

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Our goal

ACRA supports the rights of children and is committed to their safety and well-being.

The purpose of this policy is to protect children from all forms of abuse in the course of our work and reflects our commitment to protect children.

Our values, principles and beliefs

- All child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights.
- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- The situation of all children must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to live free from abuse and exploitation.
- Child abuse is never acceptable.
- We have a commitment to protecting children with/ for whom we work.
- When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for children in their programmes.

What we will do

We will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse through the following means:

- **Awareness:** we will ensure that all staff partners, suppliers, consultants, and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.
- **Prevention:** we will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimise the risks to children.
- **Reporting:** we will ensure that staff and others have clear which steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.
- **Responding:** we will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

In order to meet the above standards of reporting and responding are met, members of the ACRA will also ensure that they:

- take seriously any concerns raised;
- take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns;
- support children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns;
- act appropriately and effectively to open an inquire or cooperate with any subsequent process of investigation;
- are guided through the child protection process by the principle of "best interests of the child";
- listen to and takes seriously the views and wishes of children;
- work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

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How we will ensure our commitments above are met

All ACRA members will sign up to and abide by the attached Code of Conduct

- All partners will sign and abide by the Code of Conduct;
- all staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of the child protection policy;
- recruitment procedures will include checks on suitability for working with young people;
- induction will include briefing on child protection issues;
- every workplace will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse and every member of staff will have contact details for reporting.

Training

ACRA is committed to educating staff and others on the Child Protection Policy, how to reduce risks and create child safe environments.

As part of its child protection training, ACRA will:

- provide comprehensive written documents on ACRA's Child Protection Policy to all new staff/partners;
- incorporate extensive information on the ACRA's Child Protection Policy in the briefing procedures for new staff;
- provide child protection training for staff assigned in projects where they will work directly with children.

Reporting

Reporting suspected or actual child abuse is mandatory for all staff, volunteers, consultants and sub-contractors.

No ACRA staff or partner will prejudice their own position or standing with ACRA by responsibly reporting someone who they believe is breaking the Child Protection Code of Conduct.

ACRA Director, in collaboration with the HR Responsible, have the duty to supervise the proper implementation of this policy, adopting disciplinary measures if necessary and investigate possible abuse once reported and deal with it.

The HR Responsible is responsible for reviewing this policy by making corrections and updates. Each Responsible of the Sector within the Organization has the duty to monitor those situations in which one's employees have tasks that involve children.

All staff should normally discuss their concerns with their immediate senior manager, who will refer to ACRA's Director. Any information provided to the Director will be handled with strict

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confidentiality and who will only take action if breaches of the Child Protection Code of Conduct can be proven conclusively.

Any concerns, allegations or disclosures must be recorded in writing, signed and dated, and communicated as soon as possible to ACRA's Director. Records should be detailed and precise, focusing on what was said or observed, who was present and what happened. Speculation and interpretation should be clearly distinguished from reporting.

In order to protect children it may be necessary to take immediate action to ensure that the Child Protection Code of Conduct is not broken again and/or that further abuse cannot take place.

Any concern, disclosure or allegation is alleged rather than proven at this point. All such records should be treated as extremely confidential. It is the responsibility of each individual in possession of the information to maintain confidentiality.

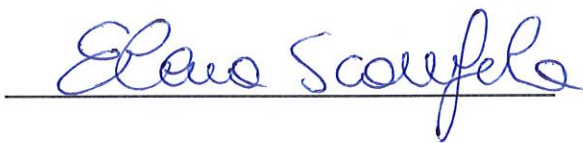
However, confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed. It must be made clear that following the steps in this policy is an obligation. Explanations should be given about the possible outcomes that could result from information being reported.

In certain instances, there will be the obligation for ACRA and its staff to report concerns to the appropriate external bodies.

Legislation

When handling child abuse complaints, ACRA will take into account the relevant legislation in both Italy and the country in which the alleged incident took place.

Elena Scanferla



ACRA Managing Director

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Annex I

Glossary / Definitions

The following definitions will serve as a guide in connection with our policy.

Child

A “child” is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

Child Abuse

According to the **World Health Organisation**, “Child abuse” or “maltreatment” constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Child Participation

Anyone below the age of 18 taking part in a process or playing a role in a process at his/her level, according to their evolving capacities - children and young people thinking for themselves, expressing their views effectively, and interacting in a positive way with other people; involving children in the decisions which affect their lives, the lives of the community and the larger society in which they live.

Child Protection

A broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In the current context, it applies particularly to the duty of organizations - and individuals associated with those organizations - towards children in their care.

Direct Contact with Children

Being in the physical presence of a child or children in the context of the organization’s work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long term.

Child Protection Policy

A statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organization is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously.

Informed Consent

Capacity to give freely consent based on all available information, according to the age and evolving capacities of the child. For example, if you seek consent from a child regarding taking their photograph and using it for publicity purposes, the child is informed as to how the photograph will be used and is given the opportunity to refuse. If a child is invited to input into the development of a child protection policy, they must be made aware of the time it will take, what exactly will be involved, their roles and responsibilities and only then will they be able to give their “informed consent”.

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Annex II

CODE OF CONDUCT

How we will ensure our commitments above are met

All ACRA staff will be bound by this Code of Conduct.

Staff and others *must never*:

- smack, hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;
- develop physical/sexual relationships with children;
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;
- use inappropriate words offensive, threatening or intimidating behaviors that shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or engage in emotional abuse;
- have a child/children, with whom they are working, to stay overnight at their home unsupervised;
- stay alone or sleep in the same room with a child with whom they are working;
- develop abusive or exploitative relations with children, including hiring children for domestic or other labour;
- condone or participate in activities where the child's behaviour is likely to lead to abusive, unsafe or illegal acts;
- use, download or buy pornography, or other photography or video, for sexual purposes;
- discriminate through preferential treatment to a child.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or have a behaviour, which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive conduct.

It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:

- be aware of situations which may present risks and try to manage them;
- plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks;
- as far as possible, be visible in working with children;
- ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed;
- ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged;
- talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns;
- empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

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