

Russian Red Cross Policy on Child Safeguarding

Moscow, 2024

1. General provisions

- 1.1. This Child Safeguarding Policy of the All-Russian Non-Government Organization «Russian Red Cross» (hereinafter referred to as the RRC) is developed in accordance with the Statutes of the RRC.
- 1.2. The RRC carries out its activities guided by the Constitution and legislation of the Russian Federation, the norms of international humanitarian law enshrined in the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and their Additional Protocols, the Constitution of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (hereinafter referred to as the International Movement), the Statutes of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (hereinafter referred to as the IFRC), documents of the International Committee of the Red Cross (hereinafter referred to as the ICRC) on the principles of voluntariness, equality, self-governance, legality and transparency, in order to realise the ideas of humanism and compassion for people, as well as to carry out socially useful humanitarian activities in the interests of the most vulnerable categories of the population and to provide assistance to state and local authorities in the humanitarian sphere. The RRC is also guided in its activities by the Resolutions of the International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and other documents of the International Movement.
- 1.3. The RRC follows the 2nd Resolution of the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent of 2007 and the 4th Resolution of the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent of 2011 and plays auxiliary role in relation to the Russian Federation, co-operating with public authorities in the sphere of humanitarian activities on the territory of the Russian Federation and beyond, in full compliance with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (hereinafter referred to as the Fundamental Principles).
- 1.4. In its activities involving children, the RRC is guided by the Principles of this policy, the Constitution and legislation of the Russian Federation, including the Family Code of the Russian Federation, the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, Federal Law No. 124-FZ of 24 July 1998 «On Basic Guarantees of the Rights of the Child in the Russian Federation», Federal Law No. 442-FZ of 28 December 2013 «On the Basics of Social Services for Citizens of the Russian Federation», Federal Law No. 436-FZ of 29 December 2010 «On the Protection of Children from Information Harmful to Their Health and Development», Federal Law No. 273-FZ of 29 December 2012 «On Education in the Russian Federation», the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989 and other international legal obligations of the Russian Federation.
- 1.5. For the purposes of this Policy, the RRC encompasses all employees, members, volunteers, and other individuals involved in any of the RRC's activities, at any level and in any location; including the RRC's structural divisions, legal entities established by the RRC, branches, and institutions of the RRC.
- 1.6. This Policy applies to all activities of the RRC, including joint activities with RRC's partners that involve children. This Policy sets out the responsibilities of RRC's partners in relation to the safeguarding of children and the reporting of suspected harm to children's physical and mental health and all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation of children in joint programmes with the RRC.
- 1.7. This Policy provides data protection within the framework of RRC's Policy on the Processing of Personal Data, to ensure all child-related information is handled with the highest confidentiality and security.

2. Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1. This policy aims to ensure all activities of the RRC prioritize child safety, protecting them from abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, violence, neglect and harm while promoting their rights and well-being.
- 2.2. This Policy provides a framework for ensuring that RRC's activities and programmes are designed and implemented taking into account the best interests of the child in mind, ensuring that children suffer no harm – whether violence, abuse or neglect, in the course of its actions. This Policy serves to implement and realize its guiding principles in RRC's activities, ensuring that every action taken by the RRC, at headquarters and regional levels, prioritizes the safety, dignity, and rights of children. The policy ensures that prevention measures are prioritised and accountability is ensured.

3. Principles of Child Safeguarding

- 3.1. The following core principles guide all child safeguarding efforts within the RRC. These principles are integral to ensuring that our operations prioritize the safety, dignity, and rights of children:
 - 3.1.1. **Do No Harm:** The foremost principle guiding our engagements with children is to ensure that our actions and interventions contribute positively to their welfare and do not cause unintended harm.
 - 3.1.2. **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** The RRC maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation of children.
 - 3.1.3. **Mandatory Reporting:** It is obligatory for all employees, members, volunteers, and other individuals involved in any RRC's activities, as well as RRC's partners of the RRC to report any suspicions or evidence of child abuse or neglect. The organization provides clear and accessible channels for reporting, ensuring that all reports are taken seriously, handled professionally, and followed up with appropriate actions.
 - 3.1.4. **Confidentiality:** Safeguarding children's information is crucial. All data related to children, including cases of abuse and interventions, must be handled with the utmost confidentiality and integrity. Information shall only be shared with authorized personnel and RRC's structures strictly on a need-to-know basis to protect the child's identity and privacy.
 - 3.1.5. **Child-Centered Approach:** In decisions and actions, the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration. This principle ensures that the child's rights to safety, development, protection, and participation are upheld and promoted.
 - 3.1.6. **Victim-Centered Approach:** This approach prioritizes the child's safety, dignity, and empowerment, ensuring interventions focus on the child's needs and rights. It involves maintaining confidentiality, minimizing trauma, and providing comprehensive support.
 - 3.1.7. **Non-Discrimination:** Policy should ensure non-discriminatory practices, considering the needs of all children, including marginalized groups.

4. Policy implementation tools

- 4.1. The RRC ensures that all employees, members, volunteers, and other individuals involved in any RRC's activities are informed and are required to receive mandatory training or briefing on this Policy and the child safeguarding principles; as well as the Code of Conduct and, where applicable, the Behaviour Rules. They are made aware of the rights of the child, the total prohibition on direct harm to children (including violence, abuse and neglect) and the disciplinary measures in place for such violations. The RRC ensures that all personnel are aware of, and trained in, the appropriate reporting mechanisms for child safeguarding concerns, understanding the specific actions required when such issues arise.

- 4.2. The RRC will not consciously cooperate, directly or indirectly, with those who pose a danger to children. Through its partnerships, the RRC reserves the right to terminate partnerships with entities that cause harm to children.
- 4.3. The RRC implements child safeguarding through specific safe recruitment practices, including vetting of the biographies and past behavioural and performance qualities of potential employees, volunteers and other individuals recruited to carry out RRC's activities. All individuals involved in RRC's activities are to be familiarised with the RRC Statutes, the Code of Conduct for RRC members and other documents, including this Policy, and provide written confirmation of their agreement to comply with the provisions of these documents and, in particular, not to violate the rights and interests of children in carrying out their activities.
- 4.4. The RRC ensures that a risk analysis is carried out when developing various programmes, projects and activities to identify risk factors for children and develop effective measures to prevent risks of harm to children's physical and mental health and all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation of children.
- 4.5. The RRC ensures that risk analyses are carried out when initiating partnerships under the RRC Good Partnership Policy and that standard clauses on child safeguarding are included in partnership agreements involving activities with children, emphasising the principles of this Policy.
- 4.6. By putting the best interests of children at the centre of all actions and decisions taken, the RRC ensures that appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safeguarding of children within the RRC's operations when there is a risk of harm to children's physical and mental health, as well as a risk of violence, abuse and exploitation of children. This includes measures to raise awareness, prevention, reporting and responding.
- 4.7. The RRC provides a supportive environment in which the rights and wishes of children who have suffered harm to their physical and mental health, as well as violence, abuse and exploitation, are respected, their safety is ensured and they are treated with dignity and respect. This approach is guided by four guiding principles: safety, confidentiality, respect and non-discrimination.
- 4.8. The RRC ensures the confidentiality of the data of whistleblowers.
- 4.9. The RRC provides support and protection of information to individuals who have been reported to it for identifying a risk or evidence of harm to the physical and mental health of children, or a risk or evidence of violence, abuse and exploitation of children, by ensuring confidentiality, safety and a comprehensive review of the reporting.

5. Obligations of RRC's employees, members and volunteers, as well as other individuals involved in RRC's activities

- 5.1. Employees, members and volunteers of the RRC, as well as other individuals involved in RRC's activities, are obliged to:
 - 5.1.1. Comply with the provisions of this Policy.
 - 5.1.2. Immediately report any suspected or actual harm to the physical and mental health of children, or the risk or instances of violence, abuse and exploitation of children in the conduct of RRC's activities by an employee, member, volunteer of the RRC, other individual involved in RRC's activities, or partner of the RRC, using any of the following designated channels:
 - A. the line manager;
 - B. the Human Resources Department if the situation involves the line manager and the RRC's Headquarters;

C. the RRC Ethics Commission by sending an email to etika@redcross.ru in any cases.

- 5.1.3. Immediately report to the RRC if any of the RRC's employees, members, volunteers, other individuals involved in RRC's activities, or RRC's partners are suspected, accused or convicted of criminal offences involving harm to the physical or mental health of children, or violence, abuse or exploitation of children. Reporting to the RRC must be done through the channels specified in clause 5.1.2.
- 5.2. Where feasible, the information sent to the RRC Ethics Commission should contain information about the date, place, time and any other relevant details of the fact that caused the application to the RRC Ethics Commission.
- 5.3. Specific responsibilities under this Policy are assigned to the RRC Governing Board, RRC President, Director of the Human Resources Department, Safeguarding Coordinator, all managers, and all employees, members, volunteers, and other individuals involved in RRC's activities (Appendix 1).

6. Community Engagement and Child Participation for Safer Environments

- 6.1. The RRC prioritizes children's voices in safeguarding processes, ensuring that they have opportunities to actively engage and share their perspectives. Community engagement, programme feedback and sensitive feedback reporting channels will be shared in all activities with children, including to ensure that children can directly report safeguarding concerns.

7. Response to Complaints

- 7.1. In accordance with the procedures of the RRC Ethics Commission, a designated safeguarding focal point (trained in interviewing children, children's rights and addressing complex safeguarding cases), upon receipt of a report, will conduct a preliminary assessment to determine materiality, urgency, and severity of the case. The immediate risk to a child's safety and wellbeing will also require a victims safety assessment and plan to be developed and implemented.
- 7.2. Where there is an identified victim(s), the RRC is committed to providing and facilitating comprehensive support for her/him/them. This assistance will be provided to alleged victims on the basis of the principles of this Policy, and a package of referrals which encompasses healthcare services, psychological counselling, case management, and legal aid tailored to the needs of the child and their family will be offered. The aim is to ensure that all affected children receive the necessary care and support to recover from harm caused.
- 7.3. Procedural fairness applies to all cases and individuals against whom the complaint was addressed will be notified of an inner investigation if undertaken. Based on the findings of the inner investigation, disciplinary actions which may range to termination will be applied.
- 7.4. In instances where allegations may also constitute criminal offenses, the RRC will support the processes complying with law enforcement.

8. Obligations of RRC's partners

- 8.1. RRC's partners are obliged to:
 - 8.1.1. Comply with the provisions of this Policy.
 - 8.1.2. Immediately report to the RRC the risk or evidence of harm to the physical and mental health of children, as well as the risk or evidence of violence, abuse and exploitation of children in the performance of RRC's activities by an RRC 's partner, as well as by an employee, member, volunteer of the RRC, or other individual involved in RRC's activities, by reporting it to the RRC Ethics Commission at etika@redcross.ru, taking into account clause 5.2.

- 8.1.3. Communicate any suspicions, accusations, or convictions of criminal offenses involving harm to children by personnel involved in joint RRC activities, by reporting to the RRC Ethics Commission at etika@redcross.ru, taking into account clause 5.2.
- 8.1.4. Note that any agreement between RRC and an RRC's partner may be immediately terminated upon confirmation of harm to the physical and mental health of children, as well as violence, abuse or exploitation of children, by RRC's partner involved in joint activities with RRC, and/or the failure of an RRC's partner to take appropriate action upon discovery of such a violation of children's rights and safeguarding.
- 8.1.5. Ensure maximum efforts to promote and strengthen child safeguarding measures within joint activities with the RRC.
- 8.2. The relevant provisions necessary to fulfil the above obligations are to be included in RRC's agreements and contracts with RRC's partners whose joint activities affect the interests of children.

9. Procedure for implementation and monitoring of compliance with this Policy

- 9.1. The RRC ensures that this Policy is disseminated to employees of the RRC Headquarters, members, volunteers and other individuals involved in RRC's activities, structural subdivisions of the RRC (regional and local branches of the RRC), legal entities established by the RRC and institutions of the RRC.
- 9.2. The Human Resources Department of the RRC is responsible for implementing this Policy at the level of RRC Headquarters. The Regional Development Department is responsible for implementing this policy at the level of the management of RRC's regional branches. The obligation to implement this policy at the level of employees, members, volunteers and other individuals involved in RRC's activities of RRC's regional branches, RRC's local branches is assigned to the chairpersons of RRC's regional branches or persons authorised by them. The obligation to implement this Policy at the level of management of legal entities and institutions established by the RRC is assigned to the employees of the RRC Headquarters who coordinate the activities of these legal entities and institutions. The obligation to implement this Policy at the level of employees, members, volunteers and other individuals involved in RRC's activities of legal entities and institutions created by the RRC is assigned to the heads of these organisations or persons authorised by them.
- 9.3. Audit and regular monitoring of partnerships in RRC's work affecting children and the application of the Policy is part of RRC's internal performance evaluation process.
- 9.4. Based on the audit and monitoring, the RRC Headquarters analyses the results of the Policy implementation and provides the RRC Governing Board with recommendations to improve the Policy.
- 9.5. The policy is subject to review every three years.

APPENDIX 1 – Responsibilities

RRC Position	Responsibilities
Governing Board	- Be informed of policy implementation challenges and address them
President	- Review and approve this Policy - Ensure that all RRC's programmes are designed with child safeguarding in mind - Hold managers accountable for compliance with this Policy - Promote the Policy and its provisions
Director of the Human Resources Department of the Headquarters	- Ensure that all potential employees, volunteers and other individuals involved in RRC's activities at Headquarters are properly vetted/screened to ensure that they do not pose a risk to children - Ensure that all potential employees, volunteers and other individuals involved in RRC's activities at Headquarters are familiar with this Policy and agree to abide by it as part of their contract - Accept reporting of the risk or evidence of harm to the physical and mental health of children, or the risk or evidence of violence, abuse and exploitation of children in the conduct of RRC's activities by an employee, member, volunteer or other individual involved in RRC's activities, or by an RRC's partner - Refer information from the reports to the RRC Ethics Commission or recommend that the whistleblower refer the information to authorised government bodies if the situation falls outside the mandate of the RRC
Safeguarding Coordinator	- Monitor the application of the Policy at the level of regional offices - Develop and adapt training materials and visual aids for the practical application of the Policy - Ensure that activities necessary to implement the Policy are carried out, including individual and group briefings and instructions, involving, where necessary, the Human Resources Department and other staff with knowledge and/or experience in safeguarding issues - Undertake accredited child safeguarding training, including training on how to investigate child safeguarding cases and interview children

All managers	- Promote awareness and understanding of the Policy among their subordinates - Refer information from the reports to the RRC Ethics Commission or recommend the whistleblower to refer the information to the authorised state authorities in case the situation falls outside the mandate of the RRC - Ensure staff and volunteers undertake mandatory training on child safeguarding and/or code of conduct, rules of behaviour (where applicable), involving, where necessary, the Human Resources Department and other staff with knowledge and/or experience in safeguarding issues - Ensure staff understand the principles of zero tolerance for abuse, violence and neglect
Employee, member, volunteer, other individual involved in RRC' activities	- Understand, comply with and apply this Policy in their workplace - Report any suspected violations of this Policy

APPENDIX 2 – Examples of unsafe and prohibited actions with children

To help clarify RRC safeguarding approach, listed here are examples of prohibited behaviours. These apply to interactions between employees, members, volunteers, other individuals involved in RRC's activities, RRC's partners and children they interact with, provide support to, or deliver services to through its programming.

The examples are not exhaustive. Prohibited

behaviours:

- Engaging in any sexual activity or having a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years regardless of the age of majority/consent or custom locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
- Marrying or becoming involved in an informal union with anyone under the age of 18 years, regardless of the allowable age of marriage in the country.
- Hitting or otherwise physically assaulting or physically abusing children.
- Hiring children for labour that is dangerous, exploitative, or does not meet local and international child labour laws.
- Exchanging of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour.
- Using language or behaviour towards children that is reasonably perceived as inappropriate, as well as harassment, insults, exploitation, sexual provocation, humiliation, discrimination based on gender, race, nationality, religion and other forms of discrimination, and other forms of psychological abuse.
- Leaving a child alone during programmes and activities, as well as being alone with the child during any kind of interaction with the child.
- Failing to take reasonable actions to provide referrals for appropriate services to a child who reports or who has someone else report, or has signs of, experiencing violence, abuse, exploitation.
- Using any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media involving children in any way that harms a child, including accessing child exploitation material such as pornography through any medium at any time, regardless of whether it is during working hours and/or on RRC-issued electronic equipment.
- Not asking permission to take a photo or video of a child, posting children's images without the necessary permissions, depicting children in ways that are not dignified or when children are not fully clothed.
- The generation, production, distribution or use of pornographic materials or engagement in online sexual exploitation and abuse (with adults or children) in RRC's offices or on RRC's equipment, including but not limited to accessing, receipt, generation, or causing the generation, production, access, receipt and sharing of sexual abuse or pornographic material online.
- Undertaking activities or programmes with children without the express permission of their parents / guardians, or relevant authorities for street/separated/unaccompanied or other children who are alone.
- Working alone with a child somewhere that is secluded or where they cannot be observed by others.
- Inviting unaccompanied children into the personnel's home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger and, in this case, the personnel involved should advise their supervisor of the need for such action immediately.
- Giving alcohol or drugs to a child.

Key Definitions

Child, Children: Refers to human beings under the age of 18, as defined by the Family Code of the Russian Federation and the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989.

Best Interests of the Child: This principle requires that the well-being of the child be the primary focus in all decisions and actions affecting them. Well-being is influenced by various factors including gender, age, level of maturity, familial circumstances, and others.

Safeguarding of Children: The process of protecting children from harm to their physical and mental health, including all forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation.

Forms of Abuse:

- **Emotional or Psychological Abuse:** Negative treatment affecting a child's emotional development or well-being, such as verbal abuse, humiliation, isolation, or neglect.
- **Physical Abuse:** The use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, pain, or impairment.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Engaging a child in sexual activities that they do not comprehend, are unable to consent to, or that violate the laws or social norms.

Violence: Any deliberate act, potentially causing physical or emotional harm, that occurs within a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.

Child Exploitation: The use of a child for someone else's advantage, gratification, or profit in situations that are harmful to the child's physical or mental health, development, or education. Exploitation can manifest as:

- **Economic Exploitation:** Such as child labor that involves demanding tasks, or is undertaken in dangerous conditions.
- **Harmful or Hazardous Labour:** Work that jeopardizes a child's physical, mental, or moral well-being.
- **Sexual Exploitation:** Practices like child prostitution, trafficking for sexual purposes, child pornography, or the grooming of children for sexual abuse.