about the children you work with or have an impact on (age, location, gender, circumstances, specifics). Do children have to travel from one location to another? Who from your organisation is involved? Where do interactions take place? Are there any physical infrastructure concerns (e.g., access to the building, etc.?) Describe this in your short overview, thinking also of any planned programmes, projects, activities, and partnerships over the next two years (the lifespan of your policy). If your work relates strictly to child rights advocacy (without any “direct” contact with children), you still have an impact on children and need to have a child safeguarding policy so that your advocacy helps to keep children safe. Think about how your work impacts on children. This part of the policy is very important. It will help you to keep children central to your work and to identify potential risks and steps needed to mitigate risks. Think about current interactions, but also, insofar as possible, take account of any upcoming interactions over the next two years, the lifespan of your policy.

2023 Review of child safeguarding policy

Describe or list main updates since last policy adoption.

Child safeguarding policy development process

Describe who was involved in writing or updating the policy, how the staff, management and governance were involved, and which stakeholders were consulted and how. To gain full marks for this section, you need to describe how children and the communities you work with were involved in the process.

Problem definition

State the organisation’s understanding of safeguarding children, the problem of child abuse and overall risks of your organisation, including definitions (if you have put these in an appendix, refer/hyperlink to that). It is particularly important to adapt this section to your particular local context (e.g., if child safeguarding is mandatory for your organisation under national law or if child safeguarding is a relatively new concept and/or entirely voluntary. Think about the local laws and policies, and strengths and weaknesses of any state agents or actors in the child protection system. You might also note the national child population and give some context at local or national level on the problem of child abuse and overall risks of your organisation.

DCI actions - Part 1: Prevention

Risk assessment, management, and mitigation

Risk management needs to happen at different levels:

- ✓ *organisational level (inherent to your structure, governance, location, staff, activities in general) (e.g., linked to how child safeguarding is built into your strategy, how leadership acts on child safeguarding, physical infrastructure, etc.)*
- ✓ *programme, project, and activity level (i.e., specific to individual programmes or activities) (e.g., if you are running a workshop with children over several days, involving travel, different ages, groups of children, the types of violations to be discussed, risks specific to children’s agency, such as for child human rights defenders), and*
- ✓ *external or environmental risks as and when needed, e.g., a renewal of armed conflict in your region, a climate emergency, a more hostile government policy towards children in migration, changes locally to police or school management that are less child sensitive and carry risks for children you work with.*

To help you do this at organisational level, see the risk assessment chart below for a good overview of potential risks linked to the organisation:



<https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/KCS-Developing-Child-Safeguarding-200218.pdf>.

At programme, project, and activity level, build risk management into design and implementation. Before any activity with children, do a specific risk assessment, also taking account of the specific group of children or individual children (age, gender, situations of vulnerability, external risks (e.g., for child human rights defenders). Are there online aspects and risks? Who is responsible for risk assessment? Who is responsible for risk mitigation? How is the Focal Point involved? When an activity, project or programme ends, how is child safeguarding reviewed? Who checks if the risk management was fit for purpose? Set a deadline, e.g., two weeks after project end, so that it is still fresh in people’s minds. Is there learning to record and share for new activities, projects, and programmes?

You could describe some of the risks at organisational level with such a type of chart:

Areas of risk	Risk identified	Risk significance	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Management			
Staff			
Contact with children			
Events/Activities			
ICTs			

Safer recruitment

Describe the measures you have taken (see [Appendix 10](#) for guidance). Describe all the measures and procedures in place to ensure safe recruitment, in particular for any post involving contact with children. Analyse the child safeguarding aspects when designing job descriptions and staff contracts. Add clauses on child safeguarding to all your templates. Reflect and address child safeguarding when publishing vacancy notices, during interview (including questions on child protection and safeguarding), in consistent and thorough checks with referees, in criminal record checks and other background checks, in induction training, awareness-raising and training on child safeguarding policy, in keeping records in all personnel files to demonstrate that all staff have signed a read receipt for the policy, in considering the use of probationary periods of employment to ensure suitability once in post.

Code of conduct

See the Movement’s Code of Conduct, which is the minimum. You may adopt higher standards for the code of conduct in your NS, but not lower. Every DCI-NS representative must return a signed copy of your code of conduct to be kept on file by DCI-IS.



Education and training

There are two aspects to consider. Education and training for all DCI representatives, and then education and training for children and families/communities. Remember to reflect training time and any other child safeguarding cost (e.g., extra staff to respect the Two-Adult Rule) in your budget.

Child safeguarding training may not be available in your region or your language. See what work arounds you can find to adopt a training programme that works for you, implement it consistently and describe it. You may find resources in the Toolkit (See [Appendix 11](#) and [Appendix 14](#)) to ensure a minimum of training (e.g., within DCI-IS, every staff member has been following the free Tusla online child safeguarding training in English). For anyone coming into the organisation, make it mandatory that they have training (e.g., a briefing by the Child Safeguarding Focal Point, a reading of the policy, some online videos that they have to watch, a follow up debriefing with the Child Safeguarding Focal Point). What about refresher training? We recommend at least annual refresher training, which could be in the form of a half-day workshop tackling case studies written for training purposes.

How, and by whom, are children in contact with your organisation and their families made aware of the child's right to freedom from all forms of violence and of your child safeguarding policy and procedures? See a resource document on drafting a child-friendly child safeguarding policy in Appendix 8. Apart from a child-friendly document, think about other means (informing children at the start of and continuously throughout projects or activities via complaint boxes and/or posters).

Safe programme design

What consideration has there been for children involved in programmes? How have the needs of different children been considered? Who delivers these services? Are there any risks for children in participating in the programme? Is the participation of children welcomed by families and/or the community? What preventative measures need to be put in place to safeguard children if activities or events are to take place in unfamiliar places and outside family care?

Communication guidelines to keep children safe

Data protection

The National Section should specify the data protection rules to which it is subject (e.g., the General Data Protection Regulation within the European Union for European National Sections).

DCI is bound by national and regional laws, and adheres to the principles of the CRC. DCI commits to promoting a positive and non-discriminatory image of children at all times.

In all DCI communication work, projects, and activities, including the use of social media by DCI representatives, the following principles apply:

- ✓ **Dignity:** The child's dignity must be preserved at all times. DCI must never use discriminatory, victimising or degrading language towards children. In images, children should always be dressed appropriately and should never be depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually provocative. DCI opposes the exploitation of children's images, irrespective of the purpose, including for fundraising purposes.
- ✓ **Accuracy:** The portrayal of children must not be manipulated or sensationalised in any way. Images and stories should provide a balanced depiction of the child's life and circumstances, balancing negative images with empowering images or showing the progress that children are making. Communication should avoid making generalisations, which do not accurately reflect the nature of the situation and pictures and videos should not be taken and used out of context.
- ✓ **Privacy and safeguarding:** Any information that could be used to identify a child or put her or him at risk will not be used. In carrying out child safeguarding risk assessments, DCI must also consider communication aspects of operations, activities, and programmes. DCI will ensure that the names



or other potential identifiers of children are never made public in any deliverables or outputs. In activities, children are asked to choose an alias to protect their privacy. Recorded images should focus on activities and, where possible, on groups of children rather than individuals.

Research¹¹ involving children

All research conducted by DCI directly or indirectly affecting children will adhere to the principles of the CRC and these Child Safeguarding Policy and Principles.

Enrolment of children in projects, activities, events

The enrolment of children in projects and/or activities requires particular skills and certain basic principles should be followed to ensure their dignity and respect for their rights.

- ✓ **Informed consent:** Enrolment in the projects or activities of DCI is entirely voluntary and informed consent is always obtained before any interviews, photos, videos, requests of personal information or engagement of a child in any activity. Informed consent means that children are told how DCI may use their views, information, or image (photograph and film) and that they are under no obligation to agree to their use. Consent must be obtained by completing and signing an appropriate informed consent form. It must contain comprehensive, child-friendly and -sensitive language and procedures and be adapted to the age and capacity of the different children and different groups of children concerned. Depending on national legislation, informed consent may also be required from the child's parent/carer or guardian or, where this is not possible, from the organisation fostering the child, who must countersign the form.

Informed consent for photographs and videos

- ✓ The use of photographs and videos of children in publications is subject to the informed written consent of the child and their parent/legal guardian. Informed consent implies that the child and parent/guardian understand the circumstances under which the image will be used and all the possible consequences of its publication, distribution, or circulation. All pictures and/or videos of children and individuals that have interacted with DCI-IS can only be published if consent has been given. In order for consent to be given, the child and their parent/guardian must sign and date the official DCI Media Release form of which a copy, electronic or otherwise, must be filed.
- ✓ The consent of use of image is limited to a **time period of two years starting from the date that the consent was expressly given**; after that period expires, the images of the child in question will be archived and no longer used in any form of internal/external or online/offline communications. This means that you need a process to manage these deadlines.
- ✓ Personnel must never share with unauthorised persons any information that could identify families or children or make them accessible to the public without the consent of the family and, where possible, of the child.
- ✓ Provision of support: There should be someone else present during any interview with a child, who the child is familiar with. Wherever possible, the child should be given a choice regarding who supports him/her during the interview.
- ✓ Respecting the right to say no: Ensure the child understands her/his rights to withdraw or stop at any time without the need to provide a justification.
- ✓ Gender: Consider the different needs of boys and girls and whether they would be more comfortable speaking with a man or a woman. Gender must be considered when deciding what topics may be discussed.

¹¹ This paper is also useful: Lundy, L., & McEvoy, L. (2012). [Childhood, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Research: What Constitutes a 'Rights-Based' Approach?](#) In M. Freeman (Ed.), *Law and Childhood Studies: Current Legal Issues Volume 14* (pp. 75-91). Oxford University Press.



- ✓ *Respecting the right to information: If you are going to take notes, or record the interview in another way, you must explain this to the child and obtain his/her permission to do so, both verbally and in writing.*

Management responsibilities and ownership

Describe key roles and responsibilities, arrangements in place to monitor compliance with and implementation of child safeguarding policy. Describe how child safeguarding is reported on to key management forums, describe how external or independent bodies such as board of trustees are used to monitor performance in this area and hold senior executives to account in relation to child safeguarding. Describe how child safeguarding is embedded in organisational development, describe processes and frequency for child safeguarding policy reviews, audits, and more formal evaluations. Describe how child safeguarding is reported on to key stakeholders and included in annual reports.

DCI actions - Part 2: Reporting and responding to concerns

See [Appendix 7](#). A good, clear policy on which your organisation has educated and trained all representatives and the children and communities you work in will allow for consistent responses. Ensure that all staff are trained, know who the designated child protection officer is, have a toolkit at their disposal. Ensure that all staff know that when a child safeguarding concern is raised, it is essential to act, and that the protection of children is always the most important consideration. Ensure timely, effective, confidential, and appropriate responses to child safeguarding issues. Describe the risk register process.

Implementation, monitoring, and review

Describe implementation measures and review frequency for the policy, e.g., every two years. Describe how you monitor implementation (annual reviews, regular refresher meetings, sampling of risk registers, etc). Self-assessment, external audit, risk register, internal audit reports, Keeping Children Safe certification.



Appendix 10: Guidance on safer recruitment processes

What is safer recruitment?¹²

Safer recruitment is a set of practices to help make sure your staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people. It's a vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and making a commitment to keep children safe from harm.

Safer recruitment procedures

The responsibility of DCI staff and partners is to protect, promote and ensure respect of the human rights of children, and promote their well-being. Thus, the process of recruitment of staff, interns, volunteers, and consultants is crucial to ensuring effective safeguarding within the organisation, by hiring qualified and skilled persons capable of fulfilling their position in a manner safe to children.

Having a safer recruitment in place is a vital first step towards keeping the children and young people who have contact with your staff and volunteers safe. It is also important to establish clear written procedures and make sure everyone who is involved with any form of recruitment knows how to follow them. These will ensure that staff and volunteers are recruited safely and fairly, and that children's safety is being considered at every stage of the process.

Plan the recruitment process

Plan the whole of your recruitment process in advance to make sure you have a consistent approach every time you recruit a new staff member or volunteer. Taking a planned and structured approach will help:

- minimise the risk of appointing someone unsuitable,
- ensure you select the right person for the role,
- make sure the process is fair,
- make sure there are records of the process for future reference.

Following a written procedure also means you're less likely to miss anything out and that each time you recruit you're consistently adhering to legislation and guidance.

The following should be considered and applied consistently when planning recruitment¹³:

- **Job descriptions for all positions** - make reference to responsibilities for safeguarding and/or the code of conduct in all job descriptions and include the mission and values of the organisation or link to them. Include a link to the policy in all job descriptions (add it to your job description template too) and your job description template.
- **Vacancy notices** – make clear references to child safeguarding in all vacancy notices. Include the link to the policy in the vacancy notice.
- Vacancy notice **template suggestion** - All DCI-NS staff and representatives are required to respect the DCI-NS child safeguarding policy in their position and in their private life.
- **Advertisement** - make clear the organisation's commitment to safeguarding.
- **Shortlisting** - obtain and scrutinise information in applications and CVs - resolve any gaps, discrepancies, or anomalies in employment history.
- **Interviews** – always include one or two questions around child safeguarding and working with vulnerable people. See sample questions below.
- **Checks** - verify the successful applicant's identity, their employment history, and qualifications. Offers should not be confirmed until all checks are in place.

¹² <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/safer-recruitment#skip-to-content>

¹³ https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/431%20Safer_Recruitment_Guidelines.pdf



- **Independent professional references** – always and consistently ask for references and include a question as to whether there are any child safeguarding concerns – references should be obtained, and any concerns followed up (at least two employment referees should be submitted, one of which should be the applicant's current or most recent employer). Where references reveal any inconsistencies or doubts about the person's suitability, the issues should be followed up and explored with the referee or the candidate. It is important to keep written records of any telephone conversations and, where the issues are significant, more detailed information sought in writing from the referee if possible.
- **External checks** - conducted according to organisational policy - this could be a request for a criminal record extract, a police clearance check or equivalent. Some donors require an antiterrorism check.
- **Contracts** – link to the child safeguarding policy and ensure that child safeguarding responsibilities are included in all employment contracts and in your employment contract template, e.g.: *“Everyone working for DCI-NS is required to respect the child safeguarding policy and code of conduct in their position and in their private life. Breaches of this policy may incur sanctions including disciplinary action leading to possible dismissal, termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements, and where relevant, appropriate legal or other such actions. Breaches of this policy may also result in a referral being made to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of xxxxxx (country, where DCI-NS is based).”*
- **Induction** – include, as a minimum, a briefing on child safeguarding and the code of conduct for all new recruits.

Sample interview questions and answers

1. **Have you ever been arrested or convicted for an offence against a child?**
2. **What do you think are some of the most important things an NGO working with and for children can do to prevent abuse or neglect?**

Sample response: Two of the most important things I think an NGO can do to prevent abuse or neglect are providing training for all staff so that they are aware of the signs of abuse or neglect and having clear and concise procedures in place to report and respond to any concerns. I also believe that it is important to create a culture of openness and transparency in the organisation so that children and staff feel comfortable coming forward with any concerns they may have.

3. **Why is child safeguarding in NGOs working on children's rights important?**

Sample response: Child safeguarding is important because all children have a right to be safe and protected from harm. Unfortunately, there are some people who may try to harm children, either physically or emotionally. It is our job to make sure that children are safe, and that they know what to do if they ever feel unsafe.

4. **Additional sample questions (especially for a candidate to work directly with children)**

- What makes an NGO working with and for children a safe and caring place?
- What would you do if you were concerned about a colleague's behaviour towards children?
- What would you do if you were concerned about a child's behaviour?
- Can you spot the signs that a child is suffering from a type of abuse, neglect, or harm? What are some of these signs?
- What do you think are the staff members' responsibilities in protecting children?
- Do you know the procedure for reporting a concern about a child?
- Do you know how to behave before, during and after a disclosure?



Appendix 11: Guidance on child safeguarding training of DCI and IS staff

Online training (free or fee-based)

The Toolkit ([Appendix 14](#)) contains links to child safeguarding training resources, some of which are free. Most of these are in English. DCI representatives are invited to pass on details of other training resources in other languages to be added to the Toolkit.

Given the role of the Child Safeguarding Focal Point, organisations should ensure that s/he develops and keeps up to date with applicable standards and guidance. DCI Focal Points are expected to participate in DCI child safeguarding working group meetings (other staff may also participate).

If your organisation has sufficient funding, you could also consider some of the fee-paying courses listed.

On-the-job training

DCI recommends that all National Sections and the IS develop in-house, on-the-job training. These could be led/delivered by the Child Safeguarding Focal Point in cooperation with other staff.

1. A briefing session on the Child Safeguarding Policy, and the Code of Conduct to be delivered to all newcomers (whether staff or interns), and a debriefing session after the newcomer has read all the material, before signature of the Code of Conduct.
2. An annual half day refresher workshop on child safeguarding for all staff and interns, reviewing the Policy and the Code of Conduct, reflecting on the National Section's or IS interactions (planned and unplanned) with children, an opportunity to discuss concerns, challenges, strengths and weaknesses, a review of progress in systematisation of child safeguarding processes, and a discussion on how child safeguarding is communicated to children and to communities.
3. Participation in child safeguarding online and in person conferences could also be considered.



Appendix 12: Guidance on child safeguarding partnership standards

Partners: When working with partners, DCI understands the importance of establishing which organisation is responsible for all aspects of child safeguarding from concept design and planning through to implementation and follow-up, and taking action in the case that a concern is raised, or an incident takes place. To this end, when joint activities or projects are intended to be carried out with a partner, a joint agreement of procedure will be signed by all parties involved in order to clarify child safeguarding roles and responsibilities. This agreement does not impede DCI or the partner(s) from meeting its/their own reporting obligations and referring any issue to relevant authorities in case of a disagreement on the appropriate course of action.

Child safeguarding partnership agreement template

Project, activity, event title:

Duration of this partnership agreement:

Project, activity, event scope:

(Briefly describe the activities and in particular the direct or indirect actions with children, including advocacy.)

Partners' roles within the project/activity/event:

(Delineate these as precisely as possible to identify possible safeguarding gaps.)

Description of child safeguarding responsibilities among the partners from conception and design through to implementation and follow-up:

(Discuss exactly who does what, and when, in terms of child safeguarding. You may wish to share a common risk management table. Ensure child safeguarding is a routine agenda item for partnership meetings. You may wish to appoint a Focal Point common to all partners and communicate that to all involved. Ensure shared understanding of when a concern or incident needs to be reported to the relevant authorities. How will partners' staff be trained for this partnership activity? How will child safeguarding be communicated to children/communities? How is child safeguarding reflected in budgets?)

Links to all partners' child safeguarding policies:

Dated and signed by all partners at an appropriately high level



Appendix 13: Framework for the evaluation of National Sections' child safeguarding policies as of December 2023

DCI-IS reviews DCI-NS child safeguarding policies using this framework (according to the requirements of the Movement's Child Safeguarding Policy).

DCI-NS are invited to use it as a checklist when developing or updating their policy.

Scoring is as follows: 0 = no evidence, 1 = partially done, 2 = done.

The reviewer adds references in the comments box to explain the score.

Requirements of DCI Movement Policy	Done (Y/N)	Comments
1. Child safeguarding policy exists and is easily found on DCI-NS website		
a) Covers four standards: policy, people, procedures, and accountability		
b) Outlines measures to respond when concerns arise		
c) Was developed, implemented, and reviewed in consultation with stakeholders (described in the policy)		
d) Clearly recognises every child as a rights holder with non-negotiable rights to protection and seeks to empower children to protect themselves and their peers and to claim their rights		
e) Summarises DCI-NS interactions with children and context		
f) Clearly sets out who is responsible for which action		
2. Embeds child safeguarding risk assessment and risk mitigation in its strategy and carries out appropriate risk assessments and mitigations for all its activities, programmes, and operations		
3. Must notify DCI-IS of any changes to its designated Child Protection Focal Point when the Focal Point changes compared to 10 September 2023 notification		Add date of notification here:
4. Must return the signed and dated revised code of conduct (Appendix 1) together with a copy of its child safeguarding policy by end December 2023		Add date here:
5. Must implement mandatory training for all staff on safeguarding and further training for those in safeguarding focal roles, particularly with regard to reporting (see e-learning in Toolkit Appendix 14). See also Appendix 11)		
6. Must raise awareness and communicate the DCI approach to safeguarding in the communities they		



Requirements of DCI Movement Policy	Done (Y/N)	Comments
operate in, including child-accessible communications and empowerment (describe, include copies)		
7. Must publish their child safeguarding policy online and send the URL to DCI-IS by December 2023		Add URL here:
8. By end 2023 implements measures to inform children, communities, and staff of the policy and on Child Safeguarding Focal Point (including but not limited to prominent displays in premises), child-accessible versions of their code of conduct and the main child safeguarding principles, complaints/comments boxes, information sessions at the start of programmes, events, etc. Must send DCI-IS a summary of child-friendly means by end 2023		Describe:
9. Must ensure that, where applicable, clear safeguarding measures are put in place for working with partners (assessment, agreement, support, capacity-building, monitoring, and evaluation)		
10. In 2020, and as part of child safeguarding reviews, thereafter, must complete the Keeping Children Safe self-assessment process and follow up on results. Must send a copy of latest self-assessment and any other safeguarding audit results to IS by end 2023		Specify what was submitted
11. Child safeguarding policy includes practical annexes as per appendices to DCI-Movement Policy, adapted to local needs		
TOTAL SCORE (maximum is 34)		
12. Must include a section on child safeguarding in their annual report		URL:
13. Must carry out a child safeguarding review every two years and submit a copy to DCI-IS		Specify:
14. Must notify DCI-IS of any cases reported to the relevant child protection authorities where a DCI-NS representative is suspected of causing harm to a child		



Appendix 14: Toolkit – links to online resources and information

Child safeguarding resources

1. Keeping Children Safe Standards: <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/international-child-safeguarding-standards/> (available in EN, ES)
2. Pocket guide: safeguarding persons with disabilities and/or mental health conditions in CSO organisations (available in AR, EN, FR, SV)
<https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/documents/pocket-guide-safeguarding-persons-disabilities-andor-mental-health-conditions-cso-0>
3. Pocket guide: safeguarding LGBTQI+ individuals working in CSOs (EN)
While this guide is focused on staff, it is also useful to reflect on risks for LGBTQI+ children.
<https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/documents/pocket-guide-safeguarding-lgbtqi-individuals-working-civil-society-organisations>
4. NSPCC: Safeguarding LGBTQ+ children and young people (May 2023)
While the research is UK-specific, this short guide has lots of useful pointers to help ensure child safeguarding is LGBTQI+ sensitive.
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/lgbtq-children-young-people#skip-to-content>
5. Keeping Children Safe: code of good practice in managing child safeguarding allegations:
<https://codeofgoodpractice.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/KCS-Management-of-Child-Safeguarding-Allegations.pdf>
6. NSPCC Keeping children safe online: a guide for organisations:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

The relationship between children's participation and protection

1. [Children's Human Rights to 'Participation' and 'Protection': Rethinking the relationship using Barnahus as a case example, 26 March 2023 - Mary Mitchell, Laura Lundy, Louise Hill](#) - "...while the significance of participation for protection is now well established, if not always fully accepted or practised, there has been much less attention to the other side of this coin. If children are afraid to speak for fear of physical or emotional harm, then Article 12 cannot be realised (Hill et al., 2021). The question then becomes how to create a space where children are both heard and are safe – participation and protection". "Children cannot be kept safe if they are not heard and cannot be heard where they are not safe."

Read more about violence against children

1. WHO 2013 European report on preventing child maltreatment:
https://intranet.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/217018/European-Report-on-Preventing-Child-Maltreatment.pdf – geographical scope is 53 countries: WHO European Region countries:
<http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries>
2. September 2014 UNICEF report: 'Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children' - prevalence of different forms of violence against children - data from 190 countries:
<https://www.unicef.org/documents/hidden-plain-sight-statistical-analysis-violence-against-children>
3. 2014 FRA Gender-based violence against women:
<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>
4. Council of Europe ONE in FIVE campaign: https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/1in5/default_en.asp
5. General Comment No 13 (2011) of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the child's right to freedom from all forms of violence:
http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.GC.13_en.pdf



6. World Report on Violence against Children (Pinheiro, 2006):
<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/587334>
7. <http://guides.womenwin.org/gbv/readiness-and-response/response-referral-and-reporting/disclosure-dos-and-donts>
The do's and don'ts are also available in other languages: [FR](#) - [ES](#) - [PT](#)
8. [NSPCC \(UK\) Guidance on disclosures by children of abuse: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/what-to-do-child-reveals-abuse/](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/what-to-do-child-reveals-abuse/)
9. A 14-minute TEDx Talk by an adult survivor of child sexual abuse on how to respond to disclosure Healing From Sexual Abuse Can Start With One Word (Rena Romano | TEDxOcala)
https://www.ted.com/talks/rena_romano_healing_from_sexual_abuse_can_start_with_one_word?utm_source
10. Tusla (Irish child protection agency) guidance on disclosure: <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/general-public/how-should-i-deal-with-a-disclosure-of-abuse-from-a-child/>
11. 15 minute e-learning course on responding to disclosure: Guiding principles: Listen-Believe-Act; practical tips on dealing with disclosure (EN): <https://campus.nsvrc.org/course/view.php?id=45>
(full text version: <https://campus.nsvrc.org/mod/resource/view.php?id=301>)
12. Guidance on potential indicators of abuse:
<https://www.childmatters.org.nz/insights/abuse-indicators/>

E-learning resources on child safeguarding and child protection

1. National Sexual Violence Resource Centre, retrieved from: <http://www.nsvrc.org/elearning/21385>
(EN) e-learning portal also available in [ES](#)
2. Tusla (Irish child protection agency) free e-learning on child safeguarding (1.5 hours in English, useful outside of Ireland too for general concepts and understanding, including on WHEN to refer to authorities (noting that national law needs to be taken into account):
<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/>
3. Keeping Children Safe
 - Understanding child safeguarding (foundation course 12 hours over three weeks)
<https://learning.keepingchildrensafe.global/understanding-child-safeguarding/>
 - Focal point training (20 hours, 2 hours a day for two weeks)
<https://learning.keepingchildrensafe.global/>
4. Focal point training: All Focal Points could usefully follow this presentation by former Detective Robert Shilling: “Assume nothing, verify everything”:
<https://vimeo.com/keepingchildrensafe/heartofthesystem2023-robertshilling>
5. Keeping Children Safe, March 2023 Roundtable: Identifying good practices and challenges in national settings
<https://vimeo.com/keepingchildrensafe/heartofthesystem2023-panel-dressler-garcia-moya-obot>
Interesting to see how child safeguarding is rolled out in different countries and sectors, e.g. a port
6. European Barnahus movement webinars with a broad range of experts:
<https://www.childrenatrisk.eu/promise/webinars/>




Keeping children safe online

1. NSPCC (UK) four-hour introductory e-course (£30):
[Keeping children safe online \(4.0\) - NSPCC My Learning](#)
2. [CEOP one-day e-training on online child sexual abuse \(£150 Understanding Online Child Sexual Abuse Course | CEOP Education \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)\)](#)
3. Marie Collins Foundation training click path to protection [Training | What We Do | Marie Collins Foundation](#). The CPP has been adapted to train professionals internationally which has resulted in facilitated training occurring to a range of organisations and agencies from around the world. This course has been independently evaluated and has been referenced in the international journal of child abuse and neglect.
4. Better Internet for Kids – Key online safety risks:
<https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/teacher-corner/learning-modules/key-risks>
5. [Safe Sisters](#) fellowship programme for woman (and girl) human rights defenders, journalists or media workers, and activists that train them to be able to understand and respond to the digital security challenges they face in their work and daily life. Through a combination of self-study, tool practice, mentorship, workshops, peer sharing, and small grants, these cohorts of women will join forces to take on the most pressing digital challenges that keep women from being able to live and be online safely.






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