CORDAID’S SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND ADULTS

DOCUMENT MANAGER: INTEGRITY OFFICER
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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. INTRODUCTION

This Safeguarding Policy defines Cordaid’s standards to ensure that our staff, operations, and programmes do not harm staff, children, young people and adult beneficiaries, or anyone else that comes into contact with Cordaid.

Cordaid has zero tolerance towards incidents of violence or abuse against children, young people, or adults, including sexual abuse, harassment, or exploitation, committed either by staff, or any other parties affiliated with our work.

For the purpose of this policy, a child is a person under the age of 18 years, regardless of the age of majority or age of consent in the country in which the child lives or in their home country. In the instances where the local and international standards each recognise different ages of majority, the standard with the higher age of majority will apply.

Cordaid is committed to being a safe and welcoming work provider and to ensure that we maintain respect and dignity towards external stakeholders in our programmes. This is not only because Cordaid 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 Behaviour (2017) and includes particular attention to safeguarding 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:
- Code of conduct
- Integrity framework
- Integrity Standard Operating Procedures
- Fraud Policy
- Conflict-of-interest Policy
- Complaints procedure
- Anti-terrorism and anti-money laundering policy

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the behaviour of Cordaid representatives towards everyone who comes into contact with Cordaid:
1. Internally: Board, managers, staff, consultants, volunteers, interns herein referred to as Cordaid representatives.
2. Externally: children, young people, adults including adults at risk, beneficiaries, partner staff, etc. who come into contact with Cordaid’s programmes.

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 5.3 provides a non-exhaustive list of interpersonal misconduct.

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.
As a guideline, interpersonal misconduct could refer to behaviour that:
- is illegal or prohibited under Cordaid’s Code of Conduct and in this policy, e.g., child abuse or discrimination or sexual harassment.
- is explicitly unwanted: the person affected made it clear with words or actions that the behaviour is not wanted.
- can be reasonably believed to be inappropriate or unwanted: the behaviour 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.

4. **WHO CAN BE AFFECTED BY INTERPERSONAL MISCONDUCT?**

Any person who comes into contact with Cordaid, whether internal (staff and other Cordaid 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 organisation.

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 organisation and in society, which is influenced by a combination of their age, gender, religion, ethnicity, race, being LGBTQ,1 disabilities, health status, and other relevant intersecting factors of a person’s identity.

5. **SAFEGUARDING**

5.1 Key safeguarding principles

Cordaid commits to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s core principles relating to sexual exploitation and Abuse. Specifically, Cordaid representatives will adhere to the following principles at all times.

1. Sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and child abuse by Cordaid representatives constitute acts of gross misconduct and will lead to disciplinary measures including termination of employment or contract and/or may necessitate Cordaid to report to relevant authorities or take legal action if required.
2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence.
3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes the exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
4. Any sexual relationship between Cordaid employees and beneficiaries (including immediate family members of direct beneficiaries) is prohibited. Such relationships are based on inherently unequal power dynamics and may undermine the credibility and integrity of Cordaid’s work.
5. When Cordaid representatives develop concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow colleague, whether in the Cordaid or from another organisation, he or she must report such concerns via established reporting mechanisms.
6. Cordaid staff and representatives are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse including child abuse and promotes the implementation of this policy. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.
7. Cordaid will not work with partners who do not have proper safeguarding procedures in place.

5.2 Safeguarding for Children

Cordaid adheres to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In particular, Cordaid will observe the “best interest of the child” principle and ensure in all actions and decisions concerning children, the welfare of the children shall be a primary consideration.

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1 LGBTQ: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer
Cordaid adheres to the United Nations Secretary-General’s Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13 on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. In particular Cordaid accepts the standards of conduct listed in section 3 of the ST/SGB/2003/13. Cordaid representatives will adhere to all local and international child protection legislation (or this policy where the policy is of a higher standard) in countries where they travel and work, as well as international laws and conventions in relation to all forms of child abuse and child exploitation, including but not limited to child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, child labour and child pornography.

Cordaid representatives will respect children’s right to participate in any decision affecting them to the fullest extent possible and will ensure their views are heard and acted upon.

Cordaid commits to adhere to even more rigorous integrity standards when working with children. Specifically, Cordaid representatives and other external parties will adhere to the following Do’s and Don’ts.

The Do’s
- 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 behaviour if a child expresses discomfort.
- Do interact with children, youth, and beneficiaries in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner.

The Don’ts
- Don’t engage in any sexual activity with children under 18, including any sexualised touching.
- Don’t hit or otherwise physically abuse children (even if culturally acceptable).
- Don’t emotionally or verbally abuse children including shouting at a child, humiliating, and shaming a child.
- Don’t ask a child to do any personal favours.
- 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 who is participating or is a beneficiary of Cordaid programmes to your home or sleep in the same bed.
- Don’t do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do for themselves (e.g., personal hygiene).
- Don’t show favouritism or discriminate against any child or group of children.
- Don’t be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs when working with children.
- Don’t get involved in any compromise settlement with parents, abusers, or authorities when a child is abused.

The above 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.

5.3 Prohibited behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROHIBITED BEHAVIOUR</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abuse</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual: unwanted sexual activity or behaviour 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).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SAFEGUARDING POLICY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical: includes, but is not limited to, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, unlawful or inappropriate restraint and inappropriate physical sanctions.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional: 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.</td>
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<td>Neglect: 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aggression and Violence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Harassment, threats, or attacks, e.g.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical: damage to belongings, kicking, hitting, and pushing.</td>
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<td>Psychological: gossip, unpleasant comments, jokes at a person’s expense, swearing, insults, threats, intimidation, public reprimands, making gestures.</td>
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<td><strong>Bullying</strong></td>
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<td>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).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discrimination</strong></td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exploitation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>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’s work. See further our Code of Conduct.</td>
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<td><strong>Harassment</strong></td>
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<td>Workplace harassment is when a person is subjected to behaviour, (other than sexual harassment) that:</td>
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<td>- is repeated, unwelcome and unsolicited;</td>
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<td>- the person considers it to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating, or threatening;</td>
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<td>- a reasonable person would consider it to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating, or threatening.</td>
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<td>Workplace harassment can be committed by an employer, worker, co-worker, group of co-workers, partner, donor, or a member of the public.</td>
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<td>Workplace harassment covers a wide range of behaviours. Some examples include (but are not limited to):</td>
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<td>- abusing a person loudly, usually when others are present;</td>
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<td>- repeated threats of dismissal or other severe punishment, that do not follow OAU’s standard disciplinary procedures;</td>
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<td>- making/sending offensive messages (e.g., via email, telephone, or other means);</td>
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<td>- significantly impairing the person’s work in any way such as withholding information, removing content, or altering the intent of the person’s work;</td>
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<td>- maliciously excluding and isolating a person from workplace activities that they would normally be involved in;</td>
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<td>- persistent and unjustified criticisms, often about petty, irrelevant, or insignificant matters;</td>
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<td>- humiliating a person through gestures, sarcasm, criticism, and insults, often in front of others;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- spreading false information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual: any unwelcome sexual advance, expressed or implied request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct, joke or gesture of a sexualised nature, or any other behaviour of a sexualised 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 environment. While typically involving a pattern of behaviour, it can take the form of a single incident.</td>
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<td>- verbal forms: jokes and comments of a sexual nature, inappropriate comments about clothing or appearance, suggesting having sex, reporting erotic experiences, fantasies, or dreams;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- non-verbal forms: staring and peeking, physically approaching too closely, gestures of a sexual nature, pornographic e-mails, or screensavers;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grooming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inappropriate relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misuse of power of authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stalking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unsafe programming</td>
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6. PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE, CHILD ABUSE AND PROHIBITED BEHAVIOUR

To prevent sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, child abuse and other prohibited behaviour Cordaid will ensure safe recruitment, safe programming, training and awareness and proper management of communication and marketing is embedded in Cordaid’s processes and programmes.

Safe recruitment
Cordaid is committed to preventing known perpetrators of child abuse, sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse from being hired, re-hired or re-deployed. It is also committed to mitigating potential safeguarding risks that can affect children, young people, and adults. Cordaid will therefore ensure that screening is incorporated in the recruitment process for all Cordaid representatives. Screening procedures will include but not limited to reference checks from previous employers and background checks. During recruitment, a criminal background check will be undertaken for staff who are recruited to positions that require working directly with children and/or vulnerable adults. These staff will be asked behavioural-based questions during interviews and will be required to sign a declaration that they have not been charged and or involved in sexual harassment, exploitation, and child abuse offences.

Safe programming
Cordaid recognises that programmes may have inherent safeguarding risks to children, young people, and adults. Project leaders will therefore conduct safeguarding risk assessments to its programmes, develop and document how to mitigate the identified risks. Safeguarding measures will be embedded in all the stages of the project cycle and in partners and programme participants’ relationships.

Training and awareness
All Cordaid employees, consultants, volunteers, interns, the board, and partners will receive safeguarding training upon joining Cordaid as part of their induction training. Refresher training will also be provided to existing employees and to the board members upon re-election.
Communication and marketing

1. Cordaid commits to comply with the local cultures, traditions and other restrictions when reproducing personal images. The images used should give an honest representation of the context and facts. In all forms of Cordaid’s communications, children, young people, and adults will be treated with dignity and respect.

2. Cordaid representatives must seek consent from adults and/or guardians/parents of children who are subjects of photos, videos, audio taken on behalf of Cordaid.

3. Personal information from children, young people and adults that is collected, stored, or shared in the course of Cordaid’s work must be held securely and adhere to relevant data protection laws.

4. Published materials concerning children and adults at risk should only mention first name and country to protect their identity.

5. In instances when the published materials contain sensitive subjects, images should be covered, and pseudonyms should be used.

7. WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE OR WITNESS INTERPERSONAL MISCONDUCT?

Representatives of Cordaid and persons outside Cordaid who witness or are made aware of suspected interpersonal misconduct are expected to report.

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

- For the person affected to receive support and to put a stop to the misconduct,
- To help Cordaid identify and manage risks and trends, which can be used to strengthen the culture of integrity within the organisation, e.g., by training, warning, or dismissing staff that does not respect Cordaid’s integrity standards.

A report of alleged interpersonal misconduct must never have a negative effect on the person reporting the allegation. The staff reporting the allegations must be protected by the Management and direct supervisor against any reprisal. Cordaid does not condone retaliation against a person who either reports suspected interpersonal misconduct, or who takes part in the investigation process. Any form of retaliation or deterring anyone from reporting suspicions of interpersonal misconduct will be treated as misconduct and may be subject to disciplinary measures.

Cordaid representatives and other external parties can make a report about allegations of interpersonal misconduct through the following channels:

- Directly to the Integrity & Safeguarding Officer via integrity@cordaid.org or
- By filling the reporting form and sending it to the Integrity & Safeguarding officer via integrity@cordaid.org.
- To the immediate or higher supervisor who will then submit the report to the Integrity Officer. In case of a partner, consultant, or supplier - to the manager in charge of their contract. Persons who have formed suspicions may also report to higher supervisors where the immediate supervisors are implicated, or they feel the immediate supervisor will not take the report seriously

Staff who are unable to report to their line manager or directly to the Integrity Officer may also use the external whistleblowing service to report. Reports of Interpersonal misconduct can also be sent through the following external channels:

- An external Whistle-blower Service via +31 (0)88 1331 030, via email to advies@huisvoorklokkenluiders.nl, or directly online (Dutch). To report (suspected) misconduct via the House of Whistle-blower’s, the wrongdoing must be of public interest and as well as based on reasonable suspicions
- Make use of the whistleblower service at the secretariat of ACT Alliance (of which Cordaid is member of) by sending an email via complaintsbox@actalliance.org.
- Or make use of the whistle-blower service of Caritas Internationalis (of which Cordaid is member of) via the Caritas Internationalis Secretary General directly (If the complaint is against the Secretary General, then the Complaint Handling Officer will report to the President.)
Cordaid representatives and any other external parties who intend to make reports of interpersonal misconduct allegations are encouraged to exhaust the internal reporting channels first unless in the instances where they believe the allegations raised will not be taken seriously.

Cordaid will treat anonymous reports as any other report provided sufficient information is available to process the complaint.

All allegations of interpersonal misconduct will be taken seriously, treated confidentially, and followed up as outlined in the Integrity SOP's which describes in detail all the steps which are needed to be taken.

7.1 False and malicious reporting

Reports of allegations of interpersonal misconduct must be made in good faith. Intentionally submitting false report(s) shall constitute a misconduct for which disciplinary measures will be imposed. Disciplinary measures will not be taken against an individual who reports a misconduct in good faith even if the allegations are not substantiated after an investigation or review is conducted.

7.2 External reporting

In the instances when it is established that the reported allegations are credible, an external report will be made to:
1. The donor(s) if the contractual obligation between Cordaid and the donor requires a report to be made. The project owner will be responsible for reporting to the donor(s) about the alleged interpersonal misconduct.
2. The local police or any other authority where necessary and in line with the local laws. The case manager will be responsible for ensuring the local authority is informed.
3. The CBF and MOFA officials follow their specific procedures and only via the CEO.

7.3 Confidentiality

Cordaid respects confidentiality and has a responsibility to protect sensitive personal data in line with the data protection policy. Information should only be shared and handled on a need-to-know basis, that is, access to the information must be necessary for the conduct of one’s official duties. Only individuals who have legitimate reasons to access the information are allowed to receive it. Breach of confidentiality will be treated as a misconduct and may be subject to disciplinary measures.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Cordaid employees and representatives

All Cordaid employees have the responsibility:
- To read, understand and comply with the content of this policy and the related policies.
- To report any suspicions or incidences of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and child abuse and other prohibited behaviour.
- To take part in preventing and responding to allegations of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, child abuse and other prohibited behaviour as guided by this policy and the related policies.
- To attend the safeguarding induction training and any other refresher training provided by Cordaid.

Project leaders and managers

Project leaders and managers should:
- Conduct safeguarding risk assessment to programmes, develop and document how to mitigate the identified risks.
- Embed the identified safeguarding measures in all the stages of the project cycle and in partners’ and programme participants’ relationships.
Create an environment that prevents sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, child abuse and other prohibited behaviour and develop systems and processes to maintain this environment.

Integrity & Safeguarding Officer

The Integrity & Safeguarding Officer:
- Receives reports of allegations of interpersonal misconduct, conducts preliminary assessments, oversees, and undertake investigations and maintains proper records for all allegations received.
- Promotes awareness and understanding of this policy by ensuring all Cordaid representatives and third parties are trained.
- Provides support and advice to the survivors and victims of interpersonal misconduct.
- Ensures that this policy is accessible to all relevant parties.

The Integrity committee

The Integrity Committee is responsible for providing support and guidance in the implementation of the Policy.

Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is effectively implemented, provide guidance, and demonstrate how Cordaid will make effort to ensure all people that Cordaid works with are protected from sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse and/or child abuse.

Cordaid Supervisory Board

Cordaid board holds the overall accountability for this policy and its implementation.

9. 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**: a person under the age of 18 years, regardless of the age of majority or age of consent in the country in which the child lives or in their home country

**Complainant**: A person who makes a complaint/report about misconduct to the organisation / authorities. This can be the person affected by the misconduct, or a witness / whistle-blower. The term is not to be understood in a negative way as in ‘nit-picker.’

**Consent**: Permission for something to happen or agreement to do something.
Cordaid Representative: Cordaid Board, managers, staff, interns, volunteers; consultants providing services for Cordaid, or anyone else in a representative function of Cordaid.

**Misconduct**: Any behaviour that can be reasonably be understood as breaching the standards of behaviour set out in Cordaid’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’s efforts to ensure that staff, operations, and programmes do not harm staff, child, young and adult beneficiaries, or anyone else that comes into contact with Cordaid.
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 ‘victimised’ by them. One option that does not 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.