



Children Change Colombia Safeguarding Policy

Table of contents

Introduction:	1
Policy statement:	2
Definitions of abuse and neglect:	3
Responding to Direct Observation or Disclosure of Abuse	4
Our approach to preventing the abuse, neglect and exploitation of children	5
Contact details	6

1. Introduction:

This policy applies to all staff, including local partners, the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, or anyone working on behalf of Children Change Colombia .

We define safeguarding as promoting the welfare of vulnerable children and adults and keeping them safe from harm.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who participate in the activities of Children Change Colombia and our partner organisations.
- To protect staff and volunteers working on behalf of Children Change Colombia
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.
- To have in place procedures to prevent and deal with the actions/behaviour of our staff, interns, volunteers, partners, visitors that result in violence against a child, young people and vulnerable adults.

- To ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.

This document is to be reviewed and updated at least once every year or as necessary (to account for major changes at Children Change Colombia or in relevant legislation).

2. Policy statement:

Children Change Colombia believes that no one should ever experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults. Any one working with Children Change Colombia has a duty of care to make sure children, young people and vulnerable adults are kept safe from harm, abuse and neglect and to report concerns about their safety or welfare. We also have a responsibility to ensure that all of our staff and volunteers work in a safe environment, free from any form of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination of any kind. We are committed to act in a way that protects these groups of people.

Children Change Colombia acknowledges its duty to act appropriately in response to any allegations, reports, or suspicions of any form of abuse.

Children Change Colombia also accepts that we have a responsibility to minimise any harm that we might do inadvertently as a result of our activities or those of our partners. We embrace the 'do no harm' principle¹, and encourage and support our partners to do the same.

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

- Child Protection
- Photography and film
- Recruitment
- Code of conduct
- Role of the designated safeguarding officer
- Complaints
- Disciplinary
- Whistleblowing
- Visits to our partners
- Reporting pathway
- Safeguarding group
- Partnership Agreements
- GDPR

We recognise that safeguarding should be underpinning by the followings principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.

¹ The principle that organisations must be aware of and strive to minimise the possibility that they might inadvertently cause harm through their actions.

- All people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse.
- We have a responsibility to care for and protect children and young people, especially those that are vulnerable, and make sure they are not harmed. This centres on taking action before harm occurs.
- Children have a right to participate in decisions about their lives and should be empowered and encouraged to fulfil their potential and to make their own decision where appropriate.
- We will act on safeguarding concerns, ensuring that our actions are timely, appropriate and centred around the child or young person, taking into account their gender and other specific safeguarding needs and vulnerabilities.
- The well-being of children and young people at risk is paramount to the work of CCC.

We will seek to implement this policy by:

- Promoting a work culture that values listening to and respecting others, and the rights of all people to live free from abuse and coercion.
- Appointing a designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and a lead board member for safeguarding.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Making awareness of this policy and our child protection policy as part of the staff and volunteers initial induction process. Where necessary or possible, staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with partners, staff and volunteers, and where appropriate, supporting partners to share this information within their organisations and those participating in their activities.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately, and to support partners in the management of any allegations within or about their organisations or organisations they work with.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- Creating and maintaining an environment in which there are clear expectations of behaviour towards staff from all external parties, and all staff are aware of how CCC will support them in response to inappropriate behaviour or behaviour that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Ensuring photographs, films and images of children undertake rigorous procedures to remove or minimise risks and maintain children's welfare.

- Ensuring all partner organisations, are required to:
 - a) have their own child safeguarding Policy in place, incorporating response and reporting procedures or;
 - b) adopt and sign the Children Change Colombia's Safeguarding Policy or;
 - c) support the partner in the development of a policy (especially in countries where capacity building of local organisations is key). This will be decided by the Programmes Director and the partner.
- Ensuring training on child safeguarding - and support to develop and implement child safeguarding policies, procedures and practices - must be part of any partner agreement. The partner agreement will note the possible consequences of negligent implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy and/ or relevant response and reporting procedures. This may include the possible withdrawal of funding/support and termination of the relationship with the partner.
- All donors - whether institutional, corporate or private individuals - will be made aware of the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Policy. This will be done by ensuring the information is online, and by actively communicating about the policy, including through project proposals, face-to-face meetings and email and telephone communication.

All staff, including local partners, the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, or anyone working on behalf of Children Change Colombia should: be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect; be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children; be alert of inappropriate behaviour, poor practices and unlawful conduct. Raise and report any concern that about wrongdoing or malpractice that could place people in or outside the organisation at risk or harm and share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the child's needs and circumstances; contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

3. Definitions of abuse and neglect:

Abuse: Abuse is maltreatment of a child. This maltreatment can be of a sexual, emotional, physical or psychological.

Sexual abuse: Forcing or persuading or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, regardless of whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. There are two types: contact abuse and non-contact abuse, it can occur online but can also involve non-touching activities, such as grooming, sexual comments or jokes, sharing photos or drawing of sexual nature and flashing.

Physical abuse: deliberately hurting a child and causing injuries that can involve; bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts . Fabricated and induced illness is also a type of physical abuse. This occurs when a parent or carer pretends or exaggerates symptoms in the child.

Emotional or psychological abuse: harmful behaviours and persistent emotional maltreatment that can cause mental distress. It can involve both verbal and non-verbal abuse which can scare, humiliate and isolate a person. This may include threats, shouting, yelling

and swearing, controlling, intimidation and coercion. It can also include someone, usually children, being denied the love and care they need to be healthy and happy.

Discriminatory abuse: Discriminatory abuse is where someone is treated unfairly because they are deemed 'different'. Factors could include: disability, race, gender, age, religion, cultural background, sexual orientation, political convictions or appearance

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Exploitation: Using and forcing a person for profit, labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage. It often results in cruel or harmful treatment, as the activities they may be forced to take part in can cause emotional, physical, and social problems.

4. Responding to Direct Observation or Disclosure of Abuse

If you have concerns or suspicions that a child is being abused because of something you have seen or heard. You should:

- Record and document what you have seen, heard or been told (CCC has a report template we recommend, though another suitable alternative would be accepted as well).
- It is important to write exactly what you are told, and not to rewrite it in your own words. When taking a statement, it is very important to avoid asking leading questions. Instead of "*and did they do X to you after that?*" ask "*and what happened next?*". This testimony could be used as evidence in a legal setting and so must be as accurate as possible.
- The person disclosing the incident might ask you to keep it secret, or just between the two of you. You **MUST** tell them you cannot do so by law. If they decide not to disclose, tell them you are always available to listen and encourage them to speak to you. Contact the DSL and complete an incident report that a disclosure was not completed, and this will be investigated.
- Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards while they are still fresh. Remember that accuracy is very important.
- Contact as soon as possible the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and provide them with all the details about the incident concerned.
- Make sure the information remains confidential to assure the safety and wellbeing of the people involved, including the survivors, family and friends of survivors, witnesses, advocates, and subjects of a report.
- Do not discuss your concern with colleagues or other individuals or family - this is a confidential incident and must be treated as such. If you are feeling affected by the disclosure, talk to your line manager or the DSL and they will help you with it.

If a child discloses information to you, you should:

5

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Let the child talk - don't interview or ask leading questions or press for information.
- Be compassionate and offer reassurance that they were right to tell, that they were not to blame, and you will do all you can to make sure they are safe.
- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer and report to DSL at Children Change Colombia and/or the local authorities.
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase).
- Do not examine the child.
- Do not take photographs of any injuries or marks.
- Involve appropriate individuals immediately; discuss and report to the designated safeguarding lead and complete your Incident Reporting Form. Remember you don't need to get anyone's permission to report a concern
- The DSL will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details. The discussion will first ensure the child is kept protected and safe and will consider whether a referral to authorities and/or police is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate for the individuals involved.
- If the DSL is involved in your concerns, contact the Executive Director.
- If your concerns cannot be reported with anyone within CCC. Perhaps, they are involved or you have reported and no action has been taken, please contact the local authorities in the country where the suspected/actual abuse has taken place.

See the Child Protection and the whistleblowing policy for more detail.

5. Our approach to preventing the abuse, neglect and exploitation of children includes the following means:

Culture of zero tolerance: This applies to all forms of abuse and mistreatment, including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying. This means that every single concern is fully responded to and where necessary prompt action.

Awareness: Ensuring that all staff and local partners connected to Children Change Colombia are aware of the high standards of behaviour and conduct expected of them to protect children from any form of abuse and exploitation in their private and working lives. Where necessary or possible, staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses.

Prevention: Ensuring, through awareness and good practice, that staff and those who work with Children Change Colombia minimise the risks of any form of child abuse and exploitation, including but by no means limited to:

- Conducting relevant vetting and background checks of staff as part of their recruitment process.
- Ensuring photographs, films and images of children undertake rigorous procedures to remove or minimise risks and maintain children's welfare.

- Making sure a risk assessment has been carried out before undertaking any project with partners.
- Making use of the appropriate up-to-date guidelines and procedures for the protection and well-being of children with whom Children Change Colombia's partners work or otherwise come into contact with.

Reporting: Ensuring that all staff and those who work with Children Change Colombia are clear on what steps to take where suspicions or concerns arise regarding allegations of child abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Detailing the contacts of Designated Safeguarding Leads and Executive Director.

Ensuring confidentiality for all parties.

Keeping detailed records of any incidents and cause for concern, even if they don't lead to an immediate referral.

Responding: Ensuring that immediate action is taken to identify and address reports of child abuse and exploitation, and to ensure the safety and well-being of the child/ren involved.

6. Contact details

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Liliana Rodríguez liliana.rodriguez@childrenchange colombia.org (located in Colombia)

If the DSL is involved in your concerns, contact the Executive Director.

Ángela Carreño angela.carreno@childrenchange colombia.org (located in the UK)