

Save the Children Norway's Safeguarding Policy

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Background and purpose of the document

Save the Children Norway's vision is a world in which every child attains all rights defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In our efforts to achieve our goal, Save the Children Norway must, of course, itself be a safe organisation for all. Therefore, we take a proactive approach to preventing incidents involving sexual harassment, violations of personal boundaries, violence, and abuse in Save the Children Norway. This is primarily done through awareness raising and preventive measures. Nevertheless, we know that violations of personal boundaries will occur, including in Save the Children Norway. We want to ensure that all such cases are reported thanks to clear whistleblowing procedures, and that cases are handled in a satisfactory manner. The purpose of Save the Children Norway's Safeguarding Policy is to ensure that Save the Children Norway takes all the necessary steps in this work and that safeguarding¹ forms an integral part of our day-to-day work and everything we do.

This policy is a synthesis of existing documents² in Save the Children International (SCI). It supplements rather than replaces SCI's current documents and specifies Save the Children Norway's safeguarding work and ambitions. Save the Children Norway's Safeguarding Policy is an underlying document that supplements Save the Children Norway's Code of Conduct and details the work on preventing sexual harassment, violence, and abuse internally in Save the Children Norway.

Definitions and scope

This policy applies to all staff, elected officials, and volunteers in Save the Children Norway. It applies to all our work, both in and outside Norway. It also applies to our private lives. The policy also applies to our partners and all events under the Save the Children Norway banner. Anyone who performs work on behalf of or in cooperation with Save the Children Norway must be familiar

¹In this document, the term safeguarding includes both child safeguarding and adult safeguarding/Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

² Especially the Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy, and Child Safeguarding Protocol. See 'Relevant documents' at the end of the policy.

with the contents of this policy. Violations of this policy can result in consequences depending on their severity, as described in Save the Children Norway's Code of Conduct.

Safeguarding is the work we do to ensure that everyone in Save the Children Norway and everyone who comes into contact with us remains safe, and that no children or adults are subjected to sexual harassment, violations of personal boundaries, abuse, or other forms of violence in Save the Children Norway. It also includes dealing with any cases that do arise.

This policy covers the acts defined below and other forms of violence.³ These are acts that Save the Children Norway is committed to proactively prevent and that we will never accept being committed in our organisation:

Sexual harassment means any form of unwanted sexual attention that has the purpose or effect of being offensive, frightening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or troublesome. The 'sexual' component indicates that the attention is related to someone's body, gender, and/or sexuality. This includes verbal, non-verbal, and physical attention.

Sexual abuse is doing something sexual with or to someone without consent or coercing or tricking someone into carrying out a sexual act on themselves. This includes acts and speech by an older and/or more powerful person directed at someone who does not understand or who does not have the experience or knowledge required to get out of the situation. Doing something sexual with or to a child under the age of 16 is always sexual abuse. This is also true with respect to taking, sharing, or storing images, video, or audio of children (under the age of 18). containing sexual content

Criminal sexual abuse includes (when it is committed against adults without consent or against children):

- **Sexually offensive behaviour**, which could be flashing, someone displaying their genitals, or showing images or video with pornographic content. It could also be causing others to look at sexual acts.
- **Sexual acts**, which involve physical contact. This could be touching intimate parts of someone's body such as their breasts, buttocks, penis, or vulva. This can happen both through and under clothes.
- **Sexual intercourse**, which involves sticking something into a body cavity. This could be sticking fingers, objects, or genitals into someone's anus, vagina, or mouth.

³ For a definition of violence and different forms of violence, see dinutvei.no.

Save the Children Norway's safeguarding duties and obligations

The work on ensuring a safe organisation involves both collective and individual responsibilities. As an organisation we have a duty to, and have committed to, raise **awareness**, **prevent**, **report**, and **respond** to cases concerning violations of this policy.⁴ This means ensuring that:

Awareness

- Documents relevant to ensuring organisational safeguarding are updated and available to staff, volunteers, elected officials, partners, and donors.
- Children, their guardians, and others who participate in our activities know the rules that apply to their activity, know what to expect from Save the Children Norway, and know how to report violations.
- Staff undergo safeguarding training at least every year, and new staff complete training within the first three months of joining and always before starting to work directly with children.⁵
- Volunteers complete training before starting activities and are offered regular training.⁶
- Key elected officials⁷ undergo training at least once per term of office. Other elected officials are offered regular training.
- Partners and others who come into contact with children through Save the Children Norway undergo training relevant to the work they are going to do.
- Staff are aware of their rights and supervisors and elected officials are aware of the power their position entails.
- Staff, volunteers, and elected officials are made aware that marginalised children, including children with disabilities, are more often subjected to abuse.

Prevention

- The people we recruit are suitable for the work they are going to do. This involves robust recruitment methods and obtaining police certificates and suitability assessments for those who will be working directly with children.
- Our programmes and activities safeguard children. This is ensured by integrating safeguarding into every part of programme and activity design, implementation, and follow-up, and ensuring that violations of personal boundaries and violence are included in risk assessments and measures designed to minimise risk.⁸ It is particularly important to take account of children with additional needs⁹ in this work.

⁴ In addition, Save the Children Norway has specific obligations related to safeguarding staff, as described in the Norwegian Working Environment Act.

⁵ New staff take an e-learning course and have an onboarding. Staff receive in-person training annually in the form of courses or case discussions.

⁶ The first training volunteers receive is in the 'Safer Together' ['Tryggere sammen'] course. Regular training is provided through case discussions and the like.

⁷ The Executive Board, the Council of representatives, and the Control Committee.

⁸ See the reference to the document Safer Programmes Guidelines in Relevant documents.

⁹ Includes children with disabilities and children in particularly vulnerable situations (for example refugees and children in crisis centres).

- Partner agreements include a commitment to safeguarding and outline whistleblowing procedures. Save the Children Norway will help partners develop their own policies and implement them in their work.
- We comply with the UN’s nine requirements for the implementation of the right of the child to be heard¹⁰ when children participate in activities and events under our banner.
- We obtain informed¹¹ written consent concerning participation from children who take part in our participation processes and the like.
- We obtain informed written consent from everyone we photograph or film, and from the guardians of children aged under 18 abroad and under 15 in Norway.
- We obtain informed consent from those whose personal information we collect or share, and from the guardians of children aged under 15 in the case of personal information and under 18 in the case of sensitive personal information.¹²
- The best interests of the child and the child’s right to privacy, dignity, and integrity are ensured when children are photographed or filmed, when children participate in our work or when we collect or share personal information, regardless of the purpose.
- Images and video are stored safely and in the right place in line with our guidelines and the GDPR.

Reporting

- It must be simple for staff, volunteers, elected officials, partners, children, their guardians, and others in Save the Children Norway to report incidents. Information about whistleblowing must be easily accessible.¹³
- Everyone in the organisation knows that Save the Children Norway wants them to report violations of this policy.
- Staff, volunteers, elected officials, and partners understand their right and obligation to report cases to Save the Children Norway.
- We forward reports to donors in line with the requirements of applicable agreements.

Responding

- We have clear procedures for handling cases that ensure that cases involving sexual harassment, abuse, and similar acts are dealt with thoroughly.
- We follow up and offer psychosocial support and protection to those involved in such cases.

¹⁰ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009), *General Comment No. 12 The right of the child to be heard*, p. 26.

¹¹ For such consent to be informed, the person consenting must have been provided with sufficient information about the purpose behind their participation and what it will entail, and this information must have been provided in a form and language they understand. [Read more about consent here.](#)

¹² This includes information about health, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, political and religious affiliation (information defined as ‘special categories’ in articles 9 and 10 of the Personal Data Act).

¹³ Includes universal design and development of child-friendly reporting mechanisms.

Your safeguarding responsibilities as a volunteer, elected official, or staff member

We also have an individual responsibility to create a safe organisation. This means that we as staff, volunteers, and elected officials undertake to comply with this policy, to never commit acts that violate it and to always conduct ourselves in a manner that safeguards others. This applies both in our work on behalf of Save the Children Norway and in our private lives outside the organisation.

As a volunteer, staff member, or elected official, you undertake to:

Awareness

- Participate in safeguarding training organised by Save the Children Norway.
- Be familiar with, understand and comply with the contents of our Code of Conduct, this policy, and other rules and instructions that are relevant to your work in Save the Children Norway.
- Be a good role model for other volunteers, elected officials, staff, and children. Be conscious of the power you have by virtue of your office, position, and/or age and never abuse it.
- Make sure that children, their guardians, and others who participate in our activities know the rules that apply for their activity, know what to expect from Save the Children Norway and know how to report violations.

Prevention

- Comply with this policy, treat all fellow human beings with dignity and respect, and never commit acts such as abuse, violence, or sexual harassment.
- Not be alone with children who are participating in our programmes unless it is in the child's best interests and has been clarified with your manager or a contact person in Save the Children Norway in advance.
- Never become sexually involved with children or adults participating in our activities and programmes.
- Make sure that Save the Children Norway's policies and procedures are complied with in all activities and at all events that you are responsible for and otherwise in the work you perform on behalf of Save the Children Norway.
- Make sure that there are enough¹⁴ responsible adults present at activities and events involving children.
- Practise the principle of *do no harm* and make what is in the child's best interests the deciding factor in all media and communications work you perform on behalf of Save the Children Norway.¹⁵

¹⁴ See the procedures for safeguarding children in our Domestic Programme (Rutiner for sikkerhet for barn i NP) and the procedures for events under the Save the Children Norway banner.

¹⁵ This based on SCI's and Save the Children Norway's policies for communications that must be complied with for photography and filming, see related documents.

- When visiting countries where we have projects, obtain written consent from the subjects you photograph or film (and from guardians for children aged under 18) and otherwise comply with the country office's and SCI's image policies.
- In Norway, obtain written consent from those you photograph or film (and guardians for children aged under 15) in your work for Save the Children Norway, and otherwise comply with the guidelines for images of children within specific activities (crisis centres and the area of asylum and refugees).
- Not publish images of participants in our programmes and events in your private channels on social media unless the image has first been published by Save the Children Norway.

Reporting

- Contribute to a culture of openness in which it is natural to raise issues as part of day-to-day interactions and ensure that it is safe to raise big and small questions.
- Listen to reports from, and the concerns of, children participating in our programmes, activities and events, and others, in a calm and reassuring manner.
- If you know or suspect that this policy has been violated, report it in line with Save the Children Norway's Whistleblowing Policy.
- Report minor non-conformities in relation to this policy and safeguarding procedures.¹⁶

Responding

- Contribute to cases being handled well, understand what your responsibilities are and where the limits of your responsibilities lie.

Procedure for listening to suspicions, reports, allegations, and confidences, and forwarding reports

As a staff member, elected official, or volunteer at Save the Children Norway, you may experience children or adults in our organisation confiding in you about violations of our policies. If you are told about violations involving sexual harassment, abuse, or violence, it is your responsibility to listen to these in a calm and reassuring manner and to then forward these reports. It is not your responsibility to 'investigate' or assess the content of what you have been told. All such cases must be reported up the line. If you are unsure whether a case is serious enough, report it to your line manager, your contact person at the regional office, or the whistleblowing manager¹⁷ and let them make the decision.

If someone wants to confide in you about sexual harassment, abuse, or violence, you should:

¹⁶ Volunteers must comply with the procedures for reporting non-conformances in their activities and staff must use Save the Children Norway's non-conformance management system.

¹⁷ In Save the Children Norway, the whistleblowing manager is the adviser to the CEO. Emails sent to alert@reddbarna.no go directly to the whistleblowing manager.

1. **Find a quiet place to talk.** If it is a child who wants to confide in you, you should preferably find a spot where you are not completely alone but can be seen, although not overheard, by others.
2. **Do not promise to keep anything secret.** Explain that you will obviously not spread what you are told to people who do not need to know but that you must report the matter to Save the Children Norway and if you are told about something that is very dangerous and/or illegal, you may have a duty to report it to someone who can help (child welfare services, a guardian, and/or the police). If a report is going to be forwarded, Save the Children Norway will tell the subject and listen to how they want the situation to be described.
3. **Listen to what is being said, act calmly and reassuringly.** Acknowledge what the person concerned is telling you and do not ask leading questions. Show that you acknowledge what you are being told. Do not rush the conversation; take your time.
4. **Take notes** underway if this feels like the natural thing to do. Write a summary of the conversation as soon as possible afterwards. It is easy to forget details.
5. **Secure the subject's situation** and arrange for the necessary emergency support and/or medical help. You are responsible for the safety of the person who confided in you until others take over.
6. **Report the matter** either directly to the whistleblowing officer via alert@reddbarna.no, a manager, the CEO, or the Chair of the Executive Board. Save the Children Norway is responsible for the subsequent following up of the matter.

In short, you need to: **Listen, remain calm, and not promise to keep anything secret. You must then forward the report.**

If what you are told involves an event that has happened outside Save the Children Norway, you should still follow the steps in this procedure. Thereafter, report it to your line manager who will help you assess whether we should send a report of concern to the child welfare services or follow it up in some other manner and/or avert repetition.¹⁸

¹⁸ You and your manager have a responsibility to jointly assess whether a duty to avert criminal acts has been triggered, see plik.no for further information. Ask for help with making an assessment from a senior adviser on safeguarding if necessary.

Relevant documents:¹⁹

Save the Children Norway:

Save the Children Norway's Code of Conduct

Guidelines on whistleblowing within Save the Children Norway

Policy for internal cases of whistleblowing at Save the Children Norway

Procedures for handling child safeguarding cases in Save the Children Norway's international programmes

Child safeguarding: Procedures, policies, and tools in the Domestic Programme's work with children

Information for children and young people who participate in activities with Save the Children Norway

Save the Children International:

Save the Children International's Code of Conduct

Save the Children International's Policy on Child Safeguarding

Save the Children Global Child Safeguarding Protocol

Disability-Inclusive Child Safeguarding Guidelines

Save the Children International's Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy

Save the Children International's Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy

Save the Children Safeguarding children and communities in our personal social media use

Safeguarding children in our communications and media work

Save the Children Image Guidelines

Save the Children Safe Programming Guidelines

Accessibility

To ensure that as many people as possible have access to and can use this policy, the document has been designed as follows:

- Clear fonts, contrasts and colours have been used
- Alternative text has been added for all illustrations and figures

¹⁹ You will find links to these documents on the safeguarding page on NorNet. Several of the documents are also available at reddbarna.no/varsle/

- The document is compatible with screen readers

See the brochure 'Information for those who are taking part in an activity with Save the Children Norway' ('Informasjon til barn og unge som deltar på aktivitet med Redd Barna') for an easy-to-read overview of our most important policies and whistleblowing routines.