

# Safeguarding children in emergencies

## *Toolkit 1 : Safeguarding standards*



Keeping  
Children  
Safe

# Toolkit 1: Safeguarding standards

## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Why safeguarding standards? - the legal framework.....	5
Standard 1: Assessing the risk and ensuring that appropriate child safeguarding measures are developed.....	10
Standard 2: The role and responsibilities of staff are clearly defined .....	16
Standard 3: Dissemination and understanding of the safeguarding measures in place is ensured at all levels .....	18
Standard 4: Safe recruitment processes are developed and implemented at all levels.....	22
Standard 5: Mainstreaming the child safeguarding measures by all sectors in the organisation.....	24
Standard 6: Monitoring and evaluation processes are developed and responsibilities clearly assigned to staff .....	26
Acknowledgements.....	27

# Introduction

All children, whoever they are and wherever they are, have a right to be protected from harm and to have their welfare promoted. While it has been known for some time that children are especially vulnerable to natural disasters and armed conflicts, lessons learned from the past have shown that too often organisations do not prioritise the safeguarding needs of children when emergencies strike. Yet children suffer the consequences in the absence of such measures. Abuse is likely to occur every time an emergency happens.

## 1. WHAT IS THE AIM OF THIS EMERGENCY TOOL?

Working with children, especially vulnerable children living in high risk situations, means that inevitably staff and associates will at some stage be confronted by child safeguarding concerns of one kind or another. More often than not these will be external to the organisation, but it must be acknowledged that children may sometimes be at risk of harm perpetrated by adults employed by or associated with the agency<sup>1</sup>.

We need to develop a common understanding of child safeguarding measures, develop good practice across the diverse and complex areas in which we operate and increase accountability in this crucial aspect of our work.

There are simple policies and procedures which, if put in place, will significantly strengthen the safeguarding of children.

This toolkit is designed for use in time-constricted environments, is easily adaptable for varied disasters both man-made and natural, and provides 'need to know' essentials for addressing child safeguarding issues during emergencies

Keeping Children Safe decided to develop this toolkit after noting an absence of concise tools readily implementable by staff that would help organisations to develop and implement child safeguarding measures during emergencies. Lessons learned from the past have shown that often organisations do not prioritise the safeguarding needs of children when emergencies strike, yet every time children suffer the consequences of the absence of such measures and abuse occurs.

The emergencies in 2010 in both Haiti and Pakistan, highlighted the need for humanitarian workers to have a resource which can prepare them for safeguarding children when the time available for normal training activities is very limited.

**It is very important to note that Child Safeguarding measures MUST be developed PRIOR to the occurrence of an emergency. Organisations must see this tool as something to guide them in the preparation for an emergency rather than to be used during an emergency.**

During an emergency there are six minimum standards that should be met to safeguard children. These standards are based on Keeping Children Safe's 11 original standards and reflect input from Keeping Children Safe's emergencies working group, members of Child Protection Working Group coordinated by UNICEF and 286 survey respondents in 83 different organisations. These informants identified the most frequently encountered difficulties when trying to develop and implement child safeguarding measures and the standards which are necessary to work to in emergency settings. The toolkit was piloted in Sri Lanka in June 2010.

Keeping Children Safe would welcome your thoughts and comments on this toolkit for future editions.

<sup>1</sup> From Plan International

---

## 2. WHAT WILL I FIND IN THIS TOOLKIT?

- **Toolkit 1 Safeguarding Standards** – outlines the minimum standards for safeguarding children in emergencies and provides indicators for mainstreaming safeguarding initiatives in emergency programming
- **Toolkit 2 How to implement the standards** - provides practical guidance on how to ensure the appropriate implementation of these standards.
- **Toolkit 3 Safeguarding References** – a set of documents provided by organisations that offer practical examples of tools, policies and procedures which can be replicated or adapted by organisations wishing to strengthen their own measures.

This toolkit will help any agency to meet its duty to protect children during emergencies. The standards identified are the minimum requirement and are based on the experience of organisations working in emergencies. Additionally, they draw upon the principles outlined in international and regional child rights instruments and commitments.

---

## 3. WHY STANDARDS?

Standards provide a benchmark against which practice can be measured and audited, areas for development identified and thus a basis for accountability and challenge if practice falls below a certain level. Although implementing standards cannot offer complete safeguarding for children, it does minimise the risk to children of abuse and exploitation<sup>2</sup>.

**Though the achievement of these standards may often be influenced by factors beyond our control, we commit ourselves to consistently work towards achieving them and we expect to be held to account accordingly. We invite other organisations and agencies to adopt these standards and join us in working towards their achievement.**

Keeping Children Safe 2012

<sup>2</sup> From Plan International

---

#### **4. WHO ARE THE STANDARDS FOR?**

The standards are aimed at: International NGOs (with or without a specific child focus), International Organisations, NGO partners of INGOs and IOs, other NGOs (national and local), government partners and any other agencies that require child safeguarding measures to be put in place.

This training will refer throughout to ‘agency’ or ‘agencies’ or organisations and this should be taken to include the range of organisations described above.

In each agency, this training must be undertaken by:

- All staff at the head-quarters who are involved in the management, recruitment and/or communication coverage of emergency responses
- All field staff / local partners & actors<sup>3</sup> involved directly or indirectly in the implementation of emergency responses on the ground and who may have immediate contact with beneficiaries or play a role in the design of the response
- All staff or contractors likely to be deployed during emergencies (incl. Rosters members, external staff recruited in support of the operations (consultants, researchers, etc.)), as well as board members, associates, sponsors, trustees, media, volunteers, community volunteers and any visitors who may come to the country where operations are taking place through your organisation
- Staff and representatives of partner agencies or any other individuals, groups and organisations who have a formal/contractual relationship with your office requiring them to take an active role in the emergency response.

---

#### **5. HOW TO USE THE SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS**

The Safeguarding Standards describe the minimum that organisations should be working to in emergencies. There are six of these minimum standards, rather than the eleven in the Keeping Children Safe full toolkit. Organisations should use these standards as a reference point to assess their current measures in emergencies and to develop or strengthen measures to effectively safeguard children. The Mainstreaming Requirements are a guide for organisations to assess whether they have considered potential safeguarding concerns throughout their emergency programme in order to adhere to Standard 5.

<sup>3</sup> This will include volunteers, camp committees, drivers, etc.

# Why safeguarding standards? - the legal framework

## 1. WHAT ARE CHILD SAFEGUARDING MEASURES?

Child safeguarding measures (CSM) are all the steps which are taken in order to ensure that children are kept safe whilst your organisation conducts its activities. These measures include, as we will see in this training tool:

- To have a Child Safeguarding Policy developed, written and implemented
- To ensure that this policy is adapted to emergencies and to the local context
- To have clearly defined processes to ensure staff are recruited safely, that partners adhere to the safeguarding measures and to clarify exactly how alleged cases of abuse need to be reported and dealt with
- To have clear and up-to-date division of responsibilities in ensuring the implementation of the CSM
- To ensure that the CSM are disseminated and understood at all levels
- To ensure the CSM adopted are reflected in all the activities of the organisation, at all levels
- To monitor and evaluate the measures to ensure they are adequate and well-implemented


## 2. IS YOUR ORGANISATION SAFE FOR CHILDREN?

It is important before we start for you to get a picture of your organisation. How does it safeguard children, are there any areas where the required measures are not in place, and what should be done to meet the standards?

For many agencies, children are not their main focus – for example, their main focus might be water aid, or food distribution, or involve the wider community.

However when all organisations analyse their activities, many are surprised to find how much contact they have with children. Children everywhere are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by people in positions of power and trust. Recent reports in the UK and overseas continue to show this. It is essential that all aid and development agencies have systems in place that guarantee the safe recruitment of staff, the timely and appropriate response to concerns arising and the adherence to best practices.

This toolkit will help you to identify what your organisation (or your partner organisation) currently does to keep children safe.

 **Tool 2 – How to assess the risk** will help you identify and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of child protection within your organisation and outline any additional measures that you will need to take to meet the standards. (to add in page reference)

If you are working with a partner organisation please include them in the risk assessment process.

A fundamental element in the safeguarding of children is the recognition that states have the primary responsibility of protecting the human rights of all persons within their territories. Children share protected universal human rights with all other persons but, in addition, because of their dependence, vulnerability and developmental needs, they also have certain additional rights.

Familiarity with international law is important because it outlines the obligations of a country in protecting children. It also provides the framework within which those who work with children should operate.

**Where there is a lack of consistency between applicable legal instruments, the one giving the best protection to the child is to be applied.**

**It is widely accepted that we must act solely in the best interests of the child.**

---

## KEY CONCEPTS

1. The legal bases for prioritised action on behalf of children are well established in international law.
2. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides a comprehensive code of rights which offers the highest standards of protection and assistance for children.
3. The civil rights and freedoms established under the UNCRC apply equally to all children, who should be provided with opportunities to express their views in any matter affecting them and encouraged to participate in the activities of the community.
4. The UNCRC and other instruments provide the right to specific protection for children in situations of armed conflict.
5. Refugee and displaced children are particularly at risk from many different types of abuse and exploitation, including child labour and sexual exploitation. Their rights to protection are established through the UNCRC and other international instruments.
6. The maintenance of family unity and the reunification of families has been established as a priority in international law.
7. Education is recognised as a universal human right which is established through a wide range of international and regional instruments.
8. The UNCRC establishes the right to the highest attainable standard of health for children.

---

## MAIN LEGAL INSTRUMENTS THAT APPLY TO CHILDREN IN EMERGENCIES.

The text below provides reference to the key sections of international legal instruments that are applicable in an emergency. This is intended as an at-a-glance resource – the full text of the instrument should be referred to for full information.

---

## HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

### UN Convention on the rights of the child

All but two countries (Somalia and the USA are the exceptions) are parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As such it can be treated as almost universally applicable. It is legally binding on every government which is a party to it and applies to all children within the jurisdiction of each state, not only to those who are nationals of that state. Indeed, the principle of non-discrimination is stated strongly in the CRC and certainly covers refugee and displaced children including adolescents.

### **The UNCRC guiding principles as an overall framework:**

Article 1, **Definition of the child:** a 'child' is a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the monitoring body for the Convention, has encouraged States to review the age of majority if it is set below 18 and to increase the level of protection for all children under 18. For normal purposes this means that it can be applied to everyone up to 18, unless it is demonstrated that they are an adult under the applicable national law for all purposes or for this specific purpose. In any case, the "scheme" of the UNCRC suggests that this exception should be interpreted as an empowering one, in other words that under-18s can claim the benefits of adulthood if granted by national law while still being able to claim the protection of the UNCRC.


Article 2, **Non Discrimination:** All rights apply to all children without exception. It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.

Article 3, **Best Interests of the Child:** All actions concerning the child shall result from taking full account of his or her best interests. The State shall provide the child with adequate care when parents, or others charged with that responsibility, fail to do so.

Article 6, **Right to Life, Survival and Development:** Every child has the inherent right to life and the State has an obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.

Article 12, **Respect for the views of the child:** All children have the right to participation in decision making processes that may be relevant in their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard – within the family, school or community.

A comprehensive understanding of and compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child must be central to all child protection activities.

Components of Article 9, 5, the Optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and the Optional protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography are also likely to be central to much of child protection work in emergencies: For full details see  **Tool 3**.

---

## **INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW**

### **International Humanitarian Law**

International humanitarian law limits the methods of conducting military operations. The fundamental rules of international humanitarian law are as follows:

- Those who do not take a direct part in hostilities, who are put out of action or who are disabled are entitled to respect for their lives and their physical and moral integrity.
- It is forbidden to kill or to injure an enemy who surrenders or who is not participating in hostilities.
- The wounded and the sick shall be collected and cared for by the party to the conflict that has them in its power. Protection also covers medical personnel, establishments, transports and supplies. The emblem of the Red Cross is the sign of such protection and must be respected.
- Captured combatants and civilians are entitled to respect for their lives, dignity, personal rights and convictions. They shall be protected against all acts of violence. They shall have the right to correspond with their families and to receive relief.
- Everyone shall be entitled to fundamental justice. No one shall be held responsible for an act he or she has not committed or be subjected to physical or mental torture, corporal punishment, or cruel or degrading treatment.
- Methods and means of warfare should not cause unnecessary losses or excessive suffering.

<sup>1</sup> THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, Guiding principles: general requirements for all rights, UNICEF, Face to Face training on Child Protection in Emergencies, 2010.

- Parties to a conflict shall spare civilian populations and property. Attacks shall be directed solely against military objectives.

### Refugee law

The fundamental principle of refugee protection is that of non-refoulement, which prohibits the return of a refugee to a territory where he or she fears persecution. This right is contained in article 33 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees:

- “No Contracting State shall expel or return (‘refouler’) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”

### Protection of the internally displaced

Unlike refugees, those who have fled their homes but have not crossed an international border are not protected by a special agency or by a special body of law. Although international human rights law applies to them in that situation, their situation is often much more vulnerable, particularly when they are living in areas controlled by rebel movements or where by virtue of their race, religion or political affiliation they are considered the ‘enemy’. Protection of internally displaced persons should be guaranteed by national legislation concerning the rights and well being of all citizens, international human rights obligations of governments and, in cases of armed conflict, by international humanitarian law.

---

## HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

Humanitarian principles are based on the work of the Red Cross, and they have their underpinnings in international humanitarian law and human rights law. The principles are a type of framework for how we act, a “code of conduct” for everyone present in an emergency, including, in conflict, the warring parties. Governments have the primary responsibility to uphold them, as well as non-state entities, and humanitarian organisations<sup>2</sup>.

**Four core principles** – accepted by all UN agencies, the International Red Cross movement, and NGOs:

- **Humanity:** The centrality of saving lives and alleviating suffering wherever it is found.
- **Neutrality:** Humanitarian agencies must not affiliate themselves to any side of the ongoing conflict.
- **Impartiality:** Humanitarian aid should be implemented solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations.
- **Independence:** Humanitarian agencies must formulate and implement their own policies independently of government policies or actions.


### Additional internationally recognised humanitarian principles.

- **Do no harm:** humanitarian organisations must strive to “do no harm” when providing assistance. Humanitarian actors need to be aware of this and take steps to minimise harm<sup>3</sup>. To minimise possible longer term harm, humanitarian organisations should provide assistance in ways that are supportive of recovery and long-term development.
- **Accountability:** Humanitarian programmes should be accountable to those whom they serve as well as to those who fund their activities. Those providing assistance have a duty to ensure that aid reaches its intended beneficiaries in the most effective and efficient way possible.
- **Customs and culture:** Understanding local traditions and values is important in carrying out humanitarian work, especially in connecting these to internationally recognised human rights.

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF, face to face training on CPIE, legal and normative framework.

<sup>3</sup> For example, aid is used as an instrument of war by denying access or attacking convoys; aid is an indirect part of the dynamics of the conflict because it creates jobs, gives incomes in form of taxes, leaves no or little responsibility on the state for social welfare, etc; or aid exacerbates the root causes of the conflict by securing rebel activities.

- **Participation:** Humanitarian workers have a responsibility to provide assistance in a way that realises the right of affected populations to take part in decisions that affect their lives.
- **Respect for international humanitarian law and human rights:** All involved in a conflict must respect international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights, particularly the rights of children as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **The humanitarian imperative:** Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable in the population, such as children, women, the displaced and the elderly. The dignity and rights of all those in need of humanitarian assistance must be respected and protected. The humanitarian imperative implies a right to receive humanitarian assistance and a right to offer it. At times, humanitarian access to civilian populations is denied by authorities for political or security reasons. Humanitarian agencies must maintain their ability to obtain and sustain access to all vulnerable populations and to negotiate such access with all parties to the conflict.

For other relevant international instruments - see  **Toolkit 3**

**Children benefit from an increased degree of protection which is reflected in various international instruments. NOTE: if a child is suspected of being the perpetrator of abuse, this child benefits from the same protection levels and from the specific provisions that have been developed to treat the cases of minors in conflict with the law.**

# Standard 1: Assessing the risk and ensuring that appropriate child safeguarding measures are developed

## WHAT IS THE STANDARD:

The standard describes what you need to do to assess the risk to children in emergencies and how to mitigate those risks with safeguarding measures.

## WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT

Risks of abuse and exploitation for children increase significantly during an emergency. Organisations may also inadvertently increase those risks with poorly designed programmes and staff who use the opportunity to abuse or exploit children. Having the right policies and procedures in place mitigates those risks and will help you provide an appropriate response to safeguarding concerns brought to your attention.

### Compliance Indicators

#### Minimum Requirements

1. The organisation has a child safeguarding policy
2. The policy is adapted to emergencies and to the local context(s)
3. The policy is written in a clear and easily understandable way
4. The policy is publicised, promoted and distributed widely
5. The policy is approved and signed by the relevant management body (e.g. Senior Management Board, Executive, Committee)
6. All staff or other representatives are required to comply with the policy – there are no exceptions
7. The policy will need to be reviewed every time an emergency occurs to ensure that it is adapted to the situation you will be facing. The policy may also need to be reviewed if there are significant changes in your organisation or any legal changes affecting your policy. Otherwise, it is advised to review it approximately every three years
8. The policy covers child safeguarding in the different types of work undertaken: emergency relief; working with partners; child sponsorship; advocacy etc
9. The policy clearly describes the agency's understanding and definitions of abuse.

#### Best practice to implement the standard fully

The policy must communicate the following:

1. All children have a right to be safeguarded.
2. The welfare of children is always the most important consideration.
3. It is made clear which individuals or groups the policy applies to.

#### Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the requirement has been met:

1. A copy of the policy
2. Policy appropriately translated into local languages
3. Signed statements by staff, partners and other representatives stating that they have read and understood the policy (specify which version of the policy was read and understood – to ensure that all staff have read and understood the most up-to-date version of the policy)
4. Examples of ways the policy has been promoted, including to communities and to children
5. A copy of the policy signed by the management board or minutes of the meeting where the policy was signed by the management board

6. Written evidence of how abuse is dealt with in the organisation, and a timetable for review.

---

## 1. DO YOU HAVE A WRITTEN POLICY ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN?

All agencies that work directly or indirectly with people under the age of 18 should have a written policy on keeping children safe. This is generally known as a “child safeguarding policy” or a “child protection policy”.


### Why is this important?

Through the policy, your organisation makes a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding children from harm. The policy makes clear to everyone that children must be safeguarded, helps to create a safe and positive environment for children, and shows that the organisation is taking its duty of care seriously.

### The policy applies to whom?

The policy applies to everyone working for or associated with your organisation. It includes without limitation:

- All staff at the head-quarters who are involved in the management, recruitment and/or communication coverage of emergency responses;
- All field staff / local partners & actors<sup>1</sup> involved directly or indirectly in the implementation of emergency responses on the ground and who may have an immediate contact with beneficiaries or play a role in the design of the response;
- All staff or contractors likely to be deployed during emergencies (incl. Rosters members, external staff recruited in support of the operations (consultants, researchers, etc.)) as well as board members, associates, sponsors, trustees, media, volunteers, community volunteers, visitors – who may come to the country where operations are taking place through your organisation.
- Staff and representatives of partner agencies or any other individuals, groups and organisations who have a formal/contractual relationship with your office requiring them to take an active role in the emergency response.

 **Tool 2** – How to develop a Child Safeguarding Policy provides guidance on how to write your policy.

---

## 2. IS YOUR POLICY ADAPTED TO EMERGENCIES AND TO THE LOCAL CONTEXT?

It is essential for all organisations operating in emergencies to have a child safeguarding measures adapted to emergencies. A survey conducted by Keeping Children Safe to better inform the development of this training tool revealed that only 34% of the respondents considered that their policy included special provisions for emergencies. Only 15% of respondents felt that their safeguarding measures were well implemented during emergencies.


### Why is this important?

It is crucial to have a clear picture of the context in which you operate in order to be able to offer to children, whose safety is at risk, the most appropriate responses. Those responses should be in line with legal and social welfare in the emergency situation, and take into consideration the diverse impacts that the emergency may have had.

<sup>1</sup> This will included for instance volunteers, camp committees, drivers, etc.

### Local context

From one country to another we can observe great variations in the understanding of what constitutes child abuse what it means to ensure the safety of children. The agency needs to give clear guidance to staff, partners and other organisations (including funding organisations) on how the policy on child safeguarding will be adapted and applied practically in these different circumstances. The policy must be applied in ways that are sensitive to different cultures but without condoning practices that are harmful to children.

 **Tool 2** – How to ensure that your policy is adapted to the local context.

### Emergency situation

Additionally, when a country is hit by a disaster, its usual structure may be severely affected and the services which once used to be utilised to address child safety concerns may not operate anymore.

It is therefore extremely important to carry out a mapping exercise in order to provide an analysis of the child safeguarding infrastructure and risks in the relevant country or programme unit (where significant variations exist).

The mapping process must include an analysis of the applicable legal framework in the country, the service providers available and suitable for children (incl. health, legislative, GBV, etc.), existing community infrastructure and identify the safeguarding risks children may face in the particular context.

The process will help to identify which child safeguarding concerns are legally punishable in country, the organisation and authorities responsible to follow-up on allegations having legal implications as well as suitable service providers to which children may be referred to if need be.

In many cases it will be helpful to make contact with key agencies and individuals to make sure there is an effective, coordinated and child-friendly response.

### Best practice to implement the standard fully

- Advice is available on how to establish local understanding and definitions of abuse and child safeguarding
- Ensure that EVERYONE is clear on the fact that a child is someone under the age of 18.
- You have an updated mapping of the legal, safeguarding / protection, community infrastructure and other services (incl. health, psychosocial) provided by local authorities and other humanitarian actors.
- You have an updated mapping of the risk factors for children in your local context which takes the emergency into consideration.
- Processes described are simple, straightforward and easy to use during emergencies.

**It is crucial to constantly update the service map during emergencies as it will evolve on a daily basis – some services will close, some will open. You need to ensure that you will not refer a child or its family to a facility which has closed and to be aware when new services become available.**

Closely liaise with the Child Protection Coordinator in country (usually led by UNICEF) to obtain and share the most update information.

### Ways of providing evidence

The following document can be used to provide evidence that the standard has been met:

- A document describing steps taken to ensure that your policy is adapted to the local context;
- An updated map of the services available and adequate to address child safeguarding concerns.

---

### 3. IS YOUR POLICY PUT INTO PRACTICE?

#### Why is this requirement important?

A policy to ensure the safeguarding of children has no impact if not put into practice. The policy is the foundation of the safeguarding measures – it communicates the position of the organisation in regards to keeping children safe and details HOW the organisation intends to make it happen. Clear procedures and guidance will need to be developed and strictly followed to ensure a prompt response is made whenever concerns about a child's safety or welfare are raised.

#### Compliance Indicators

##### Minimum Requirements

1. There are clear child safeguarding procedures in place that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take during the emergency if there are concerns about a child's safety.
2. The child safeguarding procedures are accessible<sup>2</sup> to everyone (including children, parents/carers and consultants) and actively promoted. Consideration should be given to language, different ways of communicating and making sure that everyone can find the information easily.
3. The child safeguarding procedures are consistent with international standards and good practice in the safeguarding of children. They should also take account of issues that arise as a result of different country contexts.
4. There is a person or person(s) with clearly defined responsibilities for child safeguarding, at each level of the agency.
5. There is a process for recording concerns, incidents and referrals and storing these securely, so that confidential information is locked away.
6. There is a process for dealing with complaints by parents/carers and by young people about unacceptable and/or abusive behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.
7. There is guidance on confidentiality and information-sharing which makes clear that the safeguarding of the child is the most important consideration.

##### Best practice to implement the standard fully


- Staff and associates know how to respond to a child who says they, or another child, are experiencing abuse
- Staff and associates know how to respond to allegations against a member of staff/volunteer or another young person
- Staff and associates know how to respond to concerns about a child's welfare where there are concerns but no specific allegation has been made
- An updated contact list for local child safeguarding services is widely available
- A definitions of abuse is widely available

##### Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the standard has been met:

- A copy of written procedures and guidance
- A flow chart that describes steps in the child safeguarding process
- Name and duties of those people with special responsibility for child safeguarding in the agency
- Examples of forms for recording details of child safeguarding incidents.

2 By accessible we mean available and presented in a manner which can be understood by them

 **Toolkit 2** – How to develop clear procedures to ensure that incidents and complaints are recorded, dealt with appropriately, referrals done and information stored safely – This module includes explanations on how to map out services.

---

## 4. ARE YOUR PARTNERS ADHERING TO THE SAME STANDARDS?

### Why is this requirement important?

When working in partnership with others, organisations have a responsibility to make sure that children are kept safe by that partner organisation. Most partners working with children will already be well aware of the needs to ensure the safeguarding of children but will not always have good policies and procedures in place. A discussion between partners based on these standards should allow for mutual learning and development of agreed good practice.

### Compliance Indicators

#### Minimum Requirements

1. There is a process of engagement with partners on child safeguarding issues to ensure common agreements, mutual learning and development of good practice.
2. A written agreement provides minimum standards for an agency's work with and through partners.
3. The existence or development of a child safeguarding policy and procedures form an essential part of partnership agreements.
4. Agencies consider capacity-building work or grants for the purpose of developing child safeguarding policies and procedures in partner agencies.
5. Where the partner does not have its own policy or where its policy is not up to standard, you need to ensure that your MOU with the partner makes mention of its obligation to adhere to your child safeguarding policy, make a copy of the policy available to the partner, provide the explanations required and ensure that the partner concerned signs a statement to the effect that they have read, understood and commit themselves to adhere to it. File this acceptance form in the partner's file.


#### Best practice to implement the standard fully

Ongoing training, discussions and monitoring.

#### Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the standard has been met:

- Partnership agreements should reflect a commitment to child safeguarding and to putting safeguarding measures in place in line with these standards
- Acceptance form signed by the partner
- Partner's own child safeguarding policy.

 **Tool 2** – How to work with partners.



## Standard 2: The role and responsibilities of staff are clearly defined

### WHAT IS THE STANDARD

This standard describes the roles and responsibilities of staff who lead on or implement safeguarding measures.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT

During emergencies aid workers are asked to respond urgently to needs that arise suddenly. Organisations need to pull in additional staff to meet the pressing demands and to pull staff from other locations or recruit additional employees locally or internationally. In such a rapidly evolving environment, it is vital not to lose sight of the commitment to safeguard children and to ensure that dedicated staff have been identified and given specific policy implementation responsibilities. Division of responsibilities amongst staff has to be clear from the start and must be updated as soon as any change of staff impacts it. Failure to do so will result in cases falling through the cracks.

**A survey conducted by Keeping Children Safe to better inform the development of this training package revealed that, unless there was a staff member within an organisation with clear safeguarding responsibilities, either the Child Safeguarding Policy was not in place or it was not satisfactorily implemented.**

### 1. WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE CHILD SAFEGUARDING SYSTEMS? <sup>1</sup>

While all staff have a responsibility to understand and comply with the Child Safeguarding Policy, the development of an overall effective child safeguarding system is a much more challenging process, requiring the implementation of a range of interventions. An important amount of work and co-ordinated effort across all programmes and departments is required to build such a system.

Child safeguarding is strongly linked to effective programming, child-rights and child-focused programming, recruitment and accountability initiatives. It cannot stand on its own and will not be effective unless it is integrated at all stages and levels of the organisation's work.

At headquarters level, under the leadership of the director of the organisation (who has overall responsibility and oversight) the senior management team bears the greatest responsibility for ensuring the development of an effective child safeguarding system globally and to ensure that it is reflected at country level. The responsibility does not fall solely on the HR department, nor on child safeguarding, nor on child safeguarding focal points – it lies with managers and the management team.

At regional level, under the leadership of the regional director of the organisation (who has overall responsibility and oversight) the senior management team bears the greatest responsibility for ensuring the development of an effective child safeguarding system in that region and within the framework of the global policy.

At country level, under the leadership of the country director (who has overall responsibility and oversight), the country's management team (collectively and as individual managers) bear the greatest responsibility for ensuring the development of an effective child safeguarding system in that country and within the framework of the global policy.

### 2. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EVERYONE IN THE ORGANISATION AT ALL TIMES

The Child Safeguarding Policy includes mandatory requirements that apply to everyone in all aspects of your work at all times. All representatives of your organisation must:

<sup>1</sup> The following is inspired by the draft Save the Children UK Global Child Safeguarding.


- Make themselves knowledgeable about the Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) and its implications
- Be vigilant, be proactive, be aware and be on the lookout for abuse / harm / potential risks, and take appropriate action both in their day-to-day work and in their personal lives
- Be clear on their responsibilities to prevent harm / safeguard children both in their own conduct and in the way they implement their work; and to report concerns as per local (internal) procedures

#### **Responsibilities of managers**

- Help staff to apply their learning following child safeguarding induction /training; and provide / reinforce basic information about keeping children safe
- Ensure staff understand their own roles and responsibilities including how they are expected to conduct themselves
- Ensure staff understand local (internal) reporting procedures and support them in reporting / responding to concerns
- Compile training records for monitoring purposes and to ensure nobody slips through the cracks
- Assess and mitigate child safeguarding risks at all stages of the project cycle by constantly applying the Do No Harm principle
- Ensure beneficiaries are made aware of and understand the Code of Conduct / Child Safeguarding Policy and the expected conduct of staff, partner staff and other representatives; develop appropriate complaints mechanisms
- Ensure child safeguarding is built into management systems / processes including JDs / performance management
- Discuss / review partnership agreements to ensure child safeguarding responsibilities are adequately reflected
- Engage with child safeguarding: help staff to explore how their own personal values impact on whether or not they recognize child abuse / harm and whether or not they should take appropriate action
- Challenge cultural norms that put children at risk of harm or abuse. Have the courage to step over the forbidden line!
- Promote good practice. Challenge poor practice. Lead by example!
- Enforce and monitor additional components of the Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct that may be relevant to your role / seniority / level of expertise

#### **Responsibilities of Child Safeguarding Focal Points**

- Monitor / guide the process of overall CSP implementation in their geographic area(s), according to their level of responsibility (Focal Points in managerial posts, by virtue of their authority, have greater responsibility / impact than those in junior positions)
- Receive and manage reports of community-based abuse, or internal abuse / misconduct

 **Tool 2** – How to ensure an appropriate division of responsibilities

# Standard 3: Dissemination and understanding of the safeguarding measures

## 1. DISSEMINATION

### What is the standard

This standard describes what is needed to ensure that everyone understands the organisation's child safeguarding measures and is confident in communicating and implementing them.

### Why is it important

Policies and procedures put in place by organisations to keep children safe are only effective if people are aware of them, can contribute to their development and have the opportunity to express their views on how they are working.

### Compliance Indicators

#### Minimum Requirements

1. Managers ensure that all staff are aware of the Child Safeguarding Measures that are in place and where to seek further guidance if needed.
2. Everyone in the agency knows who has responsibility for keeping children safe and how to contact them.
3. The Child Safeguarding Measures are made widely available to all associates and communities including parents and children. Particular attention needs to be provided to the fact that during an emergency, you may need to make extra effort to ensure that this information is disseminated in camps, health facilities, distribution sites or for instance printed on relief items distributed.
4. Information provided to communities, especially children, is in a format and language that can be easily understood. It is concise and focuses on the essentials (including behaviours that are not tolerated, where to report and where to seek help<sup>1</sup>, confidentiality, etc).
5. Updated contact details are readily available for local child safeguarding / protection services, such as safe houses, advocacy services, national authorities, emergency medical help and local telephone help lines.

#### Best practice to implement the standard fully

1. Children and families with whom we work understand their right to be safe from abuse, understand your commitment keeping children safe and have the policy and accompanying procedures mapped out in a way that they readily understand and can use them.
2. Managers create a culture that supports open communication on child safeguarding issues where staff and associates feel confident to raise concerns and challenge behaviour.
3. Your organisation's commitment to child safeguarding is openly displayed in public places within the office e.g. reception, so that all visitors are aware of it.

#### Ways of providing evidence

- Monitoring and evaluation visits show that children and communities have the required information to know who the focal points are, where they can be found when they have a concern and know how to contact them<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Potential victims need to be able to seek help confidentially even though they may not wish to report. We must therefore wherever possible let them know directly where they can seek support confidentially.

<sup>2</sup> Ideally, these focal points should be different from the ones dealing with complaints from adults.

---

## 2. UNDERSTANDING

### Why is this requirement important?

Everyone in contact with children has a role to play in their safeguarding. They can only carry out this role confidently and effectively if they have the right attitude towards children, are well aware of child safeguarding issues and have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep children safe. Agencies working with children have a responsibility to provide training and development opportunities for their staff as well as adequate information to affected communities and children.

### Compliance Indicators

#### Minimum Requirements

1. All members of staff, volunteers and other associates at all levels have an induction on Child Safeguarding in Emergencies when they join the agency which includes an introduction to the organisation's child safeguarding policy and procedures.
2. Children are provided with advice and support on keeping themselves safe.
3. Staff members and volunteers with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have relevant training and regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.
4. Training is provided to those responsible for dealing with complaints and disciplinary procedures in relation to child abuse and inappropriate behaviour towards children.
5. Training and written guidance on safer recruitment practice is provided for those responsible for recruiting and selecting staff.

#### Best practice to implement the standard fully

- You regularly identify staff training needs and provide regular refreshers on the CSM
- Managers place budget aside for training staff on child safeguarding
- The organisation has an internal qualified person experienced in child safeguarding and can provide training and guidance
- Where staff have specific child safeguarding responsibilities this is accurately reflected in their job profiles, reviewed and evaluated within the performance management process of your organisation against clear standards / key performance indicators. In particular, senior management are assessed on their ability to foster a working environment where employees feel able to raise their concerns on child safeguarding issues. Development needs identified through this process are addressed<sup>3</sup>.
- Children and communities we work with understand how to respond to child safeguarding concerns.
- All CSM training, workshops and other information-sharing events are evaluated to review whether the level of understanding and practice has improved and to monitor attitudes and perceptions. Evaluations inform future events.

#### Ways of providing evidence

- A record of the training needs evaluations performed
- A copy of training plans and/or programmes
- Records of training attendance
- Induction documentation / guidance
- Course evaluations.

<sup>3</sup> From Plan International

---

### 3. CHILDREN ARE ABLE TO ACCESS ADVICE AND SUPPORT

#### Why is this requirement important?

Child abuse is a serious violation of a child's rights and often has long term consequences on the emotional and physical development of the child. In addition, it is distressing and can be difficult to deal with. Organisations have a duty to ensure advice and support is available to help people play their part in safeguarding children. Children need someone to turn to when they are being abused. Often they do not know where to go for help.

#### Compliance Indicators

##### Minimum Requirements

Children are provided with information on where to go to seek help and advice in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying.

Staff members with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child safeguarding.

Contacts are established at a national and/or local level with the relevant child safeguarding / child welfare agencies that can provide information, support and assistance to children and staff.


Arrangements are in place to provide support to individuals – both the people the agency works with and staff members, during – and after – an incident or allegation of abuse or a complaint.

##### Best practice to implement the standard fully

- Staff able to provide advice and guidance have been identified and their names communicated
- An effective working relationship has been established with local staff and other organisations that may offer support to children.

##### Ways of providing evidence

- Copies of information for children about sources of support
- Information (leaflets, information sheets etc) about training, advice and support – for staff, adults outside the organisation, and children
- Lists of contacts for specialist advice and information, including on reporting.

 **Tool 2** – How to ensure the dissemination and understanding of the Child Safeguarding Measures.



## Standard 4: Safe recruitment processes are developed and implemented

### WHAT IS THE STANDARD?

This standard describes good practice in rapidly mobilising staff for emergency response.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

Recruitment, selection practices and contractual agreements must reflect your organisation's commitment to keep children safe and minimise the risk of engaging an individual or organisation unsuitable to work with children<sup>1</sup>.

Organisations should introduce a strict system of verifications when recruiting new staff and before giving them a job. A small minority of individuals will target organisations so that they can gain access to children in order to abuse them. They will look for organisations that have weak recruitment systems or where standards are not consistently applied and adhered to.

As an organisation, you must have robust policies and procedures, nationally and internationally, for recruiting representatives<sup>2</sup> who have contact with children and for assessing how suitable they are to work with children. Even if the job does not involve the person working directly with children, you must consider the access to children that the job provides him/her within the host country.

### Compliance Indicators

#### Minimum Requirements

1. All associates and visitors to the organisation are informed of, fully briefed and (where relevant) sign up to, the Child Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct and applicable local procedures whilst engaged with the organisation<sup>3</sup>;
2. There are clear policies and procedures for recruiting staff, volunteers (including community representatives), consultants and contractors and assessing their suitability to work with children. These policies and procedures include the following:
  - The standard statement of the organisation's commitment to keeping children safe is included in all job advertisements, job profiles and pre- and post-interview documentation to candidates;
  - All jobs are assessed to identify the level of contact with children, or access to child data, and the level of prevention checks needed for the post-holder;
  - A range of appropriate selection measures and pre-employment checks<sup>4</sup> are carried out on all successful candidates or potential staff and associates (where relevant);
  - For roles involving direct contact with children and/or access to children's data these checks are completed before the person takes up the post. In addition where roles involve direct working with children, consideration is given to involving children in the recruitment process<sup>5</sup>.
3. All staff receive, read and sign a copy of the Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct prior to, or at the time of, signing an employment contract
4. Contracts for consultants, contractors, suppliers, vendors and corporate agreements include a clause on Child Safeguarding, non-disclosure and data protection plus the consequences of a breach.

1 Plan International, Child Protection Policy, Implementation standards.


2 All field staff / local partners & actors (incl. volunteers, camp committees, drivers) involved directly or indirectly in the implementation of emergency responses on the ground and who may have an immediate contact with beneficiaries or play a role in the design of the response

3 It is the responsibility of the engaging office to ensure that associates and visitors are informed of, briefed on and sign up to the Child Safeguarding Policy. It is the responsibility of the receiving office to check that incoming associates and visitors have signed the policy and ensure that they are briefed on relevant local procedures and local norms.

4 These may include: criminal records checks where available and disclosure of previous convictions; reference enquiry forms with specific reference on suitability to work with children; verification of identity; and questions at interview which are specifically designed to identify behaviour and attitudes that would be of concern.

5 Children may not necessarily spot a potential risk however; they could provide feedback on whether the individual will work well with them.

5. Third parties having access to and/or managing children's sensitive data are assessed appropriately to ensure their credibility and ability to guarantee the security of data held, before being covered by a contract.
6. Child Safeguarding guidelines appropriate to the type of engagement form part of the contract (e.g. global media guidelines on the use of children's images).

 **Tool 2** – How to ensure the safe recruitment of employees.

It will be also crucial that you ensure that partner organisations abide by the same standards. In emergencies you are likely to be required to work through partners for the implementation of programs.

 **Tool 2** – How to work with partners - as staff members of partner organisation will be working

During emergencies you may not be able to get new recruits cleared by the relevant authorities quickly enough. It is therefore strongly suggested that, prior to an emergency, your organisation identifies a pool of candidates and partners with the required skills who have already gone through the verification processes.



## Standard 5: Mainstreaming the child safeguarding measures

### WHAT IS THE STANDARD?

Child safeguarding needs to be mainstreamed throughout emergency response. This standard describes the requirements you need to meet to ensure safeguarding is mainstreamed.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?<sup>1</sup>

Safeguarding of children affected by emergencies is increasingly viewed as a central concern of agencies in humanitarian response. Evidence from the emergencies in 2011 in Haiti and Pakistan revealed that the international community's relief response inadequately addressed safeguarding concerns. Consequently it is no longer considered reasonable for humanitarian agencies to focus on material needs without considering the safety, dignity and rights of children and communities.

In addition to responding, reporting and referring, agencies should also take concrete steps to incorporate safeguarding into sector response programmes such as food distribution and water and sanitation. This can be achieved through designing and adapting agency activities to improve safety by reducing vulnerability to threats, and increasing the capacity of disaster-affected communities to safeguard children.

The importance of keeping children safe **MUST** be incorporated in all organisations at every stage of the programme cycle.

### Compliance Indicators

#### Minimum Requirements

It is important to note that the following minimum requirements are commonly applicable to all sectors including water and sanitation, food aid, livelihoods, shelter, health and education

For more information, please consult the Minimum Agency Standards for Incorporating Protection into Humanitarian Response - Field Testing Version, 2008 Caritas Australia, CARE Australia, Oxfam Australia, World Vision Australia

For more information – Sphere standards that relate to Protection and Child Protection

#### The minimum requirements:

1. Agencies prioritise the safety and dignity of disaster affected populations, particularly children
2. Humanitarian response programmes are based on a comprehensive analysis of the context, which includes an analysis of the child safeguarding risks
3. Humanitarian assistance and services are provided equitably and impartially, based on the vulnerability and needs of children affected by disaster
4. Disaster-affected children and communities are pro-actively engaged as informed partners when responding to safeguarding concerns
5. Agencies recognise the State as the primary actor responsible for ensuring the safeguarding of children
6. The rights, needs and capacities of vulnerable children and communities are reflected in all stages of agency response
7. Agencies respond appropriately to child safeguarding incidents according to their mandate and recognised good practice. An organisation **MUST** refer the case – in the best interest of the child – if their organisation lacks the due mandate and expertise for dealing with such incidents.

<sup>1</sup> Minimum Agency Standards for Incorporating Protection into Humanitarian Response - Field Testing Version .

---

## 2. WHEN TO INCORPORATE THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS?

The minimum requirements **MUST** be utilised at all stages of the programme or project cycle:

### **Assessment:**

Comprehensive assessments can be used to guide programme managers and sector staff on ways to incorporate safeguarding considerations into overall humanitarian response. Safeguarding and protection information must be gathered, managed and used with care to ensure agencies do not place disaster-affected children at greater risk.

### **Design:**


Assessment findings identifying safeguarding risks should feed directly into (i) the design or adaptation of agency sector programmes to incorporate safeguarding considerations, (ii) the design of protection-focused programmes where agencies have suitably qualified staff and resources, (iii) the design of advocacy strategies, (iv) reporting safeguarding concerns and referring children to specialist child welfare / protection agencies.

### **Implement and Monitor:**

Relevant key indicators can be incorporated into monitoring frameworks (including logical frameworks) and used as a basis for monitoring the extent to which programmes and projects are mainstreaming child safeguarding.

### **Evaluate:**

The extent to which any sector programme or project has incorporated child safeguarding should be evaluated against the minimum standards. If baseline data has been collected, a direct comparison between the situation before and after programme interventions can be made. Qualitative research with disaster-affected children and communities around their perceptions of safety, dignity and agency practice will provide some indication of the impact of incorporating safeguarding into sector programmes or projects.

 **Tool 2** – How to ensure the mainstreaming of child safeguarding across the organisation and its programmes

## Standard 6: Monitoring and evaluation processes are developed and responsibilities clearly assigned to staff

### WHAT IS THE STANDARD?

This standard describes what is needed to ensure that child safeguarding measures are regularly monitored and evaluated.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

To keep children safe, policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented across all parts of the organisation. Verifications are needed to ensure this is happening appropriately and consistently. The views of those involved inside and outside the organisation can help to improve the effectiveness of any measures taken.

### Compliance Indicators

#### Minimum Requirements

1. For future monitoring purposes, there is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementing these measures, the selected indicators against which progress will be measured and when these tasks will be completed.
2. Regular monitoring and evaluation visits will be conducted at all projects sites (including partner organisations)
3. The human or financial resources necessary for monitoring and evaluation are made available.
4. During emergencies, CSM will need to be monitored and evaluated at close intervals as the fast changing situation will require you to constantly adjust.
5. Processes are in place to ask children and parents / carers about their views on policies and procedures for keeping children safe.
6. All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints are recorded and monitored.
7. Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures


#### Best practice to implement the standard fully

1. Regular management meetings such as supervision, appraisal sessions and team meetings provide an opportunity for ongoing monitoring of the way measures are implemented
2. There are ways of consulting with children on how safe they feel and what they would do if they had a complaint.

#### Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the standard has been met:

- A summary of the number of incidents of abuse and number of complaints
- Records of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) visits done to verify that the Child Safeguarding Measures were known and understood by concerned partners and communities
- Records of M&E visits carried out to verify that procedures for reporting and responding to cases were updated and functional
- Records of the steps taken to correct any inadequacies uncovered by M&E visits or complaints received
- A record of M&E visits conducted by whom and of the visits planned.

 **Tool 2** – How to monitor and evaluate the child safeguarding measures adopted and implemented.

# Acknowledgements

This toolkit was written for Keeping Children Safe by Ms. Solveig Routier and funded by Plan International and Save the Children.

Ms. Solveig has worked for over 15 years in the humanitarian sector with the United Nations, governmental agencies and INGOs. She specialises in child protection in emergencies and is an expert on children's needs assessment, programmatic strategy development, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as capacity building.

Thank you to LEADS, Sri Lanka who organised a workshop to review this toolkit in June 2010.

Thank you to the workshop participants:

Eastern Self Reliant Community Awakening Organization (ESCO), Sarvodaya, LEADS/ESCAPE, Plan International, Sewalanka Head Office, Community Concern Society, AiBi Sri Lanka, CRAN, Save the Children International – Sri Lanka, Kidznet.

Thank you to all Keeping Children Safe members who provided experience and examples from their own organisations and to the Oak Foundation for their support for Keeping Children Safe.

## **Other inputs from:**

Corinne Davey, Director, Keeping Children Safe, Alex Dressler, Consultancy Manager and Sally Warren Communications and Advocacy Manager, Keeping Children Safe.

Keeping Children Safe,

CAN Mezzanine,

49 – 51 East Road,

London N1 6AH

W: [www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)

E: [info@keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](mailto:info@keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)

Charity registration number: 1142328

© Keeping Children Safe Coalition 2012



All children,  
whoever they are  
and wherever they  
are, have a right to  
be protected.

Lessons learned from the past have shown that too often organisations do not prioritise the safeguarding needs of children when emergencies strike. Yet children suffer the consequences in the absence of such measures and abuse is likely to occur every time an emergency happens.

*Safeguarding children in emergencies Toolkits 1-3* provide a reference to safeguarding standards, helpful checklists, guidance notes, exercises tools and examples – specially selected and adapted to help you safeguard children during emergencies.

**Keeping Children Safe**  
CAN Mezzanine  
49 – 51 East Road  
London N1 6AH

**W:** [www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)  
**E:** [info@keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](mailto:info@keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)

Charity registration number: 1142328  
© Keeping Children Safe Coalition 2012