



Child Protection Policy

CODE is a Canadian international development organization uniquely focused on advancing literacy and education. We are committed to the welfare of children. We oppose all forms of abuse, discrimination, exploitation, and manipulation of children that would contravene their rights as established in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

CODE recognizes our fundamental duty of care towards children and we acknowledge our responsibilities to keep children safe while engaged in our programs and activities. To that end, CODE has developed this Child Protection Policy.

Definition

Child Protection is a broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm.¹

Mandate

CODE embraces the international principles of equality, child protection and human rights designed to ensure everyone has equal opportunity for reaching their potential, irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, class, caste, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, health status or disability.

Consequently, CODE is committed to channeling energy, effort and resources into processes that protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse², within Canada and in countries where we work. This commitment to protect children shapes our organization and programming.

This Child Protection Policy is guided by:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, Article 19) which seeks to ‘protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.’
- UNICEF’s Child Protection and Procedures Tool Kit.

¹ <http://www.unicef.org/violencestudy/pdf/CP%20Manual%20-%20Introduction.pdf>

² UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 19.

Vision

CODE will be recognized in Canada and in countries in which it works as a leader for protecting the rights of children while promoting literacy and education.

Goal

Our goal is to ensure that the rights of girls and boys to protection are supported in all CODE programming.

Objectives

1. To apply principles of human rights (and specifically the Rights of the Child) in all CODE-supported programs;
2. To promote the Rights of the Child in literacy and education through engaging stories, statistics, reports, presentations, mass media.

Principles

- The 'best interests of the child' are most important.
- All children, girls and boys, of all abilities and backgrounds irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, class, caste, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, health status or disability have equal rights to safety in all settings and locations.
- Violence and abuse against children are never acceptable, in any form, location or setting.
- The situation of all children must be improved through the promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- By enabling people, and especially children to learn, CODE promotes awareness and understanding and encourages self reliance including the realisation of the Rights of Children.

Commitment

CODE is committed to protecting children with/for whom we work.

To meet our commitment to protecting children, CODE (and CODE staff and international volunteers) will:

- Treat all children and youth equally and with respect and fairness irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, class, caste, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, health status or disability.

Approved by the CODE Board of Directors – January 21, 2016

- Ensure that children participating in CODE programming are supported to realise their rights including their rights to express views on all matters which affect them and their surroundings.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the risks to children including child abuse (whether or not individual roles involve working directly with children and youth).
- Promote positive strategies to manage children and prohibit corporal punishment, offensive or abusive language and the use of gestures or symbols that could be interpreted as insulting or provocative.
- Work in partnership with implementing organizations, governments, communities, and children to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
- Model child-friendly behaviours and practices and through awareness and good practice minimise the risks to children.

At minimum:

- All CODE staff and volunteers³ and a representative from each Implementing Partner will read, understand and sign the attached code of conduct.
- All staff, international volunteers and implementing partners will have access to a copy of CODE's child protection policy.
- CODE's recruitment procedures (for international program staff) will include checks on suitability for working with young people.
- CODE's orientation will include briefing on child protection issues.

Code of Conduct

All CODE staff must sign and abide by this Code of Conduct.

It is important for all staff, partners, volunteers and consultants in contact with children to:

- be aware of situations which may present risks
- 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
- empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

Staff, partners, volunteers and consultants must never:

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse 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 language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive

³ Volunteers who travel internationally and/or interact with children

- behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- have a child with whom they are working stay overnight or sleep in the same room
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of 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
- discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

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

It is mandatory for employees, contractors, interns and volunteers to report any witnessed, suspected or alleged violation of the child protection policy to CODE's management team.

It is mandatory for employees, contractors, interns and volunteers to report any witnessed, suspected or alleged incident of child abuse or violation of the child protection policy during the implementation of a CODE program to CODE's Implementing Partner.

It is mandatory for CODE's Implementing Partners to report any witnessed, suspected or alleged incident of child abuse or violation of the child protection policy to the appropriate local authorities.

The signatory agrees to the terms and conditions of this Child Protection Policy and CODE of Conduct.

[name]

[position]

[signature]

[date]

[signature of witness]

[date]