

DRC'S CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This policy is in force as of 26-09-2019

Revised in July 2020

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect children from harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with DRC. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated in DRC's international operations
- The design and implementation of DRC's international programmes and activities

The policy lays out the commitments made by DRC and informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to child safeguarding.

This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace – this is dealt with under DRC's Code of Conduct
- Child Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by DRC or associated personnel
- DRC staff and associated personnel in relation to national activities in Denmark, who must comply with *DRC's Code of Behaviour*

II. WHAT IS CHILD SAFEGUARDING?

At DRC, safeguarding means protecting a child's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, exploitation and neglect

At DRC, we understand it to mean protecting children from harm that arises from coming into contact with DRC staff, associated personnel or programmes.

III. SCOPE

- All DRC staff contracted outside of Denmark, and HQ staff on mission to DRC's international operations.
- All associated personnel in relation to international programme activities or visits related to DRC, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians

IV. INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

DRC's International Director endorses and gives effect to this safeguarding policy. The process owners for the policy are the Risk and Compliance Secretariat and the Human Resources Department, which will monitor the policy implementation and periodically review and suggest revisions as needed.

V. POLICY STATEMENT

DRC believes that everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. DRC will not tolerate harm to children by staff or associated personnel.

DRC will make sure that all children and young people have the same protection regardless of age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

DRC recognises the additional needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, especially around communication and access to services

This policy will address the area of child safeguarding. This area of safeguarding may have different policies and procedures associated with it (see *Associated Policies, Procedures and Guidelines* below).

DRC commits to addressing child safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

A. Prevention

A.1 DRC responsibilities

DRC will:

- Ensure all staff and associated personnel have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy
- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects children from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with DRC. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated
- Implement stringent child safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel
- Ensure staff receive training on child safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization
- Follow up on reports of child safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process

A.2 Staff and associated personnel responsibilities

All DRC managers, staff and associated personnel are obliged to contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents child safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy. Specific responsibilities include:

DRC staff and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Sexually abuse or exploit children
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed, exploitative or abusive.
- Be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while assuming professional responsibility for any child.

- Physically assault or physically abuse children, even where this may be culturally acceptable.
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour with children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Show favour to particular children to the exclusion of others (for example, promising a child gifts and enticements).
- Exploit children for their labour (e.g. domestic servants) or for sexual purposes.
- Conduct or be part of harmful traditional practices, spiritual or ritualistic abuse.
- Enter into a marriage with a child unless in accordance with the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13 of 9 October 2003¹

DRC staff and associated personnel are obliged to contribute to a culture that:

- Creates and maintains an environment that prevents child safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy
- Promotes and strengthens openness and mutual accountability at work places to enable all Child Safeguarding issues or suspicions to be raised and discussed.
- Empowers children by informing them of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by staff and associated personnel
- Encourages children to raise any concerns or suspicions about their personal safety.
- Analyses risk when organizing activities and programs involving children and plan for ways of mitigating risk
- Ensures that risks of working alone with children are minimized by ensuring that two adults are always visible to others when working with children
- Ensures physical contact is always appropriate and not an invasion of the child's privacy

A.3 DRC Managerial responsibility and accountability

DRC Managers who are responsible for hiring, onboarding and managing staff and associated personnel have a particular responsibility to adhere to this child safeguarding policy. They are expected to:

- Lead by example and set the tone and clear expectations of behaviour, as explained in DRC's Leadership Concept
- Follow the guidelines outlined in DRC's *Compliance Tool: Safeguarding Through the Employment Cycle* when recruiting, onboarding, managing and off-boarding staff.
- Ensure that all associated personnel sign up to DRC's Code of Conduct and abide to the standards of the Code.

B. Enabling reports

DRC managers, staff and associated personnel are obliged to report any concerns or suspicions regarding child safeguarding violations by DRC staff member or associated personnel.

DRC will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting child safeguarding concerns are made available to staff, associated personnel and the communities we work with.

DRC will ensure that persons reporting (in good faith) child safeguarding concerns to DRC are entitled to protection against any retaliatory action taken against them by DRC staff. All allegations of retaliation will be investigated and, if substantiated, shall be considered serious misconduct.

¹ Paragraph 3.2. (b) of the Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13 of 9 October 2003 states: sexual activity with children (persons under 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence. However, according to paragraph 4.4 of the Bulletin, this does not apply where a staff member is legally married to someone who is under the age of 18 but over the age of majority or consent in their country of citizenship.

DRC will also accept complaints from any external source such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

B.1 How to report a child safeguarding concern

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to child safeguarding should report it immediately to the Code of Conduct Reporting Mechanism (CoCRM) at HQ in Copenhagen *and* their line manager. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to their line manager (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they should report to a more senior manager who is not implicated.

Reports to the CoCRM at HQ should use this email: c.o.conduct@drc.ngo

C. Response

DRC will follow up child safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations (see VI. Associated policies, procedures and guidelines).

DRC will ensure that child safeguarding concerns related to SEA will only be investigated by certified SEA investigators.

DRC will apply appropriate measures to staff found in breach of policy.

DRC will use its best endeavours to offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be survivor centred.

C.1 Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with child safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only and should be kept secure at all times and in line with data protection law(s).

VI. ASSOCIATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

1. DRC's Operations Handbook: Code of Conduct Reporting Mechanism <https://insite.drc.dk/en/operations-handbook/code-of-conduct>
2. DRC's Safeguarding Policy
3. DRC's Leadership Concept
4. DRC's Background Check Policy
5. DRC's Compliance Tool: Safeguarding Through the Employment Cycle
6. DRC's Code of Behaviour
7. UN Secretary- General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13 of 9 October 2003
8. DRC's Code of Conduct

VII. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Associated personnel

A person that is engaged with work or visits related to DRC, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians

Beneficiary of Assistance

Someone who directly receives goods or services from DRC's programme.

Child

A person below the age of 18

Harm

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights

Psychological harm

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

Safeguarding

At DRC, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

At DRC, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes.

Sexual abuse

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

Survivor

The child who has been harmed. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.