



# **Safeguarding Policy**

## **for Children, Young People, and Adults**

The Safeguarding Policy is integral part of Cordaid's Integrity Policy & Procedure Framework, in which applicable principles, roles & responsibilities, and related documents are outlined.

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## 1. Intro

This Safeguarding Policy defines Cordaid/ICCO's standards to ensure that our staff, operations and programs do not harm staff, child, young and adult beneficiaries, or anyone else that comes into contact with Cordaid/ICCO.

Cordaid/ICCO is committed to be a safe and welcoming work provider and to ensure that we maintain respect and dignity towards external stakeholders in our programs. This is not only because Cordaid/ICCO is legally required to protect employees' health and safety (Occupational Health and Safety Act 2017), but mainly because any type of interpersonal misconduct – including, but not limited to Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse – goes against our vision to enable a life in dignity for everyone.

This policy consolidates the previous Policy regarding *(Un)desirable Behavior* (2017) and includes particular attention to safeguard children, young people, and adults-at-risk, previously outlined in Caritas Internationalis' *Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy* (2019) in combination with Cordaid's Board Resolution from 11 March 2019.

## 2. Scope

This policy is applicable to the behavior of Cordaid/ICCO representatives towards everyone who comes into contact with Cordaid/ICCO:

- a) Internally: Board, managers, staff, consultants, volunteers, interns.
- b) Externally: children, young people, adults including adults at risk, beneficiaries, partner staff, etc.

## 3. What is interpersonal misconduct?

"Interpersonal Misconduct" is an umbrella term that includes any type of harm committed against another *person* or *group* – vs. for instance fraud, which involves harm to *resources*. Interpersonal misconduct includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, bullying, discrimination, or aggression and violence. Section 6 provides a non-exhaustive list of interpersonal misconduct.

Note that interpersonal misconduct is not always *intended* to harm another person. Also, depending on personal experiences, character traits, as well as cultural and religious influences, what is perceived to be inappropriate can differ per person or according to circumstances. Therefore, whether or not a behavior is a safeguarding issue, is not always clear-cut, and the broad definition of interpersonal misconduct offers employees the opportunity to set their own boundaries.

As a guideline, interpersonal misconduct could refer to behavior that:

- is illegal or prohibited under Cordaid/ICCO's Code of Conduct, e.g. child abuse or discrimination.
- is explicitly unwanted: the person affected made it clear with words or actions that the behavior is not wanted.
- can be reasonably believed to be inappropriate or unwanted: the behavior would usually be considered unacceptable, hostile, demeaning or intimidating in the context, regardless of whether the person affected has explicitly expressed this perception or not.

In case of doubt whether a behavior is appropriate, either seek to avoid the behavior, or directly ask the other person for consent and respect their answer.

## 4. Who can be affected by interpersonal misconduct?

Any person who comes into contact with Cordaid/ICCO, whether internal (staff and other Cordaid/ICCO representatives) or external (e.g. partner staff, beneficiaries), can be affected by interpersonal misconduct. Both perpetrators and people affected can be of any gender, age, or position in the organization.

However, some people tend to be disproportionately at risk of being affected by interpersonal misconduct, and usually less able to speak out about it. This relates to a person's position of power in the organization and in society, which is influenced by a combination of their age, gender, religion, ethnicity, race, being LGBTQI, disabilities, health status, and other relevant intersecting factors of a person's identity.

## 5. Safeguarding Children, Young People, and Adults at Risk

We commit to adhere to even more rigorous integrity standards when working with children:

- **Do** have at least one other adult present, or at least in sight of other adults, when working with a child.
- **Do** ensure that an adult caretaker is present when transporting a child, or have appropriate permission.
- **Do** disclose all charges or convictions relating to child abuse or sex offenses.
- **Do** ask for both children's and caretaker's informed consent before taking pictures or interviewing a child, if necessary multiple times.
- **Do** stop a behavior if a child expresses discomfort.
- **Don't** engage in any sexual activity with children under 18, including any sexualized touching.
- **Don't** hit or otherwise physically abuse children (even if culturally acceptable).
- **Don't** emotionally or verbally abuse children (incl. shouting at a child).
- **Don't** ask a child to do any personal favors.
- **Don't** send degrading or harmful written or verbal messages to a child, such as sexting or pornography.
- **Don't** use any computers, mobiles, video cameras, social media or other means to exploit or harass children or to access, download, or share child pornographic material.
- **Don't** hire a child.
- **Don't** encourage a child to meet outside of work-related activities.
- **Don't** take a child home.
- **Don't** do things of a personal nature for a child that they are able to do for themselves (e.g. personal hygiene).
- **Don't** show favoritism.
- **Don't** be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs when working with children.

These guidelines should also be applied with regards to young people and adults at risk with limited ability to give consent, e.g. people with certain mental disabilities that limit their ability to give or withdraw consent.

## 6. Definitions

<b>Abuse</b>	<p><b>Sexual:</b> unwanted sexual activity or behavior that happens without consent or understanding. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving the individual involuntarily in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the production of, pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).</p> <p><b>Physical:</b> includes, but is not limited to, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, unlawful or inappropriate restraint and inappropriate physical sanctions.</p> <p><b>Emotional:</b> harm done by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats, bullying, and not giving care and affection (especially to children). Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone.</p> <p><b>Neglect:</b> the persistent failure to meet basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care, or when there is a failure to prevent exposure to any kind of danger. This is particularly relevant where someone fails to fulfil their care responsibilities for a child or other dependent.</p>
<b>Aggression and Violence</b>	<p>Harassment, threats or attacks, e.g.</p> <p><b>Physical:</b> damage to belongings, kicking, hitting, and pushing.</p> <p><b>Psychological:</b> gossip, unpleasant comments, jokes at a person's expense, swearing, insults, threats, intimidation, public reprimands, making gestures.</p>
<b>Bullying</b>	<p>Repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).</p>
<b>Discrimination</b>	<p>Abuse, harassment, slurs, hate speech or crime, or any other differential treatment, based on an individual's (perceived) personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, disability, health status, faith including non-believers, being LGBTQI, age, marital status, parenthood including pregnancy, refugee status, work status (working hours, type of contract), or others.</p>
<b>Exploitation</b>	<p>Actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust to profit from the sex acts of others including children, forced labour or services including child labour, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, the removal of organs, trafficking. This does not include consensual sex acts with adult sex workers that are not directly benefitting from Cordaid/ICCO's work (yet please refer to the Code of Conduct).</p>
<b>Harassment</b>	<p><b>Non-sexual:</b> any improper and unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person. Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate or embarrass another or which create an intimidating, hostile or offensive (work) environment. Harassment normally implies a series of incidents, but can also take the form of a single incident.</p> <p><b>Sexual:</b> any unwelcome sexual advance, expressed or implied request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct, joke or gesture of a sexualized nature, or any other behaviour of a sexualized nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work</p>

environment. While typically involving a pattern of behaviour, it can take the form of a single incident.

- verbal forms: jokes and comments of a sexual nature, inappropriate comments about clothing or appearance, suggesting having sex, reporting erotic experiences, fantasies or dreams;
- non-verbal forms: staring and peeking, physically approaching too closely, gestures of a sexual nature, pornographic e-mails or screensavers;
- physical forms: kissing, touching breasts, buttocks, or other body parts, hugging, standing unnecessarily close, etc.

**Grooming** The process of befriending a child, young person or adult on- or offline, thereby obtaining their trust before exploiting, harassing or abusing them.

**Inappropriate relationship** Inappropriate relationships are relationships that are consensual, yet hold a risk of exploitation of a power differential or a Conflict of Interest – e.g. a relationship between a staff member and their line manager or between staff and beneficiaries.  
Staff members are strongly encouraged to disclose such a relationship to prevent the perception/allegations of exploitation. Disclosure allows for a joint assessment of whether the relationship might be inappropriate for the workplace. Adjustments might have to be made, e.g. a change in team or relocating staff to another activity.

**Misuse of Power or Authority** Improper use of a position of influence, power or authority against another person, e.g. to improperly influence the career or employment conditions of another, including, but not limited to, appointment, assignment, contract renewal, performance evaluation, working conditions or promotion. Abuse of authority may also include conduct that creates a hostile or offensive work environment which includes, but is not limited to, the use of intimidation, threats, blackmail or coercion.

**Stalking** Deliberate and repeatedly following or harassing another person which makes them feel unsafe. This may occur in a variety of ways: physically, by mail, by telephone, by e-mail, using text messages, etc.

**Unsafe programming** Gross negligence in program design or implementation that creates foreseeable integrity risks.

## 7. What to do if you experience or witness interpersonal misconduct?

Allegations of interpersonal misconduct should be reported to the organization for two key reasons:

1. For the person affected to receive support and to put a stop to the misconduct,
2. To help Cordaid/ICCO identify and manage risks and trends, which can be used to strengthen the culture of integrity within the organization, e.g. by training, warning or dismissing staff that doesn't respect Cordaid/ICCO's integrity standards.

The channels and procedures to make a complaint about interpersonal misconduct are outlined in Cordaid/ICCO's [Integrity Standard Operating Procedures](#). The Integrity Officer can also be directly reached via [integrity@cordaid.org](mailto:integrity@cordaid.org).

While we know that making a report can be extremely difficult for those affected or for witnesses, we will not tolerate those who knowingly *enable* misconduct by 'looking the other way'. Leadership is asked to lead by example. Gross negligence to report, in particular safeguarding concerns involving minors or otherwise major misconduct, can lead to disciplinary action.

## 8. Glossary

**Adult at risk:** Someone over the age of 18 unable to take care of themselves / protect themselves from harm or exploitation; or who, due to their gender, mental or physical health, disability, age, or as a result of disasters and conflicts, are deemed to be at higher risk of being abused.

**Child:** Anyone under the age of 18, *regardless* of local age limits.

**Complainant:** A person who makes a complaint/report about misconduct to the organization / authorities. This can be the person affected by the misconduct, or a witness / whistleblower. The term is *not* be understood in a negative way as in 'nitpicker'.

**Consent:** Permission for something to happen or agreement to do something.

**Cordaid/ICCO Representative:** Cordaid/ICCO Board, managers, staff, interns, volunteers; consultants providing services for Cordaid/ICCO, or anyone else in a representative function of Cordaid/ICCO.

**Misconduct:** Any behavior that can be reasonably be understood as breaching the standards of behavior set out in Cordaid/ICCO's Integrity Framework, Code of Conduct and related policies.

**Perpetrator:** The person who commits the misconduct. When speaking about someone who is suspected to have committed a misconduct, refer to 'alleged perpetrator'.

**Person affected:** A person affected by misconduct, e.g. someone who was (sexually) harassed. See also: Survivor/Victim.

**Safeguarding:** Cordaid/ICCO's efforts to ensure that staff, operations and programs do not harm staff, child, young and adult beneficiaries, or anyone else that comes into contact with Cordaid/ICCO.

**Survivor/Victim:** Both terms can be used to describe persons affected by interpersonal misconduct. While some – especially those who have reached a certain state of recovery – might identify as having 'survived' the distressing incident(s), others feel more 'victimized' by them. One option that doesn't rely on knowing a person's self-identification is to refer to 'persons affected' by misconduct.

**Young person:** Depending on the context, young people are defined as those between 15 and 24, or between 15 and 35. While young people might face different safeguarding challenges and vulnerabilities than children, young people under 18 should be treated following the standards for safeguarding children as a precautionary measure.