




Canadian Red Cross Society Child Safeguarding

Policy Name	Child Safeguarding	Policy Number	3.10
Section Title	Health and Safety	Section #	3
Procedures	Procedure 3.10 - Child Safeguarding Reporting	References	Policy 2.1 – Code of Conduct Policy 2.3 – Integrity Protection Policy 2.5 – Confidentiality Policy 5.5 – Screening Policy 5.6 – Police Background Checks
Replaces	Policy 3.10 - Child Protection		
Approval Authority	Ann Clancy, Chief People Officer	Responsible Executive	Ann Clancy, Chief People Officer
Approval Signature			
Date	October 5, 2023		
Effective Date	October 5, 2023	Revision Date(s)	October 2023
Contact	People Services		

Policy Statement

The Canadian Red Cross Society (CRCS) is committed to safeguarding children personnel interact with and ensuring all personnel interactions are grounded in the best interests of the child, wherever they are and whoever they are, regardless of their age, (dis)abilities, gender identities and expressions, origins, racialized or Indigenous identities, religious beliefs, sexes, social status, and sexual orientations. The organization will use a survivor-centred, culturally appropriate approach, understood by children to support their safety, non-discrimination, confidentiality, and respect.

As legally required, the CRCS will seek to ensure appropriate reporting received through the CRCS around any allegations of child abuse, violence, neglect and/or exploitation of children in any circumstance. In addition, when the report involves CRCS personnel, CRC will also ensure appropriate and timely referrals for access to physical and mental health services, as well as legal support.

To safeguard children, the CRCS will take appropriate action by ensuring:

1. Effective education and training for personnel on child safeguarding, including the Best Interests of the Child.
2. Appropriate prevention measures are in place.
3. Clear reporting procedures are established and adhered to, as well as clear steps for when concerns arise.

Reason for the Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to confirm the CRCS's commitment to safeguarding children interacted with against violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, and outline the requirements for all personnel.

Application and Scope

This Policy applies to all CRCS personnel.

Policy Definitions

Adult – a person 18 years of age or older as defined by applicable provincial and territorial laws.

Best Interests of the Child – broadly describes the well-being of a child, which is determined by a variety of individual circumstances, such as their gender, age, level of maturity and experiences, and other factors, such as the presence or absence of parents, quality of the relationships between the child and family/caregiver, and other risks or capacities.

There are three aspects to the Best Interests concept:

1. A Child's Basic Right
2. A Legal Principle
3. A Rule of Procedure



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Child – refers to a person under the age of 18 years or older as defined in provincial and territorial laws, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹

Child abuse – refers to a deliberate act with actual or potential negative impacts upon the child’s safety, wellbeing, dignity, and development. It is an intentional act which takes place in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power,² and includes:

1. Emotional or Psychological Abuse
2. Physical Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse

Child exploitation – refers to when an individual in a position of power and/or trust takes or attempts to take advantage of a child for their own personal benefit, advantage, gratification, or profit. This personal benefit may take different forms: physical, sexual, financial, material, social, military, or political. Exploitation may involve remuneration in cash or in kind (such as social status, political power, documentation, freedom of movement, or access to opportunities, goods, or services) to the child or to a third person(s).³

This can be divided into three categories:

1. Economic exploitation
2. Harmful or hazardous labour
3. Sexual exploitation

Child neglect – refers to the failure of a caregiver to protect a child from actual or potential harm or to fulfil that child’s rights to survival, development, and wellbeing. This may be categorized as neglectful whether the caregiver intends to harm the child or not, however, it is only considered neglect by a caregiver when:

1. The caregiver has the abilities, financial capacities, and knowledge to meet the child’s needs.
2. When the caregiver lacks the abilities, financial capacities, and knowledge necessary, and does not take steps to seek the assistance needed to protect or provide for the child.⁴

Child safeguarding – refers to the broad obligation to ensure the design and delivery of programs are in the Best Interests of the child, do not expose children to adverse impacts, including the risk of violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect and any concerns about children’s safety within the communities where they work are appropriately reported and responded to.⁵

Survivor-Centered – refers to creating a supportive environment in which the survivor’s rights and wishes are respected, their safety is ensured, and they are treated with dignity and respect. This approach is defined by four principles:⁶

1. Safety
2. Confidentiality to the extent possible
3. Respect
4. Non-discrimination

Violence against children – encompasses all acts that involve the intentional use of power or verbal or physical force, threatened or actual, against a child or against a group of children that either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child or children’s health, survival, development, or dignity. Possible forms of harm include injury; death; disability; decreased psychological, psychosocial, or mental health; or maldevelopment.⁷

The Policy Content

1. Education and Training

- Personnel will participate in Child Safeguarding education and training opportunities, as appropriate for their role and as defined by People Services.
- Personnel will review [Procedure 3.10 – Child Safeguarding Reporting](#) and all applicable reporting authorities in the geographies where they work and/or volunteer, as appropriate for their role.

¹ OHCHR. [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#); and IFRC. (2021). [IFRC Child Safeguarding Policy | IFRC](#)

² Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and Proteknon. (2018). *Discussion Paper on the Review of Existing Definitions and Explanations of Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation, and Violence against Children*. <https://www.alliancecpha.org/en/child-protection-online-library/discussion-paper-review-existing-definitions-and-explanations-abuse>

³ Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and Proteknon. (2018). *Discussion Paper on the Review of Existing Definitions and Explanations of Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation, and Violence against Children*. <https://www.alliancecpha.org/en/child-protection-online-library/discussion-paper-review-existing-definitions-and-explanations-abuse>

⁴ Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and Proteknon. (2018). *Discussion Paper on the Review of Existing Definitions and Explanations of Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation, and Violence against Children*. <https://www.alliancecpha.org/en/child-protection-online-library/discussion-paper-review-existing-definitions-and-explanations-abuse>

⁵ DFAT. (2017). *Child Protection Policy 2017*. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/pages/child-protection-policy>

⁶ IFRC. (2018). *Minimum Standards for Protection, Gender, and Inclusion in Emergencies*. [Minimum standards for PGI in emergencies | IFRC](#)

⁷ Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. (2019). *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action* (2019 edition). <https://alliancecpha.org/en/cpms>



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2. Prevention

- Personnel will avoid being in isolated locations alone with children, as much as possible.
 - If a child needs to discuss something in confidence, personnel are to do their best to ensure additional personnel are with them (preferably of the same sex as the child) or they should interact with the child, so they are in the sight of others, but out of hearing distance. This interaction should be documented in writing, without confidential details, and shared with their supervisor.
- Personnel will not publish or present, electronically, or otherwise, any undignified, exploitative, or harmful photo or video of a child.
 - Personnel are encouraged to contact their supervisor, PS Representative, Volunteer Experience and/or Engagement Representative if they have questions or concerns regarding this requirement.
- Personnel will not exchange the above-mentioned information through social media or any other platform unless signed permission has been given by the child's legal guardian. If permission is obtained, personnel must always try to limit any potential risk to the safety of the child.
- Personnel may be subject to reference checks, as per [Policy 5.5 – Screening](#), and police background checks or Enhanced Police Information Checks (EPIC), or other types of checks as a requirement for employment/engagement with the CRCS.

3. Reporting

- Personnel must report any observation, suspicion, and/or disclosure of violence against a child or if the wellbeing of a child is at risk, as outlined in [Procedure 3.10 – Child Safeguarding Reporting](#).
- Supervisors are to support their team's in understanding the requirements of this Policy, and the associated procedure, and to facilitate reporting, as appropriate and outlined in [Procedure 3.10 – Child Safeguarding Reporting](#).

Non-Compliance with this Policy

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in corrective action, up to and including dismissal.

For behaviour or actions which may be considered serious acts of misconduct, refer to [Policy 2.1 - Code of Conduct](#).

Questions regarding the Application of this Policy and Exceptions

For questions regarding Policy application, including uncertainty about what action to take or questions about reporting responsibilities or options available, please contact your supervisor, People Services Representative or Volunteer Experience and Engagement Representative.

For escalating concerns, please contact www.ClearviewConnects.ca, or if working outside of Canada, the IFRC Integrity Line: [Report a Concern](#) | IFRC.